

Ideal Beauty in Late Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century French Art and Art Criticism with Special Reference to the Role of Drapery and Costume



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Dedication

To the memory of my parents Jonathan and Valerie Gatty
and to my children
Sophie, Alexander, Eleanor and Hector

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Abstract

Scholarly attention to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art has focused on the importance that Johann Joachim Winckelmann attributed to the male nude figure in his definition of ideal beauty, and the impact of his work on debates over the 'beau idéal' in French art and art criticism. In contrast, Winckelmann's extensive interest in the detail of ancient costume, the folds of drapery, and the teleological and aesthetic significance that he ascribed to them, has been underplayed. The role played by costume and drapery as components of the 'beau idéal' in French art and aesthetics has also not been fully explored. This thesis examines the way in which costume and drapery formed an important component and embodiment of ideal beauty in the work of Winckelmann and in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French artistic circles, providing new insights into the arguments over the meanings of Truth, Beauty and Nature in this period.

The thesis proposes that ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century France was conveyed in works of art through the accurate rendering of costume and the expressive qualities of drapery in combination with the perfect form and contour of the nude body. The first part of the thesis sets up a proposition that costume and drapery formed part of the definition of ideal beauty in the work of Winckelmann. Highlighting the significance of Winckelmann's work on costume and drapery in French art theory, it demonstrates how the definition of ideal beauty in France also incorporated the accurate rendering of costume and the aesthetic impact of drapery. In demonstrating the significance of costume and drapery to both Winckelmann and French theorists it is proposed that the application of a meta-historical approach of costume and drapery to French art theory can provide new understandings and readings of the definition of ideal beauty, the hierarchy of the genres and the broader aesthetic concerns of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century French art.

The second part of the thesis applies the proposed hermeneutic of costume and drapery to a small selection of theoretical work on the nature of ideal beauty and on a significant collection of Salon criticism. With this approach to the primary material this thesis demonstrates how French artists were able to express the 'beau idéal' within the traditional academic conventions and hierarchies, and negotiate the sense of public unease over the use of nudity in contemporary art.

Extended Abstract

Debate on the definition of ideal beauty and its manifestation and expression in works of art appearing at the Paris Salons was a feature of artistic life in pre- and post-Revolutionary France. Breaking away from the perceived excesses of Rococo art, symbolised for many in the work of Boucher, artists, critics and theorists were heavily influenced by the work of Johann Joachim Winckelmann on the neo-classical ideal as symbolic of a revived and regenerated French school of painting. The interest in the simplicity of form and revisiting of ancient Greek ideals of beauty was encouraged in France by the early translation and publication of Winckelmann's work on the art of antiquity and the classical ideal, and put into practice by French artists such as Joseph-Marie Vien and his pupil Jacques-Louis David at the *Académie de France à Rome*. The interest in classical monuments and ideals as expressed in the work of Winckelmann and Anton Raphael Mengs reached its symbolic height with the transportation to Paris of Winckelmann's papers alongside the most famous statues of antiquity such as the *Laocoön* and the *Apollo Belvedere* in the Roman Triumph of 1798.

Scholarly attention on the definition of ideal beauty in this period has focused on the attention that Winckelmann gave in his writings to the male nude figure as part of the Greek ideal and the perceived correlation between Winckelmann's interest in the nude form and Jacques-Louis David's controversial use of male nude figures in two of his history paintings. In contrast, Winckelmann's work on antique dress and drapery and the aesthetic significance he attributed to clothing has been underplayed. Although there has been research on the influence of fashion in the French art of this period, and the connection made between Winckelmann's work on drapery and the French art dictionaries, the role played by costume and drapery in French art and aesthetics has not been expanded to include its contribution to

the definition of ideal beauty. The contribution of this thesis to the field is to look at well-known material on the topic of ideal beauty in a different way, broadening the definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art to incorporate the connoisseurial and aesthetic importance of costume and drapery.

The thesis proposes that ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France was the accurate rendering of the connoisseurial details of costume as emblematic of the concept of Truth, and the expressive and aesthetic qualities of drapery, combined with the perfect form and contour of the nude body underneath. In this relationship between the body and drapery a sense of ideal beauty could be effectively, accurately and appropriately expressed. By analysing the primary material with a meta-historical approach of costume and drapery it is proposed that French artists were able to express the ‘beau idéal’ within traditional academic conventions and hierarchies of the day and alleviate public unease over the use of nudity.

The core primary material for this thesis is the French art criticism published in the ‘feuilleton’ or cultural supplements of the major Parisian newspapers, and it was the debates evident in these reviews dating from the 1790s to the 1820s over the theoretical definition of the ‘beau idéal’ and its representation in art exhibited at the Paris Salon that first prompted the thesis approach of looking into the connoisseurial and aesthetic importance of costume and drapery. The other primary material that is analysed in depth has been the corpus of Winckelmann’s works that were translated into French and read by the critics. This has included Winckelmann’s *Histoire de l’Art d’Antiquité*, his connoisseurial texts and his less well-known catalogue of Baron Stosch’s collection of antique gems, his treatise on Allegory and his three volume work on antique monuments.

The reference in the art criticisms to the figures of Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy and Toussaint Bernard Éméric-David and their public quarrel over the expression of ideal beauty in art has meant that their work has also been examined in depth. In addition to the work of Quatremère and Éméric-David, the philosophical work of the critic Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard and the Exhibition Catalogue written by David for the 1799 exhibition of *L'Intervention des Sabines* are also analysed. Other primary material relating to David and *L'Intervention des Sabines* including Etienne-Jean Delécluze's biography of David published in 1855, and the biography of David published by his grandson Jules David in 1880 have also been used.

In addition, the French art dictionaries and costume dictionaries have been an important primary source. Particular attention has been given to the definitions of ideal beauty and the aesthetic attributes associated with clothing in Watelet and Lévêque's *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure* alongside other art dictionaries and costume dictionaries. Finally, the artworks themselves have been analysed in order to demonstrate the significance of costume and drapery as part of ideal beauty, showing how this enriches our reading of them. This has incorporated antique statues, Renaissance masterpieces as well as a selection of works that were exhibited in the Paris Salons and talked about in the art criticism.

Methodologically this thesis falls into two main sections that address the topic of ideal beauty in different ways. The first section establishes the proposition that costume and drapery formed part of the definition of ideal beauty in the work of Winckelmann and in the art theory of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. It demonstrates that ideal beauty was a combination of the expressive effect of drapery, which was able to convey qualities such as movement, harmony, emotion and grace, combined with the form and contour of the body underneath. The second section applies this meta-historical approach to artworks and Salon reviews.

Thematically, the thesis is divided into three parts. In the first part the works of Winckelmann are re-examined, demonstrating the detailed and extensive research he undertook on all aspects of antique costume including the historical costumes of Egyptian, Etruscans, Phoenicians and Persians, the detail, style and fold of Greek and Roman costume, the fabrics used and his interest in ornaments and accessories. This shows how Winckelmann charted historical periods through costume, demonstrating the way in which he used the superiority of Greek clothing to prove teleologically that Greek art was the best. It is also demonstrated how Winckelmann extended this interest in clothing to providing instructions to contemporary artists on how they could achieve the expressive effect of the fold and the throw of cloth in their own work. The first part concludes by presenting the argument that Winckelmann believed the costume and drapery formed the essential part of art in combination with the essence of the form of the nude body underneath.

Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty is then analysed, proposing that his concept of the ideal embodied both physical and spiritual traits. After explaining the different ways in which Winckelmann analysed the perfect physical shape and form of the body and body parts, the focus moves to the emphasis he placed on abstract effects such as harmony, grace, expression and feeling as part of ideal beauty. It is demonstrated how Winckelmann attributed the qualities of elegance and effect to drapery, how he saw drapery as an important expressive vehicle in works of art and how drapery was also associated with the spiritual qualities that he attributed to the word 'grâce'. Finally the proposition has been made that Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty was a combination of the perfect form and contour of the body with the moveable and expressive effect of drapery.

In the second part of the thesis the focus is on the definition of ideal beauty in the costume dictionaries and art dictionaries of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. This part demonstrates that there was a similar wealth of interest from the dictionaries in the historical and connoisseurial details of antique clothing and their aesthetic and expressive effect. It also shows the different ways in which Winckelmann's work was used to support definitions of ideal beauty. This research highlights the impact of Winckelmann's friend, Anton Raphael Mengs in French artistic theory and hints at a deeper connection between Winckelmann, concepts of grace, the role of drapery and French aesthetic theory. This supports other historical research on the influence of Winckelmann in France and demonstrates the way in which his work was used to support the call for the regeneration of the French school of painting. It is noted how the nuances of Winckelmann's work were adapted to meet the needs of the French public, concluding that in contrast to contemporary scholarship and current readings of this period in French art in which the male nude figure is seen as the emblem of ideal beauty, there were moral problems in France with the representation of nudity in art.

In the final part of the thesis the approach of costume and drapery is applied to a small selection of theoretical work on the nature of ideal beauty and on a significant collection of Salon criticism. Using the approach of costume and drapery it is demonstrated that there were conflicting voices in the debate over the construct of ideal beauty and its artistic representation. First the attitudes held by the critic Chaussard on the topic of clothing are examined, demonstrating how he tried to appropriate the work of Vien and David for his own purpose and challenge the hierarchy of the genres by praising elements of the ideal in works of art that were not able to aspire to it.

It is then demonstrated how the difference in attitudes towards the use of the nude figure and drapery separates out the theoretical quarrel between Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-

David into a clearly demarcated distinction between a preference for drapery by Quatremère and a rejection of the spiritual qualities of ideal beauty symbolically represented by the preference for the nude figure as its emblem in Éméric-David's work.

Looking at the Salon criticism is equally illuminating. Analysing the 'feuilleton' through the lens of costume and drapery it is evident that the hierarchy of the genres held fast in this period and that historical accuracy in costume was seen as a broader indicator of the concept of Truth, and therefore important for the status of the French school of history painting. It suggests that the stated preference for the expression of emotion was through the use of drapery rather than through the nude form combined with LeBrun's formulaic facial gestures as stipulated in his 1649 *Traité de Passions*. It shows that there was anxiety about the use of nude 'académies' in painting and that the use of nudity by some painters was interpreted by some critics as a move towards ugliness in art. Finally, with an analysis of the dialogue over the contingent use of costume and drapery, evidence demonstrates that even in the genre of sculpture, where there was a greater conventional acceptance of nudity, there was anxiety about the use of the nude figure. The negotiations between the needs of French public opinion for modesty, the wish to convey the heroism of the time, the requirements of accurate portraiture and unattractiveness of contemporary French male fashion can be seen by the different ways in which contemporary figures were depicted both in painting and sculpture.

The thesis conclusions are that by looking at the connoisseurial and aesthetic attributes of costume and drapery it is possible to open up a new and broader way of defining ideal beauty in this period. First, by incorporating the role of clothing into Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty it enriches our understanding of the broader purpose of Winckelmann's *Histoire* and the effect of his work in France. Secondly, it allows for expression, emotion and effect to be articulated in a way that does not make it a slave to desire, either sublimated or overt in

Winckelmann's work. It further demonstrates the degree of impact that Winckelmann's work had in France and the way in which different aspects of his work were used to support diverse opinions on the definition of ideal beauty. It also shows how the moral importance of accuracy and truth through the detailed depiction of antique clothing, was seen as symbolic of the regeneration of the French school of painting and how the aesthetic qualities of drapery were important as a means of conveying intense emotional effect. Furthermore, it is demonstrated how costume and drapery was the way in which the genre of a painting was signaled, and how the historical inaccuracy of costume was one of the main reasons for the negative response to David's *L'Intervention des Sabines*.

Finally, in arguing for this meta-historical approach, it is proposed that a study of the connoisseurial and aesthetic effect of costume and drapery allows the extensive work done by scholars on the impact of the Grecian revival in contemporary female French fashion and culture to be integrated into some aspects of the aesthetic debate surrounding ideal beauty and its material expression in the artwork of the period. Analytically, it enables us to look at the role of costume, drapery and accessories in a different way, attributing a broader aesthetic value to them and integrating their accuracy and effect into the philosophical conversation about the nature and definition of ideal beauty in this period.

Contents

Thesis Introduction	4
Literature Review.....	5
Thesis Approach	14
The Language of Dress	17
Chapter Outline.....	18
Part One: Winckelmann.....	25
Chapter One. Fleshing Out Winckelmann	25
Introduction.....	25
Section 1.1: Costume in the <i>Histoire</i>	28
Section 1.2: Drapery in the <i>Réflexions</i>	46
Section 1.3: Winckelmann and ‘Style’	57
Conclusion	60
Chapter Two: Winckelmann’s Definition of Ideal Beauty	63
Introduction.....	63
Section 2.1: The Physical and Spiritual Qualities of Ideal Beauty	65
Section 2.2: The Aesthetic Effect of Drapery	83
Section 2.3: Winckelmann’s definition of Ideal Beauty	97
Section 2.4: The Definition of Ideal Beauty in its Historical Context.....	99
Section 2.5: Masculine Subjectivities and Conclusion	103

Part Two.....	113
Chapter Three: The Connoisseurial Significance of Clothing in France	113
Introduction.....	113
Section 3.1: Winckelmann in France	117
Section 3.2: Connoisseurial Interest in Costume in the Art Dictionaries	127
Conclusion	150
Chapter Four: Ideal Beauty and the Aesthetic Impact of Clothing.....	152
Introduction.....	152
Section 4.1: Ideal Beauty	156
Section 4.2: How to convey Ideal Beauty.....	167
Section 4.3: Winckelmann, Mengs and French Aesthetic Theory.....	190
Conclusion	192
Part Three.....	198
Chapter Five: Ideal Beauty in French Art Theory	198
Introduction.....	198
Section 5.1:The Theoretical Debate over Ideal Beauty	202
Conclusion	227
Chapter Six: Drapery and Ideal Beauty in French Art Criticism.....	228
Introduction.....	228
Section 6.1: Art Critics and Writers.....	233
Section 6.2: Art Criticism between the 1790's and 1820's	238

Section 6.3: Ideal Beauty and Genre.....	248
Section 6.4: Historical Accuracy	267
Section 6.5: Sedate and Grand Emotion	275
Section 6.6: Dress, Morality and Ideal Beauty in Sculpture.....	278
Conclusion	295
Thesis Conclusion.....	297

Thesis Introduction

In 1819 the artist and critic Étienne Delécluze described how he yearned for art to ‘frapper l’esprit, de toucher, d’émouvoir le cœur, et surtout d’élever l’âme’.¹ This focus on the importance of ‘vérité’ demonstrates how artists and critics in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art were interested in the philosophical questions of Truth, Beauty, and Nature and explored the metaphysical qualities of these definitions as well as their practical manifestation in works of art. There were a number of different reasons why the definition of ideal beauty and its expression in works of art appearing at the Paris Salons was of particular interest to critics and theorists. These included the early French translation and publication of Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s work on the art of antiquity and the classical ideal and the exposure of French artists such as Joseph-Marie Vien and Jacques-Louis David to the work of Winckelmann and Mengs through the *Académie de France à Rome*. The eighteenth-century debates amongst the *gens de lettres* and the Revolutionary appropriation of classical monuments and ideals reached its symbolic height with the transportation of the most famous statues of antiquity such as the *Laocoön* and the *Apollo Belvedere* to Paris in the Roman Triumph of 1798.

The contribution this thesis aims to make to the field is to look at well-known material on the topic of ideal beauty in a different way. Scholarly attention on the definition of ideal beauty in this period has focused on the attention that Winckelmann gave to the male nude figure as part of the Greek neoclassical ideal and David’s subsequent use of male nudes in two of his history paintings. In contrast, Winckelmann’s work on antique costume and drapery and the aesthetic significance he attributed to these has been underplayed. Although there has been research on the influence of fashion in the French art of this period, and the connection made

¹Étienne Jean Delécluze, *Sur L'exposition Des Ouvrages De Peinture, Sculpture, Architecture Et Gravure Des Artistes Vivans*, (Offprint from: Le Lycée français: Paris, 1819).

between Winckelmann's work on drapery and the French art dictionaries, the role played by costume and drapery in French art and aesthetics has not been fully explored.

The thesis proposition is that ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France was conveyed through the accurate rendering of the connoisseurial details of costume and the expressive qualities of drapery, combined with the perfect form and contour of the nude body underneath. This new approach to the primary sources and the conclusions made from the material demonstrates how French artists were able to express the 'beau idéal' within traditional academic conventions and hierarchies of the day, and public unease over the use of nudity in art, to argue for a re-framing of the definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art and art criticism.

Literature Review

Primary Literature

The primary material analysed in the first section of the thesis is the corpus of Winckelmann's works that were translated into French and read by French theorists and critics either in full or extract form. This includes Winckelmann's *Histoire de l'Art d'Antiquité*, his connoisseurial texts, his catalogue of Baron Stosch's collection of antique gems, his treatise *De l'Allegorie* and his three-volume work on antique monuments.

The primary material for the second section of the thesis includes French art dictionaries and costume dictionaries. Attention has been particularly focused on Watelet and Lévêque's *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure* as well as a selection of different art

dictionaries and costume dictionaries acknowledged in the chapters that concentrate on these works.

The core primary material for the thesis is French art criticism published in the ‘feuilleton’ or cultural supplements of the major Parisian newspapers. For this, the Haskell collection of salon reviews housed in the Sackler Library, Oxford has been an invaluable archive. The selection of texts from the 1790s until the 1820s and used in the final section of the thesis incorporates approximately fifty different publications and voices. It was the debates evident in these reviews over the theoretical definition of the ‘beau idéal’ and its representation in art exhibited at the Paris Salon that prompted the thesis approach to examine the connoisseurial and aesthetic importance of costume and drapery.

The reference in the art criticisms to the figures of Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David and their public quarrel over the expression of ideal beauty in art has highlighted the significance of these figures in relation to debates on the nature and definition of ideal beauty. This has prompted the examination of their work and their attitudes to clothing. In addition to Quatremère and Éméric-David, the philosophical and art critical work of the revolutionary and writer Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard has been analysed because of the significance given by scholars to Chaussard’s views and the way in which his writing is linked to the work of Jacques-Louis David. Although Chaussard is one critic amongst many and scholars often cite his work, little in-depth research has been done on his unique interpretation of ideal beauty, and the contextualisation of his views into the broader corpus of the critical work.

In addition to these primary sources, a small amount of material by David and his pupils on the topic of *L’Intervention des Sabines* has been used, including Delécluze’s biography of David published in 1855, the biography of David published by his grandson Jules David in 1880 and memoirs by his friends written around the time of his death in 1825.

Finally, the artworks themselves have been used as a source and as a means by which to explore the significance of costume and drapery as part of ideal beauty. This has incorporated antique statues and Renaissance masterpieces, as well as a selection of works that were exhibited in the Paris Salons and talked about in the art criticism.

The selection of primary material has been difficult given the scale of art criticism in this period and the large amount of material on the topic of ideal beauty. However, I believe I have covered the main figures in the debate and looked at enough writers in depth to make general claims. I have also provided an outline of the primary material used and the secondary sources that have supported it at the beginning of each chapter.

Secondary Literature

The secondary literature used to support this thesis has been extensive. Although I have referenced the work of many scholars, I will briefly outline the key influencing figures in my research and the way in which they have affected the development of my approach to the primary material. Identifying those that are most pertinent to the argument of my thesis, I will indicate the points where I engage with some of these figures and demonstrate where this thesis aims to break new ground.

The work of Alex Potts has been an important resource and is an influential model for studies of Winckelmann and his impact in French art. I will specifically address Potts's reading of Winckelmann in *Flesh and the Ideal* at the end of the first section of this thesis because I believe that although his approach and scholarship to Winckelmann has made an important

contribution to the reading of the man, there are aspects of Winckelmann's texts that Potts underplays, particularly Winckelmann's interest in costume and drapery.² By excluding Winckelmann's extensive interest in all aspects of clothing I believe that Potts has discounted the richness of his method, the depth of his construal of ideal beauty and Winckelmann's appreciation of attributes such as movement and grace indicated through ornaments and the correct adjustment of draperies. I hope to provide a richer interpretation of Winckelmann's work that integrates these aspects of his work into his definition of ideal beauty and in doing so provide the foundation for an enhanced definition of Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty, a broader understanding of Winckelmann the man and an enriched understanding of Neo-Classicism in general.

Potts's reading of the work of Winckelmann has supported similar work that has sought to integrate Winckelmann's homosexual orientation into his vision of the Greek ideal with the figure of the male nude as its emblem. This has included the work of Whitney Davis on freedom and the work on the homosocial environment of David's studio by Thomas Crow.³ Satish Padiyar has also built on the work of Potts and his definition of ideal beauty residing in the male nude figure and applied the work of Kant to a reading of David and Canova.⁴ Abigail Solomon Godeau has produced a reading of David using the work of Lacan.⁵ Whilst acknowledging the impact that the work of Alex Potts has had on studies of Winckelmann and David and specifically engaging with his work, I have chosen not to address these other readings of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art.

²Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, (New Haven; London Yale University Press, 1994).

³Whitney Davis, *Queer Beauty : Sexuality and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Freud and Beyond*, (New York, N.Y. ; Chichester : Columbia University Press 2010). Thomas Crow, *Emulation : David, Drouais, and Girodet in the Art of Revolutionary France*, (New Haven Yale University Press in association with the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles 2006).

⁴Satish Padiyar, *Chains : David, Canova, and the Fall of the Public Hero in Postrevolutionary France*, (University Park, Pa. : Pennsylvania State University Press 2007).

⁵ Abigail Solomon Godeau, *Male Trouble : A Crisis in Representation*, (London : Thames and Hudson, 1997).

Although my approach to the thesis question has derived mainly from the reading of the primary material, I have found support for my conclusions in the field of French scholarship and Classics. Within the field of French scholarship Michel Régis's catalogue has explored Winckelmann's interest in clothing as an expression of ideal beauty, and the work of Edouard Pommier has highlighted the interest that Winckelmann had in the metaphysical qualities of grace.⁶ Alice Donohue has noted Winckelmann's interest in drapery and the classicist Katherine Harloe has also explored Winckelmann's interest in grace, questioning its purely stylistic function in his work and exploring the linguistic origins of his metaphysical interest in the concept.⁷ Her research into the origins of Winckelmann's thought on the topic has supported my analysis of his complex reading of grace and my argument that it formed an important part of his definition of ideal beauty. Chloe Chard has also provided interesting reflections on the eighteenth-century reception of classical sculpture and its affect on Taste in Europe which provides a context for the reception of Winckelmann's rhetoric amongst contemporaries.⁸ In different ways these works have all supported my research approach and my contribution to the revised definition of ideal beauty in this thesis.

Pascal Griener has provided a supporting framework for my enquiry into the nature of ideal beauty with his detailed analysis of the debates amongst the 'gens de lettres' surrounding the nature and function of beauty in the mid to late eighteenth-century and a theoretical background to the impact of Winckelmann in France.⁹ His work has provided an invaluable

⁶ Edouard Pommier, *Winckelmann : La Naissance De L'histoire De L'art À L'époque Des Lumières*, (Paris : La Documentation Française, 1991); Michel Régis and Musée du Louvre. Cabinet des dessins, *Le Beau Idéal : Ou, L'art Du Concept : 94e Exposition Du Cabinet Des Dessins, Musée Du Louvre, 17 Octobre-31 Décembre 1989*, (Paris : Ministère de la culture, de la communication, des grands travaux et du bicentenaire, Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1989).

⁷ Alice A. Donohue, *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description*, (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press 2005); Katherine Harloe, *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity*, (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸ Gillian Perry and Michael Rossington, 'Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture', (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1994).

⁹ Pascal Griener, 'The Function of Beauty : The Philosophes and the Social Dimension of Art in Late Eighteenth Century France, with Particular Regard to Sculpture', (Thesis (D.Phil.) University of Oxford, 1989).

resource for certain aspects of this thesis although the approach and content of my thesis does not build on his semiotic reading of the texts. In addition, Griener in collaboration with Elizabeth Décultot has explored issues relating to the translation of Winckelmann's works from German to French and the differences between the versions of the *Histoire de l'Art d'Antiquité*.¹⁰ Décultot has also investigated the intellectual origins and background to Winckelmann's popularity in France and his impact on French theory.¹¹ Annie Becq's work has focused on the concept of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France, highlighting the significance of Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David in the intellectual debate.¹² René Schenider, James Rubin, Christopher Prendergast, Sylvia Lavin and David Gilks have supported Becq's emphasis on Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David as key figures, and been the sources of secondary literature on the figure of Quatremère.¹³ Meredith Shedd has also provided a background for Éméric-David and his dispute with Giraud and Quatremère.¹⁴ These works have influenced my choice to give these two theorists a particular focus in the third section of the thesis and all this secondary literature has provided an important framework for my reading of Winckelmann's texts and the importance of ideal beauty in late eighteenth-century France. I do not engage with the work of these scholars directly, but my reframing of the definition of ideal beauty does allow some tensions or unexplored nuances in their work to be resolved.

¹⁰ Pascal Griener, *L'esthétique De La Traduction : Winckelmann, Les Langues Et L'histoire De L'art, 1755-1784*, (Genève : Droz, 1998).

¹¹ Elisabeth Décultot, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann : Enquête Sur La Genèse De L'histoire De L'art*, (Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 2000).

¹² Annie Becq, 'Esthétique Et Politique Sous Le Consulat Et L'empire : La Notion De Beau Idéal', *Romantisme*, 16 (1986).

¹³ Christopher Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting: Antoine-Jean Gros's La Bataille D'eylau*, (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1997); James Rubin, 'Allegory Versus Narrative in Quatremère De Quincy', *The journal of aesthetics and art criticism*, 44 (1986); René Schneider, *Quatremère De Quincy Et Son Intervention Dans Les Arts (1788-1850)*, (Paris : Hachette et Cie, 1910). Sylvia Lavin, 'Quatremère De Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture', (1992). David J. E. Gilks, 'A.-C. Quatremère De Quincy and Regenerating the Visual Arts in France, C. 1770-1810.', (Thesis (D.Phil.) University of Cambridge, 2007).

¹⁴ Meredith Shedd, 'T.B. Eméric-David and the Criticism of Ancient Sculpture in France : 1790-1830', (Ph.D University of California, Berkeley 1980).

The secondary literature on the figure of David in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France is particularly extensive. As the acknowledged leader of the French school of painting, a politically divisive figure and a constant innovator, there is only scope in this thesis to examine a small aspect of his work. As a result the work of other scholars has been invaluable. The French art historians Philippe Bordes, Antoine Schnapper, Maurice Sérullaz, Arlette Sérullaz and Pierre Rosenberg have analysed different aspects of David's life and work, as has the work of David Lloyd Dowd, Anita Brookner, and Dorothy Johnson.¹⁵ Tony Halliday has also provided an analysis of David's *L'Intervention des Sabines* and an interesting insight into the influence that Cabanis and Condillac might have had in his work.¹⁶ Halliday's has highlighted the importance of David's friendship with Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, which is one of the reasons why I have paid particular attention to him as a commentator and to his art criticism, focusing on the attitude he had to clothing in his philosophical and literary work. In placing a discussion of Chaussard's attitudes to clothing with the theorists Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David I have explored Chaussard's unusual definition of ideal beauty. Isolating Chaussard's views from the critical mainstream has also enabled me to question the premise in the art critical section of the thesis that battle painting could aspire to ideal beauty and that the emblem of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art was the male nude figure. Since the work of Alex Potts and his definition of ideal beauty as the male nude is the one on which the most recent scholarship of this period has been based, I only implicitly question the arguments of

¹⁵ Philippe Bordes, *Jacques-Louis David : Empire to Exile*, (New Haven, Conn.; London : Yale University Press 2005). Antoine Schnapper, Arlette Sérullaz, and Elisabeth Agius-d'Yvoire, *Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825*, (Paris : Eds. de la Réunion des musées nationaux 1989). Pierre Rosenberg and Louis-Antoine Prat., *Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825 : Catalogue Raisonné Des Dessins*, (Milano : Leonardo arte 2002); Maurice Sérullaz and Gabriel Rouchès, *J.- L. David 1748-1825*, (Paris : Musées Nationaux, 1939). Anita Brookner, *Jacques-Louis David*, (London : Chatto & Windus, 1980); Dorothy Johnson, *Jacques-Louis David : Art in Metamorphosis*, (Princeton; Chichester : Princeton University Press 1993); David Lloyd Dowd, *Pageant-Master of the Republic : Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution*, (Freeport, N.Y. : Books for Libraries Press, 1969).

¹⁶ Tony Halliday, *The Temperamental Nude : Class, Medicine and Representation in Eighteenth-Century France*, (Oxford : Voltaire Foundation, 2010).

individual scholars in their reading of David's *L'Intervention des Sabines* and the art criticism. Instead I seek to demonstrate that by shifting the underlying foundation that the emblem of ideal beauty was invested solely in the male nude figure, many of the acknowledged tensions in David's work and the art critical material are resolved, and that serious consideration should therefore be given to the thesis that costume and drapery formed part of the construct of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.

Integrating David's interest and involvement as an influencing figure in fashion has been an important area of exploration. In this the work of the costume and dress historians Aileen Ribeiro, Harold Koda, Alice Mackrell and Claire Cage on David, and on French fashion in general, has provided a detailed and invaluable background to an appreciation of classical dress and French fashion of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.¹⁷ Ewa Lajer-Burcharth's Lacanian analysis of David and women as 'intruders in the visual field' has explored the use of contemporary French fashion in David's *L'Intervention des Sabines*, as has the work of Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, whose work supports my proposal in this thesis that there was a sense of unease attached to the display of nude male figures in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French artistic circles.¹⁸ Contextualising my work within the broader corpus of material on David, I believe that my analysis of the way in which David used costume and drapery adds to our reading of the man, his work and the Neo-classical school that he came to represent.

¹⁷ Aileen Ribeiro, *The Eighteenth Century*, (London : Batsford, 1983). Harold Koda, *Goddess : The Classical Mode*, (New Haven, Conn. ; London : Yale University Press, 2003); Alice Mackrell, *Art and Fashion*, (London : Batsford, 2005); Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress: Fashion in England and France 1750 to 1820*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality*, (London : Batsford, 1986); Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe 1715-1789*, (London : B.T. Batsford, 1984); Aileen Ribeiro, *Facing Beauty: Painted Women & Cosmetic Art*, (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2011); Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion in the French Revolution*, (London : Batsford, 1988). E. Claire Cage, 'The Sartorial Self: Neoclassical Fashion and Gender Identity in France, 1797–1804', *Eighteenth-century studies*, 42 (2008). Koda; Mackrell.

¹⁸ Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, *Necklines : The Art of Jacques-Louis David after the Terror*, (New Haven, Conn. ; London : Yale University Press, 1999). Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, 'Nudity À La Grecque in 1799', *The Art Bulletin*, 80 (1998).

Thomas Crow's work on the interface between David's political activity and his artistic output provides one perspective on the work of David that I have deliberately limited my engagement with because I believe it is outside the primary scope of the topic and because the connection between clothing, economics and politics has already been addressed in this period in the work of Philip Mansel, Richard Wrigley and Daniel Roche.¹⁹ The complex political environment did impact the way in which art works were produced and seen, and I briefly acknowledge these issues, but only in relation to the challenges of depicting figures such as Napoleon and other contemporary heroes in sculpture because of the medium's association with the concept of ideal beauty.

The secondary literature on the other major artistic figure of the period, Antonio Canova, is also extensive, including work by Christopher Johns, Ian Wardropper, Thomas Rowlands and David O'Brien.²⁰ This material has mainly focused on different aspects of Canova's interaction with Napoleon, and my contribution is to engage briefly with aspects of his relationship with Quatremère de Quincy, on drapery in his work, and as part of the already well-researched story behind the commission of the nude statue of Napoleon.

Richard Wrigley, Neil McWilliam, Jon Whiteley, Michael Fried, Udolpho van de Sandt and Susan Siegfried have provided extensive secondary material on the Paris Salons, Salon criticism and the hierarchy of the genres in this period.²¹ This has provided important support

¹⁹ Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, (New Haven ; London : Yale University Press, 2005). Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances : Representations of Dress in Revolutionary France*, (Oxford : Berg, 2002). Daniel Roche, *La Culture Des Apparences : Une Histoire Du Vêtement, Xviie- Xviii Siècles*, (Paris : Editions du Seuil 1991).

²⁰ Christopher M. S. Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe*, (Berkeley ; London : University of California Press, 1998); David O'Brien, 'Antonio Canova's Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker and the Limits of Imperial Portraiture', *French History, Oxford University Press* vol.18 (2004); Ian Wardropper and Thomas F. Rowlands, 'Antonio Canova and Quatremère De Quincy: The Gift of Friendship', *Museum studies*, 15 (1989).

²¹ Richard Wrigley, *The Origins of French Art Criticism : From the Ancien Régime to the Restoration*, (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1993). Neil McWilliam, Vera Schuster, and Richard Wrigley, *A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Paris from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 1699-1827*, (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1991); Georges Roque and Jon Whiteley, *Majeur Ou Mineur? : Les Hiérarchies En Art*, (Nîmes : Chambon 2000). Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality : Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*,

for my work, although there are some aspects of the emphasis Siegfried places on political motivations behind the critical response to Ingres's painting of Napoleon that I implicitly question.

Thesis Approach

Providing a new perspective on important art-historical figures such as Winckelmann and David has theoretically proved to be a challenge. Although Gen Doy's book *Drapery* and Anne Hollander's book *Seeing with Clothes* have both inspired my approach towards the primary material, neither propose a new meta-historical narrative.²² Instead, gender would appear to be a natural approach to the topic since the primary resources are derived from public material written by theorists, critics and commentators, who were, with almost no exception, men from a male elite circle writing for a primarily male audience. This masculine perspective is evidenced in the text through comments that relate to the expected social roles of women and women artists, concerns about the effect of some images on women and the effect of some images of women on men. These issues, however, have already been extensively analysed and commented on by many of the scholars already cited. My own engagement with feminist literature in the work of Karen Horney,²³ Marilyn Massey²⁴ and others, although proposing different ways of engaging with the masculine-feminine and

(Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1988). Michael Orwicz, 'Art Criticism and Its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century France', (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1994); Todd Burke Porterfield and Susan L. Siegfried, *Staging Empire : Napoleon, Ingres, and David*, (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Udolpho van de Sandt, *La Société Des Amis Des Arts, 1789-1798 : Un Mécénat Patriotique Sous La Révolution*, (Paris : Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts 2006); Susan L. Siegfried, *Ingres : Painting Reimagined*, (New Haven ; London : Yale University Press, 2009); Susan L. Siegfried, 'Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France', *The Art Bulletin*, 75 (1993).

²² Gen Doy, *Drapery : Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture*, (London : I.B. Tauris, 2004); Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes*, (Berkeley ; London : University of California Press, 1993).

²³ Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul 1967).

²⁴ Marilyn Massey, *Feminine Soul : The Fate of an Ideal*, (Boston : Beacon Press, 1985).

public-private debate, were not appropriate for the thesis question and my approach to the primary material. Although any investigation into the relationship between the body and dress inevitably engages with issues of gender differences, the masculine and feminine dynamic also has its limitations in a study into ideal beauty for the following reasons. First it assumes that the definition of ideal beauty incorporated a sexual charge despite the specific statement from Winckelmann to the contrary, and evidence that suggests that most French theorists also tried to distance the concept of ideal beauty from notions of desire. Secondly, in my mind it does not provide the flexibility to examine clothing and clothed images outwith a sexual difference and the historic, social, economic and political limitations placed on women of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe. Simply put, a focus on sexual difference does not allow for any engagement in the aesthetic significance of clothing beyond the male-female dynamic, even though, as I will demonstrate, clothing worn by men as well as women could express the emotional and aesthetic aspects of ideal beauty. Although we can historically accept that sexual difference may have impacted aspects of the relationship between the body and dress in relation to the definition of ideal beauty and the response of those writing about the topic, my belief is that focusing primarily on this difference limits the scope of this enquiry. Instead I intend to demonstrate that within the social and historical parameters of the time, clothing formed an important part of the definition and expression of ideal beauty irrespective of the masculine gender of the sources and whether the images they discussed were male or female. In addition, I would like to present the argument that this meta-historical focus on the significance of the historically accurate imitation of costume and the aesthetic attributes that drapery could convey, opens up our understanding of ideal beauty to incorporate its representation in images of both genders. It enables us to look at the role of costume, drapery and accessories in a different way, allowing us to attribute a broader aesthetic value to them, extending the vocabulary of

clothing and its role in painting and sculpture, and challenging us to enter into its emotional language as well as seeing it as a historical, social and political signifier.

If this thesis holds, however, it does have an impact on the way in which we view the roles of men and women in relation to the philosophical debates on ideal beauty of this period, allowing some aspects of what has broadly been defined as ‘costume’ or ‘cultural’ history to enter into the language of aesthetics. If there is a gendered objective with the thesis, it is to include rather than exclude women from the philosophical debate about ideal beauty, providing an alternative to the reading of Winckelmann and late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century French art characterised by Potts and others that excludes all aspects of the feminine (other than in effeminate same-sex male representation) from the discourse about ideal beauty. In turn, this could potentially open us up to reviewing the nature of gender relations in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France in a different way.

The Language of Dress

Language, meaning and definition are an important part of this thesis. Analysing the different words used to describe the detail, impact and construction of clothing by Winckelmann and other primary sources therefore requires a brief explanation. Since I have specifically chosen the words drapery and costume from texts for the title of this work I will put particular emphasis here to their meaning and definition.

The word costume was generally used to refer to the accurate imitation of historic or contemporary clothing. Other words used to describe clothes where there was no aesthetic meaning attached were ‘vêtements’ and ‘habillements’. I have also included the word ‘mode’ in this category. Although fashionable clothes were commented on, Winckelmann, critics and French theorists were universally adamant that fashion did not form part of the construct of ideal beauty. I have therefore not explored the contribution of fashion in my discussions about costume and drapery or fashionable dress in relation to the definition of ideal beauty.

In contrast, I present the opportunity to see the broad use of the term drapery in the text as significant of where and when an aesthetic value has been attributed to clothing or where it has the possibility to occur. In order to clearly distinguish between the two broad terms costume and drapery I describe the interest in the historic detail and accuracy of costume as a connoisseurial interest in costume and the more complex interest in the effect of dress as the aesthetic impact of drapery. In the text, however, sometimes these are interchangeable and the generic form ‘vêtements’ and ‘habillements’ are used in conjunction with the word ‘draperie’ just as there are times in the text when dress and clothing are used generically. The interchangeability of words occurs more often in the French translations of Winckelmann’s work rather than the art dictionaries where language and meaning were more tightly defined.

As an addendum to this short section on language, since it is evident from the primary sources that there were different spelling conventions in eighteenth-century France, in order to create a sense of uniformity in the text I have used contemporary spelling conventions for the French quotations used.

Chapter Outline

The thesis is divided into three sections each consisting of two chapters. The first section looks at the work of Winckelmann on costume and how he integrated the connoisseurial and aesthetic importance of clothing into his definition of ideal beauty. The second section looks at the significance of costume and drapery in the French art and costume dictionaries, again looking at how the connoisseurial and aesthetic effect of clothing was important for artists. The final section applies the same connoisseurial and aesthetic approach to a selection of theoretical works and the art criticism of the period.

The first chapter will demonstrate Winckelmann's interest in costume and how it was a way for Winckelmann to chart the broader historical phases of antique art and his teleological purpose to prove that Greek art was the best. It will demonstrate Winckelmann's engagement with costume and accessories and the part they play in illustrating the lives, habits and customs of ancient people. It will then show how Winckelmann used language to illustrate the emotional effect of drapery as well as nude statues, and it will also look at Winckelmann's own self-fashioning in the portraits of him by Anton Raphael Mengs, Angelica Kauffman and Anton von Maron. Finally it will propose that the form of the body and drapery together made up the essence and the essential part of art for Winckelmann.

In the second chapter I demonstrate that costume and drapery formed part of Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty. I have done this by dividing the chapter into two sections. The first section demonstrates that Winckelmann gave the term 'idéal' both physical and spiritual qualities. Sometimes these physical and spiritual qualities were integrated together in one object or example and sometimes the 'idéal' qualities were separated out between an appreciation of the shape of an object and its aesthetic attributes. Whereas Winckelmann's 'idéal' physical parts and the way in which he combined them is fairly accepted and derives from classical notions of the ideal, there are questions as to how he envisaged the spiritual and emotional qualities of the ideal being represented in works of art.

The second section will pick up on Winckelmann's interest in the shape and the fold of drapery as demonstrated in the first chapter. It will propose that Winckelmann attributed aesthetic qualities to drapery by looking at the elegance and effect of drapery, how drapery could express emotion in a sedate manner and how it could also convey the spiritual qualities of grace. Finally I propose that drapery in combination with the ideal form of the body was able to convey the spiritual and intangible qualities of ideal beauty, and that drapery was therefore the transposing element that took perfect form to ideal. I propose that this new way of defining Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty integrates costume and draped statues into Winckelmann's vision of the classical ideal. At the end of this section I address Alex Potts's definition of ideal beauty proposing an alternative reading and definition.

The remainder of the thesis demonstrates the way in which this reading shifts the definition of ideal beauty in the art theory and art criticism of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century France to incorporate costume and drapery as part of the discourse, which in turn explains the intense interest in art criticism and art theory over the accuracy and effect of costume and drapery.

In Chapter 3, by looking at Winckelmann and the connoisseurial importance of costume and drapery in France I first embed the work of Winckelmann into France by summarising the existing scholarship on his influence. I also look at the translation of his work into French. I demonstrate the range of information available in late eighteenth-century France on ancient costume, and the different approaches to the topic taken by writers of these costume dictionaries. At the same time I demonstrate the amount of reliance costume dictionaries had on Winckelmann as a source of information even though by the early nineteenth century it had become clear that Winckelmann was not always accurate in his attribution and dating of some works of antique art. I also ask the question why there was this need for instruction in costume. In answering this question I demonstrate the importance attributed to the concept of ‘vérité’ in clothing, the effect of contemporary disquiet about nudity in art, and the problems that artists had with using contemporary clothes in their work. I conclude by proposing that accuracy in costume and the attention given to the details of dress was seen as indicative of the health and regeneration of the French school of art as well as a means by which to maintain the hierarchy of the genres and distinguish between them.

Building on the connoisseurial interest in ancient Greek and Roman clothing in the art dictionaries and costume dictionaries, Chapter 4 looks at the aesthetic qualities attributed to drapery in the art dictionaries. I propose that in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century France the imaginative charge and spiritual qualities attributed to ideal beauty were conveyed through the movable and expressive use of draperies. First I demonstrate that theorists configured ideal beauty in a range of different sculptures and paintings. Then, in order to unpick the concept of ideal beauty from the abstract definitions of the term in the dictionaries and ground it in the practical reality of art making and the reception of art, I summarise what the dictionaries had to say about ideal beauty with the express purpose of

extracting from that summary its attributes. I identify these attributes as movement, grace, expression and harmony.

The second section demonstrates how these attributes of ideal beauty could be expressed through the fold of the cloth, the throw of material, the impact of accessories, ornaments and decorations in a work of art, and finally how a sense of harmony could be achieved with the aid of clothing within the ideal genres of history painting and sculpture. I also explore the practical aspects of creating these effects in art and the particular challenges for drapery in the genre of sculpture. Finally I will demonstrate how the inclusion of drapery as part of ideal beauty enhances our reading of works of art by looking at two of David's history paintings from the mid-1780s and including dress as part of the aesthetic vocabulary.

The final two chapters demonstrate from a mix of art critical and theoretical sources, the way in which the connoisseurial and aesthetic impact of clothing can open up our understanding of the definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art and art criticism. Building on the importance attributed by scholars to the role of *Éméric-David* and *Quatremère de Quincy* in the debates over ideal beauty, this chapter examines their views on costume and drapery and also looks at the importance and value of clothing in the philosophical work of the critic *Chaussard*. It demonstrates how the different attitudes of these writers on costume and drapery signalled their different interpretations of ideal beauty. It also demonstrates how each of them adapted *Winckelmann's* ideas and what he represented to support their own arguments.

In the final chapter, after providing an overview of the art critics, the structure of the art criticism and the range of publications in which commentaries were made, I approach the topic of ideal beauty thematically looking at a selection of artwork and supporting this with commentary from a number of critics. I first examine how the genre a painting belonged to

could affect its ability to be ideal, and how infringements to the conventions of each genre were often illustrated through the inappropriate use of clothing. In spite of pressures from the flood of portraiture and battle paintings exhibited in the Salon, I demonstrate that most critics believed that ideal beauty could only be found in the genres of history painting and sculpture and were very critical of battle paintings, genre paintings and portraits that attempted to idealise figures, over-embellish their costume or include draped figures inappropriately. In this context I will also show how the mix of genres in the history paintings of Girodet's *L'Apothéose des Héros français morts pour la patrie pendant la guerre de la Liberté* and the mix of dressed and undressed figures in David's *L'Intervention des Sabines* confused and annoyed critics in equal measure because these paintings crossed hierarchical boundaries and were therefore seen as detrimental to the expression of ideal beauty.

The next section will build on the themes from the costume and art dictionaries and demonstrate the importance of historical accuracy in painting as a component of ideal beauty. In this section, I will focus on the female and male costumes in David's *Les Sabines* and demonstrate why there was so much negative criticism of the male figures.

I will then explore the topic of emotion and demonstrate how Winckelmann's preferred 'sedate' manner of expression was also considered an important component of ideal beauty in French art. I demonstrate how Girodet's *Atala au tombeau* was able to convey the emotional content of a work of art in this sedate and dignified way. In contrast, the response to Girodet's painting of *Le Déluge* showed how the use of extreme facial gestures and nude 'académies' was discouraged by critics and seen as detrimental to beauty. I will demonstrate that the critical mainstream was never convinced about the aesthetic pre-eminence of the male nude figure and instead tended to associate the use of male 'académies' in painting with ugliness and the primacy of the art of 'dessin' over colour.

Finally I explore the complex issues around clothing in sculpture. I will demonstrate how modern figures were expected to wear historically accurate costume, how antique draperies were often used for the depiction of contemporary heroes and finally how nudity, even in the genre of sculpture, was only really acceptable in the depiction of allegorical figures. I propose that the preferred expression of ideal beauty was through draped rather than nude figures because of the uncomfortable moral issues associated with depicting nudity in painting as well as in sculpture. I illustrate this with examples of the shocked response to paintings by Robert Lefèvre and David, and the scandal over Dejoux's sculpture of *General Desaix*. As I come to the conclusion of the thesis I present the argument that for all of these reasons, costume and drapery were essential components of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.

In my conclusion I propose that incorporating costume and drapery into the definition of ideal beauty offers art historians a range of different perspectives from which it is possible to re-evaluate the work and intentionality of artists such as David, and to examine reasons behind the symbolic attachment to male nudity in the work of some of his pupils. It also allows a way to explore the extent to which male 'académies' became associated with ugliness in the work of Girodet, Delacroix and Géricault. There are also broader questions that are prompted by my approach. These include questions over whether we should see David's use of the male nude being linked to a notion of vulnerability, and whether we should focus on the idea of Antiquity rather than drapery or nudity as the motivating factor behind the expression of ideal beauty in his work.

The differing opinions of the critics on drapery and the appropriateness of nudity demonstrates the variety of opinions on the topic and in particular shows that some critics such as Chaussard, had opinions that were different to the critical mainstream. This prompts interesting questions about the relationships between the critics as symbolic of tensions

within the artistic establishment. The emphasis that the theorist Éméric-David put on the nude figure also poses questions about his connection and interaction with the critic Chaussard and Jacques-Louis David as well.

Interesting questions have also been prompted in my mind by the interest in Winckelmann's work on costume and drapery in France about the difference in teaching practices between Paris and Rome, and this is an area for further exploration that Doy has also hinted at.²⁵ Other interesting perspectives on the nature of ideal beauty in French theory include the understated importance of Mengs in French art theory and the influence of earlier French theorists such as Félibien on Winckelmann's work accounting for the popularity and ready absorption of Winckelmann's work into France.

²⁵ Doy.2004.

Part One: Winckelmann

Chapter One. Fleshing Out Winckelmann

Introduction

The image of Winckelmann by Anton von Maron (1733-1808), the brother-in-law of Winckelmann's close friend Anton Raphael Mengs, was painted in a style typical of Roman portraiture of the period. Evocative of the work of the leading artist in Rome of the time, Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787), it is an extravagant mélange of neo-classical inferences with a drawing of the *Belvedere Antinous* in the foreground taken from the collection of Baron Stosch,²⁶ combined with late Baroque exuberance in the drapery and overall styling of the piece (Figure 1.1). Painted in 1768, the year of Winckelmann's death, the clothing in this image was in stark contrast to the more austere and classically simple portraits of him painted by Mengs in 1755 (Figure 1.2) and Angelica Kauffmann in 1764 (Figure 1.3). Looking at the Maron portrait one is struck by the way in which the focus is less on the classical figures that form part of the background and foreground of the image, or even on the face of Winckelmann himself, with his narrow eyes twinkling out from underneath the sumptuous folds of a golden turban, but the exuberance of the pink velvet fur-lined cloak. With the fur pelisse gliding onto the floor as if it had a life of its own, the dressing gown dominates the man and is in danger of becoming the main subject of the portrait rather than the figure underneath, and the face that it encompasses.²⁷

One way of looking at this rather effeminate portrait in which Winckelmann the man is overwhelmed, could be to focus on the exuberance of the cloth as a means of hiding the sublimated desires Winckelmann had for the drawing of the *Belvedere Antinous* that he was

²⁶Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Description Des Pierres Gravées Du Feu Baron De Stosch*, (Florence: André Bonducci 1760).

²⁷ Winckelmann allegedly had few clothes and wore a simple clerical gown during the day. The dressing gown was one of his few personal items and was apparently what he used to wear whilst writing. See Harloe.46.

examining, or on the femininity of Winckelmann himself. Alex Potts has read the work of Winckelmann in this way and has produced a reading of Winckelmann the man and Winckelmann the art historian as one in which all attention, personally, philosophically and historically, is centred on the Greek male nude figure as the focus of both Winckelmann's sexual desires and his concept of ideal beauty. However, there is another way in which to look at this portrait. Instead of the image being one in which the draped Winckelmann is looking with desire at the image of the nude figure, we should instead pay attention to the self-fashioning of Winckelmann himself and the significance that can and should be given to the role that costume and drapery played in Winckelmann's writings on art and on his concept of ideal beauty. Just as the image of Winckelmann working at his desk in his dressing gown demonstrates the elaborate and theatrical side of his character, contrasting with the clerical costume that he wore daily around the Vatican, we can flesh out the concept of ideal beauty from one that resides solely in the form of male nude figure to include and incorporate in his work the historical and teleological importance of costume and the aesthetic significance of drapery.

In order to demonstrate how costume and drapery formed part of Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty my contribution in this first chapter will be to demonstrate the extensive interest that Winckelmann had in all aspects of clothing. Despite interest from classical scholars on Winckelmann's writings about dress his fascination with the topic has not been integrated into his concept and definition of ideal beauty.²⁸ It is my intention in these two chapters to demonstrate that costume and drapery formed part of Winckelmann's concept of the ideal.

In this chapter I will demonstrate that costume was a way in which Winckelmann charted the broader historical phases of antique statuary and his teleological purpose to prove that Greek art was the best. I will also demonstrate his deep engagement with all forms and types of

²⁸ Donohue.2005.

clothing and accessories and the part they played in illustrating the lives, habits and customs of ancient people, with a detailed and object-based analysis that drew on information about costume from ancient texts, modern sixteenth and seventeenth-century writings and his own observation of the statues housed in the Vatican. I will support Winckelmann's interest in costume and drapery by also looking at his own self-fashioning and how his preference for loose clothing can be seen in the portraits of him by Maron, Kauffman and Mengs. Finally I will illustrate how Winckelmann used language to illustrate the emotional effect of draped as well as nude statues to propose that the form of the body and the clothing together made up his understanding of the essence and the essential part of art.

Winckelmann's writings on taste and antique art are divided by written style and structure of content into two different categories: the *Histoire de l'Art de l'Antiquité*, which was published in German in 1764 and then translated and first published in French in 1766, and his essays on taste which were published in France in 1786 under the general title of *Recueil de différentes pieces sur les arts*. I will first look at the structure of the *Histoire de l'Art de l'Antiquité* and demonstrate the extent of information that Winckelmann provided on ancient costume exploring the reasons why these connoisseurial details were important to the overall purpose of the *Histoire*. I will then examine the structure of his aesthetic texts and the importance that Winckelmann placed on drapery and its relationship to the nude body. I will demonstrate how the structure of his text, his own self-fashioning and the way in which he placed the study of drapery alongside the study of nature and the nude form, presented costume and drapery as an essential part of art.

Section 1.1: Costume in the *Histoire*

I will start this section by looking at the overall structure of Winckelmann's *L'Histoire de l'Art de l'Antiquité* demonstrating the importance he attached to clothing in general before looking in more detail at Roman and Greek costume. This will demonstrate the depth of engagement that Winckelmann had with costume and the way in which it formed part of his historical and teleological purpose to prove that Greek art was the best.

Section 1.1.1: Structure of the *Histoire*

Winckelmann's aim in the *Histoire* was to create a narrative and chronological history of art, and a system within which he could determine ideal beauty and the essence of art. At the beginning of his chapter on proportion and the different ideal parts of the body, Winckelmann articulated the approach and system that he used to analyse and define the term ideal beauty. He also described these different approaches in the introduction to *Description Des Pierres Gravées du Feu Baron de Stosch* (1760), and repeated it again at the beginning of his *Monumens Inédits de L'antiquité*.²⁹ With reference to their classical heritage, he described these approaches as analytical and synthetic methods:

Jusqu'ici j'ai procédé par la voie analytique dans la considération du beau, c'est à dire j'ai passé du tout aux parties; mais j'aurais pu également employer la méthode synthétique, & ramener le Lecteur de la recherche des parties à celle du tout.³⁰

He described the analytical approach as one in which he looked from the broad understanding of beauty to looking at the detail of it. In applying this to his work it would account for many of the generalised comments about beauty that Winckelmann made. These included

²⁹Winckelmann.1760. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Monumens Inédits De L'antiquité, Expliqués Par Winckelmann*, (Paris: Chez David, graveur,... Leblanc, imprimeur-libraire, 1808).

³⁰Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Histoire De L'art De L'antiquité*, (Leipzig: Henrik Jansen, 1781).537.

statements like ‘qu'il est plus aisé de dire ce qu'elle n'est pas, que de dire ce qu'elle est’, the broad and elaborate passages on the essence and essential part of art, and rhetorical passages in which he mused on the abstract nature of beauty when inspired by particular pieces of antique sculpture.³¹ The other approach, which he described as the synthetic method, examined the individual ‘ideal’ parts of the body and from that tried to elucidate an understanding of what a completed ideal might look like.

This aim to define the essence of art and the concept of ideal beauty was a feature of all his work, but whilst the treatises on taste were examining the notion of sensation and the differentiation of an inner sense of beauty from the outer sense of observation, in the *Histoire* Winckelmann attempted to define ideal beauty within the context of the historical trajectory of classical sculpture. This separation from the biographical focus of Vasari, who used the concept of genius to explain changes in style and form in terms of the lives of individual artists, meant that Winckelmann placed the art of ancient times and its evolution within the context of stylistic change. More importantly, although this stylistic analysis was later proved to be inaccurate, and although he set his concept of ideal beauty and the essence of art within this historic and formal framework, he also examined the component parts of what made an object beautiful so that he could demonstrate how it was possible for contemporaries to recreate it. As he wrote at the beginning of the *Histoire*:

L'Histoire de L'Art de l'Antiquité, que je donne au public, n'est pas une simple narration chronologique des révolutions qu'il a éprouvées. Je prends le mot d'HISTOIRE dans la signification la plus étendue qu'il a dans la langue Grecque, mon dessein étant de donner le précis d'un système de l'Art.³²

Within the context of his time, this analytic and synthetic approach both fulfilled the need that artists and theorists had for a framework around which to discuss concepts of ideal

³¹Ibid.1781.444.

³²Ibid.1781.15.

beauty, and it provided them with detailed information to assist with the identification of objects that had been unearthed at Herculaneum and Pompeii and which, through the trade in antiquities and later wars, were scattered around Europe. Winckelmann's dual aim was, therefore, to provide both the necessary historical background of the origins of art so that connoisseurs would have the technical knowledge of ancient statuary, and to provide them with instructions on how to look at it. Winckelmann catalogued the treasures of ancient sculpture in their historical context so that connoisseurs could identify the work of art. The art and statuary in the *Histoire*, however, was not catalogued in the same manner as Winckelmann had done with the Baron Stosch collection of gems which had been divided into different sections with attached annotations and catalogue numbering.³³ Instead it was constructed as a history of antique art chronologically and teleologically. At the same time Winckelmann made both stylistic and aesthetic judgements from each individual description of the object. This ensured that the reader was able to examine the origins of art, its diversity amongst ancient civilisations, culminating in a study of the art of the Greeks. So although the art of the Greeks was the main topic of the work, Winckelmann contextualised his work by demonstrating why, in his view, earlier forms of art amongst the Egyptians, Persians and Etruscans did not meet the same level of perfection.

Winckelmann did this by relating judgements he made about the quality of art, the understanding of beauty of each of the peoples and their customs, to specific objects. He then made deductions from those same objects, which interwove with some of the more abstract and spiritual themes from the *Réflexions*. His starting point was always a detailed observation of the object itself, and a connoisseurial appreciation of it, whether it was a Roman vessel, a collection of seals and engravings or a Greek statue. An example of how he was able to

³³In this he divided the objects into two main sections *Mythologie Sacree* and *Mythologie Historique* and then he numbered the items within these two categories. Winckelmann.1760.

derive a sense of the abstract from the material is his description of Roman vessels unearthed at Herculaneum. This passage demonstrates the three-staged process that he used to extract the spiritual essence of the object from their physical shape:

What deserves our attention most, in the utensils of the ancients, particularly their vessels, is the elegant form of them; a circumstance, in which all our modern artists must yield to the ancient. All those beautiful forms are founded on principles of good taste. ... Would our artists but endeavour to imitate them...by removing this from art, would bring us back to nature, by which art might afterwards be improved.

Having discussed form and taste within the context of these vessels, he then described them in an aesthetic and sensory manner:

The secret sensation our eyes experience, when we look at pure and simple forms, is like that produced by the touching of a tender and delicate skin. Our ideas become easy and distinct, like those communicated by the sight of an object simple in its unity. ...What is easy must please merely by its clearness.

Finally, his analysis extended to a level that could be described as spiritual or abstract:

It looks, I say, as if our own feelings and reflections should alone be sufficient to bring us back to the beautiful simplicity of the ancients. ... They knew that the beautiful is always one; and, therefore, never attempted to alter it.³⁴

If one can see that Winckelmann's dual purpose was to prove his theory systematically, whilst at the same time demonstrating the importance of a sense of beauty, it becomes easier to see how and why he was able to reconcile the process and system of the synthetic method on the one hand with the emotion and his own personal passion for art and the objects that he saw on the other.

³⁴Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Critical Account of the Situation and Destruction by the First Eruptions of Mount Vesuvius of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabia*, (London: printed for T.Carnan and F. Newbery, 1771).1771.78-79.

Section 1.1.2: The *Histoire* and Costume

Winckelmann's approach to costume and the importance that he attributed to it was meticulous and in-depth. He used costume as a means by which to identify statues, to chronicle the development of style and contour and to determine the degree to which the overall aim of ideal beauty was or was not achieved. At a fundamental level, costume was also important to Winckelmann as a means of distinguishing between different statues and their origin, Greek or Roman. The statement: 'Rapporte-t-on une production Grecque, ou un prétendu ouvrage Romain, on se décide communément d'après la draperie, ou d'après la bonté du travail. Un manteau ajusté sur l'épaule gauche de la figure, doit prouver que l'ouvrage est de la main d'un Grec, & même fait en Grèce',³⁵ which Winckelmann made at the beginning of the Preface to *L'Histoire*, made costume a central and fundamental part of his historical process as well as it being part of his concept of ideal beauty. This is evident even in the early part of his *Histoire*, where he provided a detailed description of the costume of ancient peoples.

The first book of *L'Histoire* examined what he called the 'essence of art'. Into this he incorporated a study of the origins of art, the methods employed by ancient sculptors and the general influence of climate (Figure 1.4). The second section of that book focused in detail on a study of the art of ancient cultures, specifically *De l'Art Chez Les Egyptiens, Les Phéniciens, et les Perses*.³⁶ In this his primary focus was not Egyptian or Persian art, but the people themselves. He commented on their climate, the shape of their bodies and the style of their clothes. He believed that these factors determined whether or not they were able to aspire to perfect form and ideal beauty. In assessing the shape of their bodies and the style of their costumes, he took images from the work of Caylus and Montfaucon, as well as

³⁵Winckelmann.1781.18.

³⁶Ibid.255.

examining the different kinds of Egyptian statues (gods, men and women) available in Rome (Figure 1.5).

In stating that Egyptian art had never evolved and attained the perfection of the Greeks, he cited as the first set of reasons for this the shape of their bodies, then their way of thinking and finally their customs.

Le premier cause de caractère de l'Art des Egyptiens se trouve dans leur configuration qui n'avait pas l'avantage d'exalter l'âme de leurs Artistes & d'élever leur imagination à la beauté idéale....aussi n'ont-ils jamais atteint dans l'Art ce degré de perfection où parvinrent les Grecs. Les causes de ces obstacles sont diverses: la forme de leurs corps, leur façon de penser, leurs coutumes, leurs lois civiles & religieuses, leur peu d'estime pour les Artistes, jointes à un manque de talent & d'élévation de ceux-ci.³⁷

Although he regarded the bodies of Egyptian women as 'favorisé par la nature' and according to Pliny blessed with 'fécondité', he believed that their shape and the proportion of their figure in a broader aesthetic sense lacked the degree of perfection that was visible in Greek forms.³⁸ Specifically, he regarded both male and female Egyptians as being too tall and commented that the breasts of Egyptian women were also too large³⁹ (Figure 1.6).

The second section of his analysis of the Egyptians examined their concept of style, both in relation to the Egyptian figures themselves, but also incorporating in a more general sense how Egyptian style, which he defined as the drawing of the nude figure and 'la draperies des figures', was incorporated into Greek art.⁴⁰ He defined and used the word 'style' in a number of different ways. In the context of the nude figure he focused on the 'lignes droites & peu saillantes', which in his eyes lacked grace, and was void of picturesque charm, comparing it

³⁷Ibid.255-256.

³⁸Ibid.256.

³⁹Ibid.258.

⁴⁰Ibid.264.

to the straightness of the lines in architecture.⁴¹ He also used the term ‘style’ as the differentiator between the shapes of Egyptian and Greek bodies, giving as examples a number of Egyptian figures and comparing it with the *Belvedere Antinous*. Using these illustrations he then broadened out to a more generalised explanation of the difference between Egyptian and Greek art:

Avec cette unité de dessin, les os & les muscles ne sont que faiblement indiqués, les nerfs & les veines ne le sont point du tout. Les genoux, les chevilles des pieds & le tour du coude paraissent avec les failles du naturel. Le dos n'est pas visible, la statue étant appuyée contre une colonne, faite du même bloc. Cependant l'Antinoüs dont nous avons parlé plus haut a le dos libre. Les contours peu ondoyants de ces figures sont causes que la forme en est étroite & ramassée: forme par laquelle Pétrone cherche à caractériser le style de cette nation. Les figures Egyptiennes se distinguent aussi par leurs corps grêles au dessus des hanches.⁴²

During the course of the chapter on Egyptian art he used the term ‘style’ to differentiate between Egyptian and Greek heads, hands and feet.⁴³ He also applied the word ‘style’ to other areas of Egyptian art, specifically their clothing.

Winckelmann’s analysis of Egyptian costume started with the type of fabric used and cultivated in Egypt. Building on the practical reasons for the use of linen in Egyptian clothes, he went on to describe the construction of the kalasiris, and the gathered band or hem with many folds sewn in at the bottom, and which extended the dress to the feet⁴⁴ (Figure 1.7). Discussing the general construction of Egyptian dress, he then provided examples of each type of clothing and the social or religious status that each embodied from statues he had seen exhibited in the Villa Albani.⁴⁵ He also made an explicit link between the folds of the thin veils, which barely covered the breasts of Egyptian women and contemporary shifts made of

⁴¹Ibid.265.

⁴²Ibid.266-267.

⁴³Ibid.268.

⁴⁴Ibid.278.

⁴⁵Ibid.279.

fine muslin and worn by women in the Far East because of the heat. At the same time he referenced drawings in the ownership of Clement XI, the work of the anthropologist Edward Pococke and the writings of Herodotus.⁴⁶ This piecing together of antique texts, with the observations and reference books on antiquity by seventeenth and eighteenth-century scholars such as Pococke and Warburton, and contemporary images from Caylus and Montfaucon, was typical of his approach adding his own observations to these.⁴⁷ He divided costume into sections on dress, tunics and coats, but this was not the only aspect of antique statues that received such detailed analysis.⁴⁸ Winckelmann included in the study of each sphere of ancient art, the type of hairstyles, brooches, headbands and shoes, which were presented in what he believed to be a 'stylistically' chronological order⁴⁹ (Figure 1.8). He continued this approach when analysing the figures and art of the Persians, Phoenicians and Etruscans. From their clothes he deducted the extent to which there were able to aspire or understand ideal beauty, and ideal human form (Figure 1.9):

Il paraît les Perses croyaient qu'il était contre les règles de la bienséance de dessiner des figures nues, & qu'ils regardaient l'aspect de la nudité comme un mauvais augure; aussi ne voyait-on en général aucun Perse sans être vêtu, ce que l'on peut dire également des Arabes. Cette austérité de mœurs empêcha leurs Artistes d'étudier l'objet le plus sublime de l'Art, le dessin du nu. Contents d'offrir une figure habillée, ils s'attachaient à bien jeter les plis; mais leurs conceptions n'allaient pas, comme chez les Grecs, jusqu'à indiquer la forme du nu sous la draperie.⁵⁰

In conclusion, dress and accessories relating to the overall appearance of Egyptian, Phoenician and Persian figures were an important part of their chronological identification, their archaeological significance, and because of the link and comparison to Greek art, part of his wider purpose in proving that the Greeks had achieved the highest form of art. The

⁴⁶Ibid.280.

⁴⁷See Griener on Warburton and Egyptian history.Griener.1989.107.

⁴⁸Winckelmann. 1781. 288.

⁴⁹Ibid.281.

⁵⁰Ibid.327.

terminology used in the French translations of his work was also characterised by a varied meaning attributed to the word ‘style’, which Winckelmann used both to describe the style or shape of a robe, for instance, and the period of art that he placed it in chronologically. This level of deep engagement with the constituent parts, the quality of textiles, construction and detail of costume was maintained throughout the *Histoire*, particularly with regard to the female clothing of the Greeks and Romans.

Costume of the Greeks and Romans

Contextualising the discussion of Egyptian, Etruscan and other art, Winckelmann clearly stated that the whole purpose and direction of the *Histoire* was to focus on Greek art. In the opening statement of the fourth book, the *De l’Art des Grecs* he stated: ‘L’Art des Grecs est le principl but de cette Histoire’.⁵¹

He divided his analysis of Greek art into eight chapters. The first focused on the reasons for the superiority of Greek art, the second, on the drawing of the nude figure, which he described as the ‘essence of art’; the third the expression of the passions and proportions, and fourthly, the beauty of parts of the human body. The fifth chapter focused on the drawing of draped figures, the sixth, the progress and decadence of art and different ‘styles’; and the remaining chapters were written on the ‘partie mécanique’ of art and antique painting.

The climate, the moral character of the Greeks, their liberal political system, the culture of exercise and the intellectual attributes encouraged by an open and free society all contributed to explain their superiority, and in broad terms these sections developed already existing themes drawn from the *Réflexions*. His chapter on draped figures and drapery in general

⁵¹Ibid.1781.417-418.

started with stressing the importance of clothing and drapery, specifically stating that in ‘une Histoire systématique de l’Art’ not enough attention had been given by other writers to the topic because they had not combined a study of clothing with a study of the artworks themselves.⁵² He considered Pliny to be the exception to this rule. Explaining the reason why he was going to focus on the clothing of women first and then look more briefly at male clothing, he quoted Pliny again on how Greek men were in the habit of being unclothed whilst the Romans went into battle fully dressed:

Il suffit de l’inspection des yeux pour sentir la vérité des paroles de Pline, lorsqu’il dit, que les Grecs étaient dans l’habitude de ne rien voiler, tandis que les Romains, suivant un usage contraire, drapaient leurs figures & revêtaient surtout celles de leurs héros de la cuirasse.⁵³

This phrase is important because debates on the nature of ideal beauty and whether male figures in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French painting and sculpture should be depicted draped, dressed or nude used it to support different arguments. Some artists, writers and art critics who believed that to depict heroic Greek gods or figures from antiquity meant that they had to be nude quoted Pliny to support this choice. However, in the context that Winckelmann used it in the *Histoire*, Pliny’s quote only served to confirm his focus on female clothing rather than on male dress:

En conséquence de ce principe je commencerai ce chapitre par la discussion de l’habillement des femmes, & je le finirai par l’indication du vêtement des hommes.⁵⁴

⁵²Ibid.579.

⁵³Ibid.580.

⁵⁴Ibid.580.

Female Greek Costume

As with his analysis of Egyptian clothing, Winckelmann divided his chapter on female clothing into three sections; one on the fabric used by the Greeks, and then two sections examining the main components that made up female dress, the tunic and the cloak. In keeping with his emphasis on the object and material as the starting point for his study Winckelmann started the chapter by summarising the different types of textiles and fabric used to make clothing, the importance of the fabric and the effect that this subsequently had on the images themselves:

Je parlerai d'abord des étoffes, puis des différentes parties & formes de l'habillement des femmes, & enfin de la parure & de l'élégance soit de leurs habits même, soit du reste de leur ajustement. A l'égard du premier point, le vêtement des femmes était en partie de toile ou d'autre étoffe légère, & même de soie dans les temps postérieurs, en partie aussi de drap. Il y avait pareillement des habits tissus d'or.⁵⁵

Discussing in turn the staple fabrics of linen and cotton used in ancient costume, he focussed on the qualities of transparency that the material was able to achieve and the ability of the material to create small folds and pleats.⁵⁶ He also differentiated between the wet cloth that artists used to drape their models with so that the cloth would hold tight to the body, i.e. the 'imitation' of the model, with historic validation from ancient writers such as Herodotus and Thucydides that the effect in works of art of a lightness of cloth and transparency was very similar to the actual fabric used for clothing by Athenian women. He supported his argument with evidence that Roman women also wore the same transparent cloth:

Du reste si l'on aime mieux prendre pour une étoffe légère la draperie des figures de femmes qui paraît de toile, cela ne change rien à ma thèse. Il faut bien cependant que les vêtements de toile aient été d'un usage fréquent chez les Grecs, puisque c'était dans l'Elide qu'on cultivait & qu'on mettait en œuvre le lin le plus beau & le plus fin. Il en était de même des Romains. ... Les étoffes légères étaient

⁵⁵Ibid.580.

⁵⁶Ibid.580.

principalement d'un coton qu'on cultivait & qu'on travaillait dans l'île de Cos; c'était un habillement de femmes, tant chez les Grecs que chez le Romains.⁵⁷

The closeness and 'wetness' of the garment to the body that he referred to is evident in statues such as the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* (Figure 1.10), where the cloth is blown against the body and reveals almost every contour of the form underneath.⁵⁸ The fine distinction between the methods the sculptors used in their studios and what was actually historically accurate was also important to Winckelmann. For instance in order to prove the historical validity of the quality and transparency of ancient linen and cotton, woven so fine that they were known as 'brouillards', he quoted Euripides who described Iphigenia's coat as being so transparent that although it covered her face she could see clearly through it.⁵⁹

From the section on textiles, which included wool, silk and gold cloth he systematically analysed the different items of clothing that Greek women wore.⁶⁰ He split these into three basic categories; 'la tunique, la robe & le manteau', describing their shapes as 'la plus naturelle qu'on puisse imaginer'. In this way, clothing became part of what was 'natural' which in turn integrated clothing firmly within the scope of its relationship to the body, rather than something that sat outside and remained distinct from it or that was artificial in anyway. Discussing the different historic styles of dress, he also integrated the concept of fashion or 'mode' as part of the historic identification of statues and one that enabled the connoisseur to distinguish, for example, between statues of divinities and those of Greek citizens:

Dans les temps les plus reculés de la Grèce, les femmes suivaient la mode Dorienne par rapport à leur habillement. Dans les temps postérieurs les Ioniens se distinguèrent des autres. Mais il paraît que, dans la représentation des figures divines & héroïques, les Artistes s'en tinrent à la façon antique.⁶¹

⁵⁷Ibid.580-581.

⁵⁸This was not excavated until 1863 so Winckelmann was not able to use it as an example.

⁵⁹Winckelmann.1781.582.

⁶⁰Ibid.584.

⁶¹Ibid.585.

In his section on tunics Winckelmann started once again by referencing Greek statues for examples of the style and form of the particular item of clothing. For tunics he used examples of the *Flora Farnese* and the *Youngest daughter of the Niobe* to describe the ‘chiton’ or ‘monoeplos’ that formed the base garment over which a cloak would normally be draped or clasped⁶² (Figure 1.11 and Figure 1.12). The ‘chiton’ was fastened at the shoulders by brooches called ‘fibulae’ and, as Winckelmann went on to describe, it was also belted under the breasts or at the waist where it could hold up any excess fabric. As examples he cited the image of Clytemnestra and the statue of the *Elder daughter of the Niobe* (Figure 1.13a and Figure 1.13b). Winckelmann also specified the different technical terms for the robe depending on the cut and the tightly fitted nature of the sleeves:

Les femmes portaient encore des robes avec des manches étroites & cousues qui venaient jusqu'aux poignets & qui se nommaient de-là KARPÔTÔI, de KARPOS, le poignet. C'est ainsi qu'est vêtue l'aînée des deux plus belles filles de Niobé, & pareillement la prétendue Didon parmi les tableaux d'Herculanum: sur les vases peints on trouve encore un plus grand nombre de figures ajustées de cette manière.⁶³

He differentiated between the shape of sleeves in antique dress with more contemporary artworks, criticising the voluminous sleeves in the statue *St Veronica* designed by Bernini in St Peter's and modern fashion in general (Figure 1.14). In contrast to *St Veronica* he preferred the cut of the sleeves in the statue of the *Second daughter of the Niobe* because it more accurately reflected what Greek women wore and importantly did not detract from the shape of the tunic itself⁶⁴ (Figure 1.15). He contradicted contemporary writers who alleged that ancient Roman women, for instance, were not able to wear ‘des chemises d' homme avec des manches’, once again delving into the detail of paintings that he had seen at Herculaneum as proof of this type of antique clothing:

⁶²See Koda for details of the construction of the chiton. Koda.2003.21.

⁶³Winckelmann.1781.588.

⁶⁴Ibid.588-589.

Mais sur quelques tableaux d'Herculanum on voit des robes avec des manches courtes, qui ne descendent que jusqu'au milieu du bras supérieur, robes qu'on appelait de-là Colobia.⁶⁵

Belting and harnessing were the mechanisms for transforming the essentially static construction and configuration of the 'chiton' and 'peplos', and Winckelmann specified how the band or the girdle was tied depending on the type or origin of the female figure.⁶⁶ Most Greek women tied their robe just beneath their breasts with different configurations. The women 'du plus beau vase de la collection Hamilton', had 'trois cordons avec un nœud se détacher des deux bouts de la ceinture attachée sur la poitrine' (Figure 1.16). He continued to describe the different ways in which the belts were knotted and crossed.

Cette ceinture forme sous le sein un nœud de ruban, & quelquefois un nœud en forme de robe, qu'on ne remarque pas aux deux plus belles filles de Niobé. À la plus jeune de ces filles, on voit les bouts de la ceinture passer sur les épaules & sur le dos; on les voit de même aux quatre Caryatides de grandeur naturelle, trouvée au mois d'avril 1761 à Monte Portio près de Frascati. Cette pièce de l'ajustement s'appelait chez les Anciens, du moins dans le temps postérieurs, *fuccinctorium*, ou *bracile*.⁶⁷

In contrast the belt of the semi-dressed Venus lay below the belly, and the Amazon women wore their band slung over their hips like men⁶⁸ (Figure 1.17 and Figure 1.18).⁶⁹

The cloak was the third core item of Greek and Roman clothing for both men and women. Winckelmann's description of the differences between short and long cloaks, with references to ancient writers and his specific illustrations followed a similar form of analysis to those of the robe and the tunic⁷⁰ (Figure 1.19). This was both in the structure of his prose and the manner of categorising the separate types of cloaks depending on the wearer. For example, he

⁶⁵Ibid.586.

⁶⁶Koda.2003.23.

⁶⁷Winckelmann.1781.590-591.

⁶⁸Ibid.592-593.

⁶⁹In the case of this image from the Ashmolean, the belt was made from a pair of horse reins.

⁷⁰Winckelmann.1781.623.

differentiated between the type of cloak that would belong to a warrior and the type of cloak that a deity would wear. He also engaged with the detail of the shape of these cloaks and how they were differentiated using colour and accessories such as fringing, analysing the significance of each feature and the importance of each variation.⁷¹ Balancing each positive description with an example of what did not work, he again criticised contemporary artists, singling out for this particular item of clothing Bernini's sculpture in the church of Santa Bibiana in Rome, which he believed was an example of a cloak that contradicted the natural cut and flow of the material (Figure 1.20):

Bien peu d'Artistes modernes sont exempts de critique par rapport à l'habillement; ceux du siècle passé ont tous péché contre cette partie, le seul Poussin excepté. Le Bernin a ferré le manteau jeté par dessus la robe de sa Sainte Bibiane avec une large ceinture, pratique qui est non seulement contraire à tout habillement antique, mais qui contredit aussi la nature du manteau, attendu qu'un manteau serré avec une ceinture n'est plus un manteau.⁷²

The main departure from the analysis of other constituent parts of ancient dress was the added emphasis on the fold and the throw of the cloak, and the importance of how it could be shaped to show the 'cuisse' of the man, or draped over the head of an older woman⁷³ (Figure 1.21). In particular he discussed the significance of the 'double drap' and the way in which the cloak could be thrown over the shoulders:

Quand il est question d'un manteau plié en double, il faut entendre sans doute le double drap des Cyniques. Il est vrai pourtant que la statue d'un Philosophe de cette secte de grandeur naturelle & de la même Villa Albani, n'a pas le manteau plié de cette manière....Cependant comme les Cyniques ne portaient point de tuniques, ils avaient plus besoin que d'autres de doubler leur manteau: ce qui me paraît aussi plus concevable que tout ce qu'ont écrit le dessus les Saumaises & les autres Commentateurs. Le mot double ne peut pas non plus s'entendre de la manière de jeter le manteau, comme le prétendent les Savants: à la statue de notre

⁷¹Ibid.626.

⁷²Ibid.633.

⁷³Ibid.598.

Cynique le jet du manteau ne diffère pas de celui de la plupart des figures ajustées de ce vêtement.⁷⁴

He stated how it was more common for the cloak to be wrapped under the right arm and then held at the left shoulder, sometimes with buttons to secure it, giving examples of ‘la belle & unique statue de Leucothoé de la Villa Albani, & à deux Caryatides de la Villa Negroni’.⁷⁵

Winckelmann then explored different variations of this arrangement:

Au lieu de ce grand manteau on était aussi dans l'usage d'en porter un plus petit, fait de deux morceaux, confus par en bas & attachés par dessus l'épaule avec un bouton, de façon qu'il y avait deux ouvertures ménagées pour passer les bras. Les Romains appelaient ce manteau *Ricinium*. Quelquefois il descend à peine jusqu'aux manches, & il n'est souvent guère plus long que les mantelets de nos jours. En effet nous voyons sur quelques peintures d'Herculanum que ce vêtement est fait comme celui que portent les Dames d'aujourd'hui: c'est un mantelet léger, qui couvre les bras & qui paraît coupé en rond, de sorte qu'il fallait le passer par dessus la tête.⁷⁶

After the analysis of the three major garment types, Winckelmann's chapter on antique costume continued with a brief analysis of the colour of antique dress, the different kinds of material used for veils, the types of bonnets for older women, hats for men, and hats for younger women that shielded them from the sun.⁷⁷ Malliot illustrated these different varieties of headwear that Winckelmann specified in his 1809 *Recherches sur les costumes, les mœurs, les usages religieux, civils et militaires des anciens peuples*⁷⁸ (Figure 1.22). Winckelmann also specified the different types of shoes and sandals that were worn, commenting on their colour and giving examples from the paintings at Herculaneum, as well as shoes worn by the

⁷⁴Ibid.599.

⁷⁵Ibid.599-600.

⁷⁶Ibid.601.

⁷⁷Ibid.603-608.

⁷⁸Joseph Malliot, *Recherches Sur Les Costumes, Les Mœurs, Les Usages Religieux, Civils Et Militaires Des Anciens Peuples* (Paris:Ouvrage publ. par P. Martin, 1809).

Persians. He also specified the way in which some shoes were attached to the feet by a strap around the big toe, giving the example of the *Niobe* group, and how others sometimes consisted of four straps sewn together describing how ‘les sandales, composées de quatre semelles, s'appelaient *quadrifole*’.⁷⁹ He differentiated between Greek and Roman shoes and sandals, and those worn by men and by women.⁸⁰ Again these were referenced in detail and citations were given to particular statues that he had himself either seen or had read about. He even speculated whether or not the ancients carried handkerchiefs on them.⁸¹ As with his study of Egyptians he analysed the forms of earrings and headdresses worn by women and cited the pierced earrings of the *Elder daughter of the Niobe* and those of ‘une belle tête idéale de basalte vert’ at the Villa Albani as examples (Figure 1.13a):

Plusieurs statues ont eu des boucles d'oreilles, comme la Vénus de Praxitèle, & comme on en peut juger par les oreilles percées des filles de Niobé, de la Vénus de Médicis, ainsi que de Leucothoé & d'une belle tête idéale de basalte vert, toutes deux à la Villa Albani.⁸²

His interest in the finer details of women's decorative accoutrements extended to an interest in cosmetic practices and included analysis and descriptions of both the hairstyles and cuts of men and women, and the different shades of hair colour found on ancient sculpture:

Plusieurs statues nous offrent des cheveux colorés de rouge, comme on en voit à la Diane du cabinet d'Herculanum,...Les cheveux de la Vénus de Médicis étaient dorés, ainsi que ceux d'une tête d'Apollon du cabinet du Capitole. ... Il était encore d'usage de se faire couper les cheveux. On voyait avec la tête rase Ethra, mère de Thésée, & une femme âgée dans un tableau de Polygnote conservé à Delphi...Les enfants se coupaient aussi les cheveux à la mort de leur père...Nous trouvons encore que les maris jaloux coupaient les cheveux à leurs femmes, soit pour les punir de leurs galanteries, soit pour les forcer de rester à maison.⁸³

⁷⁹Winckelmann.1781.609.

⁸⁰Ibid.629-31.

⁸¹Ibid.632.

⁸²Ibid.617.

⁸³Ibid.616-617.

It is clear that in every sense Winckelmann had a deep engagement with all forms of dress, drapery and Greek and Roman accessories along with an intense interest in the practical and cultural reason why something was fashioned in a particular way and how this reflected their society and manners. All of these were illustrated with specific examples amongst the antique sculpture that he either knew or had read about. With a particular emphasis on costume his interest incorporated and involved every aspect of the design, cut and flow of the garments, their embellishments and the differentiations between each individual item of clothing. He was also interested in their significance and the practical aspects attached to the wearing of garments such as how they were fastened and worn. For example, Winckelmann included a discussion of how the ancients ironed, folded and bleached their robes, and questioned as to why, in some antique statuary, the drapery was wrinkled as if it had not been ironed.⁸⁴

This meticulous attention to the construction and detail of clothing demonstrates Winckelmann's extensive interest in all aspects of ancient Greek and Roman costume and accessories. In his mind, as well as assisting in the identification of statues it also demonstrated the sophisticated understanding and approach that Greeks and Romans had to the cut, flow and practical aspects of costume, which in turn supported Winckelmann's broader teleological purpose in the *Histoire* to prove that Greek art was the best. At the same time Winckelmann built this interest in costume into his creation of a narrative and chronological history of art, and a system within which he could set out his definition of ideal beauty and what he believed was the essence of art. This contrasted with the structure and content of the *Réflexions* as I will demonstrate by examining the role of drapery in his aesthetic and connoisseurial works.

⁸⁴Ibid.602-603.

Section 1.2: Drapery in the *Réflexions*

This section will examine the structure of Winckelmann's aesthetic texts and the importance that Winckelmann placed on drapery and its relationship to the nude body. It will demonstrate this in his text, in his own self-fashioning and the way in which he placed the study of drapery alongside the study of nature and the nude form as an essential part of art. I will first provide an overview of the structure of the *Réflexions*, and then examine the way in which he focused on the relationship between the body and drapery, and then on the fold of both the skin and the expressive importance of folds in drapery.

Section 1.2.1: Structure of the *Réflexions*

The connoisseurial works were published in France in 1786 and included the *Réflexions* and the texts *Le Sentiment du Beau* and *De La Grâce*. The structure of the French *Réflexions*, though less systematic than Fuseli's English translation, was fundamentally instructive.⁸⁵ Winckelmann's purpose with these treatises was to define, encourage and develop a sense of taste in his readership by balancing specific examples of antique statuary with discursive and embellished language and rhetoric demonstrating the emotional effect of a particular example of nude or draped antique statuary. Winckelmann's tendency to move from these general remarks and observations to particular and seemingly unrelated examples is typical of the structure of the *Réflexions*, 'reflecting' and gently pulling in thoughts and ideas, and creating a sense of movement and ease with the flow of the text and the language. With the short paragraphs punctuated with italics, quotations and illustrations of art work of both male and

⁸⁵ Fuseli's translation was split into sections: 1) Nature, 2) Contour, 3) Drapery 4) Expression 5) Workmanship in Sculpture 6) Painting and 7) Allegory whereas the French version was more discursive and there was no explicit structure to the work. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks: With Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay on Grace in Works of Art*, (London: Printed for the Translator Henry Fuseli, and sold by A. Millar, 1765).

female figures from Renaissance art and Antiquity, it allowed readers to consider his thoughts and make them their own.

Section 1.2.2: The *Réflexions* and ‘Form’

Costume, drapery and the nude were integral components of the *Réflexions*. Despite Winckelmann’s thoughts and musings on climate and geography, his concern was centred primarily on the human form. So when he talked about Nature in its environmental sense, the opening phrase of the *Réflexions* talked about ‘le climat agréable de la Grèce’ and ‘la douce et heureuse température qui y règne pendant les différentes saisons’, it was only because it was important to the people that lived there and had an effect on both male and female physical form. It was not because he was attracted to ‘Nature’ and the natural world for its own sake:

Le goût qui se fait sentir dans les productions des artistes Grecs leur a été particulier. Rarement a-t-il été transmis aux autres nations, sans perdre quelque chose de sa première pureté; & sa douce lumière n'a pénétré que fort tard dans les régions septentrionales, où elle était sans doute encore inconnue, du temps que les deux arts, dont les Grecs ont été les grands maîtres, n'avaient qu'un petit nombre d'admirateurs.⁸⁶

The type of climate that was unique to Greece produced perfect taste because it was conducive to creating perfect forms:

La température d'une atmosphère douce, pure & sereine, avait sans doute une grande influence sur la constitution physique des Grecs; & les exercices mâles auxquels ils étaient accoutumés dans leur jeunesse, achevaient de leur donner une forme noble & élégante.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Recueil De Différentes Pièces Sur Les Arts*, (A Paris: Chez Barrois l'aîné, Libraire, Quai des Augustins, 1786).1786.2.

⁸⁷Ibid.5

The emphasis on exercise as the outcome of a perfect climate, and the desire for perfect form or proportions, which resulted from their ‘natural’ taste, meant that the quality of their diet and amount of food they consumed was also of great importance in his eyes. Winckelmann recounted how the Spartans, for instance, were required to appear before their leaders, the Ephori, every ten days to ensure that there was ‘rien de gratuit ni de superflu’ on their bodies. If they were considered to be overweight ‘...ils prescrivait la plus austère diète à ceux qui paraissaient disposés à un excès d'embonpoint incompatible également avec les belles proportions & avec la vigueur du corps’.⁸⁸ According to Winckelmann’s argument not only did the Greeks have the advantage of an ideal climate in which to hone their perfect form, but they also had the type of clothing that was more flattering than contemporary eighteenth-century dress.

The preoccupation with physical perfection extended to the cut and flow of Greek clothing, which in contrast to contemporary dress accentuated the contour of Greek bodies, allowing them the freedom to move in an elegant and graceful manner, highlighting the shape of the body underneath. In contrast, Winckelmann complained about the restrictive nature of eighteenth-century costume and in the *Réflexions* remarked on: ‘ces inventions modernes qu’une fausse modestie a imaginées, pour déguiser la beauté’ which he went on to say ‘étaient absolument inconnues aux dames de la Grèce’.⁸⁹ He believed that the tight corsets and conically shaped stays that pressured a woman’s waistline to a small circumference while driving the bosom upwards, that were typical of contemporary fashion, were unhealthy and restrictive (Figure 1.23). He also remarked that he found male fashion constraining, stating that the ‘stiffening habits...and squeezing stays’ exemplified by the tightly fitted breeches and

⁸⁸Ibid.7

⁸⁹Ibid.8

the restrictive cut of a man's waistcoat and frock coat 'déforment nos cols, nos hanches & nos cuisses'⁹⁰ (Figure 1.24).

We can see this preference for loose clothing in all three of the portraits that we have of Winckelmann. Although the exuberance and effeminacy of the painting by Maron is not replicated in the classically simple images of him by Anton Raphael Mengs and Angelica Kauffman, when examined in detail, the preference for 'looseness' in his own personal self-fashioning can be demonstrated. In the portrait by his friend Anton Raphael Mengs in 1755, for example, Winckelmann is wearing an open-necked chemise with a brown cloak swept over his left shoulder, while there is a hint of green drapery to his right (Figure 1.2). This simple and austere image of him painted around the time the *Réflexions* was first published portrays a man of letters, yet without pretension. Unlike many contemporary images of scholars there is no sense of authority or status in the clothes that he is wearing or any sense of position or formality about his state. The image speaks of a young scholar unobtrusively and modestly clothed in a simple yet elegant cloak that with the book hints at a love of the classical world. This portrait is of particular interest given that Mengs's portraits were generally distinguished by painstaking attention to the detail of the costumes and an overall display of extravagance, wealth and status (Figure 1.25). Looking at the self-portrait that Mengs painted in the late 1760s around the time that Winckelmann first published *L'Histoire de l'Art de l'Antiquité*, there is a sense of similarity in the loose nature of the dress, and the folds of the cloth that resonates with the earlier portrait of Winckelmann and contrasts sharply with the intricately detailed attention to costume visible in his commissioned work (Figure 1.26).

Winckelmann's self-fashioning in Angelica Kauffman's portrait of 1764 also presents him in loose and voluminous undress and sits mid-way between the simple and in some ways quite

⁹⁰Ibid.8

austere rendering of him by Mengs and the extravagance of the drapery in the Maron portrait (Figure 1.3). In Kauffman's portrait there is the sense of a gentle presence both in the style of dress and of the man himself. Her light brush explores the high forehead and sensitive mouth, and he looks away from the viewer instead of the direct, almost obsequious gaze of the later Maron image. Despite the simplicity of the dress in Kauffman's portrait Winckelmann's commitment to antiquity and aspiration to gentility are indicated by the carnelian signet ring, possibly an antique intaglio seal, on the little finger of the right hand.

So, the freedom that Winckelmann talked about in Greek, and specifically Spartan clothing, was also one that he wanted to embody himself in the self-fashioning representations of him, within the constraints of eighteenth-century customs and manners. In the *Réflexions*, this principle of freedom in Greece allowed for either no costume for men or a loose and mobile form of costume and drapery for women, such as: 'L'habillement des jeunes filles de Sparte était si léger & si court, qu'on leur donna le nom de montre-hanches'.⁹¹ These 'thigh-showers' typical of the Spartan female dress, became a symbol of the sexual freedom that Spartan women, according to Herodotus and others, were able to enjoy.⁹² The 'chiton' cut to the top of the thigh, and typical of images of Spartan women, is similar to the 'active' images of women in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century French history painting. This can be seen when comparing the images of a Spartan figurine (Figure 1.27) with a sketch of *Hersilia* from David's *L'Intervention des Sabines* (Figure 1.28). According to Winckelmann, Spartan women were also allowed to go naked on certain feast days and solemnities:

On sait aussi qu'à Lacédémone les jeunes filles dansaient à certains jours toutes nues aux yeux de la jeunesse Spartiate. Ces usage ne doit point étonner, lorsqu'on

⁹¹Ibid.1786.8

⁹²'Spartan women were also known for their physical fitness and beauty, the most famous Spartan woman being, of course, Helen of Troy' Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece*, (London : British Museum Press 1995). 151-155.

se rappelle que, dans les premiers siècles de l'église, on baptisait les personnes de l'un & de l'autre sexe, en les plongeant indistinctement dans les mêmes eaux.⁹³

So the focus on the nude body in this particular society and culture was, for Winckelmann, more the general cult of the body than one that resided in a particular sex. The focus on physicality in Spartan society combined with a climate conducive to nudity gave rise in his eyes to the 'perfect' form of the race, and in turn their heightened sensitivity to beauty. Freedom was expressed either in having no dress or having clothing that allowed for movement and expression.

Section 1.2.3: *Réflexions* and 'the Fold'

The emphasis placed on nudity at the beginning of the *Réflexions* was therefore only part of what made up Winckelmann's concept of beauty. Beauty did not only reside in perfect form. Contour and form were important components of beauty, and the Greek climate along with the cult of the body that was part of their culture all served to reinforce Winckelmann's purpose in determining the Greeks as a central point of reference for the development and discernment of contemporary eighteenth-century taste. Drapery and the shape of the fold, however, were also an integral part of his concept of beauty, and were important in the process of highlighting the form and the contour of the body.

In the *Réflexions*, he described the 'fine line' of contour, that is 'la ligne qui, dans la nature, sépare le moins du trop', as 'extrêmement déliée'.⁹⁴ Contour was also part of what made up well-executed draperies, where the line of the body was visible underneath the light and transparent dress. The two examples he gave were of the statue of *Agrippina* (Figure 1.29)

⁹³Winckelmann.1786.12.

⁹⁴Ibid.1786.24.

and the *Three Vestales* from Herculaneum (Figure 1.30). These examples demonstrated the importance that he placed on both the quality of the cloth represented and the fold of the drapery itself, which enhanced and hinted at the shape of the body underneath as well as having a line and contour of its own. He developed the concept of contour in clothing further by exploring both aesthetically and rhetorically the importance of drapery.

Aesthetically Winckelmann placed the study of drapery alongside the study of nature and the nude form as an essential part of antique art, requiring a proper understanding by the connoisseur:

Par le mot *draperie* on entend tout ce qui dans l'art sert de vêtement au nu des figures, & les étoffes volantes. Cette partie est, après la belle nature, & la noblesse du contour, la troisième qu'il faut étudier dans les productions des anciens artistes.⁹⁵

As a result of the emphasis attached to the study of drapery, he focused in the *Réflexions* on the importance of their correct imitation first of all, and then on the proper uses of drapery so that the quality of the folds accentuated and emphasised the shape and the form of the body underneath:

Les draperies des statues Grecques paraissent, pour ainsi dire, transparentes, & le contour élégant du corps y est exprimé à travers le marbre, comme s'il n'était en effet couvert que d'une gaze légère. L'Agrippina & les trois Vestales qui sont dans le cabinet des antiques à Dresde, méritent place parmi les modèles les plus parfaits du grand style.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Ibid.1786.28.

⁹⁶Ibid.25.

He described the statues of the *Three Vestales* as of great importance, not only because they were one of the first discoveries at Herculaneum, but also because of ‘la grande manière dont les draperies sont executées’, which he believed had ‘une grâce inexprimable’.⁹⁷ He continued:

Les petits plis sortent, par la douce gradation d'une courbe insensible, des grandes parties de la draperie, & vont se perdre de nouveau dans ces mêmes parties, avec une noble liberté, sans violer l'harmonie de la composition, & sans cacher le beau contour du corps, qui se laisse voir dans toute sa perfection à travers cette élégante draperie.⁹⁸

As well as talking about the effect of the draperies, Winckelmann was very specific about the execution of them and how these ‘effects’ were achieved by sculptors. For example, as well as using *Les Trois Vestales* as illustrations, he pointed out how some Greek statues had real drapery covering them but how this was always light and transparent so that the contour and form underneath it, both male and female, was visible.⁹⁹ In other sculptures he discussed how clothing had been moulded to have that effect. There were plenty of examples in the Vatican Museum in Rome in which the marble achieved a translucent and see-through effect such as the statue of *Demeter* in the Museo Pio-Clementino (Figure 1.31 and Figure 1.32).

The importance that Winckelmann placed on drapery was not attached solely to the genre of sculpture, and he cited the work of Michelangelo as an example of how there needed to be a variety of line and texture to accommodate both the expression of musculature and the delicate contours and shapes of female bodies. As he remarked, Michelangelo was able to sculpt and paint ‘des figures mâles & robustes’, where ‘les nerfs & le jeu des muscles sont fortement prononcés’, but that his rendering of ‘la fleur de la jeunesse & les teintes délicates

⁹⁷Ibid.1786.26.

⁹⁸Ibid.28.

⁹⁹Winckelmann.116.

¹⁰⁰Winckelmann.1786.25.

de la beauté' made all his women look like Amazons rather than the Graces.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, he admired the work of the Baroque masters Carlo Maratta and Francesco Solimena as good examples of how drapery should be executed (Figure 1.33 and Figure 1.34). He also praised the work of the Flemish sculptor François Duquesnoy whose statues of *St. Andrew* and *St. Susanna* were seen as expressions of the Greek ideal, criticising those whose folds were so heavy and cumbersome they hid the form of the body underneath.¹⁰¹

Carle Maratte & Solimène ont porté ce dernier genre de draperie au plus haut degré de perfection; mais la nouvelle école Vénitienne, en voulant aller au-delà, est tombée dans une manière roide & désagréable, & n'a fait que charger en cherchant de grandes masses.¹⁰²

So it is evident from the attention and priority that Winckelmann gave drapery that the proper study of it and the skill of painters and sculptors in rendering it were important both for the artist and for the development of taste in the connoisseur. It also formed part of Winckelmann's own personal aesthetic because it allowed for freedom and movement as well as permitting elegant folds around the contours of the body.

The importance that Winckelmann attached to the aesthetic significance of drapery can also be demonstrated by the rhetoric and language that he used to describe draped statues, which was reminiscent of the languorous and effusive prose that he used to describe some of the male statues from antiquity. This is visible when comparing Winckelmann's description of the *Belevedere Torso*, with his lesser known description of the *Chiaramonti Niobe*, whose swirling skilfully executed drapery represented one of the best examples of their kind, and his already cited description of the folds of the drapery belonging to the *Vestales* of Herculaneum. In this quotation from the *Histoire* Winckelmann described how the draperies

¹⁰⁰Winckelmann.1786.25.

¹⁰¹Estelle Lingo, *François Duquesnoy and the Greek Ideal*, (New Haven, Conn. ; London : Yale University Press, 2007).181.

¹⁰²Winckelmann.1786.29.

swish and swirl around the body of the *Niobe* as if they have been caught up in a sandstorm (Figure 1.35):

Il y a apparence que dès les premiers temps la manière de jeter les draperies était la même, mais que l'Art encore dans l'enfance ne pouvait pas atteindre ces ruptures variées des plis. On ne saurait considérer sans admiration cette variété singulière, ce goût exquis dans les draperies, depuis les vases peints, envisagés comme des dessins, jusqu'aux pierres les plus dures, tel que le porphyre. La sculpture ancienne nous a laissé des modèles dans ce genre: rien de plus élégant, de plus noble que les draperies de la Niobé antique.¹⁰³

This evokes Winckelmann's description of the *Belvedere Torso*, which famously demonstrated his sensitivity and empathy to works of sculpture through the languorous and poetic language that he used (Figure 1.36). Evocative of nature itself, these descriptions of the contour of the *Torso's* muscles suggesting the exploration of a mountainous landscape, with rippling muscles forming rivulets in his mind which he compared to rivers cutting through valleys. This allows us to describe his language when describing antique drapery as the 'rhetoric of the fold'.¹⁰⁴ The sentimental and picturesque images inspired by pieces of ancient statuary gives us an insight to the sensitive and romantic nature of the man, and how his effusive and exaggerated rhetoric was extended to draped statues as well as nude ones.¹⁰⁵

The importance of drapery in Winckelmann's *Réflexions* should therefore not be underestimated. The study of drapery formed an important and significant part of the *Réflexions*, and part of what constituted his own self-fashioning and style of dress as well as the principles of discernment and refinement he was teaching others. Within the group of

¹⁰³Winckelmann.1781.614.

¹⁰⁴Winckelmann's essay on *The Belvedere Torso* was not included in the French version of the *Recueil*, so to illustrate his prose I have cited Fuseli's translation. 'Here I see the most refined construction of the frame of this body, the origin of the muscles and the basis of their position and motion, and all of this manifests itself like a landscape discovered from the summit of the mountains, a landscape over which nature has poured out the manifold richness of its beauties. Just as its merry heights disappear with a soft slope into sunken valleys, narrowing over here and widening over there, swelling hills of muscles, just as manifold, mighty and beautiful, rise up, around which, like the current of the Meander, there twist and turn often unseen depths which are revealed less to sight than to feeling'. Winckelmann.1765.xvi.

¹⁰⁵Winckelmann.1786.28.

seven components that made up his *Instructions for the Connoisseur*, *Drapery* came third in the list after *Taste* and *Contour*, and before *Expression* and *Allegory*, *Workmanship in Sculpture* and *Painting*. So in every sense it was central to his concept of taste.

The detail, shape and fold of drapery were also of interest and significance to Winckelmann. He set out the type of drapery that complimented Nature and Contour which clung to the human form rather hid it, and he criticised those sculptors whose folds were so heavy and cumbersome that they hid the shape of the body underneath. Folds of material as well as folds of skin covering rippling muscles were the trigger that spurred his imagination and incited effusive and flowery language. The empathy and sentiment that he derived from the objects that he studied and tried to teach others was demonstrated by the emotive and colourful language that he used in their description, demonstrating in turn his gentle and highly sensitive nature.

He separated the study of costume, and female costume in particular, from merely describing the items that made up a national dress and placing a particular style of clothing within a chronological period. Both the connoisseurial and aesthetic features of his work on costume and drapery have already been addressed, but because of the aesthetic importance given by scholars to his stylistic definitions it is important to briefly look at his concept of 'style' in more detail.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶See Potts.1994.

Section 1.3: Winckelmann and ‘Style’

Winckelmann’s used the term ‘style’ primarily within the *Histoire* rather than any of his Treatises on Taste. It would therefore make sense to conclude that he mainly used the term in a historic sense to define particular artistic periods rather than to attribute aesthetic values to the term. However, this was not entirely the case. For example, as we have seen, in his section on Egyptian art he defined style both in a general sense as ‘le dessin du nu & celui de la draperies des figures’, and then characterised it formally by saying that style embodied both straight and moderately curved lines:

La seconde section sur le style de l’Art, qui renferme le dessin du nu & celui des draperies des figures. Le caractère général & principal de ce style sans le dessin du nu, est la circonscription de la figure en lignes droites & peu saillantes,...en premier lieu manqué de grâces, ...en second lieu d’être dénuées de ces tournures pittoresques qui charment.¹⁰⁷

When using the term style in a broad and vague manner he embodied the idea in one particular object in order to define its formal structure. An example of this is the statue of the *Niobe and her daughters* which he argued embodied the ‘high’ style, and whose principal traits he defined as an unstudied beauty, a high simplicity, beautiful draperies and execution (Figure 1.37):

Niobé & ses filles doivent être regardées comme des monuments incontestables du haut style.... Cette beauté est comme une idée qui naitrait sans le concours des sens dans un esprit supérieur, dans une heureuse imagination qui aurait la force de s’élancer intuitivement jusques à la beauté divine: elle brille par un si grand simplicité de formes & de contours, que loin de paraître avoir été enfanté avec effort, elle semble avoir été conçue comme une pensée & produite par un souffle.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷Winckelmann.1781.264-5.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.658.

He then articulated what he meant by the formal nature of this ‘high’ style by analysing the folds of the statue of the *Chiaramonti Niobe*, thereby incorporating within this ‘high’ style both sculptures and linking them stylistically by comparing the drapes and folds of their garments (Figure 1.38). However, he also categorised the *Niobe* group as specifically belonging to the ‘sublime’ style, which he didn’t extend to the *Chiaramonti Niobe*:¹⁰⁹

Or comme la marche des plis est différente selon la diversité des temps de l'art, il résulte que la disposition de la draperie & l'élégance de l'ajustement constituent une partie de la connaissance du style & des époques. La marche des plis dans les figures des temps les plus reculés est ordinairement droite, ou formant peu d'inflexions: ce qu'un Ecrivain moderne peu instruit, dit de tous les plis des Anciens, ne sachant pas que les plis des figures qu'il cite, se trouvant sur la tunique, doivent tomber perpendiculairement. Dans le temps les plus éclairées de l'Art, on cherchait à mettre la plus grande variété dans les plis, tant de la robe que du manteau, & cela à l'imitation de ceux que formaient les vêtements effectifs.¹¹⁰

He defined the chief characteristic of the ‘beautiful’ style of which he believed the *Laocoön* to be the best example, as being ‘grâce’ (Figure 1.39). Throughout the *Histoire* and *Réflexions*, however, he gave different definitions to the word ‘grâce’ which in his eyes was either a particular formal style that characterised a chronological period or a concept which had abstract and spiritual qualities.¹¹¹ Winckelmann did not attribute specific dates or timelines to these historic styles and instead was content to give broad outlines of the epochs in which particular statues might have been made.

Teleologically, in his section on the rise and fall of Greek art he defined four styles as, ‘le style droit et dur, le style grand & angulaire, le style beau & coulant, & le style des imitateurs’.¹¹² He talked about the Greek style, of which the ‘high’ style and the ‘beautiful’ style were part, and then the ‘Roman’ style, which he applied to the art of painting and to

¹⁰⁹Mengs questioned the date of the Niobe group in his essay on the Niobe written in 1786. Anton Mengs and Hendrik J Jansen, *Œuvres Complètes*, (Paris, 1786).

¹¹⁰Winckelmann.1781.613-614.

¹¹¹Ibid.658-659.

¹¹²Ibid.685.

Roman costume.¹¹³ On the one hand, Winckelmann was specific and descriptive contextualising the details of antique costume and the different styles of their dress as a means by which to categorise the vast amounts of detailed information on ancient art, placing these sculptures within an historical and sometimes political framework. In other cases, as already cited, he specifically related the term style to that of ‘mode’, such as the Doric or Ionian fashion. These examples do not include the multiple references to style in relation to specific items of clothing or ways of adornment used by ancient cultures, without having much, if any, data other than a single object to endorse it.

So the term ‘style’, in common with other words like ‘grâce’ might have had multiple meanings and Winckelmann’s use of the term suggests that he might have attributed both broad and specific definitions of these words in order to mirror the analytic and synthetic methods that he used for building up his definition of ideal beauty. It is therefore important when examining Winckelmann’s interest in costume and drapery, and his concept of ideal beauty, to remain open minded about using stylistic definitions as a means by which to attribute specific aesthetic values such as his concept of grace and his understanding of ideal beauty.

¹¹³Ibid.636 & 769.

Conclusion

To conclude, costume was for Winckelmann, in part, a means to identifying statues and determining whether they were Greek, Roman or belonged to some other space and time. Collecting all the written sources on ancient costume, especially the Greek historian Herodotus, who referred to their dress as an expression of Greek identity and as a signifier of Hellenic cultural authority, enabled Winckelmann in a very detailed manner to look at ancient monuments from the Egyptian, Etruscan and Persian periods and classify them stylistically, historically and aesthetically. His attention to the detail of antique costume and drapery was comprehensive and meticulous and he was able to deduce the physical traits of the people from images of their clothing, and determine their body shape, their habits and their lifestyle. Clothing even at its simplest level was important to Winckelmann and the purpose of the whole *Histoire* and the *Réflexions*.

In addition to the functional and archaeological aspects to his interest in costume, he was interested in the relationship between the body and drapery. He saw this relationship as one in which the drapery enhanced the body so that the each was improved. The cut of the dress or coat was only of value to him if it was designed so that it flattered the body, and the pleats and folds could demonstrate the curves of the body underneath. Decorations such as earrings and headdresses were important because they added to the overall aesthetic effect, and also aided with the identification of the statue, placing it within its historical context.

From all of this Winckelmann was then able to make generalised and accurate statements about both male and female Greek statuary, dressed and undressed. Costume provided a means by which to link statues of female figures together stylistically and chronologically, such as the *Chiaramonti Niobe* and the *Niobe* group. Greek drapery also accentuated the contour of Greek bodies, allowing them the freedom to move in an elegant and graceful

manner. It also demonstrated that Greek sculpture, both male and female, was the best because they had perfect bodies and form, and their costume and drapery was also perfect, expressive, beautifully and practically constructed, graceful and easy to wear. According to Winckelmann's line of argument not only did the Greeks have the advantage of an ideal climate in which to hone their ideal form, but they also had the type of clothing that was more flattering, ideal and 'tasteful' than contemporary eighteenth-century dress.

Having started the *Histoire* with the discussion of male nude statues, he put an equal if not greater importance on the study of draped ones. In a complex passage in the *Histoire* he emphasised the instructive importance of studying draped figures both for the artist and the connoisseur. Arguing that because in the earlier periods of Greek art there were more draped figures than nude (in the proportion of fifty clothed to one nude figure), he concluded that 'drapery is to the nude what the expression of thoughts, that is, their drapery, is to the thoughts themselves; it often costs less effort to find the latter than the former'.¹¹⁴ Maintaining that it was easier to find the latter (that is the nude) than the former (drapery), he positioned the study of drapery, on an equal par to the study of the nude figure, contextualising his focus on nude statuary as being primarily for reasons of expediency. He considered the study of draped statues more difficult than the study of nude figures suggesting that if beauty in the drawing of the nude could be learned from four or five of the most beautiful statues, 'the artist has to study clothing in a hundred such (draped) works...because of the variety of clothing styles'. Despite the challenge, he concluded that the drawing of draped figures was an essential part of art:

Je dirai donc que le dessin des figures drapées peut être nommé à juste titre une partie essentielle de l'Art.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Ibid.1781.632.

¹¹⁵Ibid.633.

Taking into account the importance and attention that Winckelmann gave to costume historically and formally it is important to look at the aesthetic significance he attached to costume, drapery and accessories and to examine the role, if any, that these had in making up his concept of ideal beauty. In examining the relationship between the nude body, which he described as the 'essence' of art,¹¹⁶ and the study of the draped figures which he described as the 'essential' part of art, the next chapter will look at the aesthetic significance he gave to drapery and accessories and includes an examination of Winckelmann's concept of grace. The chapter seeks to redefine his concept of ideal beauty, and the concept of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century French art and art criticism to one in which drapery was the mediating symbol that took perfect form to ideal beauty.

¹¹⁶Ibid.418

Chapter Two: Winckelmann's Definition of Ideal Beauty

Introduction

The grisly image used by Winckelmann to illustrate his chapter on workmanship seems to be diametrically opposed to any concept of ideal beauty (Figure 2.1). A bearded man holds the detached headless upper torso of another male figure, with a disconnected and lifeless leg cast to the side in a random fashion. The cloak thrown over the shoulder of the older man conveys a sense of movement and purposefulness in the image which amplifies its already macabre nature. The brutal and grotesque imagery used by Winckelmann conjures up nightmarish stories of cannibalism and man-eating giants, rather than evoking any idea of what the definition of ideal beauty might be. Its connection to any broader aesthetic, conceptual or historic purpose seems obtuse.

Catalogued by Winckelmann in the *Description des pierres gravées du feu Baron de Stosch*, Winckelmann incorrectly described the gem as representing Prometheus in a creative rather than destructive act, trying to piece together the different parts of a young man. These images of dismembered bodies were traditionally known as 'maschalismos', where the extremities of the vanquished enemy were pulled apart in order to make sure the soul of the body could not come back to ask for revenge, and this particular example was from an Etruscan scarab. Winckelmann's mistake in identifying the image as Prometheus, representing in his mind creation when it was in fact destruction, putting back together when it was in fact tearing apart can be seen as a metaphor for the inherent duality of Winckelmann's approach and method. This is demonstrated in the overall structure of the *Histoire*, the dual nature of Winckelmann's use of rhetorical devices on the one hand and disjointed, disjunctive text on the other. It is also emblematic of the contrast between the *Histoire* and the *Réflexions*,

Winckelmann's interest in the natural and the supernatural, and the binary nature of relationship between the nude body and costume and drapery.

The first chapter analysed the comprehensive and meticulous interest that Winckelmann had in clothing. In the *L'Histoire de L'Art de l'Antiquité* it demonstrated that Winckelmann believed that costume was one of the characterising features of a nation and that their clothing was indicative of their capacity to achieve a sense of ideal beauty in art. This proved that items of dress and accessories, which included everything from shoes, to hats and earrings were important to Winckelmann not only as a means of identifying statues, or enabling artists to understand and correctly 'imitate' ancient costume in their work, but also as part of his overall teleological stance that Greek sculpture, both male and female, was the best. The chapter also demonstrated that in his treatises on taste, Winckelmann was interested in the relationship between the body and drapery as part of his purpose to demonstrate the superiority of the Greeks. He demonstrated how the Greeks had perfect bodies and that Greek costume and drapery was also perfect, expressive, beautifully and practically constructed, graceful and easy to wear because in accentuating the contour of their bodies, it allowed the Greeks the freedom to move in an elegant and graceful manner. Finally, I demonstrated that Winckelmann considered draped figures an essential part of art.

It is my intention in this chapter to demonstrate that costume and drapery formed part of Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty. I will do this by dividing the chapter into two sections. The first section will demonstrate that Winckelmann gave the term 'idéal' both physical and spiritual qualities. Sometimes these physical and spiritual qualities were integrated together and sometimes the different 'idéal' qualities were separated out. Whereas Winckelmann's 'idéal' physical parts and the way in which they were bound together involves fairly standard readings of the ideal, there are questions as to how he envisaged the spiritual and emotional qualities of the ideal being represented in works of art.

The second section will pick up on Winckelmann's interest in the shape and the fold of costume and drapery as demonstrated in the first chapter. It will propose that Winckelmann attributed aesthetic qualities to these by looking at the elegance and effect of drapery as a means of expressing emotion in a sedate manner, and how drapery could also convey the spiritual qualities of grace. Finally I will propose that drapery combined with the ideal form of the body, was able to convey the spiritual and intangible qualities of ideal beauty, and that drapery was therefore an important component of Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty that took perfect form to ideal. I will propose that this new way of defining Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty integrates drapery and draped statues into Winckelmann's vision of the classical ideal. The remainder of this thesis will demonstrate the way in which this changes our perception of the definition of ideal beauty in the art theory and art criticism of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century France.

Section 2.1: The Physical and Spiritual Qualities of Ideal Beauty

This section will demonstrate that Winckelmann attributed both physical and spiritual qualities to his definition of ideal beauty. I have split the physical qualities of ideal beauty into three parts. I will first look at his description of ideal parts. Next I will demonstrate how proportion played a part of the physical construction of ideal beauty from these parts. Finally I will then look at the range of different examples of ideal types that he gave and how these types could be ideal even if they were not beautiful. I will also show that within these physical qualities Winckelmann sometimes also introduced spiritual qualities.

Section 2.2.1: The Physical Qualities of Ideal Beauty

2.2.1.1: Ideal Parts

Winckelmann believed that the extremities and peripheral objects were an essential component of ideal beauty. In the *Histoire* he described why these were important:

L'étude de l'individuel de la beauté doit être surtout dirigée sur les extrémités, non seulement parce que les extrémités renferment la vie, le mouvement, l'expression & l'action, ainsi aussi parce que la forme de ces parties est la plus difficile à saisir, & qu'elle fixe principalement la différence du beau & du laid, de l'antique & du moderne.¹¹⁷

This passage partly explains why Winckelmann paid so much attention to different parts of the body, particularly the extremities and why they formed part of his concept of ideal beauty.

In his chapter on the parts of the body Winckelmann examined the way in which different parts of the body could be described as 'idéel'. He did this first of all by making generalised comments about a particular body part, describing how this might be seen in a particular piece of Greek sculpture. He would then analyse the formal shape that made it 'idéel'. Finally he took into account other compositional parts, which might convey other qualities and contribute it to becoming ideal.

This is demonstrated with the following example. Starting with the top of the body, Winckelmann talked about the way in which 'les cheveux qui couronnent le front', and 'fassent le tour des tempes en s'arrondissant' helped give the face 'la forme ovale & le complément de la beauté' which was found on 'toutes les belles personnes'. Winckelmann then described how 'cette forme du front est tellement appropriée à toutes les têtes idéales'.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Ibid.537.

¹¹⁸Ibid.540.

He then described the lines and shapes of the Greek profile, in detail as characteristic of ‘une haute beauté’:

Ce profile est une ligne presque droite, ou marquée par une douce inflexion; cette ligne décrit le front avec le nez dans les têtes de jeunesse, particulièrement dans celles de femmes....Les formes droites & pleines constituent le grand, & les contours coulants & légers le délicat.¹¹⁹

Winckelmann then looked at the component parts of the face, focusing on the detailed way in which the contour of the neck, the eyebrow, the eyelid and the ear were shaped, followed by physical examples from antiquity as an illustration of what he meant.¹²⁰ An example of this was his interest in the eyelids, which he felt were a particularly important feature because of their expressive quality. He likened the delicacy and fluttery nature of the eyelids on these statues to the ‘jeune ceps de la vigne’ describing their movement as ‘douce inflexions’.¹²¹

Les Anciens paraissent avoir dévoilé tous les mystères de la beauté, jusqu'au jeu des paupières: car l'expression d'ELIKOBLEPHAROS, chez Hésiode semble désigner une forme particulière de paupières. ...En effet, nous trouvons de la justesse dans cette comparaison, lorsque nous considérons les douces inflexions des belles paupières, qui se manifestent singulièrement aux têtes idéales du premier rang, tel qu'à celles d'Apollon, de Niobé, & surtout de Vénus.¹²²

Another example of the way in which Winckelmann analysed ideal parts was the attention he gave to the mouth. Like the fluttery nature of the eyelids he analysed the shape and the different movements of the lower lip. These were important because Winckelmann was interested in their expressive quality. He saw the changes in the shape of the mouth as indicative of the subtle nature and the distinctive effects that the emotions could have on their form and outline:

¹¹⁹Ibid.538.

¹²⁰Ibid.549-569.

¹²¹Ibid.551.

¹²²Ibid.551.

La bouche est, conjointement avec les yeux, la plus belle partie du visage; la beauté de sa forme est si connue, que je n'ai pas besoin d'en faire la description. Tout le monde fait que la lèvre inférieure doit être plus pleine que la lèvre supérieure, ce qui fait naître au dessous cette inflexion sensible qui donne au menton un arrondissement plus complet.¹²³

He then gave different physical examples of the range of emotions and attributes that a shift and movement in the lower lip could infer. For one of the beautiful statues of *Pallas* he believed that the lower lip ‘avance insensiblement, pour mieux rendre l'air de gravité qui convient à cette Déesse’. For human figures ‘les lèvres ont coutume d'être closes’, for divinities of both sexes the lips ‘ne le sont pas entièrement’. In contrast in statues of *Venus* the lips were half-closed in order to express ‘la langueur, le désir & l'amour’¹²⁴ (Figure 2.2).

The analysis of the way in which Winckelmann examined body parts demonstrates how Winckelmann built up his concept of ideal beauty from ideal components of body parts like the image of the ‘maschalismos’. These parts were also able to embody aesthetic and emotional qualities as well as having ‘ideal’ shapes.

2.1.1.2: Proportion

The next stage in the build up of Winckelmann's physical construct of ideal beauty was to ensure that all the body parts were in proportion to one another:

Le dessin du nu est fondé sur les notions de la beauté, & ces notions consistent en partie dans la dimension & dans la proportion, en partie dans la forme & la figure d'où les Artistes Grecs tiraient leurs idées de la beauté, comme l'a remarqué Cicéron. Les formes déterminent la figure: Les mesures fixent la proportion.¹²⁵

¹²³Ibid.553.

¹²⁴Ibid.553.

¹²⁵Ibid.444.

He stated that proportion was ‘la base de la beauté’ in which each individual part had to be beautiful in order for the overall proportion of the body to work.¹²⁶ The ‘proportionate’ approach to understanding the nature of ideal beauty enabled Winckelmann to start to integrate and incorporate within the physical description of body parts, spiritual and abstract ideals such as heroism and divinity in order to convey ideal beauty. By demonstrating these spiritual qualities physically he hoped to show that the way the Greeks had conveyed a sense of nobility and virtue in sculpture, could also be replicated by contemporary artists. Winckelmann conveyed these qualities by analysing the physical attributes of divinity and heroism. With heroism, Winckelmann examined the different ways in which heroism was evoked through the undulations and folds of the muscles and skin in statues of male heroes:

Comme les anciens s'étaient élevés par gradation de la beauté humaine jusqu'à la beauté Divine, ce dernier degré fut réservé à la beauté par excellence. Dans la représentation de leurs Héros, c'est à dire des hommes à qui l'Antiquité donnait la plus haute dignité de notre nature, ils allèrent jusqu'aux limites de la Divinité, mais sans passer outre & sans confondre la différence délicate de ces deux natures. ... Les Artistes imprimaient à leurs Héros des formes héroïque, en relevant de certaines parties par des saillies au dessus du naturel. Ils animaient les muscles & leur donnaient une activité extraordinaire: dans les actions véhémentes ils mettaient en jeu tous les ressorts de la nature.¹²⁷

He gave different examples of this with the *Laocoön*, the *Hercules Farnese*, the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Belvedere Torso*.¹²⁸ He also described how heroism could be manifested in the strong and pronounced parts of female heroines:

Cependant ces différentes gradations dans les formes & dans les statures ne se trouvent pas aux figures des beautés féminines: elles ne diffèrent pour la taille que relativement à leur âge. Nous voyons dans les Déesses & dans les Héroïnes de l'Antiquité, que les Artistes se sont conformés dans les unes & dans les autres à les représenter avec des membres également pleins & arrondis: s'ils avaient prononcé plus fortement quelques parties dans les Héroïnes, ils seraient sortis du caractère qui distingue le sexe. Comme le Savant trouve moins d'observations à

¹²⁶Ibid.525.

¹²⁷Ibid.485-486.

¹²⁸Ibid.485-486.

faire sur la beauté des femmes, de même aussi l'Artiste trouve l'étude de cette beauté moins compliquée & plus aisée.¹²⁹

He then contrasted examples of Greek heroes on coins and in statuary with the work of contemporary artists such as Poussin. Citing the example of Poussin's masterpiece *Thésée retrouve l'épée de son père*, he stated that the expression of heroism could be found in the manly form and shape of muscles and beard of the sixteen-year-old youth (Figure 2.3):

Le Poussin s'est encore plus écarté de la vérité & de la beauté du jeune âge dans un tableau, appartenant à M. Vanvitelli, architecte du Roi de Naples. Le Peintre moderne y a représenté Thésée au moment qu'il lève la pierre sous laquelle son père avait caché son épée avec un de ses souliers & qu'il trouve l'une & l'autre en présence de sa mère Ethra. Ce héros n'avait que seize ans, quand il donna cette première preuve de sa force & il paraît ici avec de la barbe, dans l'âge d'un homme fait, le corps privé de tous les arrondissements de la jeunesse.¹³⁰

Whilst looking at contemporary interpretations of heroism he criticised the *Réflexions sur les proportions* from *L'Art de peindre* of Charles-Henri Watelet in which Watelet had analysed the proportions necessary for the expression of the 'heroic ideal'. Angry with Watelet, he argued that this dictionary definition demonstrated that Watelet had never looked at antique sculpture.

Le jugement que M. Watelet porte des Héros & des demi Dieux des Anciens, ne paraît pas non plus être le résultat de la considération des statues antiques. Cet Ecrivain semble vouloir établir, comme formant les caractères de leur conformation, " qu'ils ont les articulations des membres bien nouées, serrées, peu couvertes de chair, la tête petite, le col nerveux, les épaules larges & hautes, la poitrine élevée, les hanches & le ventre petits, les cuisses musclées, les principaux muscles relevés & détachés, les jambes sèches par en bas, les pieds minces & la plante des pieds creuse." *L'Art de peindre. Réflexions sur les proportions*.¹³¹

¹²⁹Ibid.489.

¹³⁰Ibid.487.

¹³¹Ibid.488.

Winckelmann was also intrigued about how modern artists had gone about the complex process of embodying a sense of divinity through the systematic collection of ideal parts put together with a correct sense of proportion. He argued that in order to achieve this, artists had drawn on images of ancient heroes and gods for inspiration in Christian imagery. Detaching himself from the spiritual effect of images of Christ, he was interested in examining the way in which modern artists had depicted the figure of Jesus as an example of ‘le plus beau parmi les enfants des hommes’.¹³² Disliking medieval depictions of Christ and those by Michelangelo, he praised the work of Raphael and Annibale Carracci and cited the image of Leonardo da Vinci’s *Salvator Mundi* which he had seen in the Prince of Lichtenstein’s cabinet in Vienna as ‘le plus parfait modèle’ of ‘la plus haute beauté virile’ despite it having a beard¹³³ (Figure 2.4).

Just as Winckelmann’s analysis of ideal parts of the body had explored the way in which these parts were able to express emotional qualities, his exploration of the correct physical proportions of the body incorporated practical examples of how the abstract qualities of heroism and divinity had been and could be depicted. Finally Winckelmann demonstrated how there could be different physical ‘types’ of beauty and how the ‘ideal’ images could be found in figures that were not even beautiful.

2.1.1.3: Ideal Types

I will demonstrate these different ‘types’ of ideal by looking at the way Winckelmann attributed the word ‘idéal’ to different ages giving different examples of each. Whilst

¹³²Ibid.488.

¹³³Ibid.488-489.

describing 'jeunesse' as the most sublime form of beauty, he also specifically classed it as only one amongst many examples of an 'ideal type':

La jeunesse des Divinités de l'un & de l'autre sexe avait ses degrés & les âges différents, dans la représentation desquels l'Art s'attacha à rendre toutes les beautés. Cette jeunesse est un idéal, emprunté en partie des beaux corps de jeunes hommes, en partie de la nature des beaux Eunuques, & relevé par une taille au dessus de la stature humaine.¹³⁴

He then gave the statues of the *Farnese Hercules* and the *Belvedere Torso* as examples of 'types' of ideal beauty in adulthood; the former embodying 'la force viril' of maturity and the latter 'l'enjouement de la belle jeunesse' (Figure 2.5):

Telles sont dans les figures des Divinités mâles, les gradations, les âges & les formes de leur jeunesse. On voit cette jeunesse empreinte dans un degré convenable sur le visage des Divinités de l'âge fait, lequel consiste dans un composé de la force viril & de l'enjouement de la belle jeunesse. Cette jeunesse se manifeste par la suppression des nerfs & des muscles, qui sont peu apparents dans le printemps de l'âge. ... l'homme est imprimé à l'Hercule Farnèse, & le Dieu à l'Hercule du Belvédère ou au fameux Torse.¹³⁵

Winckelmann then gave female examples of types of ideal beauty such as the figure of *Venus* and the *Niobe and her daughters* whom he described as 'modeles du vrai beau'.¹³⁶ He also applied the concept of 'ideal types' to images that were not beautiful. For example he cited as a particular example of this the shape and the clothing of Egyptian figures:

Nous dirons donc que la combinaison des parties pour former un tout est ce qu'on appelle l'idéal, & nous ajouterons cette modification, qu'une chose peut être idéale sans être belle. Ainsi la forme des figures Egyptiennes, dans lesquelles on ne trouve indiqués ni muscles, ni nerfs, ni veines, est idéale, sans être belle, de même qu'on ne peut pas appeler belle la draperie de leurs figures de femme, qui, n'étant pour ainsi dire que pensée, ne saurait passer pour belle.¹³⁷

¹³⁴Ibid.468.

¹³⁵Ibid.479.

¹³⁶Ibid.517.

¹³⁷Ibid.457-458.

Developing the proposition that the ideal was not necessarily beautiful he then included other examples of ideal form and nature that incorporated old satyrs, fauns and even animals.¹³⁸

The range of different examples that Winckelmann gave demonstrates that ideal ‘types’ were not configured in one particular type of beauty or sex. It also demonstrates that Winckelmann used the term ‘ideal’ extensively, and that there appeared to be many different ways in which ideal beauty could be represented in art. It also demonstrates that even in discussion about the shape of the physical qualities of the ideal, Winckelmann was interested in their abstract, emotional and spiritual qualities.

Section 2.1.2: Abstract, Emotional and Spiritual Qualities

Despite the emotional attributes that Winckelmann sometimes gave to ideal parts, their imitative nature did not always provide the imaginative and expressive charge necessary for ideal form to become ideal beauty. The concepts of harmony, grace, expression and sentiment were the attributes that were able to bind together ideal parts and provide the interface between perfect physical form and ideal beauty.

2.1.2.1: Harmony

Winckelmann stated that the ‘choix des belles parties & leurs rapports harmonieux dans une figure produisirent la beauté idéale’. This sense of harmony was important because as Winckelmann said ‘...nous observons seulement que l'idéal ne peut pas avoir lieu dans

¹³⁸Ibid.464-465.

toutes les parties du corps humain séparément, que cela ne peut se dire que du tout-ensemble de la figure'.¹³⁹

In this respect Winckelmann's concept of the ideal was fairly standard in that he drew on the traditional Greek stories of Parrhasios and Apelles as examples of how, since Nature was imperfect, it was the artist's responsibility to choose the best parts in order to create an ideal and produce a perfect representational and ideal form. Using the analogy of a bee producing honey by sucking the nectar from different flowers, he described how the artist was like a gardener looking for the best quality parts that nature could provide.

L'idée de la beauté des Maîtres Grecs n'était pas restreinte au seul beau individuel, comme elle l'est quelquefois chez les Poètes tant anciens que modernes, & chez la plupart des Artistes de nos jours. Les Grecs cherchèrent à réunir le beau de plusieurs beaux corps, ainsi que nous le voyons par l'entretien de Socrate avec le célèbre Peintre Parrhasios. Ils furent épurent leurs figures de toutes les affections personnelles qui détournent notre esprit du vrai beau.¹⁴⁰

Even with the Greeks and their wonderful physiques Winckelmann accepted that art ranked higher than Nature and that in order to create a sense of the ideal, Nature needed to be improved upon. There were different ways to imitate Nature which depended on the genre a work of art belonged to. He specified these as follows:

Il y a deux manières d'imiter la nature: dans l'une, l'artiste occupé d'un seul objet, tâche de le représenter avec précision & vérité; dans l'autre, il tire de plusieurs objets certains traits qu'il combine, & dont il forme un tout régulier. Les portraits & toutes les espèces de copies appartiennent au premier genre d'imitation: ces sortes de production doivent être exécutées dans la manière Flamande, s'est-à-dire avec un grand fini, sans imitation conduit directement à la recherche du vrai beau, de ce beau dont l'idée est née dans la plus grande perfection. C'est le genre d'imitation dans lequel excellaient les Grecs.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹Ibid.461.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.461.

¹⁴¹Winckelmann.1786.20-21.

A sense of compositional harmony and a sense of ‘appropriateness’ was necessary to understand the nuances and needs of different genres of painting, and in this way all the disparate ‘ideal’ parts could be brought together.¹⁴² In the ‘ideal’ genres as well as demonstrating ‘ideal imitation’ the image had to embody ‘ideal qualities’ such as grace and emotion.

2.1.2.2: Grace

Eduoard Pommier and Harloe have explored Winckelmann’s interest in the spiritual qualities of grace. In examining the linguistic development of Winckelmann’s concept of grace, and drawing on the work of De Piles and Richardson, Harloe has provided a context for the important part it played in Winckelmann’s work and the broader meanings that it had in early modern treatises on the art of painting.¹⁴³ Neither Pommier nor Harloe, however, have explored the way in which grace impacted on Winckelmann’s concept of ideal beauty and the way in which drapery was able to express this quality of grace.

As with all attributes and concepts that Winckelmann sought to define, his concept of Grace was multi-dimensional and highly complex. He included grace as a form of historical style, and he also distinguished between the different types of grace: young, old, the *Three Graces*, referencing different historical periods and using many different artistic examples.¹⁴⁴ These different manifestations of grace can be divided into two main categories: grace as a way of analysing form, and grace that embodied spiritual qualities that created an ideal and which distinguished ideal beauty from formal beauty. In this way his concept radically differentiated

¹⁴²Winckelmann.1781.525-526.

¹⁴³Harloe.75-77.On Roger de Piles and Dominique Bouhours see Thomas Puttfarcken, *Roger De Piles' Theory of Art*, (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985). For a more contemporary analysis of the ‘je ne sais quoi’ in the early modern period see Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe : Encounters with a Certain Something*, (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁴Winckelmann.1781.660-670.

itself from formalists such as Hogarth, whose line of beauty was only his 'line of grace', and where there was no supernatural qualities attached¹⁴⁵ (Figure 2.6).

In his treatise *De L'Allégorie* Winckelmann wrote that '...les images doivent être gracieuses, conformément au but de l'art, qui doit chercher à plaire et à flatter'.¹⁴⁶ The concept of grace also formed the topic of one of Winckelmann's Treatises on Taste, and both stylistically and metaphorically it was a subject that formed part of the *Histoire*. In the *Histoire* he applied the concept of grace to a particular era and style of sculpture, embodying the formal element of grace in the 'beautiful style' of the *Laocoön*.¹⁴⁷ However, this did not mean that Winckelmann only embodied the concept of grace in a historical style or that the nude male form was his emblem of grace. In his essay *Sur la Grâce* in the *Refléxions* Winckelmann's remarks that 'la grâce dans les ouvrages de l'art, regarde principalement la figure de l'homme' has often been taken out of context to convey the idea that grace was only embodied in a masculine figure. The second sentence of Winckelmann's definition of grace emphasised both the non-gendered definition of grace and the way it incorporated not only the shape of the body, the 'essential' starting point, but also the expression, movement of the body, and more specifically objects such as drapery and ornaments.

La grâce dans les ouvrages de l'art, regarde principalement la figure de l'homme. Elle ne consiste pas seulement dans ce qui lui est essentiel, comme l'attitude & les mouvements, mais aussi dans les accessoires, comme les draperies & les ornements.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵Steve Edwards, 'Art and Its Histories : A Reader', (New Haven, Conn. ; London : Yale University Press in association with The Open University 1999).52.

¹⁴⁶Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *De L'allégorie, Ou Traités Sur Cette Matière*, (A Paris, : Chez H.J.Jansen, imprimeur-libraire, rue des Pères, 1799).96.

¹⁴⁷Winckelmann.1781.658-659.

¹⁴⁸Winckelmann.1786.287.

Whilst grounding his concept of grace in material and decorative objects, Winckelmann also stressed the spiritual and abstract meaning of the word. He believed that grace was the ‘charm that gave expression to life and form’:¹⁴⁹

La grâce est ce qui plaît à l'esprit. L'idée de ce mot est fort étendue, puisqu'elle peut-être appliquée à tout ce qui sort de la main de l'homme. La grâce est un don du ciel, mais qui n'est pas de la même espèce que la beauté; car elle ne fait qu'annoncer la disposition qu'ont les objets à être beaux. La grâce se forme par l'éducation & par la réflexion; elle peut même devenir naturelle à l'homme, qui semble fait pour la posséder.¹⁵⁰

The meaning he attributed to the quality of grace was therefore spiritual as well as physical, and it reflected his interest in the nature of divinity, the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece and Rome, and his belief that the supreme or ideal beauty resided in God:

La beauté suprême réside en Dieu. L'idée de la beauté humaine se perfectionne à raison de sa conformité & de son harmonie avec l'être suprême, avec cet être que l'idée de l'unité & de l'indivisibilité nous fait distinguer de la matière. Cette notion de la beauté est comme un esprit qui cherche à se créer un être à l'image de la première créature raisonnable formée par l'intelligence de la Divinité.¹⁵¹

In the second section of this chapter I will demonstrate how drapery and ornaments were able to convey these spiritual qualities of grace.

2.1.2.3: Expression

Describing passions as ‘les vents qui sont voguer notre vaisseau sur la mer de la vie’ Winckelmann stated how beauty needed to be in ‘un état d'action & de passion’. He

¹⁴⁹Winckelmann.1765.262.

¹⁵⁰Winckelmann.1786.285.

¹⁵¹Winckelmann.1781.455.

described this term as 'l'expression'.¹⁵² Independently of beauty Winckelmann still defined expression as this state of 'action' and 'passion':

Indépendamment de la connaissance du beau, l'Artiste ne doit pas moins chercher acquérir celle de l'expression & de l'action. L'expression de l'Art, qui est une imitation de l'état actif & passif de notre âme & de notre corps, de nos passions & de nos mouvements, renferme dans le sens le plus étendue l'action & la disposition du corps.¹⁵³

The violent and exaggerated representation of emotion represented in his eyes the impetuosity and naivety of youth and was in his eyes devoid of dignity and grace:

La plupart des hommes ont toujours plus de penchant pour le fracas que pour le silence. Horace nous dit que dans les champs Elysées, les Ombres même sont moins attentives aux vers touchants de Sapho qu'aux accents belliqueux d'Alcée, qui chante les combats & l'expulsion des tyrans: c'est que dès notre jeunesse nous sommes plus charmés d'entendre la narration des exploits bruyants de l'ambition que d'écouter le récit des aventures pacifiques de la sagesse. ... Dans le dessin de ses figures il goûte aussi peu les préceptes du calme & du repos, que la jeunesse en général répugne, mais qui sont nécessaires. Hippocrate veut qu'on commence la guérison des maux de pied par le repos, de même il faut commencer la guérison de ces sortes d'Artistes par leur prescrire le calme.¹⁵⁴

The beauty and overall unity of the composition could be affected by 'la force de l'expression' which 'altérerait la beauté de l'ensemble'.¹⁵⁵ He compared the facial expression of modern works of art to the masks used by antique artists, because he believed that the use of formulaic expressions of emotions hid the truth.¹⁵⁶ He singled out as a particular example of this 'mechanised' system, Charles LeBrun's *Traité des Passions*, which formed part of the standardised education for French artists within the academic system:

Cette expression exagérée a été même réduite en théorie, dans les *Traité des Passions* de Charles LeBrun, ouvrage qu'on met entre les mains des jeunes gens

¹⁵²Ibid.456-457.

¹⁵³Ibid.510.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.524.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.646.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.523.

qui se destinent à l'Art. Les dessins qui accompagnent ce Traité donnent non seulement aux physionomies le dernier degré des affectations de l'âme, amis encore il y a des têtes où les passions sont poussées jusqu'à la rage. ...Mais comme l'ardente jeunesse a plus de penchant à saisir l'extrémité que le milieu, il lui sera difficile, en suivant cette méthode, d'attraper le ton véritable, étant difficile quand elle l'a saisie de le lui faire garder. Il en est ici comme des passions même qui, selon la doctrine de Chrysippe le Stoïcien, ressemblent à ces courses qu'on est une fois en pleine course, on ne peut plus s'arrêter ni rétrograder.¹⁵⁷

Charles LeBrun believed that expression was the 'natural image of the thing we wish to represent...and that every part of the body can serve to express the passions'. In particular he argued that 'the face (was) the part where the (soul) makes its feelings most apparent',¹⁵⁸ and so he set out in both descriptive and visual form the 'correct' expression for every human emotion. He suggested that for the emotion of 'Terror' for instance, the eyebrow should be 'raised high in the middle, and the muscles which produce this movement very prominent and swollen, pressing against each other and drawn down over the nose; both the nose and the nostrils must appear drawn up',¹⁵⁹ (Figure 2.7).

Winckelmann, however, fundamentally disagreed with this. Although his work, like LeBrun's, was intended to be instructive, his approach throughout the *Réflexions* and *Histoire* was reflective and receptive, and this passive rather than active mode of articulation was also visible in the way he approached the topic of expression. Fundamentally, he saw expression as something that had to be articulated in a gentle, sensitive and more nuanced manner and so in its essence could not fit into any kind of formulaic system such as that proposed by LeBrun. In particular, he believed that the change to the face and the attitude of the body when emotion was being expressed in an exaggerated or gestured manner was

¹⁵⁷Ibid.523-524.

¹⁵⁸Le Brun, *Lecture on Expression* (1698), printed in J. Montagu, *The Expression of Passions: The origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*, trans. Jennifer Montagu, Yale University Press. 1994 p 127-131. Edwards. 29-31.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.33.

disadvantageous to the overall harmony and balance of the painting and, more fundamentally, the depiction of beauty:¹⁶⁰

D'après cette considération, le silence ou le calme était une des maximes qu'on avait coutume d'observer par rapport à l'expression; parce que, selon l'opinion de Platon, cet état de l'âme était envisagé comme l'état mitoyen entre le plaisir & la peine. C'est pour cet effet que le calme est l'état le plus convenable à la beauté, comme il l'est à la mer: l'expérience montre que les plus beaux hommes ont ordinairement des manières douces & engageantes. C'est pour quoi on exige cette disposition, & dans l'ouvrage & dans l'ouvrier: l'idée de la haute beauté ne peut naître qu'au sein de la méditation, lorsque l'âme repliée sur elle même écarte toutes les images individuelles. De plus le calme dans l'homme est cet état qui le rend capable d'examiner & de connaître la nature & la propriété des choses: c'est ainsi qu'on ne découvre le fond des fleuves & de la mer que quand l'eau en est tranquille & inagitée. Il résulte de cette observation que ce n'est que dans le calme que l'Artiste pourra rendre l'essence même de l'Art.¹⁶¹

In almost direct contrast to LeBrun's *Expressions*, he believed that anything that detracted from calm and stillness 'of the sea' made beauty impossible to achieve:

Mais dans le sens le plus strict la signification de ce mot paraît se restreindre à ces caractères, formés par les airs de tête & par les traits de la physionomie; l'action qui produit l'expression, se rapporte plus à ce qui s'opère par la disposition & le mouvement du corps & des membres. ...Quoiqu'il en soit l'expression change les traits du visage & la disposition du corps; elle altère par conséquent les formes qui constituent la beauté. Or plus ce changement est grand, plus il est préjudiciable à la beauté.¹⁶²

This is the reason why he thought the *Laocoön* an outstanding work of art. Stylistically and formally it was 'beautiful', which was one important attribute. What made it remarkable in his eyes, and the characteristic that differentiated it from statues such as the *Apollo Belvedere*, was the way in which the sculptor had managed to convey the extreme emotion and 'tendresse paternelle' along with the expression of the priest's 'mortal agony' without

¹⁶⁰Winckelmann.1765.259.

¹⁶¹Winckelmann.1781.509.

¹⁶²Ibid.507-508.

distorting his body or the physical features of the face¹⁶³ (Figure 2.8). Winckelmann talked of the way in which the priest ‘lèvent (s)es yeux’ towards his children ‘qui implorent son secours’. ‘La tendresse paternelle’ was manifested ‘dans ses regards languissants’, and ‘sa bouche respire la langueur, & la lèvre inférieure qui descend, en est accablée; mais dans la lèvre supérieure, qui est tirée en haut, cette langueur est jointe à une sensation douloureuse’. It was this combination of sedate expression and the meditative quality of ‘grandeur tranquille’ that Winckelmann likened to ‘le fond de l’océan reste calme & immobile pendant que la tempête trouble sa surface, de même l’expression qui règne dans une belle figure Grecque, peint une âme toujours grande & tranquille au milieu des secouffes les plus violentes & des passions les plus terribles’.¹⁶⁴

To conclude, emotional expression in art was of enormous importance to Winckelmann because it gave life to the image depicted and took the quality of an artwork from beyond mere imitation towards expressing a form of his ideal. The issue for Winckelmann was not whether a particular emotion was expressed or not, but whether its physical manifestation in the artwork was appropriate, gracefully presented and in accord with the antique virtues of stoicism. In the next section I will present the argument that drapery was able to express emotions in a way that did not distort the face and was more advantageous to beauty.

2.1.2.4: Feeling

Winckelmann encouraged sentiment, emotion and a joyous gentle feeling as a means by which the observer could discern the internal beauty of the art work and at the same time admire its external shape and form with a rational mind-set and connoisseurial knowledge.

¹⁶³Ibid.874.

¹⁶⁴Winckelmann.1786.30.

This expression and reception of emotion was subtle, and he described the sensitive, harmonious and balanced expression of the nature of human emotion and feelings as ‘jouissance’:¹⁶⁵

D'après cette idée la beauté doit être comme l'eau la plus parfaite puisée dans une source pure, laquelle moins elle a de goût & plus elle est salubre, étant épurée de toutes les particules étrangères. Il en est de la beauté comme de la félicité.

The sensitive expression of emotion and personal pleasure as well as other attributes such as effect, elegance and grace were a key part of discerning and understanding antique art and the imaginative interpretation of the ideal, in addition to the more systematic and analytical analysis of the compositional nature of their contour and form. Winckelmann's emphasis on the subjective nature of ideal beauty and personal ‘jouissance’ however, was detached from desire since desire distorted the senses:

Une beauté conçue dans les grands principes de l'Art, plus sublimes que délicate, plus grave qu'agaçante, plaira moins aux sens aveugles, qu'une jolie figure ordinaire capable de parler & d'agir. La cause de ce phénomène est dans nos passions, excitées chez la plupart des hommes par le premier aspect: le cœur est déjà rempli de l'objet, quand l'esprit cherche encore à le goûter. Alors ce n'est plus la beauté qui nous charme, c'est la volupté qui nous séduit.¹⁶⁶

Instead of the discernment of beauty being based on the impulse of desire, Winckelmann stressed throughout the *Histoire* that its judgement was the result of reflection, contemplation consideration and meditation.

Telles sont les raisons qui ont empêché la vraie philosophie de porter son flambeau sur les productions de l'Art. Ces vérités grandes & générales qui, en nous sissant passer par des chemins de roses, nous conduisent à l'examen du beau, & de-là à la source même de la beauté universelle, se trouvent noyées dans de vaines spéculations. Quel autre jugement puis-je porter de tant de savantes productions, & même de tant d'ouvrages qui se sont proposés pour but le plus

¹⁶⁵Winckelmann.1781.443.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.1781.445-446.

sublime objet après Dieu, je veux dire la beauté! Je l'ai méditée longtemps, cette beauté, mais trop tard! Dans le feu de ma jeunesse je n'ai vu son essence qu'au travers d'une profonde obscurité. Aujourd'hui, que ce feu qui ne jette plus que faibles étincelles, commence à s'éteindre je n'en peux parler qu'avec des paroles sans énergies: heureux si mes efforts excitaient d'autres à donner des principales solides, des préceptes animé par les Grâces!¹⁶⁷

These quotations provide evidence that Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty was one that tried to separate itself from any notion and integration of physical and emotional desire. The challenge was therefore how to express the abstract and spiritual qualities of ideal beauty without distorting the features of the face which was detrimental to the physical expression of beauty. My proposal is that drapery and accessories were able to convey the abstract and spiritual qualities of ideal beauty such as harmony, grace, expression, and feeling. The second section will examine how Winckelmann embodied these aesthetic qualities in drapery and accessories.

Section 2.2: The Aesthetic Effect of Drapery

This second section will demonstrate that Winckelmann was interested in the aesthetic qualities of drapery as well as costume and drapery as part of his broader historical purpose. First it will build on the interest that Winckelmann had on the 'extremities' and ideal parts of the body and demonstrate that the expressive effect that he attributed to these was also mirrored in the interest that he had in peripheral items of clothing such as ornaments and accessories. It will demonstrate that if they were handled with good taste, they could convey an effect and a sense of elegance. I will then demonstrate that Winckelmann saw drapery and

¹⁶⁷Ibid.443-444.

accessories as part of his expressive language and that they were able to convey emotion and feelings in a manner that did not distort the body or a statue's facial features.

Finally I will demonstrate how clothing was able to express the spiritual qualities of grace. This will lead onto the final section of this chapter which will provide a new definition of Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty as one in which the formal and physical qualities of ideal parts and body were combined with the spiritual qualities of emotion and grace expressed visually in drapery.

Section: 2.2.1: The Elegance and Effect of Dress and Accessories

In the first chapter, I demonstrated how Winckelmann used rhetoric and ebullient prose to describe the folds and drapery on the *Chiaramonti Niobe* and other clothed statues. His response to these was similar to the way in which he described the imaginative charge inspired by the undulations of the muscles on the *Belvedere Torso* and the *Laocoön*. This hints that Winckelmann saw drapery as embodying some aesthetic qualities. The attention Winckelmann gave to the causal circumstances and habits of the Greeks and his interest in the practical ways they achieved different kinds of folds, creases and wrinkles in their material also demonstrates that he attributed aesthetic qualities to clothing and was interested in their effect. In this section, by examining the active attributes of 'effet', 'élégance', 'expression' and 'grâce' in Winckelmann's *Histoire* and *Réflexions* I will consider the degree to which drapery was given an aesthetic value by Winckelmann and how this might become part of his construct of ideal beauty.

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Winckelmann was interested in the historical detail of costume and ornaments, whether these were bracelets, brooches, earrings, hairpieces or other examples of accessories such as the edging and tassel on cloaks and robes,

embroidery and belts. There is also one example where Winckelmann specifically linked ideal beauty to the pierced earring on the heads of goddesses:

Par conséquent on pourrait, suivant le sentiment de cet auteur, attribuer à une déesse la tête qui, avec des oreilles percées, aurait une certaine beauté idéale, puisque dans quelque têtes de femmes, surtout dans celles de Livie, qui était très belle.¹⁶⁸

He was also interested in whether these objects demonstrated the concept of ‘bon goût’ that he had sought to clarify in the *Réflexions*. This concept of ‘good taste’, however, was amorphous and Winckelmann found it easier to describe a lack of taste than to pin down a particular definition of it. Winckelmann described ‘un extrême fini dans l'exécution’, ‘excessive imitation’ and over ornamentation as examples of a lack of good taste:

L'esprit d'imitation favorisa le manque de savoir. D'une main indécise, l'Artiste cherchait à réparer le défaut de science par un extrême fini dans l'exécution. Ce goût pour le fini, se montrait d'abord dans des accessoires, regardés comme peu essentiels lors du beau siècle de l'Art, & jugés même préjudiciables au grand style. Quintilien fait une observation judicieuse quand il dit, que plusieurs Artistes auraient mieux travaillé les ornements du Jupiter de Phidias, que Phidias lui-même.¹⁶⁹

The closest he got to defining the term positively was by connecting the word ‘taste’ with ‘élégance’ and describing how drapery or accessories could only be described as elegant when it was in the hands of ‘good taste’:

L'élégance n'est pas dans l'habillement même; & l'habillement ne devient élégant que lorsqu'il a été assorti par les mains du bon goût.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸Winckelmann.1799. 20-21.

¹⁶⁹Winckelmann.1781.672.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.612.

Winckelmann conveyed a sense of what he meant by the word 'élégance' by contrasting the word with 'la parure' when discussing the 'ajustement' of women's clothing.¹⁷¹

Winckelmann then defined what he meant by the word 'élégance' in further depth:

Par rapport à l'habillement je distingue la parure de l'élégance: par le terme d'élégance j'entends la manière d'ajuster les draperies, ainsi que la façon de disposer les plis des étoffes en général: par celui de parure, que je pourrais nommer aussi l'ornement, je comprends tout ce qui est broché, brodé & ajouté au vêtement.¹⁷²

In addition to this explicit definition of the word 'élégance', he used the words 'effet' and 'élégance' when describing the throw of the cloak or the fall of drapery. This demonstrates that Winckelmann was interested in effect of drapery rather than just its outward appearance, and costume had more than just a formal and historical role to play. Costume, drapery, ornaments and accessories could not be elegant or have an effect on their own. They only became 'élégant' in the hands of those who knew how to fold, wrap and hang them with 'un goût plus délicat'.¹⁷³ An example of this was a statue of Diana in the cabinet at Herculaneum (Figure 2.9):

Une statue de Diane du style le plus ancien, conservé au cabinet d'Herculanum, est ajustée d'une draperie qui porte de ces sortes de raies peintes, comme nous l'avons déjà observé ci-devant. Au reste l'ornement ordinaire, qui se trouve sur la bordure des habits de femme est traité d'une manière facile & expéditive. Cependant quelques vases de terre cuite nous offrent des draperies dont les ornements sont peints d'un travail plus fini & d'un goût plus délicat.¹⁷⁴

As we have seen in the previous chapter, drapery that enhanced the shape and the curve of the body was important. Winckelmann described how the *Daughters of the Niobe* were examples

¹⁷¹Ibid.611.

¹⁷²Ibid.611.

¹⁷³Ibid.614.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.612.

of this, and how the tightly fitted nature of their costume and drapery was designed to enhance and show the shape of the body:

Mais lorsque les Artistes se proposaient pour but de laisser entrevoir la beauté du nu, ils sacrifiaient le fracas de la draperie, à l'industrie des chairs, ainsi que nous le voyons au vêtement des filles de Niobé; leurs habits sont entièrement adhérents aux chairs & ne forment de plis qu'aux cavités, tandis qu'ils sont légers & pour ainsi dire collés aux éminences, simplement pour indiquer un vêtement. Il est d'expérience que toute draperie qui est relevée par un membre & qui tombe librement des deux cotés, ne forme point de plis & ne s'interrompt qu'aux cavités. Ces plis multipliés & interrompus, si recherchés par la plupart des Sculpteurs & particulièrement des Peintres modernes, n'ont pas été regardés comme des beautés par les Anciens.¹⁷⁵

In this instance Winckelmann stated that artists, in their endeavours to show the body underneath the clothing, had shaped their draperies so that they adhered to the feminine flesh hidden underneath. The fall of the draperies and the creases were folded into the hollows of the body and the item of clothing itself was on occasion barely indicated. Looking at the images of the *Niobe and her daughters*, this is slightly confusing in that, although the tunic of the youngest daughter at her mother's knees conforms to the description of a dress barely indicated, the drapery of the *Niobe* herself, although close fitting, is elegantly and gracefully hung (Figure 2.10). The folds indicate the shape of the body underneath, but the transparent effect of the clothing is not like the wet-cloth drapery effect of the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, for instance. The point that this passage suggests, however, is that once again, Winckelmann was seeking to compare the way the ancients worked their drapery, and shaped the folds of the cloth against the body, with the detail of what the effect of this shaping was. Of particular note is the way in which he described the fall of the cloth when it was in motion, as in the case of the outstretched arm of the *Niobe* herself, and the elegant way in which the folds fell in an uninterrupted and perpendicular line, which as he said 'tombe librement des deux côtés'. This interest in the fall of drapery indicates an attention to costume

¹⁷⁵Ibid.614.

and drapery that was beyond its connoisseurial, historical or imitative value, because it indicates a sense of movement. I think it is fair to argue that Winckelmann's interest in the 'movement' and 'fall' of drapery, which he also described with the term 'jet', in addition to the sense of exploring the shape of the folds and the throw of the cloth around the body, was his interpretation of the terms 'effect' and 'elegance' in their dress.

In further exploring this concept of 'good taste' Winckelmann also introduced the term 'grâce' to explain his meaning of the word elegance more deeply, and to explore the relationship of decoration to costume and drapery in a complex but important passage, part of which has already been cited:

L'ornement est à l'élégance, ce que la beauté est à la grâce. L'élégance n'est pas dans l'habillement même; & l'habillement ne devient élégant que lorsqu'il a été assorti par les mains du bon goût. L'élégance pourrait être nommée aussi la bonne grâce de l'ajustement, ce qui ne peut se dire pourtant que de la draperie de dessus, ou du manteau, parce que cette partie de l'habillement pouvait être jetée à volonté, tandis que la tunique, ou l'habit de dessous devait suivre la direction du manteau & de la ceinture pour concourir à la disposition des plis. Il résulte de-là, que cette marche raisonnée des plis peut être assignée à bien plus juste titre à la draperie des Anciens qu'à celle des Modernes: car les habits de ces derniers, de l'un & l'autre sexe, étant adhérents aux chairs, ne sont pas susceptibles de ces tours pittoresques des premiers.¹⁷⁶

What strikes one about this passage are a number of key words and phrases that have both an expressive or 'active' meaning, and also those that try to describe something that is in essence, indefinable. In the case of the latter I would include the phrase 'la bonne grâce de l'ajustement', meaning something that is both graceful and refined. The other three phrases that arise from the text are those relating to the activity and movement of the cloth in the manner indicated earlier, such as, 'cette partie de l'habillement pouvait être jetée à volonté', 'suivre la direction du manteau' and, finally, 'la ceinture pour concourir à disposition des plis'. All these phrases indicate a movement and activity that is not deliberately conceived or

¹⁷⁶Ibid.613.

artificial, and in some sense could be called accidental. It is as if the object, that is the piece of drapery or the shape of the body was static, but that the cloth, the ornament, or the decoration, and ‘accessory’ was where Winckelmann saw the action, movement and expression residing. Each example that he cited of the use of drapery in an ‘aesthetic’ way, looked at a different aspect of the relationship between the body of the statue and the cloth that draped around or clothed it.

An example of the ‘accidental’ grace and movement was exactly what Winckelmann described when looking at the piece of cloth across the loins of the *Laocoön* (Figure 2.11):

Mais on voit par la draperie jetée négligemment, comme celle du Laocoön, & une autre étalée sur un vase, qui est avec le nom de l'Artiste, EPATΩN, & qui se trouve à la Villa Albani avec quelle élégance les Anciens savaient alors interrompre & contraster les draperies.¹⁷⁷

In a different way, in his text *Le Sentiment du Beau*, where Winckelmann examined what made up the essence of beauty, he connected the concept of ‘le beau idéal’ and his abstract definition of beauty with the draperies on the *Apollo Belvedere*. Describing the *Apollo Belvedere* as an example of ideal beauty, he described the draperies that swept across his shoulders as being as beautiful as the rest of his body (Figure 2.12):

L'Apollon du Belvédère est, pour la physionomie, un modèle du beau idéal, & le Génie de la villa Borghèse nous en offre un de la beauté actuelle ou purement humaine; la tête de l'Apollon ne peut convenir qu'à un dieu irrité, & qui en même temps méprise son ennemi. Il faut convenir aussi que les draperies des statues antiques ne sont pas moins belles que le nu: le jet en est heureux & sage, & toutes n'ont pas été faites s'après l'étoffée mouillée, comme on le prétend (sassement). Ce ne sont que les étoffes légères avec de petits plis, & qui touchant immédiatement la chair que les anciens ont faites dans ce goût.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷Ibid.614-615.

¹⁷⁸Winckelmann.1786.283.

Another example of clothing having an aesthetic quality was the ‘jet de draperies’ in the statue of the *Niobe*. Winckelmann described these as the perfect expression of both passion and movement. He suggested that the sculptor had expressed these in a ‘graceful’ form which did not disturb the facial features or the overall harmony of the piece of sculpture, and hence one that in his eyes became a manifestation of grace:

Secondé par cette même Grace, l'Auteur de Niobé osa s'élancer dans la région des idées incorporelles, il sut trouver le secret de combiner l'anxiété de la mort, à la plus haute beauté: créateur des Esprits purs, il produisit des formes célestes qui, loin d'exciter les désirs des sens, ne font naître qu'une contemplation profonde de la beauté souveraine. Ses figures ne semblent point formées pour les passions: elles paraissent seulement les avoir adoptées.¹⁷⁹

In these three cases of the statues he described as the most ‘beautiful’ examples of antique sculpture, drapery had an important role to play aesthetically and not just imitatively. With the *Laocoön* it was the throw of the cloth across his loins that expressed a sense of elegance. The *Apollo Belvedere*’s draperies were an example of good taste and beauty, and for the *Niobe* draperies had an expressive function and quality that encapsulated his understanding of the term ‘grâce’. Although, as he stated in the *Histoire*, more clothed statues tended to be female, because the Greek habit to go about unclothed was a male not female custom, it also appears that the aesthetic importance that he attributed to clothing applied to both genders, male and female alike. In this respect drapery was a transgendered signifier of the expressive, moveable aspect of beauty that articulated other abstract qualities that he also sought to define such as expression and his concept of grace, both of which I shall now explore in greater detail.

¹⁷⁹Winckelmann.1781.664.

Section 2.2.2: Expression in Drapery

In the first section of this chapter I demonstrated that Winckelmann was concerned about the distorting effect of emotions on the face, exemplified by the work of Charles LeBrun. For the statue of the *Laocoön*, the emotional expression was to be found in the body and the contortion of the muscles. Winckelmann stated that it was important for the *Laocoön* to be nude because the contortions of his body provided the visual expression of his agony, and in this way, it did not disturb the nobility of his facial features:

Laocoön est l'image de la plus vive douleur qui puisse agir sur les muscles, les nerfs & les veines. Le sang en effervescence par les morsures des serpents se porte avec rapidité aux viscères, & toutes les parties du corps en contention, expriment les plus cruelles souffrances, artifice par lequel le Statuaire a mis en jeu tous les ressorts de la nature & a fait connaître toute l'étendue de son savoir.¹⁸⁰

The point about expression and passion in the *Laocoön* was that it was a moveable expression and therefore it did not have to rely on a grimace or a raised eyebrow to signify the nobility of the soul underneath. Because the body of the *Laocoön* was moving, any drapery covering the body would have reduced the expressive quality of that particular piece of sculpture:

On peut objecter que l'artiste aurait dû couvrir son Laocoön d'une draperie, afin d'observer la décence que semblait exiger son caractère de prêtre; mais par là il aurait caché un grand nombre de beautés, & rendu moins frappante l'expression de la douleur.¹⁸¹

The opposite was true of the *Niobe*, though. Describing her state as representing a degree of 'anxiété indicible', which had caused an 'engourdissement des sens, lorsque la présence inévitable de la mort ravit à l'âme jusqu'à la faculté de penser', he stated that '...indifférence, n'altère point les traits de la physionomie'. The result of this was for the artist to 'imprimer à

¹⁸⁰Ibid.517.

¹⁸¹Winckelmann.1786.31.

ses figures la plus haute beauté, ainsi qu'il l'a fait'.¹⁸² Winckelmann stated that the *Niobe* had achieved a state of 'beauty' because her face was devoid of expression, and that passion had 'absorbed' it. In this way expression and emotion could not be expressed through the body. Instead '...ses figures ne semblent point formées pour les passions: elles paraissent seulement les avoir adoptées'.¹⁸³ Instead her emotional distress was conveyed through the 'jet de la draperie & dans le goût de l'ajustement', which he called 'la grâce'.¹⁸⁴ (Figure 2.13)

This section has demonstrated that drapery was a key part of Winckelmann's expressive vocabulary, and it was able to signify attitudes and attributes which were not possible through facial features or when the body was undressed. The emotional content of drapery meant that it must have had a role in his concept of beauty, and should be regarded as aesthetically significant when constructing his vision of the ideal. Some antique statues were able to convey the extremes of human suffering in a dignified and harmonious manner using the body alone. But in truth, he could find only one example, that of the *Laocoön*. The movement of drapery was therefore a means for the artist to express emotion, but without distorting the facial features in the manner of Charles LeBrun's *Expressions*. The best example of this in his eyes was the statue of the *Niobe*, whose outstretched arm and vertically hanging folds of the cloak simultaneously expressed the extreme emotion and her maternal despair as she precipitated her arm forward to protect the youngest child crouched and terrified at her knees.¹⁸⁵

Whilst the beauty of the *Apollo Belvedere* had in his eyes the static purity, serenity and perfection which fitted his description of 'la source pure', the statue of both the *Niobe* and the

¹⁸²Winckelmann.1781.517.

¹⁸³Ibid.664.

¹⁸⁴Ibid.517.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.517.

Laocoön were equally important to his concept of the ‘beau idéal’ because they conveyed moments of extreme expressive emotion:

Parmi les traits de perfection les plus frappants qui distinguent les productions des artistes Grecs, il y en a un qui mérite une attention particulière, parce qu'on le remarque dans toutes les meilleures statues, & qu'il serait difficile de le rencontrer ailleurs: je veux parler de cette noble simplicité, de cette grandeur tranquille, qu'on admire dans les attitudes & dans l'expression.¹⁸⁶

This stoic nature of intense feeling, sensitivity and emotion expressed in a ‘sedate and noble’ manner was what attracted him to the *Laocoön* because in this he believed it was possible for the truth to become visible. He believed that distorted facial features did not allow the true character and expression of the soul to become visible.¹⁸⁷ He also believed that there was a very sensitive balance between what was appropriate and ‘decent’ in the gestures and ‘attitudes’ of images because it was important to be graceful.¹⁸⁸

Section: 2.2.3: Drapery and Grace

This confluence of drapery as an expression of ‘otherness’ and a form of spirituality provides the opportunity to fully explore how the effect of drapery was important in an abstract and metaphorical sense for Winckelmann and therefore how the significance of costume and drapery went beyond any of the formal, imitative, historic and expressive criteria that I have already presented as significant and central to the broader understanding of the *Réflexions* and the *Histoire*. I will therefore propose here that Winckelmann believed that drapery could be an expression of grace.

¹⁸⁶Winckelmann.1786.30.

¹⁸⁷Winckelmann.1781.508.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.507.

Draperies and ornaments were related more to the female figure than to the male form, and Winckelmann specifically embodied the characteristic of grace not only with the idea and imagery of the *Three Graces*, but also anthropomorphically in the form of a relaxed, sensual, lightly-dressed and warm woman¹⁸⁹ (Figure 2.14):

La grâce s'étend donc aussi sur les draperies. Il est facile de se former une idée de la manière dont les Grâces devaient être vêtues dans les premiers temps; ce n'était certainement point avec des étoffes lourdes & magnifiques, mais d'un voile léger jeté négligemment autour du corps, ainsi qu'on voudrait voir sortir de son lit une jeune beauté qu'on aime.¹⁹⁰

Winckelmann himself did not express any anxiety about the suggestiveness and sensuality of the female form and the drapery that should both hint at and reveal the body underneath. In fact in his *Refléxions* he particularly made the point that contemporary artists did not have to 'violier les règles du vrai & du beau' by fully dressing their figures. Winckelmann's 'passion for art' and for the 'form' of the body, both male and female, was also apparent in the way in which he believed that Persian art could not aspire to beauty because of their religious concerns about depicting the nude human form, either naked or draped in a way that the shape of the body underneath was suggested.¹⁹¹ In modern art he praised the 'draperies assommantes' of Raphael for achieving the right effect in line with the shape of the body.¹⁹² He then contrasted this sensuous, gentle and feminine description of the nature of grace, with the work of Michelangelo, whose sculptures he criticised as those produced by a man who '...jamais permis de sentir les mouvements doux, naturels & tranquilles de la grâce'.¹⁹³ Instead he said that Michelangelo made all his women look like Amazons.¹⁹⁴ For the same

¹⁸⁹Winckelmann referred to the original Greek version of the *Three Graces* in which they were lightly dressed: '...en effet les Grâces les plus anciennes étaient figurées vêtues'. Ibid. 1781.632.

¹⁹⁰Winckelmann. 1786.292.

¹⁹¹Winckelmann. 1781.329.

¹⁹²Winckelmann.1786.292.

¹⁹³Ibid.293.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.24-25.

reason he also criticised Bernini whom he described as ‘un homme de génie & de grands talents; mais il ne connut jamais la grâce’.¹⁹⁵

The connection between grace and drapery, which Winckelmann had also described in more general terms as ‘graceful’, was reiterated again in the *De la Grâce* when he gave as examples the throw of the folds in works from high antiquity.

La grâce dans l'accessoire de la figure, consiste, comme dans la figure même, à se rapprocher le plus qu'on peut de la nature. Dans les ouvrages de la plus haute antiquité le jet des plis sous la ceinture est presque perpendiculaire; ils sont représentés tels qu'ils se forment naturellement dans une draperie moelleuse & légère. A mesure que les arts ont fait des progrès, on a cherché la variété; mais les vêtements ont toujours été traités comme un tissu léger, dont les plis ne devaient être ni lourdement accumulés, ni bizarrement dispersés, mais rapprochés & réunis avec élégance & simplicité, pour en former de grandes masses.¹⁹⁶

The quotations both earlier and in this section on grace have categorically demonstrated that drapery and accessories illustrated Winckelmann's construct of grace. Drapery was able to express the idea of grace in sculpture and painting. It was also able to indicate graceful movement, elegance and emotion, without the expressive distortion that could undermine the overall harmony and balance of the artwork.

¹⁹⁵Ibid.294.

¹⁹⁶Ibid.291.

Conclusion

Winckelmann debated at length the relationship between dress and nudity. Whereas he believed that nudity and an understanding of the human form was an essential component of art, he was also clear that he regarded nudity as a form of imitation from Nature, albeit the best and most carefully selected of parts.¹⁹⁷ Imitation in itself did not create the ideal; that was achieved through accurate imitation combined with imagination and grace.¹⁹⁸ In this schema costume and drapery had two functions; first, in combination with erudition to imitate Nature accurately. The second was to enhance Nature and to act as means of expressing emotion, grace and beauty. In order to achieve the latter, drapery had to mould the form and contour of the body. Winckelmann found the aesthetic nature of drapery that closely fitted the form and transparently exposed the body underneath, and its seductiveness, a particularly appropriate and attractive form of clothing for the depiction of women, although he was also interested in drapery on male figures, even the example of the (mostly nude) figure of the *Laocoön*. The semi-transparent clothing, the veils, the negligees that he characterised as covering ‘une jeune beauté qu'on aime’, literally provided a veil that expressed the spiritual and supernatural aspects of his aesthetic. In this respect drapery acted as an aesthetic signifier for the expressive, moveable and graceful attributes of antique sculpture, and which made up the immaterial aspects and conceptual nature of his construct of ideal beauty.

¹⁹⁷Ibid.14.

¹⁹⁸Winckelmann.1781.457.

Section 2.3: Winckelmann's definition of Ideal Beauty

The complex interweaving of feeling and form detached from desire, and expressed by Winckelmann in the language, the structure, the method and the play with rhetoric and text makes the *Histoire* combined with his connoisseurial texts a compelling and interwoven expression and definition of his concept of ideal. It is not easy to precisely elucidate through this web of analogy and metaphor Winckelmann's exact definition of ideal beauty, but again, it is possible that Winckelmann made his definition obtuse, multifaceted and amorphous because he believed that complexity and fluidity were intrinsic to the very definition of the term. This section will propose that Winckelmann incorporated drapery and accessories, both male and female, as part of his construct of ideal beauty.

Since Winckelmann's process of approaching the topic of ideal beauty involved the two different synthetic and analytic methods, and just as key definitions such as grace and style had different meanings in his work, it makes sense to present a thesis that his definition of ideal beauty could not reside in a single type or sex of statue. It had to encapsulate the different ways in which the effect of personal sensation and the response to a work of art combined and related to its formal and technical beauty. It also had to incorporate expression and passion, but in a manner that was detached from desire. If one accepts this reading of Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty, it means that works of art representing a sense of ideal beauty could depict both sexes (and none) and also incorporate artworks that were both draped and nude, as expressing two different forms of beauty articulated in two different ways. The outward moveable parts such as drapery and accessories could be a reflection of the inner expressions, emotions and grace, and the inner shape and form of the body in turn was core to its exterior beauty, visible either in the form of ideal nude parts or lightly clothed garments.

It also becomes possible to argue that the formal shape and the physical embodiment of beauty could be incorporated with its abstract and expressive elements into Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty. Costume and drapery have to be integral to this definition, not only because Winckelmann paid so much attention to the imitative detail and content of them, but also because he was engaged with the emotional effect they created and this was an integral part of the ideal as he saw it.

By looking at Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty in this way it becomes clear that the nude male figure alone has to be stripped of its significance as the only symbol of ideal beauty in Winckelmann's aesthetic because it is literally too naked unless the skin of the nude form could incorporate the expressive role of the draperies, accessories and extremities necessary for the object to be ideal. Even though the effect of the rippling muscles on the *Belvedere Torso* and the *Laocoön* were able to achieve this articulation of the ideal through the skin, with other statues Winckelmann's concept of the ideal was focused on the moving, ineffable nature, form and effect of the relationship between dress and undress. In this way drapery became the material or 'spoken' form of the transposition from beauty to ideal beauty, and the draped *Niobe* and the nude *Apollo Belvedere*, with undulating folds breaking up the nakedness of the nude form, could both be embodiments of ideal beauty.

Section 2.4: The Definition of Ideal Beauty in its Historical Context

Although the system that Winckelmann developed to present a historical trajectory of the evolution of ancient art was detailed and sophisticated, and his stress on the importance of form and contour a characteristic that set his work apart from the intellectual environment of a city dominated by the exuberance of Bernini's sculptural theatre, Winckelmann was still a man of his time. As demonstrated in the late Baroque exuberance of Maron's portrait of Winckelmann, the art of drapery dominated artistic life in Rome, and this was combined with a relaxed mix of genres that would not have been found in its French equivalent. Although Winckelmann rejected some of the excesses of Roman aesthetics, specifically the way in which the drapery of Bernini hid the form of the body underneath, his references in the *Histoire* and *Réflexions* to the painters Francesco Solemena, Carlo Maratta, Gavin Hamilton, as well as Mengs, Mengs's master Masucci and the work of the Flemish sculptor François Duquesnoy, demonstrate that the Roman emphasis on drapery had to be the framework from within which Winckelmann developed the theory and approach of a more sophisticated balancing and relationship between the nude form and drapery rather than the other way around. This proposition can be demonstrated by the context of the intellectual debates prevalent between Rome and Paris in the early eighteenth century, and the relaxed mix of genres and exuberant use of drapery evident in the artwork of leading painters in Rome.

Historically between Paris and Rome there had been an ongoing debate amongst the 'gens de lettres' throughout the eighteenth century. This intellectual debate known as the 'raging battle of Greek versus Roman supremacy' in which Piranesi and Le Roy were the main protagonists was centred on the French Academy in Rome in the 1760s around the time Winckelmann was

writing.¹⁹⁹ The theoretical debate surrounding it became increasingly petty and obtuse, focusing on questions of which architectural form had the most august derivation. However, it demonstrated that in Rome the aesthetic preference was for the supremacy and ‘grandeur’ of the elaborate architectural forms characteristic of Roman and Etruscan culture in contrast to the French championing of Greek ideals of ‘noble simplicity’ that Winckelmann espoused.²⁰⁰

The emphasis on drapery and the relaxed mélange of genres when compared to French art of the period is also evident when examining the importance of drapery in Roman art work. Mengs’s paintings themselves, and more specifically, the use of drapery in his work, demonstrate his particular debt to Baroque and Rococo techniques in the use of colour and the handling of dress, and it was this talent that brought him international recognition. Watelet referred to the skill and panache that Mengs had in rendering drapery describing him as one of the greatest exponents of the art:

...écoutons sur la manière de draper de ce grand artiste, un artiste qui l’a beaucoup étudié, le célèbre Mengs.²⁰¹

Whilst the female figures in Mengs’s allegorical painting *Parnassus* were lavishly draped in a classical style (Figure 2.15), and balanced with the central male nude figure, the detail and attention given towards the accurate and sumptuous detailing of contemporary eighteenth-century clothing and accessories was particularly evident in his portraiture as demonstrated in the first chapter. Mengs’s portraiture demonstrated the skill with which he was able to handle

¹⁹⁹David Irwin, 'Gavin Hamilton: Archaeologist, Painter, and Dealer', *The Art Bulletin*, 44 (1962); Lingo. 89. John Wilton Ely, *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi*, (London : Thames and Hudson 1978). 66-77.

²⁰⁰See Athena Leoussi’s chapter on *Images of Greece as Images of France* for further discussion of ‘the (post-revolutionary) identification of the French with the ancient Greeks and its expression in French art’. Athena S. Leoussi, *Nationalism and Classicism: The Classical Body as National Symbol in Nineteenth-Century England and France*, (Basingstoke : Macmillan, 1998).180.

²⁰¹Claude-Henri Watelet and Pierre Charles Lévesque, *Dictionnaire Des Arts De Peinture, Sculpture Et Gravure*, (Paris : L.F. Prault, 1792).1.699.

the detail and the intricacy of costume in an almost super-realist manner, as characteristic of his commissioned work (Figure 1.25).

The portraiture of Mengs's archrival Pompeo Batoni also demonstrates that Mengs's interest in clothing was not a trait particular to him. A brief look at the relaxed 'mélange' of genres and conventions visible in Batoni's work where English aristocrats were depicted standing next to ancient busts and symbols of antiquity or in semi-allegorical dress and a pose evoking a Greek hero or a Roman goddess, suggest that Roman artists fully embraced drapery as an expressive force in their work and part of the popularity and 'fashion' for 'the antique', for which Mengs had noted there was greater interest in Rome for than in Paris.²⁰²

The use of drapery and the lack of male nude figures in Gavin Hamilton's history paintings also suggest that the argument equating a passion for antiquity with the male nude form as a symbol of ideal beauty look unstable. An important point of contact for English Grand Tourists and a go-between between the Vatican and the trade in antiquities, Hamilton was at the epicentre of Roman artistic life and it was his handling of classical subject matter that drew praise from the likes of Winckelmann, who described him as 'sans cela un des meilleurs peintres Anglais'. Winckelmann particularly admired Hamilton's *Death of Hector*, which he described as having a 'grandeur naturelle'.²⁰³

This importance attached to drapery in Roman artistic circles perhaps also explains why particular attention was given to Winckelmann's writings on the male nude figure at the time the *Histoire* was first published. Within the context of an environment where artistic skill and virtuosity was demonstrated by the skill that artists could demonstrate in drapery,

²⁰² Other unique antique references in Batoni's British portraits include a bronze statuette of the Venus de' Medici (Portrait of a Gentleman, 1758-59; private collection), a terracotta statuette of the Farnese Hercules (Charles John Crowle, 1761-62; Musée du Louvre, Paris); and a marble krater recorded and illustrated in Bernard de Montfaucon's 1722 pictorial encyclopaedia of classical antiquities. As part of his portraiture the style and effect of dress and drapery were also important. Edgar Bowron, *Pompeo Batoni : Prince of Painters in Eighteenth-Century Rome*, (New Haven: Yale University Press ; Houston : Museum of Fine Arts, 2007).84.

²⁰³ Winckelmann.1786.261.

Winckelmann's work had an impact because it was proposing something different, i.e. a form of clothing that allowed the nude form underneath to be evident and a re-balancing between form and contour and costume and drapery which had been hitherto lost in Baroque art. To conclude, analysing Winckelmann's interest in costume and drapery also is supported by the broader historical and art-historical context of eighteenth-century Rome. It also hints at a difference in artistic training methods undertaken in Paris and Rome.

Section 2.5: Masculine Subjectivities and Conclusion

The re-contextualisation of Winckelmann's work and a re-reading of his definition of ideal beauty dramatically shifts the foundational premise from which Winckelmann studies and the French art of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century have been studied. In the last twenty years these have been built on the premise that ideal beauty was configured solely in the emblem of the classical male nude, linked to the perceived homoeroticism of Winckelmann's work and a reading of the homosocial environment of eighteenth-century Rome. In this light, it is important to give some attention to the work of Alex Potts, and in particular his book *Flesh and the Ideal* in which the association between the figure of the ephebe and Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty is made. This section will therefore briefly engage with his work and propose that in contrast to the work of Potts, the meta-historical reading of the significance of costume and drapery both enriches our understanding and definition of Winckelmann and his definition of ideal beauty, and can do the same for late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art.

First of all I will give a brief outline of Potts's methodology and approach in *Flesh and the Ideal*, and then I will engage with his reading of Winckelmann and Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty. Finally I will question Potts's approach and the conclusions that he makes, offering an alternate reading of Winckelmann's concept ideal beauty that incorporates Winckelmann's interest in costume and drapery. This will be illustrated with a re-reading of the image of *Achilles and Penthesilea* that Potts used as a foundational premise for his thesis in *Flesh and the Ideal*.

2.5.1: Potts's Approach

In *Flesh and the Ideal*, Alex Potts first acknowledged and recognised Winckelmann's importance as a historian, inventing a new kind of history of art that looked at art as a

historical process of rise and decline. He also acknowledged the impact of Winckelmann's antiquarian work and the effect it had on the integration of Greek art into Enlightenment culture,²⁰⁴ contextualising it within the intellectual history of eighteenth-century Europe²⁰⁵ and a scholarly analysis of Winckelmann's unusual and complex personal life.²⁰⁶

Potts particularly focused his thesis argument and the configuration of ideal beauty in the male nude figure within Winckelmann's theory of artistic modes and historical styles. In this way, Potts embedded Winckelmann's aesthetics into Winckelmann's wider teleological and historical purpose and what he described as the 'psychic resonance' of the Greek ideal.²⁰⁷

After a systematic analysis of stylistic difference in art history, referencing Barthes, de Man, Schapiro, Panofsky, Wöfflin and Freid,²⁰⁸ and a visual illustration of the different styles identified by Winckelmann using antique coins,²⁰⁹ Potts focused on the difference between two of the styles that Winckelmann analysed in reference to examples from antique art. These were the 'high' style and the 'beautiful' style. To each of these styles he attributed particular characteristics and a physical example; an abstract simplicity of beauty which he associated with the statue of the *Niobe* and a grace of form and contour to the statue of the *Laocoön*. He integrated these two styles into Winckelmann's text arguing that according to rhetorical theory, the 'emergence of one meant the disappearance of the other'.²¹⁰

Potts looked at the differences in Winckelmann's written style that I have also remarked upon, connecting Winckelmann's rhetorical style with his concept of historical styles and periodisations. This meant that the disparity in Winckelmann's text between ebullient rhetoric on the one hand and 'hard, austere and disconnected' language on the other, were in Potts's

²⁰⁴Potts.1994.7.

²⁰⁵Ibid.33-35.

²⁰⁶Ibid.182-221.

²⁰⁷Ibid.7.

²⁰⁸Ibid.67.

²⁰⁹Ibid.82-84.

²¹⁰Ibid.101.

argument, also representative of the difference in the historical styles of the ‘high’ style and the ‘beautiful’ style. Potts then connected these particular styles to their representation by Winckelmann of the ‘sublime’ or ‘high’ style in the draped female figure of the *Niobe* and the ‘graceful’ or ‘beautiful’ style as represented by the nude male figure of the *Laocoön*.²¹¹

The respective female and male orientation of the *Niobe* and the *Laocoön* created a natural gendered separation between the historical and rhetorical, in addition to their dressed and undressed form. In this way the figuration of Winckelmann’s text, rhetoric and constructs of beauty were also separated out by Potts into the two different genders, masculine and feminine. Potts connected the ‘sublime’ style and female figure of the *Niobe* with dense text, death, a negative libidinal charge and visually, stillness due to the impassivity of her face.²¹² In contrast the rhetorical exuberance of Winckelmann’s description of male statues was visually embodied the ‘beautiful and graceful style’ of the *Laocoön*.²¹³

Into this sophisticated analysis of Winckelmann’s text and differences in historical styles Potts then drew on the psychoanalytical work of Freud and presented the case that Winckelmann’s exuberant descriptions of male statuary were also expressions of Winckelmann’s sublimated desire for the male nude form.²¹⁴ These Freudian themes of fantasy, sublimated emotion and fetish allowed Potts to read the female figure in Winckelmann’s work as a negative signifier because, as a homosexual man, he argued that it held no erotic charge for Winckelmann.²¹⁵ Instead he presented the case that because of Winckelmann’s sublimated desire for the male nude, his definition of ideal beauty had to exclude the female body and draped female statues.²¹⁶

²¹¹Ibid.108.

²¹²Ibid.3-4.

²¹³Ibid.129-130.

²¹⁴Ibid.5 & 114.

²¹⁵This is despite Potts recounting Winckelmann’s affair with Mengs’s wife. Ibid.208.

²¹⁶Ibid.129-130.

Potts agreed that Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty was difficult to clarify,²¹⁷ arguing that there were five components to it. The first was the narcissistic 'recognition of man in himself', or what Potts called a 'human subjectivity'.²¹⁸ This confirmed the focus of ideal beauty being configured in a male rather than female image and incorporated both Winckelmann as a man, and as a homosexual man. Even though desire was not part of the construct of ideal beauty, its construction was going to have what Potts would call a male subjectivity.²¹⁹ In both *Flesh and Ideal* and *Beautiful Bodies*,²²⁰ Potts also provided a historic validation for this 'subjectivity' based solely on the exclusive 'masculinity or monism' of eighteenth-century Europe.²²¹ Secondly, Potts conflated ideal beauty with images of freedom, both a personal form of freedom of sexual expression but also the freedom of expression of the self within the polis.²²² Potts then proposed that in the 'self-absorbed free-standing naked male figure' there was the 'absolute freedom' that 'makes possible the imaginative creation of an ideal beauty'.²²³

The third aspect of Potts's configuration of ideal beauty was what he called the 'blanking out of the feminine'. He argued that the embodiment of the sublime style in female figure negated her possibility of holding an imaginative charge, and her draped aspect meant that she could not represent the ideal because the line and contour of her body was not visible.²²⁴ Potts's figuration of ideal beauty was therefore solely constructed in terms of Winckelmann's interest in line and the 'abstract flow of contour and surface',²²⁵ which echoed 'the logic of

²¹⁷Ibid.171.

²¹⁸Ibid.152.

²¹⁹Ibid.131,135,179 & 238.

²²⁰Alex Potts, 'Beautiful Bodies and Dying Heroes: Images of Ideal Manhood in the French Revolution', *History Workshop*, (1990).

²²¹Potts.1994.150.

²²²Ibid.182.

²²³Ibid.4.

²²⁴Ibid.131.

²²⁵Ibid.170.

Hogarth's famous line of beauty'.²²⁶ Finally, Potts's definition of Winckelmann's ideal had to have the imaginative charge of desire but at the same time be separate from it.²²⁷

In seeking to reconcile Winckelmann's language and orientation with his sexually detached definition of ideal beauty Potts proposed that Winckelmann's rhetoric was therefore the subliminal expression of his sexual desire for the sexless ephebe epitomised by Jacques-Louis David's painting of the young Revolutionary hero *La Mort du Bara* rather than my proposition that rhetoric was a means by which to engage the reader with the expressive and emotional component of ideal beauty.²²⁸

The focus on a 'linear' reading of Winckelmann's concept of the ideal, however, means that in Potts's eyes there was no aesthetic or conceptual aspect of the ideal separate from the form of the body. In turn, this means that words like 'style' can therefore only mean historical style, and the word 'grace' can only mean the 'graceful' or beautiful style rather than the range of physical and metaphysical meanings that I have read into each word. In summary, despite the complex nature of his text, using Potts's method, each word and term used by Winckelmann only had 'singular' meanings rather than the multiple figurations and definitions I have argued Winckelmann attributed to these words and terms.

Potts's argument and logic provides a complex and sophisticated reading of an extraordinary man. However, taking into account the attention that Winckelmann gave to costume and drapery, and looking at Winckelmann from the perspective of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art and art criticism, which Potts also explored with this lens, my instinctive response to *Flesh and Ideal* was that Potts's approach did not express the richness of Winckelmann's interest in costume and drapery, and the singularity of his argument that

²²⁶Ibid.171-172. I would also challenge Potts's use of Burke and Hogarth as an appropriate theoretical underpinning for the reading of Winckelmann and in the following chapter propose that Winckelmann was influenced by the French art theory of Félibien and de Piles.

²²⁷Ibid.118.

²²⁸Ibid.165.

ideal beauty resided only in the line and contour of the sexless male nude form limited the reading of the man. My questioning of this reading and its manifestation in the debates about ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art was confirmed by Salon sources that demonstrate that the configuration of ideal beauty in the male nude figure was not an *a priori* with many of the critics themselves expressing reservations about the use of the male nude figure in art.

To conclude, I have already presented my argument about how Winckelmann's use of rhetoric was an expressive device, how desire was deliberately projected into the text so that it did not play any part in the construct of the ideal and instead engaged the reader with the personal 'jouissance' of looking at art. In addition I have focused on the importance of emotion and a feeling for the beautiful as an intrinsic part of ideal beauty. I have questioned Potts's reading of the word 'grace' and the pre-eminence he gives to Winckelmann's emphasis on line and contour. As an alternative, I have proposed another reading of the image of *Achilles and Penthesilea* that Potts used in *Flesh and Ideal* to outline his thesis approach.

2.5.2: Fleshing Out

In the 1781 version of *L'Histoire de l'Art de l'Antiquité*, Winckelmann illustrated his chapter on ideal beauty and the essence of art with the striking image of a young man in a billowing cloak holding in his arms the lifeless body of beautiful woman. Potts also used the image as the outline premise for his thesis in *Flesh and the Ideal* identifying the figures as *Achilles and Penthesila*, even though in Winckelmann's 1767 *Monumenti antichi inediti* Winckelmann identified the figures as Theseus holding the dead body of a woman named Faïa whom he has just killed and with whom he had also fallen in love. (Figure 2.16). Potts argued that this

image demonstrated that Winckelmann associated feminine beauty with death building into his thesis that women held a negative imaginative charge for Winckelmann.²²⁹ If one examines this picture by looking at the relationship between drapery and nudity as different but constituent parts of ideal beauty instead of the image representing desire and death, there is however, another way to interpret the roles of the male and the female figures, and their relationship to concepts of ideal beauty.

As Winckelmann described the form of the nude body and its shape and proportion as the building block for his understanding of beauty, the choice of illustration is interesting because it challenges the traditional Greek gender stereotypes in which the male figure is the one on display and the female figure draped. In this particular image where the nude body presented is female and not male the woman is stretched out, recumbent in a position that could be as much the pose of a fulfilled, satiated lover reclining as one that is in fact that of a corpse. The details of her headdress and the bracelets on her arms and ankles accentuate the fact that she is undressed, but at the same time adds elegance and expression to her form and defines her status as Queen of the Amazons. The detailed tracing of the contours on the stretched body that contrast with the enveloping nature and billowing folds of the man's cloak, act as a shield or a pair of wings that swathes, embraces and encircles the pair. Like the arm of the *Niobe*, Theseus reaches out to pull the cloak over them both, this action of the lover's remorse, creating the movement and emotional effect in the image. He is dressed in the Greek style, with a large cloak clasped with an ornate brooch at his neck, but with nothing else underneath. His lower body is hidden as the body of Faia is stretched across him.

Detached from the nude body as either a symbol of ideal beauty or as an object of desire, how are we to interpret the transgressive nature of drapery and nudity in this particular image? Does this cloaking of the male figure indicate that Theseus was the expressive force in the

²²⁹Ibid.2.

picture, and if so does this then suggest that any gendering of roles – such as elegance and expression residing primarily in the female figure because they were usually draped – is misleading in an analysis of Winckelmann's work? Correspondingly does the nudity of both male and female bodies indicate that Winckelmann saw them both as equal in his construct of beauty and that this ancient image, although violent and passionate in its intent, in some ways gave them both an equal aesthetic status in his analysis of beauty? Finally, is there some way in which the passivity of the nude body can be seen to symbolise vulnerability, and the clothed strength?

I believe that this re-reading of the image through the lens of costume and drapery is persuasive. This is because it incorporates the role of clothing into Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty in a way in which makes sense of the broader purpose of the *Histoire*, and because it also allows for expression, emotion and effect to be articulated in a way that does not make it a slave to desire – either sublimated or overt. In arguing for this interpretation, however, it limits the importance of gender as a method of approaching and analysing Winckelmann's work and also questions the applicability of a purely gendered analysis of the artwork of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. Instead, it allows for a broader analysis of Winckelmann's work to be made and for those artists, writers and critics who tried to integrate his values into their artwork. Methodologically by placing an aesthetic value on both male and female costume and drapery it also enables them to be used more fully as a hermeneutic. As noted earlier, scholars such as Wrigley and Roche have demonstrated the social and political significance of clothing during the Revolutionary period in France, and Doy and Hollander have examined drapery and fashion as aesthetic signifiers. Clothing, in this case costume and drapery, has not been fully embedded within the art historical discourse as a component of ideal beauty. To fully integrate the importance of the imitative accuracy of costume and the aesthetic value of drapery within the concept of ideal

beauty, however, would reconcile the tension that is apparent in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century aesthetic writings and art criticisms, and also allow the extensive work done by scholars such as Doy, Ribeiro, Grigsby, Koda, Mackrell, Cage, Lajer-Burcharth and others on the impact of the Grecian revival in contemporary French fashion to be fully integrated into a charting of the development of ideas about the nature of ideal beauty and its material expression in the artwork of the period, despite ‘fashion’ being seen as more generally antipathetic to articulations of the ideal by Winckelmann and others.²³⁰ It also enables us to look at the role of costume, drapery and accessories in a different way, and allows us to attribute a broader aesthetic value to them. In having aesthetic value attached to the language of costume and drapery it extends their vocabulary when engaging with their role in painting and sculpture. It challenges us to enter into the emotional language of costume and drapery as well as seeing them as historical, social, and political signifiers. We can also engage with the symbolic importance of dress and undress in relationship to each other rather than be bound by the gender of the images themselves.

In relation to the definition of ideal beauty, my revised definition of Winckelmann’s concept of ideal beauty offers the art historian a broader range of theoretical framework for the interpretation and manifestation of ideal beauty in artworks. The revised definition incorporates draped and semi-draped examples from antiquity as symbols of ideal beauty along side contemporary expressions of the ideal. It also incorporates female as well as male antique statues into the aesthetic canon. Instead of looking the aesthetic power of these sculptures as being solely a masculine prerogative we can look at both male and female statues as individual examples of ideal beauty, and in relation to each other, without the negation of power that Potts proposes. With this call for an interdependence of gender

²³⁰Winckelmann.1786.8.Watelet and L  vesque.3.378 & 380. M. Antoine-Chrysostome Quatrem  re de Quincy, *Consid  rations Sur Les Arts Du Dessin En France. [with] Suite [and] Seconde Suite [and] R  flexions Nouvelles Sur La Gravure*, (Paris, 1791).41.

relations and a 'feminine' rebalancing of Winckelmann the next section will look at the way in which Winckelmann's work on costume and drapery was received and used in France. It will demonstrate how my revised definition is supported by the art and costume dictionaries, and in the importance attributed to costume and drapery in contemporary work by the Salon art critics.

Part Two

Chapter Three: The Connoisseurial Significance of Clothing in France

Introduction

In his monumental six-volume *Musée de sculpture antique et modern*, published between 1826 and 1853, which catalogued and analysed the antiquities housed in the Louvre, the critic, artist, and curator of antiquities at the Louvre, Comte Charles Othon Frédéric Jean-Baptiste de Clarac (1777-1847) referred to the sensational effect of Lady Emma Hamilton's draperies as she posed and danced for the nobility of Europe and inspired artists and sculptors (Figure 3.1):

N'a-t-on pas vu en Italie une femme célèbre par sa beauté et par les expressions variées qu'elle savait lui donner, inspirer et ravir les peintres et les sculpteurs qui dans ses attitudes ou gracieuses ou sévères, et dans la manière admirable dont elle se drapait, trouvaient les plus beaux motifs d'une foule de compositions?²³¹

Although Emma Hamilton's performances are usually seen as an example of the slightly risqué and scandalous environment of the Neapolitan court, her dancing, and in particular her famous 'Attitudes' resonated with a wider interest in the role of drapery in antiquity and the attention given to them by Winckelmann.²³² Clarac's section on drapery in sculpture, in particular, acknowledged the debt that all scholars of antiquity had to the extensive and meticulous work done by Winckelmann in his *Histoire* and *Refléxions* on clothing, the importance that drapery had in ancient art, and its role, when combined with the nude figure, in the expression of ideal beauty.

²³¹Charles Othon Frédéric Jean Baptiste Clarac, Louis-Ferdinand-Alfred Maury, and André Louis Victor Texier, *Musée De Sculpture Antique Et Moderne; Ou, Description Historique Et Graphique Du Louvre Et De Toutes Ses Parties, Des Statues, Bustes, Bas-Reliefs Et Inscriptions Du Musée Royal Des Antiques Et Des Tuileries Et De Plus De 2500 Statues Antiques ... Tir*, (Paris : Imprimerie royale, 1826-53).2.82.

²³²The term 'Attitude' was a technical term in painting for the overall pose of the body and for the body as a vehicle of emotional expression. Watelet and Lévêque.1.208-15. See also Watelet on Winckelmann and the dancing figures at Herculaneum.3.682.

Le costume est certainement, ainsi que le pensait Winckelmann, une des parties qui, dans les productions de la sculpture et de la peinture antiques, méritent le plus d'attirer l'attention des artistes, et il offre à leurs études la source la plus abondante et que rien ne peut remplacer. Le nombre des figures drapées est beaucoup plus considérable que celui des figures nues, et elles présentent une grande variété de costumes. On peut d'ailleurs trouver pour le nu d'assez beaux modèles dans la nature, et c'est toujours elle qu'un artiste doit consulter la première; elle le conduira bien, si en la suivant il cherche à se pénétrer de ce sentiment exquis qui animait les Grecs. Mais il n'en est pas tout-à-fait ainsi pour les draperies, du moins lorsque l'on veut leur donner ce caractère simple et noble qui distingue celles des statues grécques et romaines.²³³

Using Winckelmann's method of describing and analysing the individual components that made up antique costume in sculpture, Clarac produced detailed summaries and tabular listings of the different items and types of clothing, hairstyles²³⁴ and ornaments²³⁵ found on Greek and Roman statues in the Louvre. Although his interest was primarily connoisseurial and for the purposes of providing a comprehensive catalogue of the statues that made up the collection held in French museums and palaces, his reference to Lady Emma Hamilton's 'Attitudes' demonstrated an awareness of the interest that Greeks and Romans placed in the importance of the fold, and the movement of the cloth against the body. In particular he related the extensive amount of work that Winckelmann had done on clothing in his day to the challenges that contemporary artists had in rendering the swish and swirl of draperies in motion and the frustration that Winckelmann himself had expressed about the restrictive nature of clothing in the *Refléxions*.

Les artistes anciens dans leurs ouvrages imitaient les costumes qu'ils portaient eux-mêmes, qu'ils avaient sans cesse sous les yeux, et dont ils connaissaient et pouvaient saisir par une longue habitude les divers effets dans toutes les attitudes et tous les mouvements du corps. C'était un grand avantage pour eux de voir les draperies, pour ainsi dire, en action; nous ne l'avons pas aujourd'hui, quoique nos costumes de

²³³Clarac, Maury, and Texier.2.80.

²³⁴'Chez les anciens, la coiffure fut toujours une partie importante du costume et de la parue, et l'on voit par le témoignage des auteurs et par les monuments que de tout temps on sut mettre beaucoup de variété dans la manière de tirer parti d'une belle chevelure et d'en combiner l'ajustement avec des ornements divers'.Ibid. 2.124.

²³⁵Ibid.2.146-165.

femme et ceux des deux sexes que l'on voit au théâtre, se rapprochent de ceux des anciens beaucoup plus qu'au temps de Winckelmann.²³⁶

Continuing with the theme of the challenges that dress and drapery placed on contemporary artists, who did not have the advantage of contemporary 'Greek' fashion around them to draw on, Clarac stressed the importance of clothing for women in general, and talked about the practical steps, such as the use of mannequins, that artists could employ to capture a sense of effortless ease and effect in their work that reflected the spirit of the antique. This publication, produced years after the end of the Empire and the death of David, is one example amongst many of how Winckelmann's work influenced artists and theorists in France, and Winckelmann's impact on definitions of ideal beauty in art and art criticism. It also demonstrates how the work Winckelmann did on antique costume, and female dress in particular, penetrated the artistic establishment. French artists and theorists such as Clarac tried to extrapolate the interest in the relationship between the nude body and clothing that Winckelmann had explored, to tackling the challenge that contemporary artists faced in producing an accurate rendering of antique costume, using clothing as a means by which to both express the emotional impact of their work in a 'noble and sedate manner',²³⁷ and deal with the challenge of how best to dress contemporary figures. Drapery studies had always formed an important part of the artistic curriculum, but as Winckelmann had demonstrated, the exact means of achieving a sense of ideal beauty in the spirit of the antique, and in a way that was appropriate for each genre of art, was more challenging and complex. The question of how to convey a sense of the ideal and the antique within a contemporary setting also exposed broader problems of how to reconcile varying and disputed definitions of ideal beauty and French academic traditions, with a very rich and rapidly changing artistic and

²³⁶Ibid.2.80.

²³⁷Winckelmann.1786.29.

political environment. The debates and discussions that permeated French aesthetic writings and art criticism demonstrated this quest to both define and ‘claim’ the amorphous nature of ideal beauty within the trajectory of an evolving art historical tradition, as established by Winckelmann, and contemporary artistic practice.²³⁸

The previous chapters proposed a re-reading of the work of Winckelmann and a definition of ideal beauty that incorporated his interest in female as well as male statues, drapery and ornaments as well as the nude figure. Moving onto the definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France, the second part of this thesis will ask if this new reading of Winckelmann and the definition of ideal beauty proposed in the previous chapter is supported in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth French art and art criticism. I will first address this question by embedding Winckelmann into France. I will summarise the existing scholarship on his influence and look at the translation of his work into French. In the next section I will then assess and analyse art dictionary definitions of the connoisseurial and aesthetic importance of clothing and demonstrate how this impacted definitions of ideal beauty in France. As in the work of Winckelmann, I will demonstrate that clothing had a role in the configuration of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.

²³⁸Potts.1994.30-31.

Section 3.1: Winckelmann in France

Section 3.1.1: Literature and scholarship

There is a large corpus of scholarship that embeds Winckelmann and his work on ancient sculpture into late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. This has examined the impact of Winckelmann's work at many different levels; intellectually, politically, and artistically. In particular, it has contextualised the work of Winckelmann within the political and theoretical debates surrounding the overall purpose of the arts post-Revolution and the attempt to distance the 'French school' from what were regarded as the excesses of Rococo art particularly the work of Boucher. Becq²³⁹ and Griener²⁴⁰ amongst others have questioned the reasons behind the need to debate the issue of ideal beauty, Becq demonstrating its importance in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century artistic and intellectual circles. Griener has demonstrated its philosophical and symbolic derivation from earlier eighteenth-century debates amongst the 'gens de lettres' about the symbolic importance of the arts, and provided a detailed analysis of many of the competing essays for the 1799 competition prize issued by the fledgling Institut. The wording of the Institut's 1799 competition itself, 'Quelles sont les causes de la perfection de la sculpture antique, et quels seraient les moyens d'y atteindre?' also demonstrated the extent to which Winckelmann's work formed the context, structure and nature of the debate surrounding the purpose and aim of the arts in general.²⁴¹

Griener, like Potts²⁴² and Davis,²⁴³ has also argued that during the Revolution, Winckelmann's *Histoire*, with its link of art to the political liberty of the Greek and Roman states, articulated many republican ideals and provided an alternative to the structures of religion and monarchy destroyed with the Revolution. With the artifacts of Church and State

²³⁹Becq.

²⁴⁰Griener.

²⁴¹Ibid.276-291.

²⁴²Johann Joachim Winckelmann and Alex Potts, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, (Los Angeles, Calif. : Getty Research Institute, 2006).

²⁴³Davis.

transmuted from their symbols of political and spiritual power and placed in museums by Lenoir, public art, and the principles of art became a tool with which to create national unity, and a sense of national post-Revolutionary identity. The inclusion of Winckelmann's papers in the boxes in which the *Laocoön* and the *Apollo Belvedere* were transported to Paris and paraded through the streets as part of the Roman Triumph of 1798 certainly indicate that Winckelmann was seen as holding some degree of cultural authority.

Décultot,²⁴⁴ and Griener,²⁴⁵ have analysed the impact that the translation of Winckelmann's work may have had on its reception in France, in particular the shift from the very metaphorical German prose used by Winckelmann in the original version of the *Histoire* and the imperative tone and tenses evident in the different French translations of the work.

Potts has embedded Winckelmann's notion of stylistic periods and his thinking about the role of art and historicism into France, and he also comprehensively contextualised Winckelmann's work into the French eighteenth-century antiquarian tradition.²⁴⁶ Potts and Davis also have argued that Winckelmann's work was symbolic of both a personal form of freedom of sexual expression and the freedom of expression of the self within the new Republic. Potts has suggested that Winckelmann's writings were not accepted without question and that the new wave of art theory produced in France after the fall of Robespierre when the idea of an institutionalized art academy again began to gain a hold, led to Winckelmann's 'over-enthusiastic' prose eliciting a certain amount of skeptical commentary. Potts's theory was that this was due to the homoerotic undertones of Winckelmann's work.²⁴⁷

Potts, in particular, has argued that his reading of Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty being configured in the sexless 'ephebe' was the influencing model on painters such as

²⁴⁴Décultot.

²⁴⁵Griener.276.

²⁴⁶Winckelmann and Potts.23-29. Potts.1994.283. Alex Potts, 'Political Attitudes and the Rise of Historicism in Art Theory', *Art history*, 1 (1978).

²⁴⁷Winckelmann and Potts.Ft.105.106.52.

David. This model which associated Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty with the male nude figure in history and allegorical painting has also underpinned the work of other late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scholars. An example of this is the analysis of David and his school, and the intellectual debate between Éméric-David and Quatremère de Quincy by Prendergast.²⁴⁸ Other examples include the work of Halliday who read the male figures in *Les Sabines* as examples of Winckelmann's different ideal 'types'.²⁴⁹ The importance of Winckelmann's *Histoire* as an influencing model has also been acknowledged at the institutional and political level by a study of the role of the public concours and the importance of Quatremère de Quincy by Gilks,²⁵⁰ Lavin,²⁵¹ Rubin,²⁵² Schneider,²⁵³ and Stara.²⁵⁴ Finally, Pommier's analysis of Winckelmann's work on the concept of grace has acknowledged Winckelmann's legacy and the resonance of his work within French aesthetic theory and definitions of the term.²⁵⁵ Winckelmann's name was also a visible presence in the art criticism. The *Histoire* was either cited directly or there were references to him generically as an important source of ideas and information about ancient art and the importance of ideal beauty.

Section 3.1.2: Winckelmann's Translation into French

Although Winckelmann wrote in German, his work was popular and influential in France from the very start of his publishing career. Part of his success and popularity was the result

²⁴⁸Prendergast.

²⁴⁹Halliday.229.

²⁵⁰Gilks.

²⁵¹Lavin.

²⁵²Rubin.

²⁵³Schneider.

²⁵⁴Alexandra Stara, 'Lenoir, Quatremère and the Hermeneutic Significance of the Musée Des Monuments Français', (Thesis (D.Phil.) University of Oxford, 2000).

²⁵⁵Pommier.

of his ability to promote his own work, but the weight of knowledge and research that his work contained also accounted for the extent of his impact. This may have been due to his access to artworks and to historical sources in Rome which enabled Winckelmann to find a wide range of proofs for his historical method which he then combined with his ability to articulate the contradictory ideas of the idealisation of the Greek world and its art, alongside a contrary awareness of the parallel cyclical patterns of rise and fall in political and art history.²⁵⁶ Jeffrey Morrison described his art history as a crystallisation of contemporary thinking, but his success and influence in France was probably due to a confluence of political as well as philosophical factors, to which Potts and Harloe also refer.²⁵⁷ As Winckelmann wrote himself in the *Preface* to the *Histoire*, he had unparalleled access to the antiquities unearthed at Pompeii and Herculaneum and in the Vatican. This meant that Winckelmann had constant access to practical examples which he stressed was essential to a deep and meaningful understanding and appreciation of them. Despite this depth of knowledge and access, Winckelmann stated how he still constantly made new discoveries about the antique works:

Il est donc très-difficile, pour ne pas dire impossible, d'écrire hors de Rome un ouvrage solide sur l'Art antique & sur les Antiquités peu connues. Mais il est encore plus difficile de saisir la connaissance de l'Art dans les ouvrages des Anciens: après les avoir vus cent fois, on y fait encore de nouvelles découvertes. Mais la plupart des soi-disant Connaisseurs de l'Art pensent acquérir les notions de l'antique, en promenant des regards incertains sur les monuments, à peu près comme certains Amateurs des Belles-Lettres croient saisir les principes de la littérature, en lisant des journaux... En général la plupart des Savants qui ont écrit sur ces matières sont comme les fleuves qui s'enflent, lorsqu'on n'a pas besoin de leurs eaux, & qui restent à sec, lorsque leurs eaux seraient le plus nécessaires.²⁵⁸

Winckelmann's ability to detail objects meticulously and describe the huge collection of objects and sculptures was the outcome of this and what set him apart from other antiquarians

²⁵⁶ Jeffrey Morrison, *Winckelmann and the Notion of Aesthetic Education*, (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1996).

²⁵⁷ Potts.1994.222-238. Harloe.

²⁵⁸ Winckelmann.1781.28.

and writers on art. He also came to Rome with the success of the 1760 antiquarian treatise he had compiled behind him, the *Description des pierres gravées du feu Baron de Stosch*. This catalogue systemized and provided a commentary on the collection of engraved gems owned by his patron Baron Stosch.²⁵⁹ Written in French, this publication was the first one in which he articulated the system and approach that he then went on to use in structuring and organising the *Histoire*.

Pour ce qui appartient à l'Art chez les Anciens, j'ai déjà dit un mot de ce qu'on pourrait attendre à cet égard de ce Recueil, & je me flatte d'avoir fait là-dessus dans cet Ouvrage les remarques qu'il m'a été possible de faire, sans m'être proposé d'en former un système... Le Sentiment du Beau, qui est la seconde partie de la connaissance de l'Art, concerne principalement les Gravures Grecque. ... Le sentiment du Beau forme dans la connaissance de la plus belle manière des Grecs, & celui-ci avec l'entendement du Dessein peuvent eux seuls conduire à la science de distinguer l'Ancien du Moderne.²⁶⁰

Despite making inaccurate identifications of some of the gems he wrote about, *Description des pierres gravées* was a great success and was admired in artistic and antiquarian circles around Europe. The noted connoisseur and antiquarian, Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774), after reading the work described Winckelmann as being 'cet Amateur, doué de l'heureuse sensibilité, que les impressions du beau élèvent jusqu'à l'enthousiasme, & de ce Génie ardent, qui pénètre jusqu'à la pensée des Artistes'.²⁶¹ Pierre-Charles Lévesque referenced the Stosch publication at several points in the 1792 *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure*,²⁶² and even Clarac's much later *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne* included references to the treatise.²⁶³ These references demonstrate that Winckelmann's antiquarian

²⁵⁹Winckelmann.1760.

²⁶⁰Ibid.x-xi.

²⁶¹Winckelmann.1781.95.

²⁶²Watelet and Lévesque. See 3.461. on an engraved gem of Hercules and 5.58 regarding engraved gems in general.

²⁶³Clarac, Maury, and Texier. 2.358 and 2.661.

work was respected as a source of authority for scholars and artists, as well as antiquarians, well into the nineteenth century.

The first French edition of Winckelmann's *L'Histoire de l'art chez les anciens* was published in Paris by Charles Saillant, with the translation by Gottfried Sell in 1766 only two years after its publication in the original German.²⁶⁴ Winckelmann was responsible for the organization of this as he was keen for the *Histoire* to be disseminated around educated circles in Europe and thought that the quickest way to do this was to translate it into French. However, Winckelmann's impatience resulted in a botched translation and Winckelmann had to pull on his connections in Paris and their influence in the police to suppress and confiscate copies of the failed work:

La Traduction Française de l'Histoire de l'Art a tellement altéré le texte, que si l'on en jugeait par cette infidèle & informe copie, on en prendrait une idée aussi fausse que désavantageuse. Le Traducteur qui vraisemblablement connaît peu la langue allemande, & encore, moins la matière dont il est question dans ce livre, fait presque à chaque pas de grosses méprises, & fait dire à l'Auteur des choses qu'il n'a jamais pensées, même en songe.²⁶⁵

The sensational and grisly nature of Winckelmann's murder in Trieste along with the quality and comprehensive nature of the *Histoire* itself ensured that the work found a ready audience in the artistic and connoisseurial circles of Europe, and in particular in France where it was

²⁶⁴ According to Potts, 'the most widely circulated of these new scholarly editions was the three-volume French translation by H. J. Jansen, *L'Histoire de l'art chez les anciens*, published in Paris in 1790-4. Also particularly important was the Italian edition, *Storia delle Arti del disegno presso gli antichi*, with substantial notes and additions by the antiquarian Carlo Fea, which came out in Rome in 1783-4'. Potts.1994. 256. Ft.4 *ibid.* 256. Ft 9.

²⁶⁵ Winckelmann.1781.31-32. See also André Lens's remarks in his *Costume Dictionary*: 'Tout ce qu'on peut alléguer pour son excuse, c'est qu'il ne connaissait que la première traduction française, de laquelle WINCKELMANN avait tant de raisons de se plaindre, qu'il employa tout ce qui était en son pouvoir, pour en effectuer la suppression par le Lieutenant de Police de Paris. S'il avait connu la bonne traduction de cet ouvrage par Mr. HUBER, & s'il avait pu s'en servir, il en aurait agi plus charitablement avec cet Auteur allemand'. André Corneille Lens and Georg Heinrich Martini, *Le Costume Des Peuples De L'antiquité, Prouvé Par Les Monuments*, (Nouv. éd., corrigée & augmentée par G.H. Martini.. Dresde, 1785).Ix.

then translated and published in five separate editions during the period 1766-1802.²⁶⁶ The 1781 version used in this thesis was seen as a memorial to Winckelmann by his friends and colleagues as well as the best source text for many of the costume dictionaries of late eighteenth-century France.²⁶⁷ In addition to the 1781 version, prior to the Revolution, Winckelmann's *Histoire* was of sufficient popularity and interest to have been translated again in a new edition in 1786. The *Refléxions* were also translated and published under the title *Recueil de différentes pièces sur les arts* in 1786.²⁶⁸

Winckelmann's influence in France even with these earlier publications is evident from the wide-ranging references to him in the art dictionaries and the costume dictionaries of late eighteenth-century France, but to add to the dissemination of his work, in 1794, at the height of the Terror, the *Histoire* was published once again with another edition appearing in 1802.²⁶⁹ The Dutch bookseller and informant Hendrik Jansen put the 1794 and 1802 editions together, and again Michael Huber undertook the translation work. In 1799 Jansen also published Winckelmann's Treatise on allegory in French as *Essai sur l'allégorie, à l'usage des artistes*.²⁷⁰ Jansen, who after enjoying aristocratic patronage under Louis XVI had become an active revolutionary figure and freemason, and who had set up his own publication company during the Revolution, was an important factor in the dissemination of Winckelmann's work. He was among the first to recognise the significance of Winckelmann's

²⁶⁶Language and translation were important in the dissemination of Winckelmann's ideas around Europe; however the issues, implications and nuances of difference surrounding the different translations and editions of Winckelmann's texts into English and French have already been thoroughly explored by other scholars. Griener for instance stressed the importance of the allegorical nature of much of the eighteenth-century discourse on the fine arts and within that the notion of '*ut pictura poesis*'. He argued that the '*naissance du discours esthétique même redouble l'intérêt pour la traduction. Le but de ce discours est non seulement de décrire le fonctionnement de nos perceptions face à l'objet d'art, mais de donner un équivalent scriptural à cette perception rationalisée, validée comme mode de connaissance. La notion de traduction occupe une position centrale dans la littérature sur l'art au XVIII^e siècle.* Griener.1998.14. See also Edouard Pommier, *Winckelmann, Inventeur De L'histoire De L'art*, (Paris : Gallimard 2003).

²⁶⁷Lens and Martini.IX.

²⁶⁸Winckelmann.1786.

²⁶⁹Watelet and Lévesque referenced Winckelmann extensively in their *Dictionnaire*.Watelet and Lévesque. In André Lens's Costume Dictionary Winckelmann is used as the base source for Greek and Roman costume. Lens and Martini.

²⁷⁰Winckelmann.1799.

works being read in their entirety rather than in extract form, and his activities as a publisher and translator also helped to bridge the gulf between art theory and every-day artistic practice by stressing the practical use of Winckelmann's knowledge and expertise.²⁷¹ There are references to Jansen's versions of the *Histoire* in art critical texts,²⁷² and Watelet's *Dictionnaire* also refers to Jansen's role in publishing other material on the art of painting, notably the works of Winckelmann's friend Anton Raphael Mengs, works by Joshua Reynolds,²⁷³ by the German theorist Engel²⁷⁴ and by Gérard de Lairesse.²⁷⁵

In 1808 Winckelmann's three-volume edition *Monumens Inédits de L'Antiquité* was translated from Italian to French by A.F. Désodoards with engravings by the line-engraver François Anne David (1741-1824) and his pupil Mlle Sibire.²⁷⁶ This was originally intended to be an illustrative example of many of the antique gems and monuments that Winckelmann had previously written about in Baron Stosch's collection, and the aim of the publication was to complete and complement the work undertaken by Winckelmann in the *Histoire* and his other works on Herculaneum and William Hamilton's Etruscan vases. In this context the range of publications and the quantity of editions produced in France from 1766 until 1808, demonstrates that there was an ongoing interest in Winckelmann's work in France before, during and after the Revolution, and a continuing market well into the nineteenth century for his writings on Greek and Roman antiquities.

²⁷¹Griener.214.Winckelmann and Potts.1-2. See also Ft 6.38 for further sources embedding the work of Winckelmann in France.

²⁷²A couple of examples are Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Beaux-Arts. Exposition Des Ouvrages De Peinture, Sculpture, Architecture, Gravure, Dans Les Salles Du Muséum, Premier Thermidor an Vi*, (Offprint from: La décade philosophique: Paris, 1798).335 & 337; Anon, *Beaux-Arts ; Salon De L'an X ; Encore Un Mot Sur Le Salon*, (Offprint from: La décade philosophique: Paris, 1802).

²⁷³Watelet and Lévêque.5.196 & 257. Watelet also referred to other reference books published by Jansen:3.587 and Jansen also translated Lessing's *La maniere de représenter la mort chez les anciens*.3.470

²⁷⁴Ibid.Tome 3.587.

²⁷⁵Ibid.Tome 1.668 & 5.257.

²⁷⁶Winckelmann.1808.

Conclusion

The wealth of existing scholarly literature and analysis on Winckelmann and his influence on French artistic theory alone gives credence to linking Winckelmann's broader concept of the ideal, which incorporated drapery and accessories, to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century French art and art criticism. It is clear from the work of other scholars summarized in this chapter that Winckelmann's work became embedded into the fabric of French aesthetics. In many respects his writings 'became French' because the structure of the *Histoire* was used as the template for the debate surrounding the role of the arts and the way in which the rejuvenated French school post-Revolution could disassociate itself from the 'ancien régime', emulating instead the greatness of ancient Greece and Rome. The passionate intensity of debates surrounding the nature of beauty may also have accounted, in part, for the ready market for different versions of the *Histoire* during politically turbulent times. Even though the accuracy of some of Winckelmann's work came into question in the 1780s, the dedicated interest in questioning the attributions that he made by Mengs and others demonstrates how seriously his work was taken by the artistic establishment. It seems that Winckelmann and the *Histoire* came to represent an unbiased, detached and authoritative voice in the debate surrounding beauty.

This interest in Winckelmann at an institutional level is one of the reasons why it has been important to read and work with the French versions of the *Histoire* and *Réflexions* rather than his original German. It is clear that Winckelmann saw publication into French as the quickest way in which to disseminate his ideas around Europe, and in this context it is interesting to note that there was no English translation of the *Histoire* until the 1850s although Fuseli's translation of his connoisseurial work was published in England in the

1770s.²⁷⁷ Different versions of the *Histoire* were read and referenced by different critics, and as a result it has been difficult to select which edition to use. However, on reflection I have committed to using the 1781 translation because it was the version referenced as a source by the costume dictionaries and the art dictionaries of the 1790s as well as being seen as a memorial to Winckelmann by his friends. Since I have used these costume and art dictionaries as sources for this chapter on the connoisseurial importance of clothing and the next chapter on the aesthetic importance of clothing, this choice appears appropriate.

²⁷⁷Fuseli's translation of the *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* appeared in English 1765, and a translation of *Sendschreiben von den Herculanischen Entdeckungen* in 1771. Winckelmann.1765. Winckelmann.1771.

Section 3.2: Connoisseurial Interest in Costume in the Art Dictionaries

Introduction

This section will look at the large amount of information on ancient costume in the costume dictionaries of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. I will demonstrate that there was a significant amount of interest in antique clothing and customs, and that many of these dictionaries relied on Winckelmann as their primary source of material. The remaining section of this chapter will ask the question why this amount of information was felt to be necessary for artists and the possible reasons behind a perceived need for instruction in ancient clothing before presenting the argument that the aesthetic impact of clothing was an important part of the definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.

First I will demonstrate the range of information available in late eighteenth-century France on ancient costume, and the different approaches taken by the writers of the costume dictionaries. At the same time I will also show the amount of reliance that they had on Winckelmann as a source of information even though by the early nineteenth century it had become clear that he was not always accurate in his attribution and dating of artworks, such as the *Niobe*. Then I will explore the perceived need for instruction in clothing and look at possible reasons why it was necessary to give the accuracy of costume so much attention. I will then examine the importance attributed to the concept of ‘vérité’ in clothing and the effect of morality on dress, and the problems that artists had with using contemporary clothes in their artwork. I will conclude that accuracy in dress, and the attention given to the details of costume was seen as an indicative of the health and regeneration of the French school of art as well as a means by which to maintain the strict hierarchy of the genres.

Section 3.2.1: Ancient Costume in Late Eighteenth-Century France

There was an extensive amount of information written on ancient costume in late eighteenth-century France. Some of this was embedded within the structure of the art dictionaries and the *Encyclopédie*, but there were also a number of costume dictionaries specifically written to detail various aspects of Greek and Roman clothing and their way of life. A example of these are the following sources which were published from the mid-1780s until about 1815 and used as reference material by practicing artists. Some of the dictionaries were more practical than others, illustrating and describing items of antique clothing, ornaments and household goods. Many of the costume dictionaries also had essays or comments in the text on general philosophical issues surrounding the nature of art, ideal beauty or remarks on the status of French painting in general. Some dictionaries also illustrated the specific items of clothing or accessories with reference to pieces of contemporary and ancient art. Amongst the texts that I have researched there was no one standard model of dictionary; each had its own particular characteristics and idiosyncrasies. The selection of material chosen are those dictionaries referred to by Winckelmann, by Watelet, by scholars who have studied the work of David and those, like Clarac, who were also art critics. They provide a wide range of different examples of the way in which costume was important connoisseurally in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.

The main source I have used is Watelet and Lévesque's *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure*, first published in 1792, and updated to include references to contemporary artists and art works.²⁷⁸ This dictionary was published in five volumes and definitions were written as short essays on the particular word or term: 'costume', 'vêtement', 'habillements' etc. Watelet did not write all the essays in *Dictionnaire*, and since he died in

²⁷⁸Watelet and Lévesque.

1786 before it was complete, it was Lévesque who was primarily responsible for the essays in later volumes. Jean-Baptiste-Claude Robin also contributed articles on various topics.

Watelet's *Dictionnaire* was geared towards the artist, the connoisseur and the critic. Watelet referred to the costume dictionaries of André Lens *Le Costume des Peuples de L'Antiquité* of 1785²⁷⁹ and Dandré-Bardon's *Costume des Anciens Peuples* of 1784-6.²⁸⁰ Millin's *Dictionnaire des beaux-arts*, which was published later in 1806, was also important resource, but his definition of key words were often quoted verbatim (but not referenced) from Watelet.²⁸¹ Millin contested Lens and Dandré-Bardon as 'reliable' sources for the accurate description of antique clothing,²⁸² and he also picked up on the errors that Winckelmann had made in the *Histoire*.²⁸³ Instead he cited Willheim and Roccheggiani as the most accurate voices on ancient costume.²⁸⁴

Willheim's *Choix de Costumes Civils et Militaires des Peuples de L'Antiquité* was published in 1798 and listed amongst its subscribers David, Denon and others.²⁸⁵ Malliot, whose *Costume des Peuples de L'Antiquité* was published 1809-1815 was also a prolific writer on dress, and is an interesting source because it demonstrates the continued importance of

²⁷⁹Lens and Martini.

²⁸⁰Michel Dandré-Bardon and Charles Nicolas Cochin, *Costume Des Anciens Peuples, a L'usage Des Artistes*, (M. Cochin. Paris Alexandre Jombert jeune, 1784-1786).

²⁸¹Aubin Louis Millin, *Dictionnaire Des Beaux-Arts*, (Paris: De l'imprimerie de Crapelet. Chez Desray, M.DCCC.VI.).

²⁸²'Nous avons quelques ouvrages sur le costume, mais en général ils n'ont pas un grand mérite. Celui de DANDRÉ BARDON est compilé d'après les ouvrages des peintres modernes, et non d'après les autorités.... Le *Traité des costumes* par LENS est d'une extrême faiblesse, et les notes de MARTINI l'ont peu amélioré'. Ibid.362.

²⁸³WINCKELMANN, dans son *Histoire de l'art*, a donné des notions plus justes, mais parmi lesquelles on trouve beaucoup d'erreurs'. Ibid.362.

²⁸⁴'Les Recueils de costumes antiques de ROCHEGGIANI et de WILLEMIN, sont très utiles ; en général il faut remonter aux sources, étudier les monuments, principalement les bas-reliefs, les vases grecs, les médailles et les pierres gravées antiques, pour les costumes anciens ; et pour les modernes, les recueils des peintures faits d'après les tombeaux, les vitraux, les tapisseries, les tableaux, etc. et les recueils des voyages'. Ibid.362.

²⁸⁵Nicolas Xavier Willemmin, *Choix De Costumes Civils Et Militaires Des Peuples De L'antiquité, Leurs Instrumens De Musique D'après Les Monumens Antiques*, (Paris, 1798-1802).

Winckelmann as an accurate source of information on ancient costume into the post-Napoleonic period.²⁸⁶

3.2.1.1: Winckelmann as a resource

One of the striking features of the art and costume dictionaries is their reliance on Winckelmann as a source of information about the connoisseurial importance of costume. Winckelmann's impact in the field of clothing was notable in different ways. Some dictionaries just quoted Winckelmann verbatim. Lévesque's twenty-two page essay on the definition of *Vêtements*, opened with a reference to Winckelmann, and over the course of this particular piece he referred to Winckelmann by name at least fifteen times, and quoted direct from the *Histoire* for at least five pages when providing the detail of Greek and Roman dress.²⁸⁷

L'objet de Winckelmann en traitant du vêtement des anciens, dans son histoire de l'art, a été de se rendre utile aux artistes.²⁸⁸

Andre Lens also relied extensively on Winckelmann, using the 1781 translation largely because, as his exceedingly critical editor G.M. Martini pointed out in the preface, he lacked the linguistic skills to read sources in the original languages:

L'Auteur n'a pas eu non plus une connaissance suffisante des Langues & des Coutumes des anciens Peuples, & c'était aussi un défaut essentiel, un grand obstacle à son plan, d'ailleurs très-digne de louange. La langue grecque lui était tout-à-fait inconnue, & il est très probable qu'il n'avait qu'une connaissance très médiocre de la Langue latine. C'est à cause de cela qu'il a été toujours obligé d'avoir recours à des traduction italiennes & françaises. ... On en trouvera un

²⁸⁶ Malliot.1809.

²⁸⁷ Watelet and Lévesque.5.807-808, 810-813.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.5.791.

exemple frappant dans ce qu'il cite de l'Histoire de l'Art de WINCKELMANN, d'après la traduction française, dont il s'est servi. ... C'est ce que nous avons démontré dans plusieurs endroits, pour justifier WINCKELMANN.²⁸⁹

Lens's *Tables des Auteurs cités* shows that although he did read the works of Homer, Herodotus, Pliny and Plato in contemporary translated editions, and the *Recueil* by Caylus, he did not read Montfaucon. The entry and list of Winckelmann's works were the most comprehensive.²⁹⁰ Although he did not quote Winckelmann verbatim like Watelet, he copied Winckelmann's *Histoire* in many other ways. An example of how he drew on Winckelmann's connoisseurial expertise and the *Histoire* was the way in which he replicated plates from Winckelmann's 1781 edition,²⁹¹ in addition to citing Winckelmann extensively in his work. One example of this amongst many was his description of the component parts of Greek and Roman costume.²⁹² Quoting direct from Winckelmann's *Histoire*, Lens used the same antique statues to illustrate different garment types that Winckelmann had used, for example, taking the image of the *Second daughter of the Niobe* to illustrate the shape of sleeves in relation to the overall construction of a typical Greek female tunic (Figure 3.2).

Whilst Lens's reliance on Winckelmann was obvious, sometimes the use of Winckelmann as a source or reference on costume was more oblique. Willheim's 1798 *Choix de Costumes Civils et Militaires des Peuples de L'Antiquité* illustrated how Greek dress was constructed, the different Greek hairstyles²⁹³ and also details of how Greek women washed and prepared their 'toilette'.²⁹⁴ The images of male costume ranged from illustrating the different types of a particular type of sandal,²⁹⁵ the type of clothing used for hunting compared with the dress of a

²⁸⁹Lens and Martini.Ix.

²⁹⁰Ibid.L-LI & XXVIII- LI.

²⁹¹Ibid.28-29.

²⁹²Ibid.27.

²⁹³Willemin.Plate 31 & 36.

²⁹⁴Ibid.Plate 76 & 77.

²⁹⁵Ibid.Plate 57.

‘héro’²⁹⁶ (Figure 3.3), and a range of different helmets used at war (Figure 3.4). Willheim’s book illustrated the broader aspects of Greek domestic life, as shown in antique monuments, such as the musical instruments they played, their furniture and the decoration of their homes. His text was more descriptive than analytical and quoted direct from ancient writers Plutarch, Aristophanes, Athenaeus, Homer (*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*), Livy, Pollux and Horace rather than from Winckelmann, Caylus and Montfaucon. He demonstrated the depth of detail that these ancient writers were interested in, and the importance that was attached by the ancients to both the quality and the detail of personal care and adornment. Although on the surface the information and detail that he gave appeared to rely less on Winckelmann, the system and manner in which he organised his material echoed the structure of the *Histoire*:

Pour procéder avec ordre dans ce travail, et le rendre facile à consulter, je l’ai divisé en trois parties, dont la première contient les costumes de l’Afrique, en commençant par les Egyptiens; la seconde, ceux de l’Asie, à partir des Phéniciens; et la troisième enfin, les costumes de l’Europe, en datant des Athéniens, et en finissant par les Français.²⁹⁷

Dandré-Bardon’s analysis and images of ancient costume and accessories, also mirrored the work done by Winckelmann in the *Histoire*, but he did not cite Winckelmann or any other sources in his compendium *Costume des Anciens Peuples* of 1784-1786. Instead of any theoretical discussion over the importance of costume and the reasons why it was necessary for the artist to focus on the accuracy of representation, his accounts of garment and accessory types strictly focused on a description and comparison between examples and a very detailed explanation of the intricacies of ancient dress and accessories, which he then illustrated. The following example demonstrates the different ways in which Greek and Roman shoes were constructed and how different shoes were used for specific purposes (Figure 3.5):

²⁹⁶Ibid. Plate 54.

²⁹⁷Ibid. 6.

Les Grecs et les Romains marchaient ordinairement pieds nus. Ils ne se chaussaient que lorsqu'ils allaient en voyage, à la chasse ou à la guerre. Leur chaussure consistait en une femelle de cuir assujettie avec des rubans, des bandelettes ou des courroies qui, après s'être croisés sur le pied en diverses manières, se renouaient entre les chevilles & le mollet: deux de ces rubans passaient entre le gros orteil & le premier doigt A, B, C, & servaient à servir leur souliers. A la femelle succéda une sandale qui de ses courroies couvrait quelquefois les doigts du pied, ou une partie du dessus D, & d'autres fois jusqu'au talon E. Les patriciens & les sénateurs ajoutaient à leur chaussure une lunelle d'or, d'argent ou d'ivoire F, qui leur tenait lieu de boucle. Pour marcher sur la glace ou dans les endroits glissants, les anciens se servaient de chaussures hérissées de pointes de fer G. Nous verrons ailleurs que, par singularité, certains philosophes portaient de grosses femelles de bois armées de têtes de clous.²⁹⁸

Maillot's *Costume des Peuples de L'Antiquité* published between 1809-1815, like Lens, cited Winckelmann as an important source,²⁹⁹ referring to the work he had done on Hamilton's vase collection as an example of his erudition and standing.³⁰⁰ He illustrated the details of Egyptian clothing that Winckelmann had written about extensively annotating the Tuscan straw hats that Winckelmann referred to in the *Histoire* and directly quoting his comments on how the Persians did not go nude.³⁰¹ Like Winckelmann he commented on the kind of fabric used in ancient Greece,³⁰² quoted Winckelmann's analysis of Greek female dress and more specifically focused on the clothing of the *Niobe and her daughters*. Citing Falconet's work on the details of the Greek 'peplum' ³⁰³ he repeated Winckelmann's comments on the folding and ironing of Greek clothes verbatim.³⁰⁴ Another example of his reliance on Winckelmann included his citing Winckelmann's remarks on the shoes of Greek women, which he then developed into his own deeper analysis of the shoes on the statue of the *Niobe*:

La chaussure des femmes, dit Winckelmann, consistait soit en souliers entiers, soit en simples sandales: on voit des souliers à plusieurs figures des peintures

²⁹⁸Dandré-Bardon and Cochin.24.

²⁹⁹Maillot cited Herodotus, Diodre de Sicile, Larcher, Terrasson, Barthelemi, Winckelmann, Montfaucon and Caylus as his sources.Malliot.1809.13.

³⁰⁰Ibid.244.

³⁰¹Ibid.608.197.

³⁰²Ibid.408.

³⁰³Ibid.412-413.

³⁰⁴Ibid.418.

d'Herculanum; ils sont quelquefois jaunes, comme ceux de Vénus à un tableau des bains de Titus, et comme ceux que portaient les Perses. Les statues des femmes, dans le groupe de Niobé, nous présentent aussi des souliers entiers; du reste les souliers de ces derniers figures ne s'arrondissent pas par le bout comme ceux des premiers, ils ont une forme plus large: les sandales attachées aux pieds ont communément un doigt d'épaisseur, et sont composées de plus d'une semelle.³⁰⁵

Although the reliance of these dictionaries on Winckelmann illustrates the degree to which French costume dictionaries used Winckelmann as an important and accurate source of information about antique clothing, it also demonstrates that their interest in the detail of historic costume went beyond what Winckelmann had written. Winckelmann was important, but there were other sources cited and the authors of these dictionaries also included their own observations, knowledge and opinions about the detail of ancient dress, accessories, hairstyles, shoes, ornaments, hats, helmets and antique furniture.

3.2.1.2: The Need for Instruction

This range of different costume dictionaries demonstrates that there was an ongoing interest in the study of ancient dress. From remarks in the costume dictionaries it appears that it was felt that young artists needed instruction on antique clothing as part of their overall artistic apprenticeship. André Lens wrote in his 1785 *Le Costume des Peuples de L'Antiquité* on the importance of costume in as part of the artist's training.

On est surtout convaincu, que dans les ouvrages de l'Art qui ont rapport à de certains temps de ces Peuples éloignés, il faut observer exactement le Costume, dans leur façon d'alors de se vêtir, dans leurs mœurs & coutumes, en temps de paix & en temps de guerre, si on ne veut pas s'éloigner de la vérité, attribuer aux temps & aux Peuples des choses inusitées. En un mot, ces considérations ont fait

³⁰⁵Ibid.427-428.

regarder l'observation la plus exacte du Costume & de ce qui était usuel, dans des Siècles différents & chez chaque Nation, comme le devoir principal & essentiel de chaque Artiste.³⁰⁶

A few years later Willheim's 1798 *Choix de Costumes Civils et Militaires des Peuples de L'Antiquité* stated the importance of costume for the arts in general:

Je ne m'attacherai pas à prouver combien l'étude des costumes est intéressante: la nécessité en est aujourd'hui généralement démontrée sous le triple rapport de son utilité pour les arts, de ses agréments dans les jouissances domestiques, et enfin des avantages inappréciables qu'elle procure au commerce de notre nation, qui cesse ainsi d'être la tributaire des peuples étrangers.³⁰⁷

This drive to instruct is interesting. The emphasis on its necessity implies that something was felt to be lacking in the education of young artists in the mid-1780s. This need for improvement was also echoed the instructive *Considérations sur les art du dessin* published in 1791 by Quatremère de Quincy where he spelt out in detail a format and proposed curriculum for academy training. In addition to stressing the attention that needed to be given to study of the antique in general,³⁰⁸ he was particularly specific about training in the art of costume.³⁰⁹

La seconde classe, serait celle du costume et de l'antiquité. Le professeur de ce cours d'étude devrait faire d'après tous les monuments, une collection des habillements de tous les peuples; en faire la démonstration avec des étoffes et sur des mannequins. L'étude du costume ne se borne pas aux habillements. Elle embrasse la connaissance des usages, des cérémonies religieuses et civiles, des meubles et ustensiles, des différents goûts d'architecture, de tout ce qui est un sujet d'erreur, d'anachronisme et d'équivoques continuelles pour tous les artistes.³¹⁰

³⁰⁶Lens and Martini.IV.

³⁰⁷Willemin.7.

³⁰⁸Quatremère de Quincy.1791.128.

³⁰⁹Watelet and Lévesque.5.791.

³¹⁰Quatremère de Quincy.1791.132.

Even Malliot's *Costume des Peuples de L'Antiquité*, which was published 1809-1815, was presented in the format of an instruction manual on ancient costume and dress:

Il ne faut pas perdre de vue, que c'est principalement a l'instruction des jeunes artistes que cet ouvrage est destine, et qu'ainsi on a du bannir tout ce qui n'est appuyé que sur des hypothèses: des-lors les différentes chronologies des peuple et les systèmes sur ce qu'ils ont du être n'étaient point à considérer.³¹¹

The interest in clothing therefore appears to have been prompted either by a perceived need and lack of education and instruction in dress or a change in the type of clothing that the art schools were instructing painters in. The quantity and scope of information published on the detail of ancient costume demonstrates that costume was seen as significant and of interest. The reliance on Winckelmann as a source also embeds his work on costume firmly into French art and costume dictionaries and demonstrates that his importance to the artistic establishment was not just at a symbolic, political and institutional level. The interest in Winckelmann was also important because it appears that he was just the starting point for many of the dictionaries, who used his work as the basis from which to research more deeply into the minute details of antique costume and ancient ways of life. It demonstrates that not only was Winckelmann read extensively, but also that costume specialists engaged with his research, and, in combination with information from other sources, went beyond it. All of this research and information demonstrates that there was a deep-seated desire to learn and be instructed on the details of antique dress and customs. The question therefore has to be why there was this strong desire to learn about the connoisseurial details of antique costume. In exploring possible answers to this question I will go back into the dictionaries themselves and look at the reasons that they believed that the accurate representation of antique clothing was important.

³¹¹Malliot.1809.10.

Section 3.2.2: The Significance of Connoisseurship in Costume

In looking at the question why instruction in the art of costume and dress was important for late eighteenth-century dictionaries and art schools, I will look a little further into the dictionaries themselves and demonstrate how it appears that the emphasis on accuracy and detail was prompted by a search for ‘truth’ and a sense in which ‘vérité’ was linked to issues surrounding morality. It demonstrated that there were perceived complications surrounding the depiction of contemporary figures in art partly because contemporary clothing and ‘fashion’ was seen as disadvantageous to beauty and to art in general. This concern led theorists to look for the best and most appropriate way in which to dress contemporary figures particularly in the genre of sculpture whose traditions called for a sense of timelessness to be attached to the rendering of any image or figure.

3.2.2.1: The Importance of ‘Vérité’ and Morality

Accuracy in clothing was described by many of the dictionaries as being ‘a science’. Watelet used the term ‘la science du *costume*’ when talking about the role of dress in history painting.³¹² André Lens also described costume as a ‘science’ and as ‘un hors-d’œuvre’,³¹³ demonstrating both the seriousness with which clothing was studied and the way in which he also sensually and tangibly embodied clothing with aesthetic attributes. In this section on ‘vérité’, however, it demonstrates that accuracy was essential for ‘l’Artiste intelligente, le Critique & l’Amateur’ to understand costumes properly and correctly apply that knowledge to works of art. As Lens described it:

³¹²Watelet and Lévesque.1.704.

³¹³‘...ont fait regarder la science du Costume comme un hors-d’œuvre en peinture’. Lens and Martini.Xxviii.

...il faut, pour ainsi dire, se placer en idée dans les temps & parmi la Nation, dont l'Histoire fournit le sujet, bien connaître & observer le Costume de ces temps & de ces Nations, & considérer éviter ou critiquer comme un défaut choquant le moindre écart de ce qui était usuel dans ces temps & chez ce peuple. On est surtout convaincu, que dans les ouvrages de l'Art qui ont rapport à de certains temps de ces Peuples éloignés, il faut observer exactement le Costume, dans leur façon d'alors de se vêtir, dans leurs mœurs & coutumes, en temps de paix & en temps de guerre, si on ne veut pas s'éloigner de la vérité, attribuer aux temps & aux Peuples des choses inusitées. En un mot, ces considérations ont fait regarder l'observation la plus exacte du Costume & de ce qui était usuel, dans des Siècles différents & chez chaque Nation, comme le devoir principal & essentiel de chaque Artiste.³¹⁴

Watelet's *Dictionnaire* also stressed the vital importance of accuracy in the connoisseurial and historical depiction of clothing in painting. The emphasis on accurate imitation was an important underlay to the definition and application Robin gave to the word 'vérité' in the *Dictionnaire*. 'Vérité' was also given aesthetic attributes and linked to the concept of beauty by Robin who quoted Boileau's phrase 'Rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable' at the beginning of his section titled 'Vérité'.³¹⁵ Robin placed accurate imitation as one of the underlying precepts of art, and Millin repeated his definition almost word for word with a little elaboration:

Le *vrai* est de l'essence des beaux arts, & tous les avantages qui lui sont attribués, leur appartiennent. ...Sans le *vrai* l'art est nul. La fonction spéciale de l'art étant de parler aux yeux, son but est manqué s'il ne leur présente le *vrai*.³¹⁶

Le *vrai* est de l'essence des beaux-arts, et tous les avantages qui lui sont attribués leur appartiennent. C'est par lui seul que l'art peut nous montrer les éléments, les saisons, les climats, les distances, les corps, les habitations, les rangs, les caractères; et c'est lui qui donne les nuances aux passions. Sans le *vrai*, l'art n'a rien exprimé; il ne peut alors être ni jugé ni senti. Il ne suffit pas d'être copiste insipide pour imprimer à une composition le caractère du *vrai*, il faut répondre, par une disposition poétique, à l'idée que les spectateurs ont dû se former des sujets ou des personnages qu'on veut leur faire reconnaître.³¹⁷

³¹⁴Ibid.Iv.

³¹⁵Watelet and Lévesque.5.818.

³¹⁶Ibid.5.818.

³¹⁷Millin.3.823.

Not every aspect of ‘vérité’ in the art of painting was centred on clothing, but a significant amount of attention was given to the importance of it and also to the importance of getting the nuances of ‘vérité’ right. It was difficult for theorists, writers and critics to get across this subtlety between what was appropriate and what did not work, so as with Winckelmann, examples were important. Pigalle’s 1776 nude statue of *Voltaire* provided an illustration to Robin and Millin of the gradations of ‘vérité’ that they were trying to communicate.³¹⁸ (Figure 3.6). Robin and Millin both agreed that the portrayal of Voltaire as a withered and desiccated old man was not what was meant by the term ‘vérité’. Neither did Quatremère who stated that the statue depicted merely an undressed figure rather than a famous poet.

Mais ce que dit le système métaphorique de la nudité, dans la statue dont on parle, il ne faut pas qu'il soit contredit par un principe ou un goût d'exécution qui y soit opposé. Or, ce sera quelquefois l'artiste lui-même, qui, sans le vouloir, annulera la métaphore qu'il employa sans s'en douter. On sait que c'est ce qui est arrivé à la statue d'un poète célèbre représenté nu, et dont l'artiste se plut à faire une sorte d'étude d'anatomie, plutôt qu'un monument honorifique. ...Il faut en ce genre, qu'à un système métaphorique se joigne un style idéal. Que si l'artiste néglige cet accord, il n'aura point fait une statue nue, mais une figure déshabillée.³¹⁹

Houdon’s version of *Voltaire* draped in ancient robes was also not seen as considered an appropriate manifestation of truth either (Figure 3.7). Millin used Pigalle’s monument to the *Maréchal de Saxe* as another example of how the concept of truth had been too literally applied to his physical state and was inappropriate because it did not embody a sense of action and energy that his name was associated with:

C’est donc avec raison qu’on a blâmé Pigalle d’avoir copié servilement la corpulence lourde et engorgée du maréchal de Saxe. Une proportion bien découplée, des formes vigoureuses et ressenties, eussent beaucoup mieux peint

³¹⁸Ibid.3.824.

³¹⁹M. Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, *De L'imitation*.1823, (Bruxelles : Archives d'architecture moderne, 1980).409.

peut-être à la postérité, et l'âme de ce guerrier, et le physique agile et robuste que l'histoire lui attribuera dans ses descriptions.³²⁰

Robin's definition of 'vérité', which Millin also echoed, was therefore a balanced, nuanced and sensitive reading of Nature, combined with what he chose to describe as 'sentiment':

On voit donc qu'il ne suffit pas de copier indifféremment la nature. On voit qu'il faut la choisir avec sentiment, & que c'est au génie seul à nous donner le vrai.³²¹

This 'sentiment' varied depending on what was required by the particular scene depicted. Robin did not appear to connect sentiment with 'jouissance', as Winckelmann had done, but it was more akin to an understanding of what might be better described by the word 'appropriate':

...un véritable artiste, c'est-a-dire celui qui n'est pas borné à l'exécution mécanique de son art, se transporte à toutes les scènes qu'il veut peindre: il est simple & pauvre dans la chaumière de Philémon & Baucis; il est voluptueux dans les bosquets où il nous découvre le groupe de Renaud & d'Aramide; il répand de la grâce à Paphos, & de la sublime & respectable beauté dans la grotte où Diane & ses nymphes se reposent d'une chaise fatigante. Enfin c'est en s'oubliant soi-même, c'est en faisant passer dans son âme le caractère propre de ses sujets que l'artiste peut nous montrer le vrai.³²²

Despite the acknowledged difficulty involved in getting costume correct and 'appropriate' and despite the fact that Watelet accepted that painters were not by nature also scholars, he stressed that this was not an excuse for costume not being accurate. He was quite prepared to admonish those who did choose to ignore the importance of exactitude and the small details that were important in a work of art:

³²⁰Millin.823-824.

³²¹Watelet and Lévesque.5.821.

³²²Ibid.5.821.

Mais, je le répète, ils ne sont pas autorisés par ces difficultés & ces raisons à des transgressions qui blessent trop la *vérité*.³²³

Watelet emphasised the importance of this balance between good research and too much detail pointing out that the general population most of the time would not notice whether the precise minutiae were absolutely correct.³²⁴ He used as an example the issue surrounding the type of swords used in David's *Le Serment des Horaces* (Figure 3.8). David had used the incorrect swords for the painting. Stating that 'le savant critique' who would understand all the minuscule points of obscure erudition 'sera plus choqué de voir dans un tableau manquer quelque chose aux armes que portaient les Horaces, qu'il ne sera touché de la vérité de leur action'. His solution was the following:

Le milieu que le peintre peut garder, est de donner à une nation, aux Romains par exemple, les vêtements qu'ils portaient dans les temps les plus célèbres de la République.³²⁵

Watelet argued that it was unfair to expect that the artist would put all his energy into 'longues & pénibles' research in order to 'suivre toutes les nuances que le luxe a répandues successivement sur les habillements de ce peuple fameux'. In this particular case he found David's inaccuracy excusable, but it demonstrates the extent to which detailed knowledge was expected from artists because some of their audience were experts on the topic:

J'ajouterai qu'un peintre est plus excusable, quand, ne consultant point le costume d'une nation, il lui donne des draperies idéales, que lorsqu'il lui prête celles d'un peuple fort différent. L'ignorance peut passer à la faveur de l'imagination, comme on voit un sexe aimable nous faire excuser ses caprices par les grâces dont il les accompagne.³²⁶

³²³Ibid.1.562.

³²⁴Ibid.1.562 & 590.

³²⁵Ibid.1.705.

³²⁶Ibid.1.705.

The link of ‘vérité’ to the French school of painting in general, supports other scholarship which has demonstrated that there was a general push for the regeneration of the arts pre- and post-Revolution. It appears that the use of Greek and Roman costume and the historical accuracy of dress in painting and sculpture became emblematic of the health and vitality of this revitalised school of painting and that many dictionaries explicitly linked accuracy and ‘vérité’ in dress with a sense of morality. An example of underlying concerns surrounding dress and morality is this passage from Quatremère de Quincy’s *Considérations sur les art du dessin*. Setting out a possible way forward for the arts in France, this passage demonstrates that he believed Greek and Roman clothing was the only option for successful imitation because nudity was not a possible option in French art:

L'usage de la nudité y est proscrit par le climat, y répugne à toutes les opinions religieuses. Aucune des institutions qui rendirent habituelle en Grèce la vue de la nudité, ne saurait se renouveler chez un peuple où elles seraient en opposition avec les usages civils, militaires et religieux.³²⁷

Quatremère added to his concerns about the moral implications of nudity with more practical considerations regarding the climate and the application of a form of dress (or undress) in a climate, such as France, where temperatures were different to those in Greece:

La représentation de la nudité révolte d'autant plus la vue, qu'elle répugne plus au climat... Quoiqu'on puisse dire à cet égard, les mesures de la pudeur publique reposent plus qu'on ne pense sur les degrés de la température.³²⁸

By 1823, Quatremère made the point that the benefit of using Greek and Roman costume was that not only was it beautiful and therefore displayed ‘good taste’, but it had also, over time, become part of the language of art, and was ‘une sorte de convention universelle dans

³²⁷ Quatremère de Quincy.1791.41. Quatremère went on to analyse in depth the different forms and styles of imitation possible in his treatise *Sur L'idéal* written in response to Éméric-David’s winning essay for the Institut in 1805.

³²⁸ Ibid.22.

l'Europe entière'.³²⁹ Accuracy in Greek and Roman clothing was therefore the way in which the imitative obligations of art could be satisfied, and if the painting belonged to the genre of history and allegorical painting, it also meant that it satisfied the criteria of Winckelmann's truth to Nature without offending any moral sensibilities. Truth therefore became indelibly associated with the desire to aspire to beauty, and truth in clothing therefore meant the accurate rendition of ancient clothing.

3.2.2.2: Contemporary Clothes

The problem with dressing contemporary figures once again illustrates the importance of instructing artists in antique clothing. Most theorists and writers felt that contemporary clothes, particularly French male costume, were unattractive and unsuitable for works of art. Quatremère, for example, was negative about the quality of contemporary clothing, stating that 'le mode des habillements français et européens, outre qu'il masque la nature, est parvenu à être le plus défavorable à l'imitation'.³³⁰ Contemporary clothing or any form of dress that relied on a pattern and artificial assembly did not, in his eyes, 'take nature as its model':

L'art qui doit imiter des habits ou des étoffes artificiellement découpées sur un patron, n'a donc pas en ce genre la nature pour modèle.³³¹

The logical development of this was that Greek and Roman costume had to be used in art, not because it was ancient, but because it was natural, and because modern dress was both anti-

³²⁹Quatremère de Quincy.1823.428.

³³⁰Quatremère de Quincy.1791.41.

³³¹Quatremère de Quincy.1823.422.

metaphorical and anti-imitative.³³² Likewise, the ‘caprices de la mode’, influenced by the commercial requirements of the fashion and luxury industries, and encouraged through the prospect of financial gain to change on a regular basis only served to demonstrate, in Quatremère's eyes, how ridiculous it was to dress subject matter in contemporary clothing.³³³

Disons donc hardiment que la fidèle représentation de nos modes en sculpture, ne prépare que des sujets de ridicule, non seulement aux générations futures, mais aux hommes de notre âge, puisque l'effet de l'esprit de mode, est de rendre ridicule ce qui n'est pas conforme au goût du jour.³³⁴

This dislike was directed mainly towards male costume because of its formal constraints, and the way in which garments were separated and disconnected into upper and lower sections that detached the body into different parts and prevented a flow and movement of shape:

Le système de cet habillement, qui consiste à donner à chaque partie du corps de l'homme un vêtement séparé, devient par ce seul défaut d'ensemble et d'unité, ridicule dans l'imitation. Il n'offre d'ailleurs dans l'économie et la coupe des étoffes rien qu'aucun art ne puisse copier avec plaisir, rien qui soit même susceptible d'une imitation autre que servile et mécanique.³³⁵

The middle road in choosing the right kind of clothing appropriate for the scene or for the depiction of contemporary figures was also at the heart of Lévesque's essay on *Costume*. In this essay he addressed the issue surrounding the appropriate form of dress for contemporary figures. As well as dress indicating the particular genre of a painting or a piece of sculpture a work belonged to, the debate over Pigalle's statue of *Voltaire* and later, Canova's statue of *Napoléon*, demonstrated that the dilemma over how to dress contemporary figures and yet convey a sense of timelessness was a difficult problem. Lévesque's particular opinion was, as

³³²Ibid.424.

³³³Ibid.406.

³³⁴Ibid.426.

³³⁵Quatremère de Quincy. 1791.41. Schneider detailed how he was equally against the use of uniform in paintings: ‘Le costume moderne, l'uniforme surtout, n'est qu'une mascarade; à favoriser les sujets de batailles, « les branches subalternes de l'art, le gouvernement frappe le tronc de stérilité. »’ Schneider.255.

with Quatremère, that Greek and Roman dress was preferable. His rationale for this echoed the thoughts of Winckelmann on the topic, stating that contemporary clothes hid the form and shape of the body and the changing vagaries and nature of fashion were entirely antipathetic towards art:

Je ne répéterai pas ici d'une part tout ce qu'on a dit sur l'extravagance & la mobilité continuelle de nos modes, qui la plupart, en effet, changent les proportions naturelles, & qui par-là sont aussi contraires à l'intérêt des personnes qui les adoptent, qu'aux arts.³³⁶

Watelet did not see any correlation between the world of fashion and the world of art, referring in his essay on 'mode' to Joshua Reynolds's opinion that art should be for eternity and that the changing nature of fashion therefore rendered it unsuitable as a form of dress for any painting that wanted to convey a sense of timelessness.³³⁷

3.2.2.3: Accuracy and its Importance for the French School

It appears that the interest in the details of antique costume, and their validation through sources such as Winckelmann, were prompted by factors other than just curiosity. The drive to ensure the details were accurate appears to have been motivated by the link between the accurate representation of dress and the concept of 'vérité'. In turn, it appears that this concept of truth was attached to a sense of morality. In this way the accurate rendition of dress and the need to instruct young artists in it was given a moral value.

In questioning the deeper motivations around the connoisseurial interest in clothing there is evidence to show that accuracy in clothing became an emblem for the state of the French

³³⁶Watelet and Lévesque.1.563.

³³⁷Watelet.3.380.

school of painting and France in general. Willheim noted how he hoped that his work on antique dress and customs would help not only in the 'l'amour du beau', but also that his role in instructing the public would render him useful to his country:

J'espère que le public reconnaitra aisément que je suis appliqué, autant qu'il a été en mon pouvoir, à soigner scrupuleusement cet ouvrage, et que l'amour du beau, le désir d'être utile à ma patrie, en tâchant de contribuer, pour ma part, à l'instruction publique, ont seuls conduit tous mes traits, comme ils animeront toujours mon esprit.³³⁸

The sense that there was a bigger purpose in promoting the use of Greek and Roman clothing is also demonstrated in Watelet's *Dictionnaire*. Lévesque cited how Mengs had encouraged the use of Greek and Roman costume as a means by which to rejuvenate and revitalise French painting from the 'vulgar excesses' of Rococo art. This quotation, which I cite at length, demonstrates how the French viewed their own school, the importance they gave to accuracy in clothing, the credence and reliance they gave to the advice of Mengs, and the way in which the issue of 'dégénération' and the emergence of 'un style national' revolved around the topic of clothing:

C'est Mengs qui a parlé jusqu'ici, & nous n'avons fait que le transcrire presque mot pour mot. Il ne se trompe pas quand il prononce que l'art a dégénéré en France après LeBrun; mais il se trompe quand il donne pour cause de sa dégénération, l'imitation des ouvrages de Rubens qui se trouvent à Paris. Il prouve par ce jugement que notre école récente ne lui est pas bien connue. Jamais les Français ne se sont beaucoup occupés de l'imitation de Rubens; ils l'ont même longtemps méprisé. Presque tous élèves de l'Italie, ils ont dégénéré en prenant surtout pour exemple l'école du Cortone & de Carle Maratte, en adoptant les défauts de ces écoles sans en prendre toutes les beautés qu'ils perdent trop tôt de vue. Ils ont dégénéré, parce qu'Antoine Coypel, qui a pris beaucoup d'influence sur les artistes de sa nation, avait trop écouté les conseils du Bernin. Enfin la perfection de l'art dramatique en France, l'habileté de nos acteurs, la magnificence & les manières de notre cour n'ont pas faiblement contribué à la dégradation de l'art. Au lieu de chercher à se former sur la belle simplicité de la nature, nos peintres ont étudié les gestes & les attitudes de nos comédiens, les minauderies des femmes de la cour, les airs affectés des courtisans, le faste de

³³⁸Willheim.6.

Versailles, & la magnificence de l'Opéra. Mengs lui-même dit, & nous ne le contredirons pas, «que les Français se sont formé un style national, dont le goût ingénieux, & ce qu'ils appellent esprit, sont les qualités distinctives; qu'ils ont cessé de faire entrer dans leurs tableaux des personnages Grecs, Egyptiens, Romains ou barbares, ainsi que le Grand Poussin leur en avait donné l'exemple, & qu'ils se sont bornés à peindre des figures françaises, pour représenter l'histoire de quelque peuple que ce fût». Mais notre école change maintenant de principes, & si elle continue de suivre la route qu'elle commence à se tracer, elle deviendra de toutes les écoles, la plus sévère observatrice des convenances & des lois que s'étaient imposées les artistes de l'ancienne Grèce.³³⁹

This interest in dress as a symbol of regeneration supports other studies on the regeneration of the arts in late eighteenth-century France. Gilks has looked at the political and structural role of Quatremère and others, and Francis Haskell also demonstrated how, in the last decades of the eighteenth century, the visual arts were widely seen to be an index of general development in society.³⁴⁰ The unveiling of David's *Horatii* in 1787 was seen as symbolic of the new French school, with the accurate imitation of Roman costume shortly becoming the emblem of a Republican ideal.³⁴¹

3.2.2.4: Dress and Genre

Associated with the sense that clothing that had to be accurate, truthful, and yet appropriate was the way in which clothing was seen an indicator to which genre a painting belonged to. Watelet believed that the way of clothing the body was one of the most distinctive ways in which to separate a portrait from a history painting. For example, he argued that the purpose of a portrait was 'd'imiter particulièrement les traits du visage & l'habitude du corps, qui

³³⁹Watelet and Lévesque.4.636-637.638.

³⁴⁰F. Haskell, 'Art as an index of society', *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven, 1993), pp. 217-35.Cited Gilks.2007.62.

³⁴¹'Most contemporaries agreed (regeneration) peaked in the revival of the French school of painting. Goethe, in Rome in August 1787, wrote that the exhibition in the French Academy was 'an important artistic event. The *Horatii* by David converted everybody to the French school'. Goethe, *Italian Journey 1786-1788*, trans. W. Auden and E. Mayer (London, 1982), p. 381. Cited *ibid*.2007.64.

nous sont distingués les uns des autres, & cela s'appelle faire le portrait'.³⁴² A history painting on the other hand dealt with the human figure and its actions rather than facial characteristics and the intricacies of how they were dressed. Although the details of clothing were less important in a history painting compared with a portrait, the way in which characters were dressed indicated the kind of actions in which they were engaged. Since the purpose of history painting was to demonstrate the 'action of man',³⁴³ the art of drapery and the different ways in which drapery was folded and hung were therefore significant and important, albeit in a different way to portraiture:

(Portraits) entreprennent d'imiter particulièrement les traits du visage & l'habitude du corps, qui nous sont distingués les uns des autres, & cela s'appelle faire le portrait. Les autres s'attachent à imiter les actions des hommes, plutôt que le détail exact de leurs traits différents ; mais ces actions sont de plusieurs genres: elles sont soit nobles soit communes, soit véritables & historiques, soit fabuleuses & chimériques, ce qui exige des différences dans la manière de *draper*.³⁴⁴

As Winckelmann had also stated,³⁴⁵ the nuances of what to include and not include had to meet the conventions of the particular type or genre of painting under consideration. Of particular concern was how to clothe figures in the genres of history painting and historic portraits. In reading Watelet it becomes clear that the distinction between the genres of history painting and historic portraits, for example, fundamentally came down to issues of dress:

En effet, l'étude de ce qu'on appelle l'*antique*, qui fait l'objet des occupations les plus assidues des artistes, les instruit du costume, en même temps qu'elle les instruit de ce qui est le plus essentiel à leur art, de sorte que, par cette heureuse réunion, ils gagnent sur l'emploi du temps, trop court & trop rapide pour la multiplicité des connaissances qu'ils doivent acquérir. Ils apprennent donc à la fois comme ils doivent dessiner pour parvenir à représenter les formes humaines les plus parfaites, & comme ils doivent revêtir & parer ces formes conformément

³⁴²Watelet and Lévesque.1.703.

³⁴³Ibid.1.702.

³⁴⁴Ibid.1.703.

³⁴⁵Winckelmann.1786.20-21.

aux temps, dont les grands artistes & les grand poètes leur ont conservé le souvenir. Il en résulte que manquer grossièrement au *costume* mythologique des anciens, serait avouer qu'on n'a point dessiné, ou qu'on a étudié trop superficiellement les monuments qui sont devenus les bases de l'art.³⁴⁶

Watelet described accuracy in the latter as particular difficult to gauge as the tendency in these historic portraits was to inflate the ego of the sitter, often with risible results:

Les portraits des Princes & des Grands, sont plus sujets à être *historiés* que d'autres. La Peinture accumule, par flatterie, ou d'après les désirs de l'orgueil, des allégories froides, un costume que l'on peut appeler ambitieux, enfin les actions & les expressions souvent les plus exagérées. C'est bien pis encore, quand elle joint des modes modernes, capricieuses, ridicules, aux idées qu'elle emprunte de l'ancienne mythologie, comme quand elle a mis la tête de Louis XIV, coiffé d'un énorme perruque, sur le corps d'Apollon.³⁴⁷

The interest in the connoisseurial details of costume and its accuracy, as well as being an indicator of the resurgence and regeneration of the French school of painting also demonstrated to which genre a piece of sculpture or a painting belonged. With the changing nature of artworks appearing at the Paris Salons over the course of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century, and the emphasis on the importance of beauty as a benchmark of excellence, clothing became an important barometer of taste. Looking at the art criticism, it is apparent that dress became a major area of contention amongst the critics in their response to works of art. In a sense, the connoisseurial importance that Winckelmann had attributed to the accurate imitation of antique costume became symbolic in France for different reasons. Its association with the delineation between genres as well as with notions of truth, beauty and morality meant that in many senses accuracy in the depiction of clothing became symbolic of the state of French painting itself.

³⁴⁶Watelet and Lévesque.1.561.

³⁴⁷Ibid.3.43.

Conclusion

In summary clothing was important connoisseurially for a range of different reasons. It was an important indicator of 'vérité', and the accuracy and the 'truth to nature' of images in painting and sculpture was, in turn, seen as indicative of the health and vitality of a rejuvenated school of French painting. Clothing was an easy way in which to accurately demonstrate 'vérité', and in turn 'vérité', was given an aesthetic value, because it was imbued with the idea that what was truthful was also beautiful. This may have been one of the reasons why there was so much interest in the connoisseurial aspect of clothing and why the costume dictionaries mixed the detailing of ancient dress with essays on the importance of clothing, truth, and also touched on the aesthetic as well as the practical aspects of Greek and Roman clothing.

The dictionaries also demonstrate that clothing was a key indicator of the genre to which a painting belonged or to which it aspired to. As we will see when we look at the art criticism, this accounts for the fact that dress became an area of contention in early nineteenth-century French art because of the flood of portraiture and battle paintings that were exhibited at the Salon and the divisive nature of paintings such as David's *Les Sabines*.

Another reason for contention around the topic of dress was the dilemma that modern artists had over how to depict contemporary figures, but in the 'heroic' style. Aware that they were living in extraordinary times politically, in the genre of sculpture this was regarded as a particularly difficult and complex issue. The response to Pigalle's statue of *Voltaire* was one example of the problems faced by artists and critics over clothing. Another famous example was the scandal over the nude statue of *Général Desaix* which had to be removed from the Place des Victories and the story of the commissioning of Canova's nude statue of Napoleon as *Napoléon en Mars pacificateur*. These will be explored further in the following chapters,

but the interest in the connoisseurial aspect of clothing demonstrates the complex nature of nuances and conventions that artists and critics had to negotiate over the issue of dress.

Finally, this insight into the connoisseurial importance of costume demonstrates yet again the influence and importance of Winckelmann in France. From the dictionaries, the art dictionaries and the costume dictionaries, it is clear that Winckelmann's work on ancient dress and customs was of profound importance and value to the French. Winckelmann was referenced continuously and quoted verbatim. The statues he used as examples in the *Histoire* were reproduced and illustrated for French artists, and he was cited as a respectable and eminent source of information even though some dictionaries did remark on his inaccuracy. He was not regarded as the only source, but he was seen as a gateway into the ancient world for those who did not speak Latin and Greek. Of particular interest in the relation to the influence and importance of Winckelmann in the French dictionaries is the status of his friend Anton Raphael Mengs. Mengs was regarded as a serious authority on the art of painting and a thinker about the arts in general independently from Winckelmann, who was seen as the expert on Greek sculpture rather than a reliable source for understanding painting. As we move on to exploring the aesthetic importance of clothing and definitions of ideal beauty in France, I will demonstrate how the opinions and definitions of beauty and the ideal given by Mengs, although seen as linked to Winckelmann and in some ways reliant on him, were taken with great seriousness.

Chapter Four: Ideal Beauty and the Aesthetic Impact of Clothing

Introduction

In the previous chapter I demonstrated that there was a large amount of connoisseurial interest in the detail of ancient Greek and Roman clothing in the art dictionaries and costume dictionaries. Much of the information that the French dictionaries used came from the description of ancient clothing that Winckelmann had set out in his *Histoire*. It appears that the purpose of this interest was not just historical or imitative. The French dictionaries believed that accuracy in clothing was also symbolic of other qualities that reflected on the quality of French painting in general. In particular there was a sense that Truth, that is accuracy in the detail of clothing, was symbolic of a broader sense of morality and the state of French art in general. In this way, it appears that the accurate rendition of antique costume separated the ‘rejuvenated’ French school from the perceived excesses of Rococo art. The interest in ancient costume, as well as antique subject matter therefore became symbolic of the resurgence in French painting. I also demonstrated that the relative importance in the accuracy of dress depended on the genre in which the painter worked. Not only was the debate around clothing significant in the light of national pride and virtue, but it was also an important indicator of the genre a painting belonged to.

The need and requirement for instruction in the art of costume also hints at either an actual change or a perceived need for change, in the training of young artists in late eighteenth-century France. This builds on the proposition in the previous chapter on Winckelmann that there may have been greater emphasis in Rome on the art of drapery than in Paris, and that one of the aims that Winckelmann had in his work on contour and the beauty of form as part of the Greek ideal was to readdress a balance rather than to propose that ideal beauty could

only be expressed in a nude figure. It also supports my suggestion that there may have been broader differences in the training of artists between Rome and Paris.

I demonstrated that Winckelmann was regarded as an important source and cultural authority on clothing. Although some dictionaries relied heavily on the *Histoire* for their information about antique dress, others engaged with Winckelmann in a different way. Some dictionaries did not reference Winckelmann at all but then used the structure and method of the *Histoire* for their own work on clothing. Others used his work as a springboard for further research, some criticised his work as inaccurate or ignored him completely. However, it was clear that all of these theorists had read Winckelmann and in some way engaged with him critically. Just as other research has demonstrated the importance of Winckelmann's influence in France politically and theoretically, this demonstrates that Winckelmann's work on costume in the *Histoire* also became the context, structure and nature of the debate around clothing.³⁴⁸

This chapter will look at the aesthetic qualities attributed to clothing in the art dictionaries. The purpose of this is to propose that in late eighteenth- century and early nineteenth-century France the imaginative charge and spiritual qualities attributed to ideal beauty were conveyed through the movable and expressive use of draperies. First, I will demonstrate that theorists configured ideal beauty in a range of different sculptures and paintings. The purpose of doing this is to demonstrate that art writers of these art dictionaries believed that there were many different ways of achieving a sense of the ideal in art. Then, in order to unpick the concept of ideal beauty from the abstract definitions of the term in the dictionaries and ground it in the practical reality of art making and the reception of art, I will briefly summarise what the dictionaries had to say about ideal beauty with the express purpose of extracting from that

³⁴⁸Donohue has noted Watelet's reliance on Winckelmann's work on drapery and has some interesting reflections on the general lack of attention given by scholars to draped figures, referencing Doy's book on Drapery. Donohue.155-181.

summary its attributes. I have identified these attributes as movement and grace, expression and harmony.

The second section will demonstrate how these attributes of ideal beauty could be expressed through the fold of the cloth, the throw of material, the impact of accessories, ornaments and decorations in a work of art and finally how a sense of harmony could be achieved with the aid of clothing within these ‘ideal’ genres of history painting and sculpture. I will also explore how it was suggested that artists went about the practical aspects of creating these effects in art and the particular challenges for drapery in the genre of sculpture. The reason behind this is to demonstrate the difficult and complex nature of painting drapery and how mastering it was considered an important skill for artists. Exploring what the dictionaries said about how to achieve these effects with the movement and the fold of the cloth can also increase our appreciation of the artist’s skill and question the artist’s purpose in painting drapery in a particular way. Finally I will demonstrate how the inclusion of drapery in the aesthetic vocabulary of ideal beauty enhances our reading of works of art by reading two of David’s history paintings from the mid-1780s and including dress as part of the definition and representation of ideal beauty.

This approach supports my earlier chapter on the aesthetic importance of dress to Winckelmann and the impact that it had on his definition and reading of ideal beauty. Winckelmann’s influence on the art dictionaries was demonstrated in the previous chapter on the connoisseurial importance of clothing. As part of the summing up in this chapter I will also briefly examine the possible derivations of the inclusion of drapery in the aesthetic language and demonstrate the extent to which French theorists relied on Winckelmann. Noting how they engaged with Winckelmann’s concept of ideal beauty so that it also ‘became French’ will hint at possible reasons behind his popularity in France and why he was

so quickly and readily assimilated. It will also support my reading of the aesthetic importance of clothing in French art and theory.

I have used a small selection of art dictionaries, which in the spirit of *Encyclopédie* looked to provide comprehensive if slightly scattered and self-referential definitions of artistic terms and methods.³⁴⁹ These dictionaries often had different authors writing for them on a particular aspect of a definition. Sometimes definitions were repeated from dictionary to dictionary verbatim. On other occasions there were different definitions and essays within one particular word demonstrating different voices and approaches to a topic. Some essays were signed by the author and others were anonymous. References to contemporary works of art were quite common although they were often not explicit. For example, they would describe a painting in order to define a term, but not necessarily give the name and author of it.

As in the previous chapter, the primary resource I have used is Watelet and Lévesque's *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure* published in 1792, in which Watelet wrote most of the articles on drapery and the ideal. Lévesque was the other major contributor to the *Dictionnaire* in association with Robin for the later volumes written after Watelet's death. In addition I have used Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* which was published in 1780 although Watelet wrote many of the articles for the *Encyclopédie* as well as for his own publication. I have also used Millin's *Dictionnaire des beaux-arts* published later in 1806. Although the choice of dictionaries is not comprehensive, a range of different opinions can be seen on some topics, so we are able to find areas of contention amongst theoreticians in art.

³⁴⁹The essays in Blanckaert's collection focus on the relationships between Watelet, Lévesque and Diderot. For further details on the Dictionaries and *Encyclopédie* see Vidal 103-125. Richard 127-152. Claude Blanckaert and others, *L'encyclopédie Méthodique (1782-1832) : Des Lumières Au Positivisme*, (Genève : Droz, 2006).

Section 4.1: Ideal Beauty

Section 4.1.1: Examples of Ideal Beauty

Watelet described the ‘beau idéal’ as a combination of ‘plusieurs perceptions qu’on unit dans la pensée’.³⁵⁰ The variety of sculptures and paintings from antique and contemporary art that the writers of dictionaries used as examples of ideal beauty gives some idea how they envisaged the combination of Nature and imagination connecting and manifesting in a form of tangible physical reality demonstrating how French theorists visualised the ideal. On the surface these examples also support my proposition in second chapter that Winckelmann’s definition of ideal beauty incorporated both male and female figures and was a combination of perfect form of the body combined with the expressive effect of draperies.

In his essay on sculpture Lévesque quoted the examples that Reynolds had given of ideal beauty. This consisted of the fairly standard list of famous antique sculptures, namely the *Apollo Belvedere*, the *Vénus de Médicis*, and the *Laocoön* (Figure 4.1). Lévesque and Reynolds were particularly entranced by the ‘air de vérité’ in the ‘draperies volantes’ of Bernini’s *Apollo and Daphne*, and saw them as evidence of Bernini’s capacity to explore antique concepts of ideal beauty even though this was not subsequently maintained (Figure 4.2):

Le premier ouvrage célèbre qu’il exécuta dans sa jeunesse, le groupe d’Apollon & Daphné, fit espérer qu’il disputerait un jour la palme aux meilleurs artistes de l’antiquité: mais il s’écarta bientôt de la bonne route. ...Au lieu de continuer l’étude de la beauté idéale qu’il avait commencée avec tant de succès, il se livra à la folle recherche des nouveautés; & entreprenant d’exécuter ce qui n’est pas au pouvoir de l’art, il s’obstina à vaincre & à maîtriser la dureté & la fierté du marbre.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰Watelet and Lévesque.3.95.

³⁵¹Ibid.5.716-720.

Lévesque cited Winckelmann's description of Leonardo's *Salvator Mundi* as an example of the ideal³⁵² and then suggested how the movable, expressive beauty found in the *Dancing Figures of Herculaneum* offered an example of 'les grâces décentes' as well as one of the heads of the dancers at the entrance of the Palais Caraffa Colobrano in Naples offering an example of 'la plus sublime beauté' (Figure 4.3):

Winckelmann, qui nous fournit cet article, remarque qu'ils observaient cet extérieur jusques dans leurs figures dansantes. On trouvera dans les antiquités d'Herculanum des exemples qui confirment l'opinion de l'ingénieux antiquaire. Il pense même que les mouvements de l'art eurent de l'influence sur le maintien des danseuses, qu'elles cherchèrent à imiter les grâces décentes dont ils leur offraient le modèle, & qu'elles s'imposèrent une bienséance qu'ils avaient consacrée. ... On peut remarquer que les danseuses étaient drapées de robes amples & longues, mais légères. Une statue de danseuse, placée au-dessus de l'entrée du palais Caraffa Colobrano, à Naples, la tête couronnée de fleurs (est) de la plus sublime beauté.³⁵³

Lévesque described the violent contraction of muscles and the pose of the figures in David's *Socrates* as 'sublime' and as an example of ideal beauty.³⁵⁴ Watelet writing for Diderot's *Encyclopédie* described the *l'Apollon du Belvédère*, and the *Vénus de Médicis*, as examples of ideal beauty in antiquity. For its modern equivalents Watelet cited Raphael's 1514 *La Madonna della Seggiola*, and Correggio's *Magdeleine de Parme* as examples of the ideal³⁵⁵ (Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5). He also believed that Raphael's *Galatea* embodied the quality of grace,³⁵⁶ an attribute which was cited by Robin as being 'plus belle encore que la beauté',³⁵⁷ (Figure 4.6).

³⁵²Ibid.3.109.

³⁵³Ibid.3.682-683.

³⁵⁴Ibid.3.104.

³⁵⁵Denis Diderot and Jean-Baptiste le Rond d'Alembert, *Encyclopédie, Ou, Dictionnaire Raisonné Des Sciences, Des Arts, Et Des Métiers, Mis En Ordre Par Mm. Diderot Et D'alembert. [with] Planches. Table Analytique Et Raisonnée Des Matières [by P. Mouchon]*, (Paris, 1780). 8.514.

³⁵⁶Ibid.8.515.

³⁵⁷Watelet and Lévesque.2.458.

These few examples alone demonstrate that there were many physical permutations and interpretations of the term ideal beauty in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century France. Many antique statues embodied the quality of perfect physical form with an imaginative ideal, but so did some exceptional pieces of modern and contemporary work. Since it is apparent, even on a surface reading, that there was more than one way in which ideal beauty could be expressed, my plan is to outline the definitions that the dictionaries gave to the terms ‘beau idéal’, ‘beau’ and ‘beauté’, and from these extract the attributes attached to the concept of ideal beauty. The reasoning behind this is that this approach answers the obvious question of how theorists literally defined each of the terms and subsequently allows me to demonstrate how this could practically affect the production of art work that aspired to convey a sense of beauty and the ideal. It is my intention to demonstrate that the authors of the dictionaries attributed these characteristics and aesthetic qualities to clothing and that consequently clothing had an aesthetic value in French art, just as it did with Winckelmann.

Section 4.1.2: Attributes of Ideal Beauty

4.1.2.1: ‘Beau Idéal’

For the term ‘Beau Idéal’ both Watelet and Diderot³⁵⁸ relied heavily on Winckelmann’s definition and Watelet quoted Winckelmann direct:

Si vous êtes ravis d’admiration en regardant & en dessinant l’apollon antique, si votre âme est saisie de l’expression céleste qui s’y joint à toutes les beautés des formes; que vous servirait qu’un des plus célèbres enthousiastes du beau idéal & de l’antiquité vous dit,: «L’idée de la beauté est comme une substance abstraite de la matière par l’action du feu, comme un esprit qui cherche à se créer un être à

³⁵⁸Diderot and d’Alembert.3.514-518.

l'image de la première créature raisonnable, formée par l'intelligence de la divinité.»³⁵⁹

In addition to quoting Winckelmann, Watelet also implicitly relied on Winckelmann saying that because ideal beauty was separated from ordinary beauty, it could express forms of heroism and communicate a sense of divinity.³⁶⁰ Watelet thought that ideal beauty should be more accurately described as 'une perfection idéale' rather than beauty.³⁶¹ The attribute of grace contributed to this sense of perfection and to the indefinable aspect of beauty:

Le talent de donner de la grâce ne s'acquiert pas plus que le goût. La grâce ne connaît ni les principes, ni les conventions; elle est une dans tous les pays. Elle ne peut se décrire, ni se mesurer, ni se déterminer; elle plaît et ravit sans la précision de formes nécessaire pour exprimer la beauté. Aussi peut-on lui appliquer justement le trait dont La Fontaine achève la peinture de la déesse des amours, la grâce plus belle encore que la beauté.³⁶² La grâce, ainsi que la beauté, concourt à la perfection.³⁶³

This conceptual reading of the term ideal beauty, associated with words such as 'surhumaines',³⁶⁴ 'élevés', 'idée',³⁶⁵ 'hors de nous', 'abstrait et intellectuelle',³⁶⁶ 'âme', 'celeste', 'spirituelle', 'chimérique', 'je ne sais quoi',³⁶⁷ 'grâce' and 'esprit' meant that ideal beauty was seen as existing outside normal reality.³⁶⁸ A sense of how drapery was able to express the elusive and abstract quality of the ideal can be seen in the metaphor that Watelet used to describe the sense of the supernatural that the concept of ideal beauty evoked:

C'est un désir noble sans doute que de prétendre atteindre à des conceptions que l'on peut nommer surhumaines; mais plus les objets de contemplation sont

³⁵⁹Watelet and Lévesque.1.267. Diderot and d'Alembert.8.514-518.

³⁶⁰Watelet and Lévesque.1.266.

³⁶¹Ibid.1.264.

³⁶²Millin.1.729.

³⁶³Watelet and Lévesque.2.452.Robin.

³⁶⁴Ibid.1.248.

³⁶⁵Diderot and d'Alembert.8.489.

³⁶⁶Watelet and Lévesque.1.248- 249.

³⁶⁷Ibid.1.279.

³⁶⁸Diderot and d'Alembert.8.514.

profonds ou élevés, plus ils s'enveloppent de voiles qui les obscurcissent et nous les dérobent.³⁶⁹

It appears that drapery was seen as being able to convey some of the abstract qualities of ideal beauty, in particularly the sense of the supernatural and the quality of grace.

Lévesque's essay on the topic expanded Watelet's thoughts on the nature of the moveable quality of beauty. He echoed Winckelmann's description of the *Belvedere Torso* when writing about the sublime expressive beauty in the servant's tense and contorted shoulders when handing the cup of poison to Socrates in David's *La Mort du Socrate* (Figure 4.7):

Un valet de geôle doit donner le poison à Socrate: voilà un personnage oblige par le sujet, & dont l'action est déterminée. Mais quel récit n'a jamais déterminée la beauté idéale de l'action que M David prête à cette figure ? Ce valet présente la coupe en détournant le corps entier. Il doit offrir, il voudrait la retirer, & pour tenir le bras tendu, il fait sur lui-même un tel effort, que tous les muscles de ce bras sont dans une violente contraction. La convulsion intérieure que lui fait éprouver sa situation douloureuse, s'annonce dans un de ses pieds qui ne pose que sur le talon. Socrate doit prendre la coupe: mais l'histoire dit-elle qu'il n'a pas même tourne la tête du côté de cette coupe, qu'il l'a prise comme à tâtons & d'une manière distraite, daignant à peine, tout occupe des matières sublimes dont il entretient, pour la dernière fois, ses auditeurs, penser au poison qu'il reçoit & qui va lui donner la mort? Cette pensée n'était écrite que dans l'idée de M. David. Mais quel étonnant contraste: Socrate prend nonchalamment le poison mortel, comme si cette action lui était indifférente, & le valet qui le lui donne souffre dans toutes les parties de son corps, comme s'il était menace lui-même du trépas.³⁷⁰

Lévesque's reading of the word 'idéal', in this context, firmly rooted its meaning in a form of 'sedate and grand expression', which stood outside of the facial expressions and grimaces advocated by LeBrun.³⁷¹ The following quotation demonstrates that expression was seen as an integral part of ideal beauty yet particularly difficult to achieve in a work of art because of the way in which it could distort actual physical features:

³⁶⁹Watelet and Lévesque.1.248.

³⁷⁰Ibid.3.104.

³⁷¹Winckelmann.1786.30.

Cette belle partie de l'art, l'expression, est presque toute idéale. Dans la nature, l'expression est fugitive; surtout dans les passions vives, les mouvements de l'âme se succèdent, se chassent, se combattent. On ne peut les copier sur un modèle. Lui ordonner de poser une expression, c'est lui ordonner d'en faire la grimace: car on n'exprime qu'en grimaçant ce qu'on ne sent pas. Alors les figures, loin d'avoir pour le spectateur le charme qu'inspire une action naïve, lui causeront la sorte d'aversion que sont éprouvées les physionomies fausses.³⁷²

This reading of the term expression is also supported by dictionary definitions related to the words 'expression'³⁷³ and 'grimace'.³⁷⁴ As with Winckelmann, it appears that expression, as long as it was not exaggerated, was seen as one of the components of ideal beauty.

Other theorists that supported this reading of ideal beauty included Quatremère de Quincy. In *Sur l'idéal dans les arts du dessin*,³⁷⁵ he separated out two different understandings of the 'idéal'; the 'idéal' as could be defined either in visual terms, or a metaphorical understanding of the notion of the 'idéal', which in common with the dictionaries was derived from the word 'idée' and referred to imagination.³⁷⁶ Quatremère's analysis of the former meant that he aligned the 'beau idéal' with the 'beau visible', (in which beauty was viewed only through the eyes),³⁷⁷ with the spirit of the artist, and the feeling and emotion in the work of art that then combined with the power of the 'idée' and the imagination.³⁷⁸ Quatremère argued that with his understanding of the 'beau idéal', old age could be beautiful, and even ugliness could be beautiful. As there was the 'beau idéal', so there could be an understanding of an 'l'horrible idéal',³⁷⁹ and in *De l'imitation* he went on to question as to why 'beauty' only had the privilege of being described as achieving this ideal.

³⁷²Watelet and Lévesque.3.104.

³⁷³Ibid. 2.225-246. Watelet quoted Winckelmann and Mengs in his essay on 'Expression', and also included LeBrun's and Dandré-Bardon's definitions of expression as well. He did not express a preference for any of the theorists but did suggest that it was Mengs who had influenced Winckelmann's thoughts on the topic.

³⁷⁴Ibid.2.629-631.

³⁷⁵M. Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, *Sur L'idéal Dans Les Arts Du Dessin*, (Paris, 1805).

³⁷⁶Ibid.5.

³⁷⁷Ibid.19.

³⁷⁸Ibid.18.

³⁷⁹Ibid.21.

Mais s'il y a quelque chose qui soit conforme à la nature et à la vérité, et qu'il soit permis d'appeler idéal, je demanderai pourquoi ce serait le privilège du beau.³⁸⁰

Mengs's definition of ideal beauty also combined feeling with formal perfection. When discussing the perfect form of the body Mengs's particular preference was for female nudity over nude male figures, and he specifically invested female nudity with more of the ideal than the male. He gave a number of reasons for this, some aesthetic, others not. Firstly, he believed that the colour of a woman's skin was more attractive and rounded than men's; secondly he pointed out that there was more chance to have occasion to view women nude in painting than in real life, which is why they seem more ideal than the male torso which one saw all the time, and the third reason he simply stated as 'facile à deviner'.³⁸¹ Mengs then described the quality of feeling as being the 'spirit of the artist on the material of his work':

Ce qui teint à l'idéal est plus parfait que ce qui tient à la matière, & la matière est susceptible de la recevoir. L'artiste qui veut produire quelque chose de beau, doit chercher à s'élever par degré au-dessus de la matière, ne rien faire sans cause & ne rien souffrir d'inanimé ni d'inutile ; car cela dégrade tout. Son génie doit chercher à donner par le choix la perfection à la matière. Le génie est l'esprit du peintre, & l'esprit doit à la matière.³⁸²

The dictionary definitions of ideal beauty are interesting because they support the idea that there was an expressive and movable quality to its manifestation in art works. It also supports the idea that there was more than one definition or manifestation of ideal beauty. The next two sections will explore this idea further.

³⁸⁰Quatremère de Quincy.1823.186.

³⁸¹Mengs and Jansen.686.

³⁸²Ibid.115.

4.1.2.2: 'Beau'

Diderot's definition of 'Beau' related primarily to the usage of the term and his definition focused on a historical reading of how the word had been used and its derivation.³⁸³ Watelet's was more interested in how the word 'beau' was applied theoretically and practically. He looked at the association of beauty with colour³⁸⁴ and the association of beauty with love³⁸⁵ but concluded that neither definition explained the more abstract meaning associated with the word 'beau'. In particular he tried to separate the meaning of the term from its application to sensual objects; i.e. a beautiful smell, touch, and sight.³⁸⁶ He implied that the words should be used in different ways so that the concept of beauty could be separated from the idea of desire. In place of the term 'beau' being applied to objects of desire or relating to sensual objects,³⁸⁷ he suggested that the terms such as marvelous, sublime or heavenly should be used instead.³⁸⁸

4.1.2.3: 'Beauté'

The definitions of the word 'beauté' in the dictionaries were more akin to Winckelmann's definition of the word 'idéal'. They demonstrated two particular characteristics: an association with physical perfection and then beautiful 'types'. The former particularly echoed the work of Winckelmann. Watelet described in detail the most beautiful shapes for each part of the body stating which was aesthetically preferable.³⁸⁹ The categorisation of particular 'types' of beauty echoed Winckelmann's ideal types but with a difference. In

³⁸³Diderot and d'Alembert.2.169-181.

³⁸⁴Watelet and Lévesque.1.252.

³⁸⁵Ibid.1.252.

³⁸⁶Ibid.1.251.

³⁸⁷Ibid.1.251.

³⁸⁸Ibid.1.253-254.

³⁸⁹Ibid.1.293-298.

Watelet's analysis the ideal types were imbued with moral qualities associated with a particular age or stage of a human life. For example, the following quotation demonstrates that the quality of beauty in old age did not depend on physical form alone. Features such as the eyes and the wrinkles were important for beauty in old age because they could reveal the quality of the soul underneath:

...Si la tête d'un vieillard conserve un caractère noble; si sa physionomie annonce la bonté, la sagesse; si ses rides paraissent s'être formées sans violence & par le seul effet physique de quelques déperditions indispensables; si elles n'offrent point des filons formés par l'habitude de passions blâmables, ou des traces d'expressions violentes & forcées qui appartiennent aux vices & aux dérèglements du corps & de l'esprit; si la tête dégarnie, les cheveux & la barbe blanchis ne sont pas naître l'idée d'une dégradation & d'un dépérissement prématurés; si, au contraire ces signes de vieillesse réveillent l'idée d'une expérience que l'on n'acquiert que par le cours des ans; si les yeux animés annoncent une vigueur de l'âme, qui résiste encore à la loi du temps & qui s'est conservée par la sagesse & la modération; si la bouche, les lèvres & le sourire n'opposent aucune expression défavorable à celle du calme parfait d'une âme sans remords & sans craintes, la vieillesse a droit de prétendre encore au titre de beauté.³⁹⁰

A sense of morality was therefore integral to the definition of a physical expression of 'beauté'. Another meaning associated with the word 'beauté' imbued the physical qualities of perfection with emotional attributes. The most striking passage which demonstrates the connection between beauty and feeling was Watelet's association of the beauty of Venus with the feeling and sensation of love:

Il est encore nécessaire que la figure à laquelle on adapte le mot beauté, exprime, indépendamment de ce qui vient d'être dit, une action ou un sentiment, ou bien une idée spirituelle qui anime la perfection physique; & puisque la beauté naît, comme je l'ai dit figurément, des idées d'appartenances à Vénus, c'est l'amour qui naturellement a le droit le plus général d'animer la figure, & de donner plus d'intérêt à ses formes & aux parties qui la composent; mais cet amour peut être, ainsi que sa mère, ou spirituel & sentimental, ou sensuel... & que cette figure, ou nu, ou artistement couverte, peut laisser juger de son ensemble.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰Ibid.1.283-284.

³⁹¹Ibid.1.271.

The definition of 'beauté' therefore also incorporated animation and movement. This infers that rather than simply being a static form of physical 'perfection' detached from any emotional or movable qualities 'beauté' was both expressive and moveable. 'Beauté' was therefore associated with both physical and emotional qualities and could be expressed equally in a nude figure or a clothed one. This is an important distinction because it also echoes the definition of ideal beauty in Winckelmann and how beauty needed to be in a state of action and passion for it become ideal.

Conclusion

The conclusion that emerges from examining the different definitions given to the words, 'beau' 'beauté', 'idéal' and 'beau idéal' is the sense that ideal beauty was not a fixed emblem or object of any kind. It was connected to Nature but it was also seen as an embellishment of it. This is supported by Lévesque's definition of art and the statement that Nature alone was not enough.

Enfin l'art n'est pas précisément la nature; il est une magie puissante qui gouverne la nature à son gré, ou qui plutôt crée à son gré un monde fantastique. Si l'on veut que l'art ne soit que la nature, il ne sera pas elle, & n'en offrira qu'une imitation froide & inanimée. C'est à l'idée créatrice qu'il doit tous les charmes qui lui donnent la vie.³⁹²

In his mind, ideal beauty also embodied attributes and feelings that were connected with the subject matter of the painting.

To find some coherent and useful conclusion to the quest for a definition of ideal beauty it might therefore be worthwhile inverting the question 'what was ideal beauty' to 'how did French theorists find the ideal in beauty?' There was a consensus that perfection, beauty, the

³⁹²Ibid.3.107.

best choice and all these different ways of saying that beauty was the best of nature, were part of it. If that was an accepted premise, it means that only the ideal needs to be defined. In many ways this approach was exactly how the dictionaries went about dealing with the meaning of the words themselves. They connected the definition of ideal beauty to the derivation of the word 'idéal' itself, which as Diderot and Quatremère noted came from the word 'idée', and in turn linked it to imagination. The question for the artist then had to be how the powers of imagination could best be expressed so that the 'idéal' and ideal beauty could be found in everything. As a consequence, my reading of the meaning of the term 'beau idéal' is that instead of it being fixed to a particular object or type of object, for the French theorists it needed to be expressed, as Winckelmann said, through 'action' and 'passion'. In this way almost everything could become ideal if the attributes of feeling and movement could be combined with their most beautiful form and incorporated into objects.

This reading is supported by the way in which the dictionaries used the term ideal, and the way in which theorists such as Quatremère applied the term. If this interpretation of ideal beauty is found in the combination of the definition of 'beauté' and Quatremère's 'beau idéal', it also echoes the work of Winckelmann. It also means that as Lévesque pointed out, draperies could be part of ideal beauty:

Nous avons vu à l'article DRAPERIE, combien il entre d'idéal dans cette partie de l'art.³⁹³

Applying this way of defining the indefinable to the example of ideal beauty that Lévesque gave demonstrates how ideal beauty could be found both the form and movement of the servant's shoulders in *La Mort du Socrate* and in the draperies he was wearing, provided they

³⁹³Ibid.3.107.

were in accord with the movement of the figures, the emotional story and the overall harmony of the whole painting.

Section 4.2: How to convey Ideal Beauty

This section of the chapter will look at the expressive and aesthetic qualities of clothing and how it was possible to convey ideal beauty in draperies. This section is divided into parts that explore the general association of draperies and ideal beauty and then the different attributes associated with ideal beauty in drapery; grace and movement, expression and harmony. It will include the practical advice given by the art dictionaries on how to create these effects with drapery and the final part will look at the specific challenge of successfully rendering drapery in sculpture and the problems associated with the use of mannequins for modelling drapery. This approach demonstrates that clothing formed an integral part of ideal beauty and could by itself be ‘ideal’. It also demonstrates how the attributes of clothing could be practically achieved in an artwork. This understanding explains why so much importance was given to the correct execution of drapery in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French art and it also provides us with the art historical tools to read these paintings and sculptures at a deeper level.

Section 4.2.1: Drapery and the Ideal

The differentiation between clothing in the ‘ideal’ genres of history painting and sculpture and the connoisseurial and aesthetic importance of dress was expressed in the use of words. In the genres of history painting and sculpture, clothing was called ‘draperie’, and in the imitative genres of portraiture, sentimental art and battle-painting the term used for dress was

‘costume’. This signified a deeper difference which the Comte de Jaucourt and Diderot enumerated in the *Encyclopédie*, both of which I quote below:

Le costume est l’art de traiter un sujet dans toute la vérité historique. ...l’observation exacte de ce qui est, suivant le temps, le génie, les mœurs, les lois, le gout, les richesses, le caractère & les habitudes d’un pays où l’on place la scène d’un tableau. Le costume renferme encore tout ce qui regarde la chronologie, & la vérité de certains faits connus de tout le monde ; enfin tout ce qui concerne la qualité, la nature, & la propriété essentielle des objets qu’on représente.³⁹⁴

Drapery: ...Peu de personnes, à moins qu’elles ne soient initiées dans les mystères de l’art de peindre, imaginent de quelle importance est dans la composition la partie des draperies. Souvent c’est l’art avec lequel les figures d’un sujet sont drapées, qui est la base de l’harmonie d’un tableau, soit pour la couleur, soit pour l’ordonnance. Cet art contribue même à l’expression des caractères & des passions; Dans l’imitation des hommes, l’habillement concourra donc avec la passion d’une figure, à confirmer son caractère.³⁹⁵

The attributes given to drapery were therefore different from those given to ‘costume’, ‘vêtements’ and ‘habillements’. Drapery needed to conform to the action of the painting, the movement of the figures in a painting and finally show the shape and form of the nude figure underneath the arrangement of the folds:

Ce n’est pas assez que les draperies soient conformes au costume de l’action représentée, il faut en second lieu qu’elles s’accordent au mouvement des figures; troisièmement, qu’elles laissent entrevoir le nu du corps, & que sans déguiser les jointures & les emmanchements, elles les fassent sentir par la disposition des plis.³⁹⁶

The requirement of drapery, in contrast to the connoisseurial and historical importance of costume, was twofold; it first needed to have an imitative function in its relationship to nature which is why the accurate and connoisseurial details of costume were important. Secondly, it needed an imaginative function in order to allow drapery to form part of ideal beauty. The

³⁹⁴Diderot and d’Alembert.4.298.

³⁹⁵Ibid.5.108.

³⁹⁶Ibid.5.108.

correct imitation of draperies was therefore the starting point for the artist. This accurate knowledge was especially important in drapery since the principal object of study was the ‘action of man’, and all aspects of clothing had an effect on the action and expression of the work of art.³⁹⁷

Peu de personnes, à moins qu’elles ne soient initiées dans les mystères de l’art de peindre, imaginent de quelle importance est dans la composition la partie des draperies. Souvent c’est l’art avec lequel les figures d’un sujet sont drapées, qui est la base de l’harmonie d’un tableau, soit pour la couleur, soit pour l’ordonnance. Cet art contribue même à l’expression des caractères & des passions; & si quelqu’un venait à douter de cette dernière proposition, qu’il réfléchisse un moment sur ce que les habits des hommes qui se présentent à nos yeux, ajoutent ou ôtent continuellement dans notre esprit à l’idée que nous prenons d’eux. Dans l’imitation des hommes, l’habillement concourra donc avec la passion d’une figure, à confirmer son caractère.³⁹⁸

The imitative role of drapery in the painting therefore had to demonstrate a facility with rendering the human body, dressed and undressed so that the figure and the movement of the figure were clear and did not conceal the form of the body or hide the inability of the artist to render the nude figure well. Secondly, draperies had to ‘tell the story’ and convey the action and movement that the painting was about. For this, draperies needed to be close to the body so that the movement of the body underneath was clear and not lost underneath heavy wrappings of cloth.

The second function of draperies in creating a sense of the ideal was to demonstrate imagination. The very fact that draperies were seen as having an imaginative function and had the potential to be ideal demonstrates that they were perceived as having an aesthetic value and contribution to the painting.

Les draperies contribueront à la vie, au caractère, à l’expression des figures.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷Watelet and Lévesque.1.501.

³⁹⁸Diderot and d’Alembert.5.108.

³⁹⁹Watelet and Lévesque.1.696.

In the context of discussing David's *Les Horaces*, and the correct balance between accuracy of dress and creativity, as quoted earlier, Watelet stated how many painters used ideal draperies configured from their imagination:

J'ajouterai qu'un peintre est plus excusable, quand, ne consultant point le costume d'une nation, il lui donne des draperies idéales, que lorsqu'il lui prête celles d'un peuple fort différent. L'ignorance peut passer à la faveur de l'imagination, comme on voit un sexe aimable nous faire excuser ses caprices par les grâces dont il les accompagne.⁴⁰⁰

Ideal draperies could assist in making a figure beautiful, which in turn could lead it to having a greater sense of perfection and a more 'general' sense of the figuration of ideal beauty. In this particular quotation Lévesque demonstrated how that simplicity in the material that Helen was draped in was a much more effective way of conveying a sense of ideal beauty than if she was covered with rich and highly ornamented jewellery:

L'idéal de l'art ne consiste pas à faire Hélène riche, mais à la faire belle. ...Une belle femme, noblement drapée d'une étoffe simple, sera bien plus noble dans un tableau, que si elle était chargée de perles, d'or & d'étoffes précieuses.⁴⁰¹

It was the quality of this aesthetic 'effect' that was important to the authors of French dictionaries. Since a painting was often trying to show a range of movements and emotions simultaneously on a single piece of canvas, drapery was an important tool for depicting the range of complex activities related to the overall purpose and subject matter of the painting: the movement of the figures, the emotional impact of the painting and the overall harmony and balance of the work of art. I will demonstrate how the theorists discussed and advised on the types and the nuances of aesthetic effect that draperies could have in a work of art and

⁴⁰⁰Ibid.1.705.

⁴⁰¹Ibid.1.698.

how this effect could be expressed through the use of folds and the quality and grace of the ‘throw’ of drapery.

Section 4.2.2: Grace and Movement

The folds of drapery were an important mechanism for creating a sense of movement for figures in a painting:

... tous les mouvements des plis annoncent le mouvement plus vif ou plus tranquille de ces figures.⁴⁰²

The theorists distinguished between the term ‘movement’ and the term ‘action’. Watelet illustrated the difference by giving the example of two paintings; in the former King Solomon had his hand raised about to cut the body of the infant in two. He described this as an example of the term ‘action’. ‘Action’ required a great skill in anatomy from the artist because one had to understand what bones and muscles would be moving in order to paint an ‘action’ with accuracy. In the case of ‘movement’ however, which he illustrated with the example of a woman jumping in-between two warriors, it relied more on getting the weight and balance of the figure correct. Drapery and the way in which the folds of the cloth fell were a way in which to convey this sense of movement. The folds of the drapery could convey whether a figure was moving forwards or backwards or if the figure was rising and flying through the air. Alternatively folds could demonstrate if a figure was descending and falling downwards. These distinctions were important in large history or allegorical paintings as they specifically related to the accuracy of the story illustrated. Ducray-Duminil believed that the draperies in Prud’hon’s *l’Enlèvement de Psyché* (Figure 4.8), made the figure look as if she was falling rather than flying, and Boutard believed that Perrin’s *La Résurrection et*

⁴⁰²Ibid.1.696.

l'Assomption de la Vierge had the same problem⁴⁰³ (Figure 4.9) Folds could be large or they could be small, but their placement was crucial for determining the correct movement of the body:

L'idéal entre aussi dans la composition des draperies; car on ne peut pas donner des draperies tranquilles à un homme qui court rapidement. Dans un ange qui vole, par exemple, il faut désigner par la draperie s'il monte ou s'il descend; de même qu'il faut indiquer par les plis posés sur chaque membre, & par ceux de la draperie en général, si la figure est actuellement en action, ou au retour de l'action; si le mouvement a été doux, prompt, ou violent; si s'est le commencement ou la fin d'une action.⁴⁰⁴

Agrippina's clothes in the statue by Pierre Le Gros were given as a good example of how movement should be executed in drapery by Robin:

...la figure assise appelée Agrippine, celle qu'on nomme la vestale, dont nous avons aux Tuileries une si belle copie par le Gros, ont toutes deux oublié la matière dont elles sont faites, & en les regardant, ont été tenté de chercher à pénétrer les idées qui les occupent. La simplicité des vêtements, la marche à fée & naturelle des plis, leur détails, toujours proportionnés aux diverses formes qu'ils couvrent, & caractérisant avec sentiment la nature de l'étoffe, sont les moyens d'offrir le mouvement dans une figure en action, & d'en montrer la possibilité dans la figures la plus tranquille.⁴⁰⁵

It was important both for the movement and the throw of draperies to demonstrate the quality of grace and 'be graceful'. Grace was used in the dictionaries as a term to describe the changing and flexible nature of the way draperies fell, or were 'thrown'. Grace was also a more generic movable and spiritual attribute seen as having an aesthetic status because it contributed to perfection and ideal beauty. In general, Lévesque was keen to disassociate himself from Hogarth's definition of grace as a 'line of beauty', and instead solely focused on

⁴⁰³M. François Guillaume Ducray Duminil, *Salon Des Tableaux*, (Offprint from: Petites affiches de Paris: Paris, 1808-1809).187. Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De L'an Dix*, (Offprint from: Journal des débats Paris, 1802).11th October 1802. 2.

⁴⁰⁴Mengs and Jansen.259.

⁴⁰⁵Watelet and Lévesque.3.428.

the nebulous and spiritual meaning of the term associating it visually with drapery rather than with contour or line.⁴⁰⁶ As these quotations demonstrate although grace was associated with a quality of spirit and sentiment, it was manifested on canvas by the movement of the body and the draperies. Draperies and in particular, the 'jet' or throw of the draperies were seen as a way of expressing grace:

Si la grâce naît du juste accord des sentiments de l'âme avec l'action du corps.⁴⁰⁷ ...La grâce consiste dans l'accord de ces mouvements et ceux de l'âme.⁴⁰⁸ En second lieu, l'accord des mouvements du corps avec ceux de l'âme convient autant à l'expression exacte de toutes les passions, qu'aux grâces.⁴⁰⁹ Elle (la grâce) consiste dans une certaine disposition des parties d'une figure, de manière qu'il en résulte une aimable attitude. Elle repose singulièrement sur le contraste et la légèreté dans la position.⁴¹⁰

Watelet described the moveable quality of grace as a form of charm which he described as the 'je ne sais quoi':

Non-seulement le maintien, la démarche, l'action, la grâce acquièrent, dans les sociétés éclairées, le droit d'avoir part à l'idée de la beauté, mais ce qu'on appelle plus particulièrement la physionomie, le caractère des traits, les gestes, les mouvements, entrent aussi dans l'idée dont je parle, & l'on y a joint quelquefois un certain charme senti, mais si difficile à expliquer, qu'on s'est permis de la désigner en le nommant un 'je ne sais quoi'.⁴¹¹

The function of the 'jet' or the throw of the drapery was to assist in giving this sense of movement to clothing, and to the figure underneath. This 'jet' could also contribute towards the 'grace' of the draperies or convey other attributes such as a sense of heroism and timelessness. Often the 'effect' of the 'jet' was to create a sense of 'grace' through the 'accidental' throw and movement of cloth:

⁴⁰⁶ M. Falconet, très-supérieure à cette futile recherche, a fait sentir en passant le ridicule de la *ligne* inventée par Hogarth, pour exprimer la beauté'. Ibid.3.243.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.2.451.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.2.453.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.2.459.

⁴¹⁰ Millin.1.727.

⁴¹¹ Watelet and Lévesque.1.279.

Quoique la grâce dans le jet de draperies, semble dépendre de celle qui se trouve dans les figures qu'elles couvrent, il existe cependant une grâce absolument propre à l'art de draper. On trouve de la grâce dans un rideau retroussé, ou dans un manteau jeté sur un meuble, lorsque leur mouvement est doux, qu'il contraste & cependant s'enchaîne avec les objets qui les a voisement. C'est dans ce cas surtout que le hasard, le caprice, une main heureuse offrent des succès qu'un froid raisonnement n'aurait pas produit.⁴¹²

The 'jet' could be expressed in the accidental throw of a piece of cloth across a piece of furniture, or it could be linked to the principal object of a work of art. An example of this quality expressed by drapery was the yellow cloak in David's portrait of *Bonaparte franchissant les Alpes au Grand-Saint-Bernard* exhibited in the Salon of 1801, which Millin described as an example of a history painting even though technically it was a portrait⁴¹³ (Figure 4.10). In Millin's eyes David had successfully negotiated the space between a portrait of Napoleon in contemporary military uniform and a 'historic portrait' partly because of the way in which he had used a piece of drapery to create movement and an 'effect'.⁴¹⁴ Draperies and the fold of the draperies against the body were therefore also important in determining the action and the movement of the characters and in turn determine the genre and status of a painting.

Section 4.2.3: Expression

In the second chapter, I demonstrated that Winckelmann reacted strongly to the exaggerated expressions of Charles LeBrun and felt that contorted grimaces illustrated in his *Traité des Passions* was detrimental to beauty in art. Watelet's definition of 'Grimace' and 'Expression'

⁴¹²Ibid.3.112.

⁴¹³The cloak itself, was of historical significance as it had been used at the Battle of Marengo and subsequently served as the shroud for Napoleon: ' Il se servit de son fils aîné pour le mouvement de la figure, et ce jeune homme eut l'honneur de s'envelopper de ce glorieux manteau de Marengo, qui plus tard devait servir de linceul au maître du monde, s'éteignant en captivité'. Jacques Louis Jules David, *Le Peintre Louis David, 1748-1825 : Souvenirs & Documents Inédits*, (Paris V. Havard, 1880). 384.

⁴¹⁴Millin.2.58.

also confirmed that the use of the face as a vehicle of expression in contemporary art was an area of contention and disquiet in late eighteenth-century Europe:

L'expression dont l'âme n'a qu'une idée vague, sans la sentir vivement, devient aisément sous le pinceau, une grimace, & la grimace laisse le spectateur froid ou le fait rire aux dépens du peintre.⁴¹⁵

Watelet included Mengs as one of the severest critics of LeBrun suggesting that it was his influence that caused Winckelmann to complain about extreme emotion being conveyed through the face.⁴¹⁶ In his essay on 'Expression' he also quoted LeBrun, Winckelmann and Dandré-Bardon's thoughts on the matter, without making any personal judgement about whose approach to facial expression was either preferable or correct. Mengs's solution was to use drapery as the means of creating the emotional impact in a painting and Watelet suggested that it was his influence that inspired Winckelmann's thoughts on the matter rather than the other way around:

«Ainsi on trouve l'esprit de Raphael dans chaque ouvrage, dans chaque groupe, dans chaque figure, dans chaque membre, dans chaque articulation, & jusque dans les cheveux & dans les draperies.»⁴¹⁷

Mengs may have acknowledged that the ancients regarded drapery as an accessory, but it appeared that Mengs was ambivalent about the priority given to the nude form in sculpture and cited the expressive importance that Raphael had attached to clothing:

Lorsque j'ai dit que Raphaël, à l'exemple des anciens, n'a regardé la draperie que comme un accessoire; j'ai voulu faire entendre que, comme il reconnut que le corps que couvre la draperie & les mouvements de ses membres sont les seules causes & le principe de la situation actuelle & du changement des plis dans les draperies, il a jugé digne de son art d'y employer le travail & le choix, qu'il a néanmoins su cacher.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵Watelet and Lévesque.2.630-631.

⁴¹⁶Ibid.2.225-246.

⁴¹⁷Ibid.2.238.

⁴¹⁸Mengs and Jansen.161.

The expressive nature of draperies and extremities, and the importance of expression that did not change and distort the shape of the face was a notable point of differentiation between Winckelmann and the work of the French theorist Charles LeBrun.

The third ‘effect’ of draperies was to act as a vehicle of emotional expression. The colour and the shape of clothing could demonstrate whether the person depicted was happy or was sad; and it could also indicate age and social standing. This was why it was important that clothing was both accurate and appropriate so that, in the words of Lévesque:

Les draperies doivent aussi s'accorder avec l'âge & le caractère des figures qu'elles revêtent. Des couleurs gaies, de légères étoffes conviennent à la jeunesse; des couleurs sombres, des étoffes épaisses à l'âge avancé. Un personnage grave & austère ne sera pas vêtu comme un personnage léger ou voluptueux. Une princesse majestueuse, une sage mère ne se confondront point par leurs vêtements avec une courtisane.⁴¹⁹

The borders, fringes, the detail of clothing and accessories were also important, but only in relation to its association with the principal object. A piece of clothing like the veil over the head of Agamemnon or the consular robes of Cicero could be part of the central expressive function of a painting or it could be just accessory to the action of the main figures:

Dans un tableau d'histoire, les personnes qui agissent sont l'objet principal; elles donnent l'idée de l'action que le peintre a voulu figurer, sans qu'au fond il soit besoin d'autre chose. Ce qui appartient à la scène, est accessoire.⁴²⁰

Firstly, these details and accessories were part of what was found in Nature.⁴²¹ Secondly, borders and fringes, for example, gave drapery an ‘edge’ which assisted the painter in

⁴¹⁹Watelet and Lévesque.1.697.

⁴²⁰Millin.1.7.

⁴²¹Watelet and Lévesque.1.627.

demarcating the boundaries between drapery and, for instance, the background. Borders and fringes also showed ‘que (l)es figures ne sont pas habillées d’un simple sac’.⁴²²

Drapery was then able to express emotions through movement, colour and shape. Ornaments had a similar function. As Watelet stated, it was natural for man to decorate and to embellish themselves and their clothing:⁴²³

Plus la manière dont on décore s’accordera avec les convenances & les conventions, plus les choses seront ornées, décorées enfin conformément à la raison & au bon goût. Enfin la simplicité n’exclut pas la variété, car la nature est à la fois simple & variée.⁴²⁴

The object of ornaments was therefore to create a sense of expression, a sombre sense of decoration, and one that added to a sense of grandeur rather than detracted attention away from the principal object. Used in the correct way, ornaments added to the beauty of a painting. As a result Watelet emphasised the importance of getting the nuances correct. He quoted de Piles’s remarks about the draperies and ornaments contributing to the beauty of a painting.

«La richesse des draperies & des ornements qui sont dessus, dit de Piles, fait une partie de leur beauté, quand le peintre en fait faire bon usage.»⁴²⁵

On the other hand he stressed the difference between the painter who decorated the figures in his painting and someone who focused too much on becoming a ‘décorateur’:

On a répété souvent dans ce Dictionnaire, que le peintre, le sculpteur ne sauraient être trop sobres d’ornements dans ceux de leurs ouvrages qui ont de la grandeur, & qui doivent plaire surtout par la justesse de l’expression. Les détails de décoration partageraient toujours l’attention des spectateurs & nuisaient à l’objet

⁴²²Ibid.1.701.

⁴²³Ibid.1.626.

⁴²⁴Ibid.1.636.

⁴²⁵Ibid.1.697.

principal. C'est toujours cet objet qui doit faire le premier & le véritable ornement d'un ouvrage. Toutes les décorations accessoires ne doivent y tenir qu'un rang très subordonné. Le peintre doit savoir décorer; mais son but ne doit jamais être de se montrer décorateur.⁴²⁶

According to Watelet, draperies were therefore an important part of an artist's expressive vocabulary. As with Winckelmann, draperies were able to indicate status and standing, sex and circumstances. They were also able to convey emotions through the movement, the 'jet' and the shape of the folds, and their colour. Although Watalet did not criticise LeBrun and the *Traité de Passions*, he noted the different way in which Winckelmann and Mengs on the one hand and LeBrun on the other, dealt with the matter. Separately under the definition of 'Grimace' he stated how distortions of the face were not desirable for beauty. This dichotomy in French art theory and Winckelmann is worthy of note, and I will explore it further in the reading of the art works and art criticism in the final chapter.

Section 4.2.4: Harmony

This final section on the attributes associated with ideal beauty on the one hand, and drapery on the other looks at the importance clothing could make to the sense of overall harmony in a painting. It demonstrates how drapery could also achieve different 'effects' in a work of art. These effects could be related both to the composition and arrangement of the painting and also to its overall sense of harmony and balance. Compositionally drapery could be used to bind different parts of the painting and different characters in the story together. This was often done through the shape of clothing. Drapery and the way it was located in the composition of the painting could therefore contribute to the overall visual and compositional harmony and balance of a work of art.

⁴²⁶Ibid.3.581-582.

Another important effect of draperies was the effect on the balance of colours within a painting. Despite differences on the role of colour drapery could also be associated with conveying colour. Draperies were visually the element in which colour had the most impact because they formed ‘les grandes masses’ on the canvas:⁴²⁷

La couleur & le genre des étoffes concourront à l’expression générale: on n’introduira pas de draperies fines & brillantes dans un sujet triste ou terrible.⁴²⁸

Draperies were able to convey the varying and different qualities of light in a painting within the spaces and folds of the fabric. Draperies were also the part of the painting where shadows could be articulated, again within the folds and movement of fabric as Lévesque’s definition of the term demonstrates:

Pour bien draper, il faut que les plis soient grands & en petit nombre, parce que les grandes formes produisent les grandes masses d’ombres & de lumières, & parce que de petites formes multipliées égarent la vue & partagent l’attention. Si le caractère des vêtements & des étoffes exige de petits plis, ils doivent au moins être distribués par groupes, en sorte qu’un grand nombre de petits plis ne soient que des parties subordonnées d’une même masse formée par un pli principal, & que les plis subalternités ayant moins de profondeur, ne nuisent pas à l’effet général de la lumière.⁴²⁹

The effect of colour and chiaroscuro in draperies was therefore an important component in ensuring that there was a sense of harmony in a group of figures in a painting and the harmony of the composite overall work of art:

Tous les principes qu’on peut acquérir sur l’art de draper sont généraux, & ne peuvent déterminer la précision avec laquelle il convient d’accompagner, de couvrir, ou de laisser voir les mouvements innombrables du corps de l’homme par la disposition des plis de ses vêtements. Le goût seul de l’Artiste les fait servir au caractère & aux mouvements de la figure. Bien plus, il les fait contribuer à

⁴²⁷Ibid.1.695-696.

⁴²⁸Ibid.1.696.

⁴²⁹Ibid.1.695-696.

l'expression générale d'une scène pittoresque, par leur choix, & par les effets de clair-obscur dont il les rend susceptibles.⁴³⁰

The general aim of the artist was to create a balance on the canvas between shape and colour.

Drapery was an important way in which both these qualities could be demonstrated.

Section 4.2.5: The Practical Aspects of Creating Effect, Movement and Expression in

Drapery

Watelet and others also examined the practical aspects of creating effect, movement and expression in drapery. As with Winckelmann this started with the right choice of material for the subject matter and the right texture of cloth so that it could show the contours of the nude:

...le choix des étoffes légères, telle que serait la serge la plus fine qui se puisse imaginer, a dû les conduire à atteindre cette éternelle supériorité (des Grecs). D'abord, il est résulté de ce choix la nécessité de laisser apercevoir le nu; en second lieu, les petits plis de ces draperies sont partout en opposition avec la largeur & la solidité des parties du corps; d'où vient cette grandeur imprimée sur leur figures drapées, comme sur tous leurs ouvrages. Mais allons plus loin, & disons que ces étoffes flexibles étant disposées naturellement à tomber, & leur plis remplissant les intervalles que les membres laissent entre eux, il s'enfuit une grande largeur de masses, tant parce que ces plis remplissent les espaces vides, que parce que les grandes parties du corps n'en étant pas couvertes, reçoivent sans obstacle tous les effets de la lumière & des ombres. De ces plis disposés à tendre vers la bas, il naît un contraste frappant avec les membres qui, par leurs mouvements, sortent de la perpendiculaire.⁴³¹

Material also had to be an appropriate weight for the subject of the painting and suitable for the kind of person that it was covering as well as the garment it made up. Lévesque stated how it might not be appropriate to dress an older person in a flowery material, for example.

⁴³⁰Ibid.5.109.

⁴³¹Ibid.5.112-113.

Material also had to achieve the right balance between accuracy and the need to take account of the fact that a history painting was not the same as a portrait and each genre required a different approach:

Comme les figures du peintre historien ne sont pas les portraits de tel ou tel homme, ses draperies ne sont pas des copies de telle ou telle étoffe: ce ne sont pas des étoffes de soie, de coton, de laine, ou de lin; ce sont des draperies & rien autre chose.⁴³²

Another essential aspect in the rendition of drapery and the creation of the correct effect was through the fold of the cloth. This had been of interest and importance for Winckelmann. It was also given attention by French theorists and experts on the art of painting such as Mengs and the Salon critics. For example, the author of *L'Examen* wrote how the folds in Errante's painting *Le Concours de la beauté* were 'petits et peu distinctes', and had the effect from a distance of appearing 'lourdes et mal senties'.⁴³³ Also how 'les plis des draperies' in Perrin's *La Tempête* were too small which meant that the 'draperie légère', did not appear to be connected with the young man's body⁴³⁴ (Figure 4.11).

Mengs's ability to analyse the fold and effect of different folds on the movement of the figures demonstrate his extensive knowledge and interest in the subject. It is clear from the following passage that Mengs understood about drapery and how the folds needed to be arranged on top of each other, weighted and folded in order to properly indicate movement:

Raphaël a de même donné de plus grands plis aux parties saillantes du corps qu'à celles qui fuient; & il n'a jamais placé de longs plis sur une partie raccourcie, ni des plis courts à forme triangulaire sur une partie longue. Les grands yeux & les coupes profondes n'étaient placés que sur les inflexions; & il ne mettait point à côté l'un de l'autre deux plis d'une même grandeur, d'une même forme, d'une même élévation. Ses draperies volantes sont d'une beauté admirable; on voit

⁴³²Ibid.1.589.

⁴³³Anon, *Examen Critique Et Raisonné Des Tableaux Des Peintres Vivans, Formant L'exposition De 1808*, (Paris : Chez madame veuve Hocquart 1808).45.

⁴³⁴Ibid.49-50.

qu'elles ont toutes dans leur mouvement une cause générale, savoir l'air. Elles ne sont pas comme ses autres draperies, tirées & comme aplaties par leur poids; mais chaque pli est, par la disposition naturelle, placé à côté d'un autre. Il laisse quelquefois apercevoir les bords de ses draperies, & fait sentir que ses figures ne sont pas habillées d'un simple sac. Tous les plis ont une cause, soit le poids spécifique de l'étoffe même, ou l'arrondissement des parties du corps. On aperçoit souvent chez Raphaël quelle attitude ses figures avaient auparavant. On découvre par les plis de la draperie, si un bras ou une jambe s'est trouvé, avant l'action actuelle, rempli ou allongé; si un membre replié s'est étendu & va se replier. Il a pris garde que lorsque les draperies eussent des formes triangulaires, & que les plis semblables au tout (furent) aussi disposés en triangle. La cause de ces formes triangulaires des plis vient de ce que toute draperie cherche à s'élargir; comme cependant son propre poids la force à se replier sur elle-même, elle s'étend d'un autre côté: ce qui forme des triangles.⁴³⁵

Instructing artists on how to paint ideal draperies Watelet described the Roman method of drawing drapery and 'colouring' it up with the method used by Raphael:

L'usage de l'École Romaine qui dessinait les draperies d'après nature, & les peignait d'après ces dessins, ne doit pas être adopté par les coloristes, parce que la nature, suivant le caractère des étoffes, produit des tons & des lumières qui donnent à l'ouvrage plus de perfection & de vérité. Cependant Raphael, qui s'est conformé à cet usage, est resté le premier maître dans l'art de jeter les draperies & de donner aux plis le plus bel ordre. Il est même parvenu, dans cette partie, jusqu'à la beauté idéale. Il est enfin le plus grand peintre de draperies, comme les Vénitiens sont les plus grands peintres d'étoffes.⁴³⁶

Raphael's draperies were seen as particularly excellent examples for those artists who wanted to express ideal beauty. In the *Encyclopédie* Watelet explained how Raphael had managed to balance the relationship between nature and imagination perfectly, and to achieve the concept of ideal beauty in his draperies and in his work in general:

... je me aperçus que plus on était savant dans l'art du peinture, plus on découvrait de beautés particulières dans les ouvrages de ce grand maître, ou pour mieux dire, plus on y reconnaissait la véritable beauté, la beauté idéale, si supérieure à toute beauté d'imitation.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ Mengs and Jansen.160.

⁴³⁶ Watelet and Lévesque.1.699.

⁴³⁷ Diderot and d'Alembert.8.514.

Mengs particularly admired the quality of Raphael's draperies. He stated that Raphael, like the ancients, did not believe that draperies were 'only accessories' and described the development of Raphael's style, method and approach in rendering ideal draperies in the spirit of antiquity.⁴³⁸

En parlant des draperies, je ne puis me dispenser de faire encore l'éloge de Raphaël. Ce grand artiste commença par imiter son maître dans la manière d'en faire le jet, qu'il perfectionna par l'étude qu'il fit des ouvrages de Masaccio, mais plus encore par ceux de Barthélemy de Saint-Marc. Il quitta enfin entièrement le Goût de l'école de son maître, lorsqu'il eut vu les antiques, & se servit alors des règles des bas-reliefs; ce qui lui donna un grand Goût dans le jet de ses draperies. ...Lorsque j'ai dit que Raphaël, à l'exemple des anciens, n'a regardé la draperie que comme un accessoire; j'ai voulu faire entendre que, comme il reconnut que le corps que couvre la draperie & les mouvements de ses membres sont les seules causes & le principe de la situation actuelle & du changement des plis dans les draperies, il a jugé digne de son art d'y employer le travail & le choix, qu'il a néanmoins su cacher.⁴³⁹

Accuracy in the rendition of the folds was important to ensure that the cloth could move and form the expressive throws. Mastering the 'jet' of the draperies was also essential because of its expressive importance. There was necessarily a difference between painting and sculpture when it came to distinguishing between separate ways of executing draperies. In painting, Robin identified the triangular shape as closest to nature and provided the best pattern for the artist as an aid to learning how to fold a piece of cloth around the body. Getting the technicalities right was also important for the movement of the cloth and the quality of the 'jet' of the draperies which, for example, depended on the size of folds. The following quotation demonstrates that small folds were important so that the body could be seen underneath whereas large folds were reserved for the 'throw' of larger pieces of cloth like a man's cloak:

⁴³⁸Mengs and Jansen.161.

⁴³⁹Ibid.158 & 161.

Nous voyons ensuite que les sculpteurs & les peintres modernes de la plus grande célébrité ont habillé leurs figures d'étoffes qui par leur consistance produisent des plis large & soutenus. Mais ils n'adoptaient pas ces sortes de draperies d'une manière exclusive. Les tuniques qui touchaient les membres ne donnaient que des plis fins & légers: c'étaient des linges ou d'autres vêtements d'une finesse qui allait quelquefois jusqu'à la transparence. Ils réservaient les étoffes dont les plis sont plus grands pour les manteaux qui se jettent librement sur le corps. C'est par cette méthode qu'ils ont donné du jeu, de beau effets, & une agréable variété à leurs ouvrages.⁴⁴⁰

Watelet, like Mengs, went into considerable detail in explaining the different 'yeux' and angles that the cloth could be folded into and the range of different types and choice of folds that could be achieved as a result:

On recommande essentiellement dans les écoles de peinture la forme des yeux des plis, & ce n'est pas sans raison: ce sont grosse & molles, les yeux des plis sont ronds, & ils sont aigus & cassés dans celles qui sont sèches ou ferme, soit que ces étoffes soient fines comme le taffetas ou épaisses comme le velours & le camelot. ...Les angles aigus ou obtus doivent être préférés aux angles droits, dans la disposition des plis comme dans telles des membres. Les formes absolument régulières déplaisent dans toutes les productions pittoresques. Il faut partout de la balance sans symétrie: & quoique nous bannissons une certaine égalité géométrique, on veut, & particulièrement dans les plis, de la liaison & de l'ordre. La liaison est indispensable; car c'est par elle qu'on juge que les vêtements tiennent à la même personne. Si une partie nue interrompait sèchement les plis, de manière qu'on ne put lier leurs principes & leurs fins, ce serait pécher contre qu'il faut tenir entre eux.⁴⁴¹

The word 'plis', as with Winckelmann, was also applied to the skin as well as the cloth, and it was up to the artist to choose and arrange the folds on his figures correctly and artistically whether they were folds of skin or folds of drapery:

La première de ces applications a été traitée dans le mot peau: il a été aussi question de la seconde dans les mots draperies & jet des draperies.⁴⁴² Le génie particulière de l'Artiste se reconnaît dans la manière dont il choisit & dispose les plis de ses figures.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰Watelet and Lévesque.5.110.

⁴⁴¹Ibid.5.116.

⁴⁴²Ibid.5.109.

⁴⁴³Ibid.5.109.

There was also a choice between two ways of painting drapery and the folds of clothing. Lévesque described the advantages and disadvantages of these two methods. The first was to draw the drapery and then ‘colour’ it in. He gave the examples of the Roman school who worked this way.⁴⁴⁴ The second method was to follow the character of the cloth and produce tones and lights and blocks of colour which conveyed a sense of ‘perfection and truth’. Watelet in common with his contemporaries also thought that Raphael was the greatest painter of draperies and the Venetians the greatest painters of materials.⁴⁴⁵

In conclusion the artist needed to choose the right material for draperies and then learn how to fold them correctly to align them with the shape of the body and know how to throw the material in the correct way so that it could achieve an expressive effect. There were many practical issues and points the artist had to consider for draperies to have the correct effect in painting.

Section 4.2.6: Draperies in Sculpture

There were different practical issues for the rendering of draperies in sculpture. As with painting, the dictionaries went into the detail of how these could be conveyed to best effect. Antiquity was regarded as the best example to follow and Bernini’s draperies appeared, as always, to be cited as the worst example. This is demonstrated in the following quotation from Falconet :

Je suppose qu’un statuaire épris de la simplicité des belle draperies antiques, & révolté contre quelques bizarreries ingénieuses du Bernin, adopte uniquement le style des plis antiques, & qu’un autre statuaire, voyant tous les genres dans la nature, se croie permis, comme son imitateur, de les représenter tous: il semble

⁴⁴⁴Ibid.1.699.

⁴⁴⁵Ibid.1.699.

que ces deux systèmes, qui paraissent s'exclure, peuvent être également avantageux à la sculpture, & que ce serait lui préjudicier, si l'un prévalait sur l'autre.⁴⁴⁶

The main focus was on ensuring that the draperies in sculpture followed the conventions of antique sculpture in three different but important respects. The first was that they showed the shape of the body underneath:

Les draperies qu'on appelle mouillées, sont d'un très-bon usage dans la sculpture, où étant employées sans affectation, sans maigreur, selon le sujet & l'à propos, elles laissent voir les mouvements du nu, en rendent les formes plus sensibles, moins embarrassées, & conséquemment plus intéressantes.⁴⁴⁷

The second way in which draperies were supposed to imitate antique sculpture was the shape and weight of the folds so that they fell correctly. This is illustrated by Robin's description of antique sculpture and his comparison of their successful use of drapery with the contemporary paintings of Poussin, Corneille and Le Sueur:

La sculpture antique se distingue par de petits plis forts multipliés, souvent fort rapprochés, & toujours tendant à tomber en bas par leur propre poids. Les peintures antiques ont le même caractère de plis. Ce goût de draper a été imité depuis la renaissance des arts, & l'on remarque particulièrement cette imitation dans les ouvrages du célèbre Poussin, & dans quelques uns de Michel Corneille & de le Sueur.⁴⁴⁸

Thirdly, as in painting, the aim was to create a sense of the 'jet' of the draperies, so that they appeared to fly: ...'La pratique de détacher les draperies des figures, pour les faire paraître volantes'.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁶Ibid.5.706.

⁴⁴⁷Ibid.5.706.

⁴⁴⁸Ibid.5.110.

⁴⁴⁹Ibid.5.719.

As with Winckelmann, L  vesque, quoting Reynolds, believed that the piece of drapery on the figure of the *Apollo Belvedere* was an essential accessory to the nude figure, ‘d’  viter la s  cheresse qui serait r  sult   d’un bras nu   tendu dans toute sa longueur;    quoi l’on peut ajouter l’effet d  sagr  able qu’aurait produit l’angle droit form   par le corps & le bras’.⁴⁵⁰ This short illustration of the particular challenges that draperies presented in the genre of sculpture demonstrates that antique draperies were seen as the most important model for sculptors. As demonstrated in the section on Winckelmann, Watelet believed that drapery was an important way in which the ‘s  cheresse’ of the nude figure could be broken up and alleviated, whilst maintaining the same simplicity of form. Using the example of the *Apollo Belvedere* (Figure 4.12), L  vesque explained:

Quoique la draperie de l’Apollon forme une grande masse, & se trouve s  par  e de la figure, elle ne contrarie point ce que nous venons d’  tablir. Cette draperie est totalement isol  e, & la r  gularit  , la simplicit   de sa forme ne permettent en aucune mani  re de la confondre avec la figure.⁴⁵¹

Section 4.2.7: Modelling and Mannequins

The practical aspect of how to model draperies to achieve these effects in painting and sculpture also concerned Watelet and others since there was general agreement that the use of mannequins by sculptors and painters detracted from accurate imitation and resulted in an effect that looked lifeless. Millin in his dictionary cautioned against the use of mannequins by artists because they sometimes led to stiffness and hardness in the modeling of folds.⁴⁵² Clarac’s concerns regarding the use of mannequins explained the reasons why there was this general dislike of their use, and the differences between a live model and a lay figure:

⁴⁵⁰Ibid.5.722.

⁴⁵¹Ibid.5.721-722.

⁴⁵²Millin.468.

Il y a déjà bien de la différence entre la manière dont on draperait une figure vivante et celle dont elle ajusterait elle-même son vêtement; celle-ci serait beaucoup plus naturelle que l'autre, et bien mieux adaptée à toute l'attitude du corps de la personne. Mais c'est encore autre chose lorsque, pour rendre ses idées, l'artiste en vient au mannequin; s'il est plus petit que nature, ce qui est assez ordinaire, c'est un inconvénient de plus ajouté à beaucoup d'autres: les étoffes ne sont plus, pour le tissu, la souplesse et le poids, en proportion avec ce qu'elles seraient pour une figure de grandeur naturelle; et en supposant même que les vêtements dont on habille ces poupées soient d'une coupe exacte, il n'est guère possible que l'ensemble et les plis en soient ajustés comme ils le seraient dans une grande figure.⁴⁵³

This supported Watelet's doubts over whether a lay figure could replicate the manner in which the folds formed on a human body, and it appears that critics were able to notice the difference. Prud'hon, for example, received particular praise from the critic Brunn Neegaard for his skill in painting draperies that gave a sense of movement and grace without recourse to the use of a mannequin:

Il est à remarquer que Prud'hon se sert rarement de mannequin. On peut à la vérité se dispenser d'y recourir, quand on l'a étudié aussi bien que lui ; car alors on donne beaucoup plus de vraisemblance, et la distribution des plis s'en fait d'une manière plus convenable pour saisir le mouvement.⁴⁵⁴

Gault de St Germain noted on how the drapery on Guérin's figures was stiff because 'il n'était plus permis de draper le mannequin qu'avec les linges mouillés'.⁴⁵⁵

There is also evidence that mannequins were used in contemporary sculptural practice. Quatremere de Quincy, for example, wrote in his 1834 *Canova et ses ouvrages* that, concerned with the reception of Canova's work *Hébé* because he had 'négliger un peu ses draperies, c'est-à-dire, de ne pas porter dans l'invention de leur ajustement et dans leur exécution, ce choix de partis ingénieux, et cette vivacité de travail dont l'antique offre de si

⁴⁵³Clarac, Maury, and Texier.2.81.

⁴⁵⁴Tønnes Christian Bruun-Neergaard and Barthélemy Joseph Fulcran Roger, *Sur La Situation Des Beaux-Arts En France : Ou Lettres D'un Danois À Son Ami*, (Paris : L'ancienne librairie de Dupont 1801).121.

⁴⁵⁵Pierre Marie Gault de Saint-Germain, *Ouverture Du Salon Annoncé Pour Le 5 Novembre 1814*, (Offprint from : Le Spectateur Paris, 1815).208.

nombreux modèles'.⁴⁵⁶ He sent mannequins to Rome so that Canova could master all details of draperies to ensure that in future they would not 'détruit l'effet piquant de l'imitation'.⁴⁵⁷ The result appeared to be only moderately successful with Boutard describing the draperies of *Psyché et Amour* (1793) as 'peu pittoresque'.⁴⁵⁸ (Figure 4.13). So, despite Quatremère's instruction, some critics in Paris still found Canova's draperies unconvincing; the use of Quatremère's mannequins was possibly the reason for this.

Conclusion

This section on the practical issues surrounding the use of drapery in sculpture has demonstrated the importance that artists attached to the accuracy of rendering drapery and its overall effect on the work. Although drapery was sometimes regarded as an accessory to the main action of the painting, it is clear that it had a profound role in determining the effect or emotional impact of a work. This demonstrates that clothing was perceived as having an aesthetic value in the genres of history painting and sculpture and its purpose was not just merely decorative. Looking at the broader definition of ideal beauty, it appears that clothing was an essential component of a painting because it could convey ideas, emotions and imagination. The next short section will look at the way in which Winckelmann's work on clothing impacted French aesthetic theory, which will further develop the link of clothing to ideal beauty.

⁴⁵⁶ Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, *Canova Et Ses Ouvrages : Ou, Mémoires Historiques Sur La Vie Et Les Travaux De Célèbre Artiste*, (Paris : A. Le Clere et cie Imprimeurs-Librairies, 1834). 57-59.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. 57-59.

⁴⁵⁸ Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De L'an 1808*, (Offprint from: *Journal de l'Empire* Paris, 1808-1809). January 1809.4.

Section 4.3: Winckelmann, Mengs and French Aesthetic Theory

Many of the quotations in this chapter specifically include or refer implicitly to Winckelmann's work on clothing. The previous chapter also demonstrated his influence on Watelet as a source of information about antique costume. This reinforces the importance and impact of Winckelmann's work in France. As I have demonstrated earlier, and in accord with other studies on the impact of Winckelmann in France, it demonstrates that French theorists engaged with Winckelmann's definition of ideal beauty as one that incorporated perfect form and expression, but also that there were nuances to their definitions which demonstrated that they had critically engaged with his work. Looking at the aesthetic impact of clothing, it appears that there was a more complex integration of Winckelmann's values and ideas about the nature and expression of ideal beauty in art evident in his work on clothing. This particularly relates to the impact of Mengs in French artistic theory.

Mengs's reputation and influence has been linked to his friendship with Winckelmann rather than as an important writer and thinker on aesthetic theory in his own right. From the remarks made by Watelet and others however, it appears that Mengs's writings on art were held in high regard. Mengs and his work on the theory of painting were referenced by Watelet and L  vesque in the *Dictionnaire* more often than any other writer on the arts including Winckelmann and de Piles, Watelet always using the prefatory title 'le c  l  bre Mengs' or 'le Chevalier Mengs'. L  vesque also described him as a 'penseur'.⁴⁵⁹ This may have been for a number of reasons.

Firstly, with his famous essay questioning the date and attribution of the *Niobe* from the inconsistency in the style of the draperies he had distanced himself from Winckelmann. Secondly, his expertise as a painter and a renowned painter of draperies was appreciated,

⁴⁵⁹Watelet and L  vesque.5.539.

because it meant that he really understood at practical level the particular needs, challenges and requirements of painters.

Finally, there is a sense in Watelet's writings from the references to and quotations from Félibien, de Piles and other French theorists that either Winckelmann developed the connection between grace, movement and ideal beauty from French sources, or that one of the reasons why Winckelmann was so influential in France could have been because his work built upon and supported existing French aesthetic theory.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁶⁰See Donohue; Lingo; Pommier; Potts.

Conclusion

In summary the aesthetic role of clothing was stressed in French art dictionaries because it contributed to the movement, the colour, the harmony and the expression of the painting. It was a highly skilled and complex art in its own right. There were clear differences on how drapery should be treated in history painting and in the genres of imitation. The artist had to be sensitive to the nuances of every aspect of the story, the movement of the figures and the shape and throw of the cloth.

Firstly, the folds on a piece of drapery had to correctly signal the movement of the figures and therefore the narrative of the painting. Secondly, drapery had the capacity to create a sense of harmony in a painting and a compositional whole through the use of colour, light, chiaroscuro and through the shapes of the folds. Thirdly, drapery also contributed to the expressive effect of a painting. It could indicate the age and station of a character. It could also communicate the mood and emotional state of characters within a painting. Finally, the ‘jet’ of the drapery was able to embody values, indicate movement and also demonstrated the attribute of grace, which both the French and Winckelmann separately believed was ‘plus belle encore que la beauté’ and formed an important component of ideal beauty.⁴⁶¹ It is therefore not surprising that Watelet and others acknowledged the complexity and difficulty involved in painting drapery and Lévesque cited Carlo Marrata’s comment that drapery was more difficult to paint well than the nude figure:

Carle Maratte pensait que bien draper était encore plus difficile que bien dessiner la figure, & que c’était un art dont il était moins aisé de donner des leçons, parce qu’on ne pouvoit en démontrer les règles avec la même exactitude.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶¹Watelet and Lévesque.2.458.

⁴⁶²Ibid.1.590.

I have argued that as with Winckelmann, costume and draperies in French art dictionaries had both an imitative and an aesthetic function. It was important for dress on the one hand to be accurate and appropriate for the genre of painting or sculpture. On the other hand draperies also had an expressive role in a painting or piece of sculpture. Although draperies needed to express and articulate the shape of the figure underneath, they had an important role in the narrative of the painting, they indicated the movement and gestures of the figures in the painting, and they could be used to express emotion. They could also be used by the painter to create an overall sense of harmony and balance. This way of reading the impact of draperies on the nature and form of ideal beauty also enriches the quality of the history paintings. As this short quotation demonstrates, drapery was seen as an integral way of defining and expressing the nature of ideal beauty in art:

Nous avons vu à l'article DRAPERIE, combien il entre d'idéal dans cette partie de l'art. Enfin l'art n'est pas précisément la nature ; il est une magie puissante qui gouverne la nature à son gré, ou qui plutôt crée à son gré un monde fantastique. Si l'on veut que l'art ne soit que la nature, il ne sera pas elle, & n'en offrira qu'une imitation froide & inanimée. C'est à l'idée créatrice qu'il doit tous les charmes qui lui donnent la vie.⁴⁶³

Before illustrating in the final two chapters how the inclusion of drapery in the definition of ideal beauty enriches our understanding of debates amongst the art critics and raises interesting questions about the controversies over the nature of ideal beauty in the early nineteenth-century France, I will demonstrate how the incorporation of draperies and clothing into the definition of ideal beauty affects and enriches an art-historical reading of two of David's paintings: *La Douleur d'Andromaque* and *Les lecteurs rapportent à Brutus les corps de ses fils*.

⁴⁶³Ibid.3.107.

In David's painting *La Douleur d'Andromaque* of 1781 (Figure 4.14), the nude body of Hector lies prostrate. The upper torso is emaciated and the thin ribs exposed indicate that the lungs have no breath left in them. A light blanket the colour of dried blood covers his lower torso and drapes gracefully to the floor symbolising in outward form the coagulated and congealed blood of the dead man. The fresh green of the laurel wreath demonstrating his heroic status, contrasts with the dried pallor of his skin. The light surrounding him is diffused and sombre, the dark blue of the festooned curtains behind him emphasising the melancholy tone of the painting. In contrast the figure of Andromache is highlighted, the white colour of her chiton symbolising purity, beauty and grace and the light, concentrating on her face and upper body, emphasises that she is the central focus of the painting.⁴⁶⁴ Placed centre stage with Hector lying behind her, her right arm stretches out towards the static body of her departed husband, and her left consoles their son who is reaching out to her as he in turn comforts her. Her eyes are raised heavenward drained of all emotional energy, the open mouth and lower lip betraying the 'douce inflexion' and subtle nature of the shock, and anguish that she experiences. The dignity of her grief and its gentle trace on her face evoke the sublime and noble grandeur of the *Laocoön*. The expression of suffering that is visible in the contorted muscular structure of the *Laocoön*'s abdomen is replaced in this painting by the expressive movement of Andromache's draperies.

Wearing the basic Greek chiton, tied under the breast, her finely decorated edged cloak covers her head and falls in large gentle folds behind her shoulders and onto the floor. The large folds contrast with the smaller tighter folds of the 'chiton' and the sleeves held together with multiple 'fibulae'. The folds formed by the sleeve hang loosely downwards and the fall and shape of the inner and outer garments creates a sense of heaviness in tune with the mood of the painting. The light at the point of her left breast and shoulder suggests that her

⁴⁶⁴See Mengs on Raphael's use of white as a central focus of an artist's compositional plan and its symbolic meaning. Mengs and Jansen.240-241.

heartbreak is the subject matter of the painting and designates her status as the heroine of the painting.⁴⁶⁵ The chiaroscuro emphasises the folds of the fine material that outline the shape of her round breast and nipple with a translucency that balances the modest and appropriate nature of her clothing. The bright red of the cloak worn by their son symbolises the new life and vitality of young blood in contrast to the piece of drapery covering his father, the ‘jet’ of the cloth creating a sense of dynamism, courage and hope in the painting as he seeks to console his mother.

David made Andromache’s grief the central focus of this tragic story and her figure holds all the expressive content. She elegantly embodies all of the action and passion that Winckelmann believed was central to the expression of the ideal in combination with the perfect contour and form of Hector’s body lying horizontally across the image, their young son symbolically connecting them together. Even in death, this family group illustrates Winckelmann’s concept of ideal beauty, including perfect form in the body of Hector and sedate and grand expression through the fold and the throw of Andromache’s and her young son’s draperies.

In another of David’s masterpieces, *Les licteurs rapportent à Brutus les corps de ses fils* of 1789, the male and female figures are again separated from one another (Figure 4.15). On the left hand side entering the gloom and crossing the horizontal space of the frame, the bodies of the sons are carried in from the left behind the seated figure of Brutus and separated from his wife and daughters by a column that divides the background into the darkness on the left and the curtain on the right, enclosing and separating the women from the others. The large folds of tunics and cloaks of the pall-bearers hang vertically reflecting the sombre task of carrying bodies. In contrast the determination and anger etched across the face of Brutus in the foreground is barely visible. Brutus’s cloak is wound tightly around his chest, the small folds

⁴⁶⁵Duncan Macmillan, ‘Woman as Hero: Gavin Hamilton’, Perry and Rossington.

surrounding his chest contrasting with the larger folds to the side of his chair conveying some of the tension and contradictory emotions of patriotism and paternal love visible in the twisted contortion of his feet and the highly charged expression in his face.

The real drama of the painting lies not in the dark side of the canvas but in the spotlighted figures of Brutus's wife and daughters. Dressed in a similar style to the figure of the *Niobe*, whose draperies and expressions Winckelmann believed embodied the high or sublime style of Greek art, they provide the movement, and contribute symbolically to the drama and emotion of the painting. The tight small folds of the mother's 'chiton' outline her breast and shape of her body underneath, the dislodged sleeve demonstrating the disarray caused by her emotional distress. Her arm stretched out towards the bodies of her sons creates a sense of 'action' in the painting, and the 'jet' of her cloak a sense of her movement thrust forward towards the corpses. Simultaneously, she holds up the fainting younger daughter whose loose and unfettered draperies indicate her semi-recumbent state. The draperies of the elder daughter are the most striking. The movement of the folds around her chest and their 'jet' encapsulate the backwards and forwards motion of her body and the intensity of the mother's passion. The swirl of the folds evokes Winckelmann's rhetoric in the *Réflexions* describing the folds of the *Chiaramonti Niobe*:

Il y a apparence que dès les premiers temps la manière de jeter les draperies était la même, mais que l'Art encore dans l'enfance ne pouvait pas atteindre ces ruptures variées des plis. On ne saurait considérer sans admiration cette variété singulière, ce goût exquis dans les draperies, depuis les vases peints, envisagés comme des dessins, jusqu'aux pierres les plus dures, tel que le porphyre. La sculpture ancienne nous a laissé des modèles dans ce genre: rien de plus élégant, de plus noble que les draperies de la Niobé antique.⁴⁶⁶

In the *Andromache* and *Les Lictors* the female figures were placed central stage, were placed in the light and held the emotional focus of the painting illustrating in the respect for perfect

⁴⁶⁶Winckelmann.1781.614.

form, action and passion the expression of Winckelmann's 'beau idéal' David's accurate detailing of the clothes, accessories and household furniture demonstrated that not only had he thoroughly researched the costume dictionaries, but that he associated accuracy in drapery as with the newly reformed and resurgent French school of painting.

Part Three

Chapter Five: Ideal Beauty in French Art Theory

Introduction

Alphonse Leroy, writing for the *Décade Philosophique* in 1802 about the state of French sculpture gave as an example of ideal beauty the statue of *Jeanne d'Arc* made for the citizens of Orleans by the sculptor Edme-François-Étienne Gois (Figure 5.1). This piece of sculpture encapsulated for him all the attributes that Winckelmann gave to the 'beau idéal' in Greek sculpture, as well as incorporating qualities Leroy saw as important for French art. He described these qualities as the following; a dignity of expression, a perfect and 'appropriately' clothed body assembled from ideal body parts, a statue that was historically accurate, and an artwork that also embodied the qualities of movement and emotion. Finally he remarked how this particular statue marked a glorious moment in French history.

Focusing first on the importance of expression, Leroy stated how '...les anciens ont toujours exprimé les passions dans leurs statues avec majesté,' and giving as examples of the 'beauté idéale d'expression', the statues of 'le Laocoon et la Néobé.'⁴⁶⁷ Referencing Winckelmann's thoughts on the nature and form of sedate and grand expression in ancient sculpture and concerns about contorted faces he commented that 'les grimaces que la nature présente souvent dans de pareilles douleurs' had a negative effect on ideal beauty.⁴⁶⁸

Leroy also echoed Winckelmann's system and method of constructing the ideal body from an assemblage of body parts. His definition of ideal beauty echoed Watelet's, combining a sense of perfect form with characteristics and qualities that were appropriate for the particular

⁴⁶⁷ Anon.110.

⁴⁶⁸ Leroy believed that this was down to the relying on the mouth to express emotion rather than the eyes, which 'seuls peuvent peindre toutes les passions avec noblesse'. Ibid.110.

individual depicted.⁴⁶⁹ As with Winckelmann's concept of the ideal, Leroy's reading of the definition incorporated male and female figures of all types, ages and temperaments:

Enfin jusque dans les plus petites parties l'antique est la belle nature, mais modifiée et asservie géométriquement à un système dont le résultat est le beau idéal, c'est-à-dire, auquel ne parvient jamais la nature dans l'ensemble ni même dans les détails. Ce beau idéal varie lui-même dans ses proportions suivant les facultés, les âges, les tempéraments.⁴⁷⁰

For Leroy, Gois had incorporated all of these qualities into his statue of *Jeanne d'Arc*. First, the statue was historically accurate, the accessories such as the sword, hat, flag and shoes were correct and the figure was also dressed in the 'costume du temps'.⁴⁷¹ He acknowledged how difficult and complicated the topic of costume was for the artist, stating that one of Gois's great achievements in this work was to convey in the Maid's dress both an accurate sense of the weight of her armour, yet at the same time outline correctly the shape of her body:

Ces obstacles ont disparu devant ce statuaire, qui, par un art admirable, a rendu transparents le jupon et l'armure. En sorte que l'on devine l'armure sous le jupon et le nu sous l'armure.⁴⁷²

Landon also congratulated Gois on overcoming 'les difficultés que présentait le costume' and rendering it with 'la plus exacte vérité' despite this in reality not really being the case.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁹Ibid.111-112.

⁴⁷⁰Ibid.112.

⁴⁷¹'Sa tête est couverte d'un chapeau semblable à celui qu'elle portait. Il est noble, élégant, et je ne doute pas que les Françaises qui mettent dans l'invention de leurs modes, tant de grâces, de gout et de fécondité, n'adoptent et ne conservent longtemps les formes de celui-ci'. Ibid.112.

⁴⁷²Ibid.112-113.

⁴⁷³Charles Paul Landon, *Annales Du Musée Et De L'école Moderne Des Beaux-Arts*, (Paris : C. P. Landon 1801-1824).1801. 3.12. Landon. See Nora Heimann: 'She was historically incorrect not only in having long hair and wearing long skirts but also in the appearance of anachronistic articles of clothing, including the sabbaton she wears on her feet, which – like her plumed hat – did not appear in Europe until the first half of the sixteenth century, over a hundred years after her death, and the sole use of chain mail on the Maid's arms, an eleventh-century form of body defense that was improved by the early 1300s with the addition of padded textiles, leather, and metal plate worn over mail on the extremities and torso'. Nora M. Heimann, *Joan of Arc in French Art and Culture (1700-1855) : From Satire to Sanctity*, (Aldershot : Ashgate, 2005).76.

In addition to showing the form of the body in a manner that maintained her modesty, as was appropriate for the depiction of a virgin, the figure of the Maid managed to convey all the action and passion that formed part of the expression of ideal beauty for both Winckelmann and Leroy. Leroy described how the statue of *Jeanne d'Arc* combined the beauty of form that 'respirent la grâce et la force'⁴⁷⁴ with 'la colère, l'indignation, la fierté et cet heureux enthousiasme qu'inspire la victoire'.⁴⁷⁵ He continued:

A l'exemple de l'antique, le statuaire a évité les mouvements de la bouche, et a tout concentré dans les yeux, ce qui lui a fait exprimer ces passions avec grâce et noblesse.⁴⁷⁶

The combined effect of her pose and the way in which the folds of her costume draped and conveyed a sense of 'grand movement', which 'indique à la fois le repos et l'action', was in Leroy's eyes 'une des beautés remarquables de cette statue'.⁴⁷⁷ Finally, Leroy remarked how Gois had marked a glorious moment in French history when the 'héroïne ...dut alors sa délivrance du joug des Anglais'. In doing so, Gois's work was seen by Leroy as 'honorer la nation, l'héroïne et le statuaire'.⁴⁷⁸

I demonstrated in the last two chapters how all these different attributes of ideal beauty formed part of the definition of ideal beauty in the French art and costume dictionaries; the role of drapery as an expression of emotion, historical and contemporary figures dressed so that so that they also conveyed a sense of timelessness, the importance of the historical accuracy of clothing as symbolic of the status of the French school of painting, and finally the way in which general concerns over issues of morality and beauty related to costume and drapery were negotiated.

⁴⁷⁴He described how her neck was slim and carried 'le caractère de la virginité'. Anon.1802.112.

⁴⁷⁵Ibid.112.

⁴⁷⁶Ibid.112.

⁴⁷⁷Ibid.112.

⁴⁷⁸Ibid.113.

In the next two chapters I will demonstrate from a mix of art critical and theoretical sources how by examining the connoisseurial and aesthetic impact of costume and drapery and its role in the definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art provides new and interesting perspectives on well-known material. The first chapter examines the theoretical debate surrounding the nature of ideal beauty through the work of three individual theorists on the importance and value of costume and drapery in relation to the definition of ideal beauty. The second chapter then examines how this affects the reading of the art criticism.

The reference in the art criticisms to the figures of Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David, Quatremère's significant role during and after the Revolution in the art establishment, and their public quarrel between Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David over the expression of ideal beauty in art has highlighted the importance of these two figures to many scholars in relation to debates on the nature and definition of ideal beauty. Less publicly recognised was the figure of the revolutionary and writer Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, who I have chosen to examine independently of other critics because of the significance given by scholars to Chaussard's views on *Les Sabines* and his relationship to Jacques-Louis David. In choosing these three figures my purpose is to demonstrate how their different attitudes to costume and drapery also signalled their different interpretations of ideal beauty, showing how each of them adapted Winckelmann's ideas and what he represented to support their own arguments. Once again this demonstrates the way in which theorists and critics often tried to take on the mantle of Winckelmann as their spokesperson on the topic of ideal beauty, but in reality were using his work to support different readings of the terms as well as the complex nature of the actual debate itself.

Section 5.1: The Theoretical Debate over Ideal Beauty

There is extensive scholarship on the theoretical debate and definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. Becq,⁴⁷⁹ Griener,⁴⁸⁰ Pommier,⁴⁸¹ Gilks,⁴⁸² Siegfried,⁴⁸³ Potts⁴⁸⁴ and Prendergast⁴⁸⁵ have all addressed the topic in some way. My contribution here is to demonstrate that the role of dress and drapery in a selection of influential theorists helps to differentiate the different permutations and interpretations of ideal beauty in this period and the different ways in which they used the work of Winckelmann to support their positions. In turn this supports my thesis that the emblem of ideal beauty in this period was a combination of perfect form and expressive drapery rather than the formal and spiritual qualities of the Greek ideal being embodied solely in the figure of the male nude. It also demonstrates how the conflation of male nudity with the ‘beau idéal’ may have evolved from the work of some theorists outside the critical mainstream. It must be noted that this selection of writers on art and the topic of ideal beauty is not comprehensive. Many of the art critics also wrote theoretically about the nature of ideal beauty in response to the artworks they reviewed. I will separately provide an overview of the critics and the publications they wrote for in the first section of the next chapter.

First I will explore the different definitions of ideal beauty found in the work of the journalist and critic Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, (1766-1823). I will then examine the work of the theorists Toussaint-Bernard Éméric-David (1755-1839) and Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849). I will engage with each of these individually and will

⁴⁷⁹ Annie Becq, *Genèse De L'esthétique Française Moderne : De La Raison Classique À L'imagination Créatrice, 1680-1814*, (Pisa : Pacini, 1984).

⁴⁸⁰ Griener, Pascal Griener, *La République De L'œil : L'expérience De L'art Au Siècle Des Lumières*, (Paris : O. Jacob, 2010).

⁴⁸¹ Pommier.

⁴⁸² Gilks.

⁴⁸³ Porterfield and Siegfried; Siegfried.

⁴⁸⁴ Potts.1994. Potts.1990.

⁴⁸⁵ Prendergast.

demonstrate how they all defined the term ideal beauty in a different way. The reference in the art criticisms to the figures of Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David and their public quarrel over the expression of ideal beauty in art has highlighted the significance of these figures in relation to debates on the nature and definition of ideal beauty and their importance has also been validated through the work of scholars of this period of French art because of the impact of Quatremère de Quincy in the institutional reframing of the arts during and after the Revolution. This has prompted me to examine their work and their attitudes to clothing. In addition to Quatremère and Éméric-David, I have spent time analysing the philosophical and art critical work of the revolutionary and writer Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard because of the significance given by scholars to Chaussard's views and the way in which his writing is linked to the work of Jacques-Louis David. Although Chaussard is one critic amongst many and his work is often quoted by scholars, little in-depth research has been done on his unique interpretation of ideal beauty, and the contextualisation of his views into the broader corpus of the critical work. I will examine both the theoretical work and the critical work of Chaussard, specifically his response to David's *Les Sabines* and the *Salon de 1806*. This is in order to demonstrate Chaussard's unusual views on the nature of ideal beauty and how it should be represented in works of art. It will demonstrate how Chaussard distrusted the aesthetic effect of clothing and believed that ideal beauty could be found in the emotional content of battle painting, portraiture and the sentimental depictions of everyday life typical of genre painting. It will also demonstrate how he attributed his beliefs on the importance of these genres to the painters Joseph-Marie Vien (1716-1809) and Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825).

Secondly I will demonstrate how Éméric-David rejected the concept of an abstract definition of ideal beauty focusing instead on the 'beau visible' and the male nude figure as its emblem. Finally I will show how Quatremère de Quincy held onto the traditional reading of

Winckelmann's concept of ideal beauty that incorporated both perfect form and an abstract quality to the concept expressed by drapery. I will demonstrate how these different attitudes were reflected in the approach each had to the topic of clothing.

Finally I will examine the theoretical debate between Éméric-David and Quatremère. This will provide a sense of how the theoretical debate over ideal beauty evolved in public and the different ways in which Winckelmann and his definition of ideal beauty developed. As with Chaussard, I will propose that their different attitudes to clothing demonstrated deeper ideological beliefs about the nature and expression of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century definitions of ideal beauty.

Section 5.1.1: Chaussard's definition of Ideal Beauty

Although little known today other than for his essay on *Les Sabines*, and his art criticism for the *Journal des Arts*, Jean-Baptiste 'Publicola' Chaussard was a prolific writer, public servant and an active revolutionary⁴⁸⁶ who was involved during the Revolution, like David, with the 'fêtes révolutionnaires'.⁴⁸⁷ During the Revolution he held administrative posts in Belgium and Paris and like David, narrowly escaped execution. He was an enthusiastic advocate of the work of David. His influential essay *Sur les Sabines par David* published just after the controversial exhibition opened at the Louvre in 1799, linked the nude figures in David's painting to Winckelmann's expression of the heroic ideal. This text has become the central focus around which contemporary scholarly debate of *Les Sabines* has been analysed, and in

⁴⁸⁶During the Revolution he changed his name to Publicola Chaussard and eventually rejected his family. See Jean-Louis Baritou and D Foussard, *Chevetet, Contant, Chaussard: Un Cabinet D'architectes Au Siècle Des Lumières*, (Lyon : La Manufacture, 1987). Chaussard also appears to have also been an active member of the Masons and his very popular *Fêtes et courtisanes de la Grèce* displayed an avid interest in the sacred rituals, cults, varied forms of sexuality and the astrology of the Greeks. Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Fêtes Et Courtisanes De La Grèce* (Paris 1803). 305.

⁴⁸⁷Griener.

particular how the understanding of the ‘beau idéal’ in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France has been framed. His views on ideal beauty and the hierarchies of the genres, however, were different to those of his contemporaries and the critical mainstream.

In addition to his essay on *Les Sabines*, Chaussard wrote some conventional reviews of the Salon paintings organised by genre, and also published an influential essay in 1797 called *Essai philosophique sur la dignité des arts* on the philosophical importance of the arts. In 1798-99 he published a novel, *Le nouveau diable boîteux*, which he described as ‘une tableau philosophique et moral de Paris’. In these two publications, along with his 1800 essay *Sur les Sabines par David* and the *Salon of 1806* written under the pseudonym of *Le Pausanias français* he set out his particular vision of what constituted ideal beauty and the role of dress and drapery within that.

Although Chaussard’s art criticisms and his essay *Sur les Sabines par David* are often quoted to support the argument that David and French art criticism in general, believed that the emblem of ideal beauty was the male nude figure, there is little secondary literature that has specifically focused on his work and his interesting definition of ideal beauty.⁴⁸⁸ I have therefore given particular attention to him in this section and will propose that he is a significant figure in the evolving debate over ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, his definition of ideal beauty residing in the male nude form became associated with the Davidian school of painting even though in practice male nudity only appeared in three of David’s paintings. Secondly, it appears from some secondary literature on battle paintings that his views that this genre could aspire to a form of ideal beauty meant that there was a consensus in French

⁴⁸⁸ Adrian Rifkin ‘History, time and the morphology of critical language, or Publicola’s choice’. Orwicz. 29-42. Bordes; Halliday; Marc Régald, *Profil Perdu ; L’idéologue Chaussard*, (Paris : Klincksieck, 1974); Sérullaz and Rouchès; Siegfried.

art criticism that the category of battle paintings were more generally regarded as ideal.⁴⁸⁹ Thirdly, I will demonstrate that this confusion is understandable because Chaussard believed that the concepts of Truth and Nature were important components of ideal beauty, but that he interpreted these terms differently from other critics. These differences were illustrated, in part, by his attitude to clothing, his reasons and preference for the nude figure, and the qualities and virtues of antiquity he attributed as his model and embodiment of ideal beauty. I will also demonstrate that, like others critics and theorists, he used aspects of Winckelmann's work to support his arguments and points of view.

Chaussard described ideal beauty as being 'l'imitation fidèle de la Nature, à l'expression'.⁴⁹⁰ In many ways this definition of ideal beauty echoed the work of Winckelmann and the definition of ideal beauty given by Watelet and others. I will suggest, however, that his reading of the phrase 'imitation fidèle' and the word 'expression' were different to the critical mainstream. These differences can be seen when one looks at his views on the role of arts in society and in his attitude to clothing.

I have separated his views into the following themes for further exploration. Firstly, I will look at the utilitarian and functional attitude he had to clothing, and the broader role of the Arts. Secondly, I will demonstrate that his way of ensuring the qualities of Truth and Emotion were imbued in art was to propose that the imitative genres of portraiture, battle painting and sentimental art should be the vehicle of ideal beauty in post-Revolutionary France. I will demonstrate how he believed that these genres were characteristic of the new era because they could embody the emotional qualities of heroism, morality and truth that for him were 'historic'. Finally I will demonstrate how all these terms affected Chaussard's definition of ideal beauty and how he aligned the work of Winckelmann with his broader

⁴⁸⁹Siegfried.1993.

⁴⁹⁰Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Essai Philosophique Sur La Dignité Des Arts*, (Paris: de l'Imprimerie des sciences et arts, 1797). 25.

concept of the ideal which embraced a concept of ‘Antiquity’ rather than Winckelmann’s own specific definition. I will demonstrate how this accounts for Chaussard’s response to David’s *Les Sabines* and propose that this work was important for Chaussard because it imbued the qualities of heroism, empathy and historical ‘truth’ that he found in the genres of battle painting, sentimental art and portraiture. Chaussard then combined these qualities with a broad sense of ‘Antiquity’, Greek and Roman, which together made *Les Sabines* emblematic of his definition of ideal beauty. I will propose that the manner in which he combined these views together in this essay might be one of the reasons why Winckelmann and David’s definition of ideal beauty has become associated with the emblem of the male nude figure.

5.1.1.1: Utilitarian Approach to Dress

Chaussard’s did not see clothing as having any aesthetic qualities or contributing to the expression of emotion or ideal beauty as Winckelmann, Watelet and others believed. Chaussard’s definition of ideal beauty appears instead to have been the outcome of his republican ideals and the way he believed the arts were reflective of the broader political and moral structure of France. Chaussard’s 1797 *Essai philosophique sur la dignité des arts* set out his vision of how the arts had an important and useful role as part of the overall social edifice:

On a jusqu'à ce jour considéré les arts comme les ornements de l'édifice social: ils font partie de ses bases. Mobiles du commerce, leviers de l'instruction, langue énergique, rapide, universelle, industrie d'une civilisation perfectionnée, dépositaires des pensées du génie, éléments de la gloire et de la prospérité des peuples, les Arts sont la première comme la plus irrésistible des puissances. On

confondit leur *moyen*, qui consiste à plaire, avec leur *objet*, qui consiste à être utile. ...Cette erreur est moderne. Chez les anciens, les Beaux-arts formaient la clef et le corps des législations.⁴⁹¹

In this context, Chaussard believed that clothing played an important symbolic role politically, philosophically and aesthetically, but for different reasons from Winckelmann and Watelet:

Plusieurs considérations doivent influencer sur le costume, chose plus importante qu'on ne pense.⁴⁹²

To Chaussard, the frivolity of decoration and ornamentation were reminiscent of 'le faux goût, la manière, les systèmes, les prejudices' of the 'ancien régime',⁴⁹³ which 'forment une tache ou une dissonance'.⁴⁹⁴ Chaussard suggested that artists should focus on the simplicity of form instead, and remember that 'taste' was a sense of propriety rather than elegant shapes:

Dessinateurs, imprimez aux instruments de l'industrie des formes simples; à ceux du luxe, à tous ces éléments de jouissances, à ces meubles, à ces recherches voluptueuses, des formes élégantes; à ces jardins, des formes romantiques; à la parure des femmes, des formes majestueuses et sévères; mais rappelez-vous que le goût est le sentiment des convenances. Ce sentiment a guidé les anciens en tout.⁴⁹⁵

In his philosophical novel *Le Nouveau Diable Boiteux*, Chaussard expressed his thoughts on clothing further. Using as his main point of reference the importance placed by Montesquieu in his *De l'esprit des lois* on the virtues of 'économie et de frugalité' characteristic of a republican state, in his chapter on *Les Modes* he articulated the priorities and significance of

⁴⁹¹Ibid.3.

⁴⁹²Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, 'Le Nouveau Diable Boîteux : Tableau Philosophique Et Moral De Paris ; Mémoires Mis En Lumière Et Enrichis De Notes', (A Paris : Chez F. Buisson, imprimeur-libraire 1798-99).1798-99.547.

⁴⁹³Chaussard.1797.14.

⁴⁹⁴Ibid.26.

⁴⁹⁵Ibid.26.

dress in general, and fashion in particular.⁴⁹⁶ He believed that the importance of clothing was firstly its impact on politics and customs, and secondly on hygiene and health.⁴⁹⁷ Other factors such as the impact of climate, and the interests of industry were also relevant. Of least importance to Chaussard was the pleasurable aesthetic effect achieved by elegant clothing, stating that whilst in a moment of ‘libertinage’ he found it ‘délucieux’ that mothers were dressed like the dancers from Herculaneum and their daughters like ‘des Phryné et des Laïs’, clothing was more important than something merely to excite the senses.⁴⁹⁸ He then demonstrated his commitment to the ideas of Cabanis, Condillac and Rousseau by encouraging French women to take care of their hygiene and health so that they could properly fulfil their role as caretakers of the home:

Enfin l’hygiène, ou les principales de conserver la santé, me paraissent devoir entrer dans la balance des profonds calculs du costume. Papillons voluptueux, ah! ne fût-ce que pour mieux la perdre, connaissez le prix de la santé, et pour en jouir, sachez la ménager. ...Je ne vous demande plus, madame, que de porter un manteau pour vous garantir de la fraîcheur et des rhumatismes.⁴⁹⁹

The emphasis on the utilitarian purpose of clothes, and the way clothing should embody moral rather than sensual or emotional values meant that unlike Winckelmann, Watelet and others he did not see clothing as imbuing aesthetic qualities or part of his definition of ideal beauty. Although Winckelmann and others had remarked on the importance of ‘simplicity’ and other critics disliked paintings that reminded them of the extravagance of pre-Revolutionary France, Chaussard’s views on clothing combined with his interpretation of ideal beauty was different to the critical mainstream.

⁴⁹⁶Chaussard.1798-99.

⁴⁹⁷Ibid.228. & 547.

⁴⁹⁸Ibid.547.

⁴⁹⁹Ibid.551-553.

5.1.1.2: Ideal Beauty in Truth and Nature

Whilst reviewing portraits in the Salon of 1806 Chaussard commented that, ‘cependant malheur à l’artiste qui méconnaît cette loi suprême du goût: Rien n’est beau que le vrai’.⁵⁰⁰

As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, this phrase from Boileau was used to support the importance of historical accuracy in dress by French costume and art dictionaries. ‘Truth’ and the importance of accurate costume in history painting also became emblematic of the status of the regenerated French school of painting.

Chaussard’s texts demonstrate that he extended the moral attributes of the word ‘Truth’ to include moral and emotional qualities such as heroism, genius, and virtue. He demonstrated this in the *Essai Philosophique* by citing Plato’s dialogue with Hippolytus on how moral lessons could be derived from looking at ancient monuments.⁵⁰¹ He also stated that from the moment the Arts were used for public enjoyment in ancient times, they were associated with the qualities of ‘la Vertu, l’Héroïsme, (et) le Génie’.⁵⁰²

Chaussard strongly believed that the ‘emploi sublime’ of the Arts was to encourage the positive qualities and attributes of mankind.⁵⁰³ Stating that since ‘les Arts font partie des institutions politiques’,⁵⁰⁴ ideal beauty was therefore the combination of two things: ‘du choix et de l’imitation de la belle Nature’⁵⁰⁵ combined with the senses, the imagination and the passions.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Le Pausanias Français : Ou, Description Du Salon De 1806 : État Des Arts Du Dessin En France, À L’ouverture Du Xixe Siècle : Ouvrage Dans Lequel Les Principales Productions De L’école Actuelle Sont Classées, Expliquées, Analysées ... Avec Des Notices Historiques Et Inédites ... Publié Par Un Observateur Impartial*, (Paris : F. Buisson, 1808). 397.

⁵⁰¹Chaussard.1797.6.

⁵⁰²Ibid.3.

⁵⁰³Ibid.7.

⁵⁰⁴Ibid.7.

⁵⁰⁵This included everything from the influence of the climate to the nature of government and politics, national customs, cult of beauty, liberty and philosophy.Ibid.5.

⁵⁰⁶Ibid.7.

Elever, agrandir toutes les facultés de l'homme, lui composer une âme, lui créer des affections douce ou généreuses, l'enrichir d'émotions, de plaisirs et de leçons, polir les mœurs, embellir la vie, ouvrir aux nations les sources de la gloire et du bonheur, faire naître les vertus du spectacle des vertus, instruire, éclairer leurs contemporains, le monde, les siècles.⁵⁰⁷

The practical implication of his definition was to embody emotion and the accurate imitation of Nature in the imitative genres of battle painting, sentimental painting and portraiture rather than those traditionally associated with an aspiration to ideal beauty. He therefore called on French artists to 'ne traitez que des sujets nationaux. Associez vos succès à ceux de votre pays.'⁵⁰⁸ His 1806 Salon demonstrated the 'historic' way in which he glorified battle paintings and attributed qualities of virtue and heroism to them:

Mais les batailles sont l'objet qui occupe principalement les pinceaux, et qui saisit d'abord l'attention. En effet, n'y a-t-il pas dans le luxe de notre gloire militaire de quoi enrichir tous les Arts? Histoire, Poésie, Peinture, Sculpture, Architecture, tout semble inondé en quelque sorte de sujets Homériques...L'âme s'élève à la vue de ces grands objets, et le premier mérite de ces représentations, est de créer à nos intrépides défenseurs d'illustres émules. Le portrait de celui qui les conduit aux combats, ou plutôt à la victoire, et du sein duquel s'échappe comme d'un foyer brûlant, ces flammes de l'héroïsme, s'est multiplié sous le pinceau des Artistes: il semble le Dieu de ce temple des Arts, et il en remplit toute l'enceinte.⁵⁰⁹

He then described Gros's painting, the *Combat d'Aboukir* as 'une belle page de l'histoire, ou plutôt un chant de poème épique' (Figure 5.2):

...semblables aux Grecs, les Français triomphent de l'antique Orient: c'est ainsi qu'Homère rassemble et l'Europe et l'Asie sous les murs d'Ilium, et montre, d'un côté, selon les expressions de Boussuet, le calme de la supériorité, la valeur éclairée, et de l'autre, le brutal emportement, la férocité stupide et le courage aveugle; comme s'il avait voulu indiquer qu'il s'agissait du triomphe des lumières et de la civilisation sur les ténèbres et la barbarie.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁷Ibid.7.

⁵⁰⁸Ibid.25.

⁵⁰⁹Chaussard.1808.73. & 75.

⁵¹⁰Ibid.78.

Because passion was a strong feeling associated with being ‘true’ and being ‘heroic’ Chaussard also believed that the ugliness and ‘goriness’ of some battle paintings was acceptable because of the emotion that it evoked:

Etrangers, par notre état comme par notre caractère aux misérables passions d’amour-propre et d’intérêt qui divisent trop malheureusement les Artistes, loin de répandre, à l’exemple de quelques journalistes, le fiel et le poison dans les blessures profondes que leur irritable sensibilité multiplie, et dont elle est la victime, nous voudrions au contraire y verser un baume consolateur, ou plutôt les fermer pour jamais, en proclamant de plus en plus cette grande vérité que l’on feint de ne pas entendre, et dont chacun cependant a la conscience: C’est que NUL NE SAURAIT être parfait.⁵¹¹

As well as suggesting that painters should focus their attention on national subjects and not flinch from engaging with the painful reality of war, Chaussard also proposed that the painters of Nature and Truth should ‘annoblissant les compositions d’Hogarth’... and his ‘leçons de la vie humaine’:⁵¹²

Peintres de la nature et de la vérité, devenez les Orateurs de la vertu et de la morale...Créez le genre sentimental.⁵¹³

The emotional attributes Chaussard gave to sentimental works of art and the way in which he incorporated them into his definition of ideal beauty can be seen in his review of Mlle Lorimier’s *Jeanne de Navarre* (Figure 5.3):

Le secret dans tous les Arts est de parler au cœur: voilà pourquoi les scènes même les plus communes d’un Drame nous émeuvent; mais le véritable intérêt se puise toujours au sein de la famille. Montrez-moi donc des mères, des pères, des époux, des enfants; qui ne serait alors touché de leurs malheurs? il devint en quelque sorte le nôtre, par la réflexion et par un juste retour sur nous-mêmes.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹¹Ibid.83.

⁵¹²Chaussard.1797.26.

⁵¹³Ibid.26.

⁵¹⁴Chaussard.1808.273.

As can be seen from the negative references to Hogarth in Watelet, and the low ranking of sentimental art in the hierarchy of genres, this was a radical departure from existing artistic conventions. Chaussard's empathy for the emotional content of an image and its relationship to his definition of ideal beauty was also evident in his response to David's *L'Intervention des Sabines* (Figure 5.4). His comparison of David's painting with Guercino's painting of the same topic demonstrates how 'truth' of feeling and 'truth' of character were the qualities that Chaussard admired in a painting (Figure 5.5). Describing Guercino as 'un ouvrier habile' and David as 'un grand artiste'⁵¹⁵ he focused on the qualities he saw as 'idéal'; the 'caractère idéal' of Hersilia's head, 'la noblesse de son attitude, la dignité de sa douleur' and 'une âme hors de la condition commune'.⁵¹⁶ He described David as having looked for the effect of 'la beauté morale dans l'ensemble, et la plus parfaite expression de la beauté physique dans les détails; mais avec la variété qui doit caractériser les conditions, les sexes, les âges, les passions'.⁵¹⁷ One of the reasons that he was therefore so supportive of *Les Sabines* was because, in his eyes, it conveyed all the qualities of sentimental art, a genre which he found ideal. Finally, he suggested that there was the opportunity in portraiture to be 'historic':

Le premier mérite de ce tableau consiste donc dans la vérité, sans laquelle il n'y a rien de beau. Nous avons reconnu cette vérité dans la différence de la situation des personnages, et surtout dans celle de leur caractère moral. Saisir ces nuances, voilà ce qui caractérise un Artiste penseur; mais il se trouvait arrêté par d'autres difficultés, il fallait encore exprimer dans toute sa vérité la nature physique et diverse dont les modèles étaient loin de ses yeux et ne pouvaient être rassemblés que par des circonstances rares, par des soins laborieux, et par une patience tenace dont l'effet devait être de glacer l'imagination de l'Artiste; elle semble au contraire s'être embrasée par ces difficultés même. Son pinceau accuse d'une manière énergiquement précise, les formes les plus caractéristiques et les plus opposés, et le Peintre d'Histoire s'est montré grand Peintre de Portraits et de Portraits nationaux.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Sur Le Tableau Des Sabines Par David*, (C. Pougens, 1800, 1800). 7.

⁵¹⁶Ibid.8.

⁵¹⁷Ibid.12.

⁵¹⁸Chaussard.1808.81.

To demonstrate another way in which Chaussard's views departed from the critical mainstream was the way in which he also challenged the use of nudity in sculpture which was a genre of art, in which many critics who otherwise stood on different ideological grounds, did agree that nudity was both preferable and appropriate. For example, in the critique of Clodion's sculpture of *Une jeune Personne assise, donne à manger à des petits Oiseaux*, Chaussard challenged the realism of the piece saying that the model was a woman of twenty to twenty-four and that feeding birds was a puerile activity for a woman of that age never mind that despite the charm of her not being dressed it was totally unrealistic to imagine her undertaking that activity in the nude.⁵¹⁹

In conclusion, this section has demonstrated that Chaussard's way of ensuring that the qualities of Truth and Emotion were imbued in art was to propose that the imitative genres of portraiture, battle painting and sentimental art should be the vehicle of ideal beauty in post-Revolutionary France because they could embody the emotional qualities of heroism, morality and truth. Chaussard believed that the real truth of the 'beau idéal' was not to be 'chimérique' like Boucher but to 'imiter fidèlement la belle nature'.⁵²⁰ He continued to state that 'les Peintures d'histoire devaient faire des Portraits, afin de s'habituer à rendre fidèlement ce qu'ils voyaient'. Instead he believed that 'le beau, le vrai idéal, tel que celui des Grecs', was always 'fondé sur la belle nature'.⁵²¹ His support for the work of Vien and David was because he saw their work as embodying the virtues of Truth, as in 'emotional' truth, and Nature as in 'man in antiquity'. His enthusiasm for *Les Sabines* was because in his eyes it embodied these qualities.

⁵¹⁹Ibid.515.

⁵²⁰Ibid.115.

⁵²¹Ibid.115.

5.1.1.3: Winckelmann and Antiquity

Since the Bible was in Chaussard's eyes 'le livre d'où sont découlées les plus ridicules comme les plus atroces superstitions',⁵²² he called upon the French school to embrace Antiquity and Nature as its model:

Le berceau des Républiques fut encore celui de la renaissance des Arts. ...Une pareille révolution est prête. L'École française, ramenée à des principes sévères, affranchie de ses tyrans, et j'entends par ce mot le faux goût, la manière, les systèmes, les préjugés; forte de grands exemples, et surtout de l'étude de la Nature et de l'Antique, enrichie des trésors de plusieurs siècles et de plusieurs contrées, éclairée des lumières philosophiques de cet âge, puissant dans toutes ces sources, dans son caractère, dans la liberté créatrice des grandes choses, son enthousiasme, son génie et son élévation, étonnera aussi l'Europe de ses paisibles et glorieux triomphes.⁵²³

Chaussard used the pseudonym *Le Pausanias Français* for his thoughts on the Salon of 1806 after the Greek traveller and geographer who lived in the second century AD.⁵²⁴ Although the review involved a systematic critique of the paintings exhibited in 1806, the volume was structured within a historicist framework that evoked both Winckelmann's *Histoire* and Vasari's *Lives*, demonstrating Chaussard's teleological approach to the arts. His purpose in doing this, I believe, was to try and contextualise and establish the artists of the 'French school' as natural inheritors of the Greeks, despite acknowledging that the French school as such did not consist of any particular 'type' or style of painting saying that each artist was driven by personal sentiment.⁵²⁵ In doing so he was essentially trying to align the French school and taste with his broader concept of emotional truth.

⁵²²Chaussard.1797.15.

⁵²³Ibid.13-14.

⁵²⁴Orwicz.29-42.

⁵²⁵Chaussard.1808.72.

He placed Vien as the saviour of the French school,⁵²⁶ and amongst the rank of ‘great’ painters, because of the emphasis that he said that Vien placed on the imitation of nature as the fundamental bedrock on which painting should be founded.⁵²⁷ Chaussard quoted Vien as saying to his pupils: ‘*Qu’est-ce que la peinture? Y aurait-il d’autre réponse que celle-ci: C’est l’imitation de la nature*’.⁵²⁸ Having described the French school as descending into excess thanks to ‘l’absence totale de la Nature et de la Vérité’, he proclaimed: ‘Enfin, Vien pârut. La Nature attendait un Peintre; il fut le Peintre de la Nature...Dès ce moment, l’École Française marcha d’un pas rapide vers sa régénération’.⁵²⁹ He praised Vien as the first artist to argue that history painters should imitate ‘la belle nature’ and become portrait painters.⁵³⁰ However Chaussard’s proposal did not accord with reality. In Year VII, a suggestion had been made by the minister Neufchâteau to the jury responsible for prizes distributed to history painters that battle paintings should be included within the realm of history paintings. Vien was the man who informed Neufchâteau that the jury had unanimously rejected this proposal.⁵³¹

5.1.1.4: ‘Sur Les Sabines par David’

Chaussard also used Winckelmann to support the arguments he made in his essay *Sur Les Sabines par David*. Chaussard's defence of *L’Intervention des Sabines*, published in 1800, presented David as the philosopher artist, the inheritor of Raphael and the upholder of Winckelmannesque principles.⁵³² His essay focused on a defence against the two main

⁵²⁶Ibid.42. L’Amateur also credited Vien with overhauling the teaching methods and focusing on the study of antiquity. L’Amateur, *Salon De 1817*, (Offprint from: Mercure de France: Paris:Cailleau, 1817).

⁵²⁷Chaussard.1808.47.

⁵²⁸Ibid.47.

⁵²⁹Ibid.38.

⁵³⁰Ibid.115.

⁵³¹Roque and Whiteley.76.

⁵³²Chaussard.1800. 2

criticisms of *Les Sabines*: the static poses which resembled statues rather than live figures, and the nudity of the male figures which were criticised by others for being historically inaccurate and indecent⁵³³ (Figure 5.6).

Chaussard justified the rigidity of the figures on a number of counts. First he argued that David had chosen a moment where the action had been naturally ‘suspended’.⁵³⁴ Then he referenced Winckelmann stating that the heroes of antiquity were always distinguished by the tranquility of their poses:

De là ce calme qui révèle un héros: il est exempt de trouble; il doit vaincre...Tous les héros de l'antiquité, dit Winckelmann, sont remarquables par le caractère tranquille de leur figure. En général, dit-il, on peut établir que l'art avait banni du système public des monuments avec toutes les passions violentes.⁵³⁵

This male dignity was contrasted in the painting with the emotional abandonment of the female figures⁵³⁶ displaying ‘vulgar passions’.⁵³⁷ He stated that David had ‘élevait la nature, du matériel à l’intellectuel’, representing man ‘dans sa plus haute dignité’.⁵³⁸ Together, however, he argued the male and female figures created a harmonious and united composition.⁵³⁹

Tout est contraste dans ce tableau. Il rappelle le mouvement, et il offre le repos. Il oppose l'innocence des enfants à la férocité des pères; le cri de la nature à celui de la rage; l'attitude des suppliantes à celle des combattants; le pathétique à l'horrible.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³³Ibid.37.

⁵³⁴Ibid.5.

⁵³⁵Ibid.13.

⁵³⁶Ibid.10.

⁵³⁷Ibid.9.

⁵³⁸Ibid.14.

⁵³⁹Ibid.10.

⁵⁴⁰Ibid.20.

Chaussard's most passionate response to criticisms of *Les Sabines*, however, was in regard to the nudity of the male figures.⁵⁴¹ Whilst agreeing on the one hand that the nudity in David's painting was 'une licence' he described the nudity as 'une licence heureuse'.⁵⁴² He then proceeded to provide an ideological and philosophical rationale for it. His main argument was that indecency was often greater in the 'figures voilées depuis les pieds jusqu'à la tête, qui expriment l'action la plus contraire à la décence'.⁵⁴³ This view on the indecency of some clothing was also illustrated by the critical reaction to Robert Lefevre's painting *Les Callipyges grecques* discussed in the next chapter. The particular example that Chaussard gave was the suggestive use of drapery in Fragonard's *Le Sacrifice de la rose* (Figure 5.7):

Telle est cette figure qui, dans *le Sacrifice de la rose*, se pâme près d'un autel; telles sont toutes ces compositions bien modernes, bien libertines, où préside, au défaut du véritable génie, celui de l'équivoque grossière, et qui, plus dangereuses que les peintures Cyniques de l'Arétin, s'adressent moins au sens de la vue qu'à la pensée vicieuse dont elles réveillent tous les désordres à l'aide de séductrices allusions, de signes voluptueux, quelquefois vagues et détournés, toujours expressifs et licencieux. Voilà, voilà les compositions indécentes, celles qui corrompent le cœur en trompant et pervertissant l'esprit. Tel homme qui les déploie dans son cabinet sous les yeux de sa mère, de sa femme et de sa fille, n'a pas manqué de proscrire avec indignation la nudité de tous ces demi-dieux de l'antiquité qui, dans leur expression générale, ne rappellent que dignité, vertu, héroïsme.⁵⁴⁴

Chaussard then justified the nudity of the figures by quoting Rousseau, Montaigne, Voltaire, Winckelmann, Pliny, Virgil and Romulus, as support for his argument.⁵⁴⁵

This overview of Chaussard's reading of *Les Sabines* and the way in which he used Winckelmann along with the names of other philosophers both ancient and modern, demonstrates his determination to capture the ideological high ground. The dispute between

⁵⁴¹Ibid.32.

⁵⁴²Ibid.35.

⁵⁴³Ibid.33.

⁵⁴⁴Ibid.33.

⁵⁴⁵Ibid.34-38.

Éméric-David and the sculptor Giraud demonstrates a similar determination to reference ancient philosophers and be seen to inherit the mantle of Winckelmann.

Section 5.1.2: Éméric-David and Quatremère de Quincy

In contrast to the subtle way in which Chaussard expressed his thoughts and definition of ideal beauty the dispute between Éméric-David and Quatremère de Quincy was well-known at the time and has been written about extensively since.⁵⁴⁶ However, analysing their work in the light of the aesthetic importance of costume and drapery in Winckelmann's work demonstrates more clearly the way in which Éméric-David split away from Winckelmann's work, at the same time as echoing it in the manner, approach and structure of his dissertation on antique sculpture. The comparison with the work of Quatremère also demonstrates how closely Quatremère held to Winckelmann's principles, and was more firmly attached to the use of drapery because of the moral and religious problems associated with nudity in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.

Éméric-David's *Recherches sur l'art statuaire* was the winner of the public Concours question 'Quelles sont les causes de la perfection de la sculpture antique, et quels seraient les moyens d'y atteindre?' It was published in 1805 under the aegis of the Institut and presented a direct challenge to the generally accepted philosophical concepts of beauty established by Winckelmann. However, the break with Platonic metaphysics and Winckelmann's conclusions about the nature of beauty was set in the format of a dissertation on ancient statuary in the style of Winckelmann's *Histoire*.

Instead of the focus on the supernatural aspects of the ideal, Éméric-David's thesis set out a philosophy of beauty that was grounded in physical and not aesthetic laws. He challenged

⁵⁴⁶Gilks; Prendergast; Shedd and others.

Winckelmann's theory of the Greek climate⁵⁴⁷ being an aid to their imagination⁵⁴⁸ proposing instead that it was instead the physical geography of Greece that had created the 'passionate' character, nature and history of the Greek people.⁵⁴⁹ The essence of art, beauty and taste was for him only through imitation and truth to nature and he was dismissive of notions such as the 'ideal' in art, summarising his thoughts with the comment that 'le beau abstrait est la chimère des artistes paresseux qui négligent le beau visible' which he defined as 'l'imitation fidèle de la nature'.⁵⁵⁰

...il faut chercher la vérité de l'imitation avant la beauté des formes; la beauté des formes avant l'expression des passions; et que si l'on considère l'ordre des idées et la théorie, il faut rechercher encore la vérité avant l'expression des passions et avant même le choix des formes. Imiter, c'est l'art; imiter ce qui est beau, après l'avoir choisi, c'est l'art éclairé des lumières du goût; imiter ce qui est beau, grand et expressif tout-à-la-fois, c'est l'art guidé par le goût et par la philosophie: mais imiter enfin, imiter avec fidélité, c'est l'art dans son essence même.⁵⁵¹

For Émeric-David, 'love' was the 'supreme judge of beauty',⁵⁵² and it was a love based on physical and sensual desire, the sexual attraction 'qui force les deux sexes à se rechercher et à s'unir',⁵⁵³ and the sentiment that allowed 'la vierge la plus délicate dans les bras d'un satyre brûlant'.⁵⁵⁴ The concept of 'taste' was aligned to individual pleasure, rather than an abstract moral force and theory of what was 'good',⁵⁵⁵ or one that carried with it a notion of good breeding and elitism as suggested by Germaine de Staël and others.⁵⁵⁶ This also contrasts with definitions of beauty found in the dictionaries as demonstrated in the previous chapter.

⁵⁴⁷Toussaint Bernard Émeric David, *Recherches Sur L'art Statuaire, Considéré Chez Les Anciens Et Chez Les Modernes* [by T.B. Émeric-David], *Ouvrage Couronné Par L'institut National*, (Paris, 1805).10.

⁵⁴⁸Ibid.8.

⁵⁴⁹Ibid.21.

⁵⁵⁰Ibid.39. & 516.

⁵⁵¹Ibid.236.

⁵⁵²Ibid.43.

⁵⁵³Ibid.44.

⁵⁵⁴Ibid.44.

⁵⁵⁵Ibid.267.

⁵⁵⁶Madame Anne-Louise-Germaine de Staël and Simone Balayé, ed, *De L'Allemagne*, (Paris : Garnier-Flammarion, 1968). 247-249.

Éméric-David then aligned this understanding of ‘taste’ to the idea of grace.⁵⁵⁷ His concept of grace focused on grace as an expression of harmony and order created out of confusion, which he then applied to clothing. In his eyes dress and drapery were subordinate to the ‘truth’ of human form:

Une draperie, dans la nature, présente souvent de la confusion. L'habileté de l'artiste consiste à produire l'ordre sans nuire à la vérité, à réunir la fermeté avec la souplesse, l'ampleur et la légèreté, la méthode et la grâce; à créer enfin l'harmonie. Il ne suffit pas d'imiter quelques plis, il faut embrasser un grand ensemble.⁵⁵⁸...Les draperies ont une beauté qui leur est propre, et une beauté relative. Considérées comme des accessoires, elles doivent faire valoir le nu: vues en elles-mêmes, elles doivent être conformes aux mêmes lois; il faut y appliquer le même principe, qui dit beauté, dit ampleur et ordre.⁵⁵⁹

The study of anatomy⁵⁶⁰ and the nude were the ‘ideal’ dress because they represented both nature and truth, and the beauty of the body was aligned with its ‘utility’:

Qu'est-ce que la peau? Le vêtement des chairs? Que sont la peau et les muscles? Le vêtement des os. Le squelette fut le premier ouvrage de la nature; après l'avoir modelé, il ne lui resta qu'à le vêtir.⁵⁶¹...Tout ce qui est destiné à un certain usage est beau et bon, s'il est convenablement conformé pour cet usage: toute les choses sont laides et mauvaises, quant à l'usage auquel elles ne conviennent point.⁵⁶²

He put more value on ‘le nu’ in contrast to ‘l’opposition des draperies et des accessoires’,⁵⁶³ and argued that the deterioration in Greek art occurred when:

...la beauté du corps cessa d’être utile et honorée ; quand, ...l’on connut mieux la beauté d’un cheval, que celle d’un homme;...(1) quand les arts, séparés d’avec la politique, ne furent plus que l’amusement de quelques particuliers (2); quand on recherché dans leurs ouvrages, les caprices de l’imagination, plutôt que l’imitation

⁵⁵⁷Éméric David. 268.

⁵⁵⁸Ibid.372.

⁵⁵⁹Ibid.372.

⁵⁶⁰Although Éméric-David did stress the importance of anatomy, Giraud's comments were that it was incorrect of him to attribute this to the Greek writers. Jean Baptiste Giraud, *Appendice a L'ouvrage Intitulé : Recherches Sur L'art Statuaire Des Grecs : Ou, Seconde Lettre De M. Giraud À M. Emeric David*, (Paris : Chez l'auteur M.DCCC.VI).38.

⁵⁶¹Éméric David.204.

⁵⁶²Ibid.52.

⁵⁶³Ibid.517.

de la nature (3); quand on préféra des têtes de fantaisie, aux portraits des ses aïeux.⁵⁶⁴

It was with this attack on imagination and the concept of the ‘beau idéal’, in particular, that Éméric-David sought to differentiate himself from Winckelmann and his followers. Using an etymological analysis of the Greek word ‘eidos’, he argued that the Greek understanding of the word ‘beau idéal’ referred to the ‘beauty of human form’,⁵⁶⁵ rather than the ‘beau idéal’ being an abstraction above nature. He regarded Winckelmann's ‘beau idéal’, and its emphasis on the supernatural as placing the genius of artists above that of nature and as ‘un abus de mots’,⁵⁶⁶ and the ‘beau abstrait’ as a ‘chimère des artistes paresseux qui négligent le beau visible’.⁵⁶⁷

Quatremère de Quincy took Éméric-David's attack against the concept of the ‘beau idéal’ very seriously. His immediate response was to publish, in 1805, *Sur l'idéal dans les arts du dessin*,⁵⁶⁸ where *Recherches* (but not Éméric-David in person) was referenced and a clear definition of the ‘idéal’ as he saw it, set out, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Quatremère believed that there were two different understandings of the idéal; the idéal as could be envisioned in works of art and, a metaphysical understanding of the notion of the idéal.⁵⁶⁹ Using Éméric-David's etymological form of analysis of the Greek word ‘eidos’, he argued that the ‘beau idéal’ was two-fold; that of the ‘beau visible’, in which beauty was viewed only through the eyes,⁵⁷⁰ which alone did not allow for the subtle understanding of the spirit of the artist, and feeling and emotion in the work of art, and secondly, the power of

⁵⁶⁴Ibid.396.

⁵⁶⁵Ibid.284.

⁵⁶⁶Ibid.516.

⁵⁶⁷Ibid.516.

⁵⁶⁸Quatremère de Quincy.1805.

⁵⁶⁹Ibid.5.

⁵⁷⁰Ibid.19.

the ‘idée’ and of the imagination.⁵⁷¹ In conclusion, he argued that the Greek verb ‘eido’ ‘signifiait particulièrement voir par l’esprit, et se disait de l’intuition métaphysique et intérieure’.⁵⁷² The ‘beau idéal’ was the combination of the ‘beau visible’ with the spirit and the power of the ‘idée’,⁵⁷³ and Quatremère justified this etymologically by stating that ‘le mot idéal étant formé du mot idée’.⁵⁷⁴ Directly contradicting Éméric-David’s concept of the beautiful as ‘attraction’, he argued that Éméric-David’s understanding of that ‘qu’on entend vulgairement par beauté’⁵⁷⁵ could easily just refer to the attractiveness of youth, ‘la grâce des contours, (et) cet attrait puissant qui est particulièrement l’apanage du sexe’.⁵⁷⁶ In contrast, Quatremère argued that with his understanding of the beau idéal, old age could be beautiful, and even ugliness could be beautiful.⁵⁷⁷ In his essay, *De L’Imitation*, although not published until 1823, but presented as a series of lectures around 1805 he went on to question as to why ‘beauty’ only had the privilege of being described as achieving this ideal.⁵⁷⁸

Quatremère justified his articulation of the multiple nature of the ideal by pointing out that even the depiction of a young and ‘beautiful’ woman was difficult to achieve in art,⁵⁷⁹ and that the visualisation of the ‘beau idéal’ involved more than simply a ‘choix des formes’ and the ‘réunion des beautés éparses chez les différents individus’ that Éméric-David’s definition implied.⁵⁸⁰ Searching for an expression of the indefinable ‘je ne sais quoi’ expressed in Winckelmann as his concept of grace, along with a system that might enable artists to achieve it his conclusion was that ultimately the decision and responsibility of how to achieve this

⁵⁷¹Ibid.18.

⁵⁷²Ibid.19.

⁵⁷³Ibid.20.

⁵⁷⁴Quatremère de Quincy.1823.184.

⁵⁷⁵Quatremère de Quincy.1805.21.

⁵⁷⁶Ibid.21.

⁵⁷⁷Ibid.21.

⁵⁷⁸Quatremère de Quincy.1823.186.

⁵⁷⁹Quatremère de Quincy.1805.37-38.

⁵⁸⁰Ibid.38.

rested with artists themselves, who were also accountable for applying his concepts of ‘l’idéal de l’expression’ and the ‘l’idéal de la composition’.⁵⁸¹

...il restera vrai que ce talent dépend presque uniquement du savoir et du sentiment de l'artiste. Si le beau idéal est une abstraction, on ne saurait parler de son principe comme d'un chose visible et sensible, que les yeux et les sens puissent saisir; il demeurera constant, au contraire, que sa production dépend de rapports que peu d'esprits sont en état de découvrir, de rapprochements que peu d'organes peuvent faire, d'une délicatesse de goût, d'une finesse de jugement, (et) d'une pénétration d'intelligence.⁵⁸²

Despite Quatremère's emphasis on the supernatural aspects of beauty, and the judgement of the artist, he saw art as a ‘system’, and as a system derived from Winckelmann's *Histoire*.⁵⁸³ Core to a full understanding of Quatremère and the ‘Neo-classical’ school that he came to eventually define, was a sense that there was an order and a way of putting a painting together that made sense both intellectually and emotionally. This consisted of understanding the laws of the imitation of Nature, and capturing the indefinable essence of originality and grace in the harmonious assemblage of the whole.⁵⁸⁴ This was one of the reasons that Quatremère was so violently opposed to the school of ‘Romanticism’. Whilst believing that within the broad scope of the imitative arts, as Lessing did, that poetry was the art form that spoke most directly to the spirit, and was therefore the one most highly regarded,⁵⁸⁵ he felt strongly that poetry ‘as painting’, in its essence, and certainly in its visible manifestation in the Romantic school of painting, was totally inappropriate because of its pretensions to be great art.⁵⁸⁶ This was partly because there was no stylistic detailing in Romantic painting, but also because the subject matter of romantic painters was ‘literary’ and descriptive, whilst Quatremère strongly believed in the concept of Allegory as a means by which to convey

⁵⁸¹Ibid.37-38. & 56.

⁵⁸²Ibid.53.

⁵⁸³Ibid.37.

⁵⁸⁴Quatremère de Quincy.1823.195.

⁵⁸⁵Ibid.144.

⁵⁸⁶Ibid.80.

ideas through signs.⁵⁸⁷ As a genre of painting, he believed that Romanticism was a contemporary invention that did not have a system of references comparable to classical sculpture, relying on metaphor and atmosphere, which, in his eyes, rendered it a 'prétention'.⁵⁸⁸ He believed that the 'Romantic' school should present itself not as a challenge to 'Classicism' but as a genre of painting that held a similar status within the hierarchy of genres to landscape painting and therefore, in his eyes, incapable of achieving the 'beau idéal':

La poésie sans doute a ses tableaux, mais ce sont des tableaux par métaphore; et comme il est interdit à l'œil de les voir, il est défendu au poète d'aspirer à l'emploi d'éléments qui n'ont de valeur que par la visibilité... Si Virgile nous peint la nuit, c'est par son effet général sur les créatures. Il n'a pas la vaine prétention de rivaliser avec le travail du paysagiste.⁵⁸⁹

Although Quatremère believed that the religion of the Greeks was the principle on which the ideal style had been built,⁵⁹⁰ the appropriate costume, drapery and use of the nude, was part of the system by which Quatremère's concepts of 'l'idéal de l'expression', 'l'idéal de la composition' and therefore the 'beau idéal' were achieved.⁵⁹¹ Quatremère then moved on the try to define and 'systematise' what he described as the 'style idéal'.⁵⁹²

Éméric-David, although regarded as an authority on technical matters in contemporary sculpture, and respected for his art critical work in the *Moniteur universel*, especially between 1817-1820, unlike Quatremère did not achieve any official position within the artistic establishment.⁵⁹³ His public quarrel with the sculptor Giraud did not enhance his

⁵⁸⁷Rubin.383-392.

⁵⁸⁸Quatremère de Quincy.1823.82. Winckelmann regarded his *De l'Allégorie* as one of his finest works.

⁵⁸⁹Ibid.83.

⁵⁹⁰Quatremère de Quincy.102.

⁵⁹¹Ibid.57.

⁵⁹²Ibid.34.

⁵⁹³Shedd discussed Éméric-David's involvement as a technical consultant for a public statue in Marseilles using a new system of casting that had been used by Gois for his statue of *Jeanne d'Arc* in Orleans. Shedd.275.

scholarly reputation,⁵⁹⁴ since it exposed his fraud, which he disclosed in public essay on the topic, at having quoted the 'ancient philosophers' in his *Recherches*, when Giraud⁵⁹⁵ maintained that he had been the main point of reference for much of the material.⁵⁹⁶

Quatremère and Éméric-David continued to debate against each other in print, and both were writing and publishing work until their deaths in respectively 1849 and 1839. Quatremère's response was to become more theoretical and to attempt to control both the practical manifestation of theory through dominance of the artistic establishment and its moral import. Éméric-David's response was to delve into the historical and archaeological detail of the antique sculpture, refuting Winckelmann and Quatremère in order to find empirical 'proof' of his view that the 'idéal' did not exist. However, according to Shedd, Éméric-David's *Recherches* was enthusiastically received at the time of its publication in 1805 and regarded as a standard reference for artists and enthusiastic amateurs alike.⁵⁹⁷ Despite his popularity, Éméric-David, with both his *Recherches* and his 1796 attack on contemporary cultural institutions such as the Salon, the Institut de France and the Louvre in his *Musée olympique de l'école vivante des beaux-arts*⁵⁹⁸ for the lack of coverage of modern artists, which helped establish the Musée du Luxembourg exhibitions and his subsequent reputation for the championing of 'popular taste' amongst his contemporaries, was not elected to any official position within the artistic establishment.

⁵⁹⁴Simon Céléstin Croze-Magnan, a bibliophile from Marseilles was quoted as questioning Éméric-David's scholarly precision in the *Recherches*. Ibid. 251.

⁵⁹⁵Giraud. 36.

⁵⁹⁶Grenier focused on the relationship and eventual dispute between Éméric-David and the sculptor Giraud as symbolic of the 'struggle between artists and *hommes de lettres* for control of art theory. Quatremère, encouraged by the dispute between artist and writer encouraged Giraud to publicly criticise Éméric-David. Griener.

⁵⁹⁷Shedd. 166.

⁵⁹⁸Toussaint-Bernard Éméric-David, *Musée Olympique De L'école Vivante Des Beaux-Arts, Ou Considérations Sur La Nécessité De Cet Établissement, Et Sur Les Moyens De Le Rendre Aussi Utile Qu'il Peut L'être* (Paris, 1800).

Conclusion

Quatremère believed that drapery was the best way in which to convey a sense of ideal beauty in contemporary France because of the moral problems surrounding the use of nudity in art. In contrast, Éméric-David and Chaussard believed that nudity was better able to convey a sense of the ‘beau idéal’. The public quarrel between Éméric-David, the sculptor Giraud and Quatremère de Quincy was a head-on ideological battle in response to Éméric-David’s essay on the nature of antique statuary. This theoretical debate had an important effect on art criticism and artistic practice. In art criticism there were those like Guizot who were angry about the writings of Éméric-David, arguing that his work was responsible for encouraging the use of male academies in painting, which he felt in turn was detrimental to beauty in art.⁵⁹⁹

In its own way the contested nature of the debate also demonstrates the change in the discourse surrounding the topic clarifying the point made over the course of this thesis that whilst Winckelmann’s writings and complex definition of ideal beauty did attribute aesthetic qualities to costume and drapery, his work was adapted by theorists and writers in France for their own purpose and to justify their own ends.

⁵⁹⁹M. François Guizot, *Études Sur Les Beaux-Arts En Général*, (Paris : Didier, 1852).34.

Chapter Six: Drapery and Ideal Beauty in French Art Criticism

Introduction

Girodet's *Atala au tombeau*, exhibited at the Salon of 1808, received universal praise from the critics (Figure 6.1). Based on Chateaubriand's novel of the same name the painting represented and imbued themes of morality, sentiment and undying love. Drapery was the key form of emotional expression in this painting, the different colours, shapes and folds of the clothing on each character expressing their particular traits and roles in the sad tale of death and irreconcilable love. In every sense this picture exemplified Winckelmann's concept and expression of ideal beauty. The perfect form of the figures combined with a 'sedate and grand expression' on their faces, the dress and drapery of the three figures acted as the emotional and expressive element of the work.⁶⁰⁰ This painting was seen by the critics to convey in every sense the concept of ideal beauty. As Alexandre Barginet wrote in his *Salon of 1824*, 'Si je cherche ce beau idéal, dans un sujet moderne, je le trouve au tombeau d'Atala'.⁶⁰¹

In this painting the large folds on the heavy cloth draping the figure of the monk indicate the sombre tone and weight of the painting, broadly outlining the form of the man underneath. His face hidden by the long hood, voluminous beard and eyes looking downward indicate his status as a holy man. The emotional burden that his draperies are holding is matched by the physical load as he lifts the body of Atala up and into her tomb. The figure of Atala is clothed in virginal white, the symbol of purity and grace, which Girodet spotlighted, focusing on the tight folds shaped sensually around her breast, contrasting with the cross symbolising her union with Christ. The larger folds of her shroud modestly indicate the shape of her body, and

⁶⁰⁰ Alexandre Barginet, *Salon De 1824*, (Offprint from : Panorama des nouveautés parisiennes: Paris, 1824).384.

⁶⁰¹ Eugène Dandré, *Lettres Sur Le Salon De 1808*, À M. Denon, Membre De L'institut National, Directeur Général Du Musée Napoléon, De La Monnaie, Des Médailles, Etc, (Paris:Chez l'auteur, H. Nicolle, Lenormant 1808). 4-5.

the horizontal lay of her body indicates the pull between her love for Christ and her love for Chactus. The drapery folded around her feet, combined with the pallor of her skin indicates that she is dead and that the cloth is a shroud. Girodet's placement of the wrapped feet into the nestle of Chactus's lap indicates her physical tie to him, the darkness and shade in contrast to the light of the cross on her breast demonstrating the choice of love that she has made. The figure of Chactus is modelled in the academic style, the shape and tension in the muscles expressing his profound sorrow and despair, the 'jet' of the hair resting on her upper thigh to indicate both the movement of his head as it rests over her knee and their physical connection. The intensity of his hold indicates how he wants to keep her with him forever. The red of his loincloth symbolises life in contrast to the deathly white of Atala's gown, the fold outlining the lower torso and the 'jet' his lost passion.

The accuracy of the clothing as well as the 'beauté morale' and Christian theme of the story were particularly remarked upon by critics.⁶⁰² Kerarty described how 'tout est vrai, tout est naturel dans cette composition'.⁶⁰³ Boutard wrote how the figure of Atala 'égalent en beauté et surpassent en finesse et en grâce celles de la sculpture'.⁶⁰⁴ Fabre more eloquently described how this painting achieved a sense of the ideal, echoing Winckelmann's interest in grace and ideal beauty as a form of divinity expressed sensitively by Girodet not only through the entire work but, like the figure of the *Niobe*, in the expressive parts and details of the eyelids:

...Son expression recueillie contraste admirablement avec l'expression passionnée de Chactas: et au milieu d'eux Attala, déjà suspendue sur la tombe, mais conservant dans la mort la plus parfaite beauté, les grâces les plus touchantes, joint ses mains pâles et glacées, et semble encore sourire à son amant et à son Dieu. Sous ces paupières immobiles se cachent pour jamais les tendres regards, et leur douceur caressante; mais sur ce front calme et pur est descendue la sérénité

⁶⁰²Ibid.1808.8.12. Barginet.384. Boutard. 19th November 1808.2. Marie Jacques Joseph Victorin Fabre, *Salon De Peinture, 1808*, (Offprint from: Mercure de France: Paris, 1808).225.

⁶⁰³Auguste Hilarion Kératry, *Du Beau Dans Les Arts D'imitation : Avec Un Examen Raisonné Des Productions Des Diverses Écoles De Peinture Et De Sculpture, Et En Particulier De Celle De France*, (Paris : Audot, 1822).326.

⁶⁰⁴Boutard.1808.3.

divine. On sent que l'artiste s'est pénétré de ces paroles du roman: *Je n'ai rien vu de plus céleste...* Le dessin de ce tableau, et l'idéal des formes rappellent les plus grands peintres de l'école romaine. ...La draperie blanche qui moule ses voluptueux contours est ajustée d'un caractère à la fois naturel, convenable au personnage, et cependant au-dessous même de la belle nature.⁶⁰⁵

In the last chapter I demonstrated that there were conflicting thoughts amongst theorists surrounding the construct and depiction of ideal beauty in late eighteenth-century France. The critic Chaussard and the theorist Éméric-David both believed that ideal beauty was best exemplified in the nude figure, and they used the work of Winckelmann in different ways to support their argument. Chaussard believed that the virtues and freedoms that Winckelmann had championed were ones that should be incorporated into contemporary art under the banner of the 'spirit' of Antiquity and Nature. He believed that these could best be expressed in the genres of battle painting, sentimental art and portraiture. Éméric-David structured the *Recherches* to copy the structure of Winckelmann's *Histoire*, even if he then went on to explicitly contradict much of what Winckelmann had to say. In contrast, Quatremère de Quincy's views on ideal beauty more accurately mirrored Winckelmann's thoughts on the topic, believing that for moral and aesthetic reasons drapery was the preferred way in which to dress figures and incorporate a sense of ideal beauty into the artworks in contemporary France.

In this final chapter, after providing an overview of the art critics, the structure of the art criticism and the range of publications in which commentaries were made, I will approach the topic of ideal beauty thematically looking at a selection of artwork with commentary from a number of critics. I will first examine how the genre a painting belonged affected its ability to be ideal, and how infringements to the conventions of each genre were often illustrated through the inappropriate use of dress. In spite of pressures from the flood of portraiture and

⁶⁰⁵Fabre.1808.224-225.

battle paintings exhibited in the Salon, I will demonstrate that most critics believed that ideal beauty could only be found in the genres of history painting and sculpture and were very critical of battle paintings, genre paintings and portraits that attempted to idealise figures or over-embellish their clothing. In this context I will also show the mix of genres in the history paintings of Girodet's *L'Apothéose* and the mix of dressed and undressed figures in David's *Les Sabines* confused and annoyed critics in equal measure because these paintings crossed hierarchical boundaries which was seen as detrimental to the expression of ideal beauty.

The next section will pick up the themes from the costume and art dictionaries and demonstrate the importance of historical accuracy in painting as a component of ideal beauty. In this section I will focus on the female and male costumes in David's *Les Sabines* and demonstrate why there was so much negative criticism of the male figures. I will then explore the topic of emotion and demonstrate how Winckelmann's 'sedate and grand' expression was considered an important component of ideal beauty. The reading of David's *Andromache* and Girodet's *Atala* has demonstrated how clothing was able to convey the emotional content of a work of art in this sedate and dignified way. In contrast Girodet's painting *Le Déluge* demonstrated how the use of extreme facial gestures and nude 'académies' was discouraged by critics and seen as detrimental to beauty. I will demonstrate that the critical mainstream was never convinced about the aesthetic pre-eminence of the male nude figure and instead tended to associate the use of male 'académies' in painting with ugliness and the primacy of the art of 'dessin' over colour.

Finally I will explore the complex issues around costume and drapery in sculpture. I will demonstrate how modern figures were expected to wear historically accurate dress, how antique dress was often used for the depiction of contemporary 'heroes' and finally how nudity, even in the genre of sculpture, was only acceptable in the depiction of allegorical

figures because of the general discomfort around the use of nudity in art. I will suggest that the preferred expression of ideal beauty was through dressed rather than undressed figures because of the uncomfortable moral issues associated with depicting nude figures. I will demonstrate this by illustrating the shocked response to Robert Lefèvre's *Les Callipyges grecques* and David's *Les Sabines*. As I come to the conclusion of the thesis I will present the argument that for all of these reasons, the accurate imitation of costume combined with the aesthetic effect of drapery was an essential component of ideal beauty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France.

Since the existing scholarship on this topic of art criticism in this period is extensive, I will contextualise the existing research in each section of this chapter, demonstrating my specific contribution to the conversation. My overall contribution to this already well-researched field is to demonstrate that the definition of ideal beauty was more finely nuanced and complex than has previously been acknowledged and differed from critic to critic. My other contribution is the finding that the inclusion of drapery as having aesthetic value and manifesting the more ethereal qualities of ideal beauty means that the premise that ideal beauty was configured solely in the nude form in French art and art criticism of this period can be questioned.

Section 6.1: Art Critics and Writers

The secondary literature on the Salons, the art criticism and the critics is extensive and an invaluable resource. In particular I have been grateful for the work of Wrigley,⁶⁰⁶ McWilliam,⁶⁰⁷ Crow,⁶⁰⁸ Fried,⁶⁰⁹ Doy,⁶¹⁰ Grigsby⁶¹¹ and Siegfried.⁶¹² I have also been grateful for the Haskell Collection itself and work on putting together this and other invaluable resources on the Salon criticism by Dr Jon Whiteley⁶¹³ and Dr Linda Whiteley. This section will provide a background to a small selection of the writers, critics and commentators on art that makes up the Haskell Collection. The range of different voices and opinions concerning the nature of ideal beauty and the role that dress and drapery had in its expression, evident in the material also demonstrates the value of this resource. This section is not attempting to add to the literature on the topic other than to provide an overview of the collection and the character of the content and the individuals that make up the resource.

Several of the critics were anonymous, which was quite common among the reviews of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Salons.⁶¹⁴ Although some critics were prominent men or women of letters, often these well-known figures only wrote sparingly about the Salons. The critics in the collection were also mainly men. Two female critics are included, but their output was very small; Diderot's daughter Mme de Vandeul wrote a review of the 1802 Salon and Mlle Erard made observations on the 1814 Salon.⁶¹⁵ Likewise, although there

⁶⁰⁶Wrigley.1993.

⁶⁰⁷McWilliam, Schuster, and Wrigley.

⁶⁰⁸Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, (New Haven ; London : Yale University Press, 1985).

⁶⁰⁹Fried.

⁶¹⁰Gen Doy, *Women and Visual Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century France 1800-1852*, (London : Leicester University Press, 1998).

⁶¹¹Grigsby.

⁶¹²Orwicz; Porterfield and Siegfried; Siegfried.

⁶¹³Roque and Whiteley. Humphrey Wine and others, *Tradition & Revolution in French Art 1700-1880 : Paintings & Drawings from Lille*, (London : National Gallery Publications, 1993).

⁶¹⁴See Wrigley.1993.

⁶¹⁵Vandeul was literary executor for her father's estate. She was married to a wealthy, but by all accounts, boring and uncultivated businessman with no interest in the arts. Jean Massiet Du Biest, *La Fille De Diderot*,

were a number of prominent and successful women artists, notably David's pupil and friend Angélique Mongez (1776-1855), since the focus is on history and allegorical painting, and sculpture, rather than the genres of portraiture and genre painting, which female artists were encouraged to concentrate on, there is less opportunity to look at the female point of view as represented in the art of the time.⁶¹⁶

Baron Jean-Baptiste de Boutard (1771-1838) was an important figure in the art criticism because he wrote for the *Journal des débats* for seventeen years 1800-1817 and his art criticism forms a consistent part of the Haskell Collection. Boutard allegedly owed his position at the newspaper because of his marriage to the Bertins's sister, and was an architect by training.⁶¹⁷

Boutard was succeeded at the newspaper by David's pupil Étienne Jean Delécluze (1781-1863) who became one of the great chroniclers of the nineteenth-century art world. He is perhaps best known for his biography of David, *Louis David: son École et son temps*,⁶¹⁸ which was published in 1855 and incorporated work written by Coupin and Lenoir as well as his own memories as a pupil in David's studio. Delécluze was apprenticed to David in 1797. He won a gold medal at the Salons of 1808 and exhibited his last work, *Auguste et Cinna* at the 1814 Salon (Figure 6.2). After the end of the Napoleonic Empire he stopped his artistic career, and started collaborating on the *Lycée français* newspaper, where he wrote on art criticism and Italian theatre. By 1822 he was an active critic, reviewing for the *Moniteur*

Mme De Vandeul (3 Septembre 1753-5 Décembre 1824) : Extraits De Sa Correspondance Inédite, Avec Son Mari, Avec Jacques-Henri Meister De Zurich (1746-1826) Et De Divers Lettres Et Documents Inédits Du Fonds Diderot-Vandeul Aux Archiver Départementales De La Haute-Marne, (Tours : Aux Archives Départementales d'Indre-et-Loire 1949).

⁶¹⁶Jouy writing for *Le Minerve* remarked on the number and quality of women artists exhibiting at the Salon of 1819. Étienne de Jouy, *Salon De 1819*, (Paris : Au bureau de la Minerve française 1819).73.

⁶¹⁷Orwicz.9-28 &16.

⁶¹⁸This was published at the time of the Universal Exhibition in 1855 when the numbers of those who had been directly taught by David were diminishing. Ingres triumphed at the Universal Exhibition, and Delécluze spent quite a bit of time talking about the 'new school' which he believed Ingres was responsible for maintaining. Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Louis David, Son École Et Son Temps : Souvenirs*, (Paris Didier 1855).

universel and contributing to the *Journal des débats*. He continued to write for the *Journal des débats* and was a passionate defender of Ingres, with whom he had shared a studio at the Louvre and who was based in Italy.

Another important figure in the literary and artistic world in this period and a core component of the Haskell Collection was Charles-Paul Landon (1760-1826). He was an artist and pupil of Régnault (1754-1829) as well as a critic and publishing entrepreneur.⁶¹⁹ Régnault's other pupils included the portrait painter Robert Lefèvre, the history painter Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, and the genre painter Henriette Lorimer and was generally seen as the 'rival' to David for the title of 'leader of the French school'. Landon's *Annales du Musée et de l'École Moderne des Beaux-Arts* was not only a comprehensive study of works exhibited at the Salon, but it was also a great commercial success. By the end of the second year of publication the *Annales du Musée* had almost four hundred subscriptions outside of Paris and approximately three-to-four times the number within the city. In 1806, the *Annales du Musée* received an award of excellence at the *Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie*, and by this time re-editions were already underway in Germany and England.⁶²⁰ For the period under study he was the only critic who consistently reviewed every Salon.

As well as pursuing this ambitious project of cataloguing both modern and old master paintings and modern and ancient sculpture for the general public, Landon was also principally responsible for setting up the *Nouvelles des Arts* and he also wrote for the *Gazette de France*, the *Décade Philosophique*,⁶²¹ the *Moniteur Universelle*, and held an editorial

⁶¹⁹Guérin was famous for his theatrical rendering of stories from classical antiquity, which received enthusiastic reviews in the Salons. His history painting *Marcus Sextus*, exhibited in 1799 was still enthusiastically referred to in the Salons of 1801 and 1802.

⁶²⁰Landon. 1801.1.2. George McKee, *Charles-Paul Landon's Advocacy of Modern French Art, 1800-1825 : The 'Annales Du Musée'*, (Binghamton, N.Y.:Dept. of Art and Art History, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1990). 205.

⁶²¹Wrigley.113.

position with the *Journal des Arts, des Sciences et de Littérature*.⁶²² His methodical collation is particularly interesting when it comes to the lesser known paintings and sculptures exhibited over the period. The engravers Philipp Calmé and Jacques Frémy were responsible for the drawings, and the engravings were done by MM. Normand père et fils et de Mme Soyer, née Landon.⁶²³ This extraordinary degree of output, which included commentary on his own works of art exhibited at the Salons is typical of the connoisseurial approach to the review of current salon exhibits and the descriptive approach that he took to the artworks exhibited was similar to Clarac's *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*.

Landon was also a successful artist in his own right and two of his paintings that were included in the first two volumes of the *Annales* both won medals.⁶²⁴ Clarac included Landon in his selection of museum chroniclers and collectors in his *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*,⁶²⁵ and the anonymous author of *La Décade Philosophique* was fulsome in praise of Landon's *Le Bain de Virginie* exhibited at the 1801 Salon, stating that it had achieved a sense of ideal beauty, describing him as 'le Racine de la peinture'⁶²⁶(Figure 6.3).

Aside from Chaussard, discussed in the previous chapter, other critics writing reviews for the 'feuilleton' included the novelist and poet François Guillaume Ducray-Duminil (1761-1819) who wrote for the *Petites Affiches de Paris*, François-Xavier Fabre (1766-1837) who wrote for the *Revue Philosophique*, and the Comte de Forbin (1779-1841), who was a pupil of David's and who succeeded Vivant Denon as curator of the Musée du Louvre. Auguste Hilarion, Comte de Kératry (1769-1859), was a literary critic and historian and his essay *Du Beau dans les arts d'imitation* (1822) is of particular interest in relation to David's *Les*

⁶²²McKee.205.

⁶²³Landon.

⁶²⁴Landon's inclusion of himself, with an attempt to give a dispassionate analysis, demonstrated that the commentary was probably designed to educate rather than entertain.

⁶²⁵Clarac detailed the exact number of editions and the details of the engravers for Landon's *Annales*. Clarac, Maury, and Texier. CCCXXXV.

⁶²⁶Anon, *Beaux-Arts ; Coup D'oeil Sur Le Salon*, (Offprint from: *La décade philosophique*: Paris, 1801).29.

Sabines. Pierre-Alexandre Coupin wrote for the *Révue encyclopédique*, Gault de Saint-Germain⁶²⁷ wrote for *Le Spectateur*, and the statesmen and literary giants, Guizot, Thiers and Stendhal also wrote extensively on art at the Paris Salons.

Despite the dominating figures of David and Canova in this period of French painting and sculpture, the controversies and illustrations evident over the accuracy of costume, the expressive effect of drapery and ideal beauty were often demonstrated in the lesser known works of artists, their mistaken attempts to create a sense of ideal beauty often demonstrating more clearly where the demarcation lines lay between the genres and the particular challenges faced by artists. Although paintings such as *Les Sabines* are significant when it comes to looking at the concept of ideal beauty, David's exceptional talent and celebrity status also means that one has to be careful not to judge the exception as the rule. Critics such as Stendhal, for example, berated what he saw as the dominating influence of David and the tendency for some of David's pupils to believe that by producing a painting that replicated aspects of David's successful works in a relentless and formulaic manner they were in some way expressing the elusive concept of 'ideal beauty':

L'art statuaire est à veille d'une révolution: faut-il copier servilement l'antique, comme la plupart des sculpteurs français?...C'est une étrange prétention de vouloir que l'Ecole française soit *immobilisée* comme un coupon de rentes, parce qu'elle a eu le bonheur de produire le plus grand peintre de dix-huitième siècle, M. David.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁷Camilla Murgia, 'The Works of Pierre-Marie Gault De Saint-Germain (1752-1842): Artistic Models and Criticism During the Early Nineteenth Century in France', (Thesis (D.Phil.)University of Oxford, 2008).

⁶²⁸Stendhal, *Mélanges D'art: Salon De 1824 : Des Beaux-Arts Et Du Caractère Français : Les Tombeaux De Corneto : Notes D'un Dilettante*, (Paris: Le Divan, 1932).152.12.

Section 6.2: Art Criticism between the 1790's and 1820's

In the art criticisms the focus and interest on topics such as the nature and form of beauty along with a more general interest in the purpose of art and the quality of artistic practice demonstrated attempts by critics to tackle broader conceptual and intellectual questions rather than simply to respond to a work of art or the quality of workmanship. At the turn of the century these criticisms demonstrated a marked turn from the beautifully styled and imaginative musings on art that was characteristic of the work of Diderot and Abbé de la Porte, and instead were structured as descriptive pieces of text often recounting the story line that the painting represented and then the skill of the artist in executing the work. Often they were written in a rather prosaic unimaginative language, and these formulaic summaries do not on first glance demonstrate any particular representational expression or insight into the nature of beauty or ideal beauty. The references to ancient and contemporary philosophers and writers on art such as Pliny, Rousseau, Voltaire, Winckelmann and other major artistic figures such as Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo, and French painters such as LeBrun demonstrates that the systematic structure and language used to describe a painting possibly had a deeper aesthetic significance.

From the late 1790's to the early 1820s the written style of the Salon criticisms differed from critic to critic. Some of the critics categorised artworks according to genre, others, particularly towards the end of the Napoleonic period, made more generalised remarks on the nature of Beauty, using specific works of art as a reference. In the 1790s the reviews were usually of individual works of art, often written in order from their exhibit number. In the period around 1810-14, some of the reviews were focused on one particular artist, or on one particular genre of painting. By the early 1820s art criticisms tended to be written more in the form of long essays on Beauty, the 'beau idéal' and its relationship to Nature and Truth.

Although of more literary merit and interest, and more focused on a determination to dig deep into untangling the complex abstract and philosophical notions of ‘beauty’, ‘truth’, ‘imagination’ and ‘nature’, the art critics were less interested in the details of a painting’s composition and execution and whether or not the figures should be dressed in historical costume, draped or nude. The following brief insight into the work of the critics Boutard and Landon demonstrates the different ways in which they structured their reviews and ideas on art and the nature of beauty.

Boutard tended to divide his essays into sections on the genre of paintings he was writing about; for example, sculpture, battle painting, landscape etc. For the history paintings he would then write on the work of specific artists. For those like David, Guérin and Girodet he would perhaps place a discussion of their work separately, or in the case of 1810 when David and Girodet were running head to head for the ‘prix décennal’ he wrote about them together. His writing was both descriptive and analytical and sometimes he would develop the theme of the painting into a broader discussion on either a technical or philosophical point. For other less famous artists he would discuss the work of four or five different artists in one article. As a close friend of Girodet he promoted his work enthusiastically, especially when Girodet’s success at the Salons increased.⁶²⁹ His views were similar to Quatremère de Quincy, believing in the importance of the body combined with appropriate effect through the use of drapery as the way in which to balance the artistic need to see the figure with the moral requirements of the French public. Although he admired David’s skill, he was less certain about the way in which David used the nude form in *Les Sabines* and *Léonidas* and the effect of this on the hierarchy of the genres and the work of other painters.

⁶²⁹Shelton A. ‘Girodet et Boutard. Portrait d’une alliance artistico-journalistique au temps de Napoléon. 129 - 135. Sylvain Bellenger and Marc Fumaroli, *Girodet, 1767-1824*, (Paris: Gallimard; Musée du Louvre Éditions 2005).131.

Charles-Paul Landon produced two editions of his *Annales du Musée et de L'École Moderne des Beaux-Arts* (1801-24), amounting to over thirty-three volumes of engravings, a critical commentary of art in the Louvre, the Prix de Rome competition and the works of art exhibited at the Salons over the course of his career and amongst many other publications.⁶³⁰ He formatted his volumes so that instead of dividing art into different categories in sections or genres (eg: sculpture, battle paintings etc) he interspersed contemporary art works with a mix of ancient sculpture and French art from the sixteenth and seventeenth century adjacent to each other, giving an impression of continuous and effortless connection between contemporary art, the 'French masters' of yesterday and ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. He was a supporter of nudity for the depiction of contemporary figures in sculpture and his 1801 essay in the review of *Le Pardon* about categories of art also hints at openness to questioning the hierarchy of the genres.⁶³¹

By the 1820s there was a sharp polarisation of critics into two camps: those who supported 'David's school', such as Delécluze, and others such as Thiers and Stendhal who with their different written styles were drawn to the work of Delacroix and Géricault. This affected the style of the art criticisms. The articles written by Étienne Delécluze tended to be formatted in a similar way to Boutard's. In contrast, Adolphe Thiers's writings on art were discursive, using the art to illustrate his goal of elucidating a path to achieving a sense and 'effect' of the beautiful, rather than analysing the work itself and from that determining how this detracted from his particular sense of the ideal. Stendhal's written style was also different. As befitted his background as a Napoleonic soldier he used language full of bluster and bravado, creating a sense of theatre and melodrama with his opening phrase to the *Salon of 1824*; 'Nous sommes à la veille d'une révolution dans les arts',⁶³² and later; 'Il paraît que, cette année, il

⁶³⁰Landon. 1801.1.2. McKee.205.

⁶³¹Landon.3.69-70.

⁶³²Stendhal.71.

existe deux partis très violents parmi les gens qui se mêlent de juger le Salon. La guerre est déjà commencée’:

...Les *Débats* vont être classiques, c’est-à-dire ne jurer que par David, et s’écrier: Toute figure peinte doit être la copie d’une statue, et le spectateur admirera, dût-il dormir debout. *Le Constitutionnel*, de son côté, fait de belles phrases un peu vagues, c’est le défaut du siècle; mais enfin il défend les idées nouvelles.⁶³³

This emotive and polarising language became more characteristic of later art critical writing, particularly in response to the work of Delacroix and Géricault. Fabien Pillet, for instance, recounted an incident of a Salon visitor first seeing Delacroix’s *Scènes des massacres de Scio*, going red in the face from anger and describing it as ‘...affreux,... c’est épouvantable, c’est l’abomination de la désolation’.⁶³⁴ His own response was equally colourful describing the painting as a ‘...prétendu chef-d’œuvre (qui) n’est encore qu’une sorte d’ébauche; c’est le premier jet d’une grande pensée’.⁶³⁵ This language perhaps made the literature more entertaining to read as a result. However, it possibly also demonstrated a deep fear and anxiety over a perceived change in aesthetic values, and the sense by some that a sense of control over ‘la religion du beau’ had to be maintained.⁶³⁶

Winckelmann was an insistent presence in the art critical texts. Although the depth and range of the criticisms changed over time and within the different contexts and backgrounds of those who were writing them, his name was seen as being co-existent with an aspiration to define and achieve ideal beauty in art and as a benchmark against which paintings could be judged in achieving or lacking that sense of perfection.⁶³⁷

⁶³³Ibid.11.

⁶³⁴Fabien Pillet, *Une Matinée Au Salon, Ou, Les Peintres De L’école Passés En Revue : Critique Des Tableaux Et Sculptures De L’exposition De 1824*, (Paris : Delaunay, 1824). 25.

⁶³⁵Ibid.25-26.

⁶³⁶Chaussard.410.

⁶³⁷See Griener; Winckelmann and Potts. Davis; Halliday. and others.

In terms of the order given to different genres, critics tended to place discussion of sculpture alongside architecture, etching and medals at the end of their reviews and in terms of word space this also took up less than history painting. In terms of the volume of works reviewed and length of articles, sculpture also took up far less space than history painting, although this changed over the course of the period with an increase of sculpture exhibited at the Salon as noted by the Comte de Forbin in his *Rapport sur le Salon de 1824*.⁶³⁸ However, this did not reflect the degree of importance that critics attached to sculpture as a genre that aspired to beauty. It was possibly organised that way to make it easier for their readership.

As well the quantity of sculptural works increasing over the period, there was, as many of the critics noted in despair, an upsurge in portraiture exhibited at the Salons. Most critics were passionate in their belief that the only art that could be ‘great’ and aspire to an ideal was the genre of history or allegorical painting and were rather disheartened about the trend. Although critics understood the reasons for the popularity of portraits or genre scenes with the public, and the need for artists to be able to sell their work, critics such as Boutard continued to emphasise how French artists had to maintain the ‘progrès de l’art’ and ‘la gloire de l’école’:

Le portrait, le tableau de genre, le tableau anecdotique, les intérieurs, en général tous les petits ouvrages, qui sont faits, portent avec eux leur moyen de récompense: pour peu qu’ils soient passables, ils trouvent des acheteurs dans le public. Il n’en est pas de même du tableau d’histoire; le meilleur, dès qu’il s’élève au-dessous de certaines dimensions, cesse être à l’usage des particulières. Il n’y a pour lui que l’alternative de passer dans les palais du prince, ou de demeurer dans l’atelier du peintre. D’autre part, ce genre, de la hauteur duquel on descend avec facilité à tous les autres, est sans contredit celui dont la culture et le succès important le plus aux progrès de l’art et à la gloire de l’école. Le mieux donc serait de concentrer sur lui à peu près tous les encouragements.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁸Gabriel Marie François Vauthier and Louis Nicolas Philippe Auguste Forbin, *Rapport Du Comte De Forbin Sur Le Salon De 1824*, (Paris : E. Champion, 1824).174.

⁶³⁹Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De 1814*, (Offprint from: Journal de l'Empire: Paris, 1814-1815). 18th January 1815. 2.

The increase in battle paintings was generally met with mixed feelings; a sense of pride that they were living through a 'glorious' period in the history of France, mixed with some anxiety that the arts were being manipulated by politics and that the quality of 'real art' and aspiration to the 'beau idéal' was being compromised as a result.

Genre painting was a complex area of painting; in general it was not regarded as 'serious' art, and it was placed in a category, along with portraiture, that female painters were encouraged to enter. Some male critics, enjoying the opportunity to speculate on how David's pupil Angélique Mongez, for instance, had managed to maintain her sense of decorum and at the same time introduce male nude figures into her history paintings, noted that genre, landscape and portraiture were more appropriate for a female painter because these would be less likely to compromise her domestic duties and her relationship with her husband and children. The critic St L...t in his *Salon of 1806* raised the issue of the time involved in the production of history paintings mentioning that he did not want to visit the Salon to see '...a work whose composition, sketch and execution would have taken its author away from her family and society for a year'.⁶⁴⁰ Others, including Mme de Vandeul, were simply astonished at the accomplishment of producing works of art on that scale and with that amount of financial outlay.⁶⁴¹ This accounts for the numerous jokes and rumours, in the satirical newspapers in particular, about David's involvement in her work.⁶⁴²

The satirical newspapers enjoyed making fun of David and his pupils, and David's entrepreneurial flair made him an easy target for them. David's decision to hold the 1799 exhibition of *Les Sabines* in a private room in the Louvre and to charge an admission fee

⁶⁴⁰Doy.107.

⁶⁴¹Angélique Vandeul and Maurice Tourneux, *Lettre De Mme De Vandeul, Née Diderot, Sur Le Salon De L'an X*, (Paris: E. Champion 1906).135.

⁶⁴²'Il est fort bien peint ce tableau/Cette draperie est bien faite/Mais en louant votre pinceau/ Autour de moi chacun répète Qu'à David/ Mongez dit toujours:/ "Venez, venez à mon secours."' Marant, *Arlequin Au Muséum, Ou Critique Des Tableaux, En Vaudevilles : Exposition De L'an 12*, (Paris : De l'imprimerie de Ch. Fr. Cramer, 1804). 4.

caused considerable disquiet amongst the critics.⁶⁴³ Some of the frustration expressed by the absence of David from the Salon of 1801 was due to the effect of his actions upon the institution of the Salon itself.⁶⁴⁴ With one of the great contemporary ‘grand maîtres’ exhibiting his work outside the normal forum, other major artistic figures such as Regnault chose to have private exhibitions as well, even though Regnault's private exhibition of the *Trois Grâces*, *Hercule délivrant Alceste*, and *la Mort de Cléopâtre*, was not as successful as *Les Sabines*.⁶⁴⁵ The satirical paper, the *Revue du Salon*, accused David of cowardice in the face in Guérin's masterpiece, *Marcus Sextus* stating that ‘David avait vu le tableau de Guérin...dans l'atelier de ce jeune artiste, et il se doutait bien que le sein ne pourrait pas en supporter la comparaison’.⁶⁴⁶ The overall effect of David's innovation however, was that the principal artistic figures of the period were not included in the Salon exhibition at all. According to the critics the result was that the level of the work, particularly in the genres of history painting and sculpture, were restricted to works of relatively poor quality and a greater amount of space had to be allocated to portraiture and genre painting. As the author of the *Journal des Arts* noted ‘...on remarque...que les Portraits et les Tableaux dits *de genre* l'emportent de beaucoup, par leur nombre, sur les Tableaux d'histoire’.⁶⁴⁷ Despite the concerns surrounding the lack of historical works, and in consequence the status of the French school, by 1814 the critic Gault de Saint-Germain still felt that the French school was ‘progressing’:

⁶⁴³ David referenced West as the inspiration for the concept but it was in fact Copley who introduced fee paying exhibitions. Chaussard.1-2. Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun remarked on the effect of David's innovation back in England. Louise-Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun, *The Memoirs of Elisabeth Vigée-Le Brun : Member of the Royal Academy of Paris, Rouen, Saint-Luke of Rome, Parma, Bologna, Saint-Petersburg, Berlin, Geneva and Avignon*, (London : Camden, 1989).190.

⁶⁴⁴ Crow.232.

⁶⁴⁵ David.1880.364.

⁶⁴⁶ Anon, *Revue Du Salon De L'an X : Ou, Examen Critique De Tous Les Tableaux Qui Ont Été Exposés Au Muséum*, (Paris : Chez Surosne, 1802).187.

⁶⁴⁷ Anon, *Peinture : Ouverture Du Salon D'exposition Annuelle Des Peintres Vivans*, (Offprint from: *Journal des arts, des sciences et de littérature* Paris, 1802).367-292. 370-371.

Les progrès de la peinture sont évidents; ils sont fondés sur l'amour de l'antique. C'est un grand pas sur le dix-huitième siècle, qui n'avait ni les yeux, ni les lumières propres à discerner la pureté du dessin classique, et les motifs de son excellence; mais en appliquant l'antique à tout, nous sommes courbés sous un nouveau joug dont nous ignorons encore le poids.⁶⁴⁸

Section 6.2.1: Publications

The number of publications in which paintings exhibited in the Salon were discussed was extensive. The Haskell collection, for example, comprises of at least fifty different authors or publications for the period 1797-1824.⁶⁴⁹ The art critical texts were presented in the form of cultural supplements to the newspapers published at the turn of the century. The Revolution had brought with it freedom of the press and within two years the number of officially sanctioned journals in Paris alone skyrocketed from four to over three hundred. By the end of the 1790s, however, this had been reduced to seventy-three, and in January 1800, following Napoleon's 'coup d'état', the number of political newspapers had been cut from seventy-three to thirteen. From 1810-1811 the number of officially sanctioned newspapers was reduced further from thirteen to four and even these were subject to strict police surveillance. The new press laws exempted from censorship 'journals devoted exclusively to the sciences, the arts, literature, commerce, or announcements and advertisements'.⁶⁵⁰ This resulted in the

⁶⁴⁸Gault de Saint-Germain.1815.98.

⁶⁴⁹ In alphabetical order they comprise of the following authors and publications: Amateur, Amateur Lyonnais, Anon, Barginet, Bignan, Boutard, Bruun-Neergaard, *Cassandre et Giles au museum*, Chaussard, Clarac, Coupin, Dandree, DD, *Décade philosophique*, Delécluze, *Collection Deloynes*, Delpech, Ducray-Duminil, Dupuis, Durdent, Edmond, *Entretiens sur les ouvrages*, Mlle Erard, *Examen critique et raisonné*, Fabre, Gault de Saint-Germain, Girodet, Guizot, Hazlitt, *Journal des arts*, Jouy, Landon, Lelièvre, *La revue, ou Chronique parisienne*, *Le Nouvel observateur*, *Le petit magasin des dames*, *L'observateur au muséum*, *L'observateur et Arlequin aux Salons*, Marant, Marec, Mirabeau, *Nouveau coup d'œil au Salon*, *Observations sur le salon*, O'Mahony, Pillet, *Revue des productions*, Stendhal, Thiers, Vandeul, Vauthier, V***, Voiart. The Collection was compiled Dr Jon and Dr Linda Whiteley.

⁶⁵⁰ Actes du Gouvernement. Arrête du 27 Nivôse, *Journal de Paris* (30 nivôse an VIII [20 January, 1800]) referenced 'The Politicisation of Art Criticism in the Post-Revolutionary Press'; Siegfried, S. *Politicisation of Art Criticism*. Orwicz. 9-28. 24. Also see Wrigley.

development of the 'feuilleton' or cultural supplements where the Salon reviews were published.

The major Paris papers were the *Journal des débats* (or *Journal de L'Empire* as it was renamed during the Napoleonic period) and the *Mercure de France*. The *Journal des débats* was one of the most widely distributed and commercially successful of the newspapers in the Napoleonic era and one in which there was regular Salon criticism. The newspaper had been purchased and revamped by the Bertin brothers in 1800, and by going on to acquire the subscription lists of defunct papers, they soon had in their possession far and away the largest subscription base of any paper in France.⁶⁵¹ According to Siegfried, by 1803 the *Journal des débats* accounted for thirty per cent of subscriptions to all daily newspapers printed in Paris.⁶⁵² Following re-organisation of the press in 1810-1811 subscriptions to the *Débats* steadied at about twenty thousand, still double and often quadruple that of its nearest competitors. In 1810, the *Débats* was renamed the *Journal de l'empire*, reverting back to its original title with the Restoration.

The *Décade Philosophique littéraire et politique* was founded in 1794 by historian and 'homme de lettres' Amary Duval with the purpose to 'monitor and encourage the progress of the arts in an era of freedom'.⁶⁵³ It then changed its name to the *Revue philosophique* eventually merging with the *Mercure de France* in 1807. The *Décade philosophique* was one of the important publications of the period although its contribution to art criticism was relatively small. It was traditionally representative of the group of thinkers known as the *Idéologues*. Alphonse Leroy wrote for it, and Chaussard was also linked to it.⁶⁵⁴ As well as

⁶⁵¹ Siegfried, S. *Politicisation of Art Criticism*. Orwicz.9-28.

⁶⁵² Siegfried gives the figures of 10,125 subscriptions to the *Débats* out of 35,580 total subscriptions in Paris. Its closest competitor, the *Publiciste*, had 3,850 subscribers. These figures are drawn from Cabanis, *La presse*, pp.320 – 2. Ibid.26. Ft 31.

⁶⁵³ Richard Fargher, 'The *Décade Philosophique*, and the Defence of Philosophy at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century', (Thesis (D.Phil.) University of Oxford, 1941). Wrigley.

⁶⁵⁴ Fargher.

the major Paris papers there were satirical magazines.⁶⁵⁵ Some of these satirical reviews such as the *Arlequin au Muséum* and *Cassandre et Gilles* also form part of the Haskell collection. They have given an insight into contemporary thought surrounding figures such as David rather than specific art criticism relating to drapery and ideal beauty.⁶⁵⁶

This overview gives a sense of the scope of the Haskell Collection, and the rich range of publications, different critics and commentators on the Paris Salons that it incorporates. Its scope provides an important insight into the range of Salon criticism available and the way in which Salon criticism evolved in the course of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. In addition to these publications there were a number of theoretical texts published on the nature and form of beauty, some of which were explored in the previous chapter.

The next section will engage with the topic of hierarchy of the genres, which I propose was an important component to understanding the nature of debate surrounding the nature of ideal beauty. We have briefly seen how the critic Chaussard tried to elevate the genres of battle painting, portraiture and sentimental art. This section will demonstrate how perceptions of ideal beauty varied according to its genre and, in the nature of art criticism, will focus on those paintings that broke with acceptable conventions. In doing so, it will demonstrate the extent to which Chaussard's views were outside the critical mainstream and the extent to which costume and drapery were the indicators of breaches in the traditional hierarchy of the genres.

⁶⁵⁵According to Wrigley due to the increase in censorship during the Consulate and Empire the satirical publications 'lost their bite'. Wrigley.212-213.

⁶⁵⁶Marant.1804, Anon, *Cassandre Et Gilles Au Muséum : Ou, Critique En Vaudevilles De L'exposition De 1810*, (Paris : Chez Aubry, 1810); Marant, *Arlequin Au Muséum, Ou Critique En Vaudeville Des Tableaux Du Salon*, (Paris : Chez Delaunay, 1808).

Section 6.3: Ideal Beauty and Genre

As Watelet had stated, dress was the clearest way in which to distinguish which genre a painting belonged to. L'Amateur writing for the *Mercure de France* confirmed Watelet's opinion that dress rather than subject matter was the distinguishing characteristic between the different genres of painting:

C'est moins par le sujet que ces deux classes se distinguent, que par le style; et comme le costume, en peinture, en est la partie la plus caractéristique, le choix que l'on fait du costume suffit quelquefois pour assigner à un tableau la classe à laquelle il doit appartenir.... Je ne conclus pas de cette observation, que le costume constitue essentiellement le genre, mais que souvent il le détermine.⁶⁵⁷

The art dictionaries clearly demarcated the conventions for each genre of painting, but the rigorous defence of these differences demonstrate that many writers and critics felt that the hierarchy of the genres was under threat in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. In part it can explain some of the outrage and controversy to the works of David, Ingres and others.

This section will demonstrate how the critics responded to clothing and the concerns they expressed about works of art that in their eyes breached convention. I will first look at dress in the genres of battle painting, genre painting and portraiture. Then I will look at criticism of two history paintings Girodet's *L'Apothéose* and David's *Les Sabines* which confused critics because they felt that the artists had mixed the conventions of the genres.

⁶⁵⁷ Amateur.1817.353-354.

Section 6.3.1: Battle

Battle paintings, a genre of work that grew increasingly popular thanks to the ‘prix de encouragements’ that Napoleon instituted, were not expected to aspire to any sense of ideal beauty.⁶⁵⁸ Many critics were therefore despondent about seeing the expansion in this type of painting over the course of the Napoleonic period, and the effect of having to view ‘les horreurs de la guerre’ and the ‘affreux spectacle qui, endurcissant le cœur’, and ‘étouffe la sensibilité’.⁶⁵⁹ Costume was expected to be accurate rather than ideal and the merit of these works were judged on their veracity. Since contemporary clothes were generally felt to be ‘le plus défavorable à l'imitation’,⁶⁶⁰ critics found this difficult. L’Amateur commented how painters found ‘la vérité des costumes modernes, indispensable dans les sujets contemporains’, and an ‘obstacle que l’habileté des plus grands peintres ne saurait surmonter’. Although he found military dress ‘moins défavorable que l’habit civil’, he stated that the issue in battle paintings was to try and avoid the composition becoming monotonous and boring with the uniformity of dress.⁶⁶¹ Some of the painters of battle scenes took advantage of the picturesque opportunities that Ottoman costume gave to liven up the colour and the tone of the canvas, but critics were always very quick to point out instances where they felt the artist might have been a bit too imaginative with their dress and at that point sacrificed the truth or the harmony of the composition. Voiart, for example, felt that Lejeune’s Oriental costume had this effect on the overall harmony of his *La Bataille d' Aboukir* (Figure 6.4):

M. Lejeune d'avoir surmonté tant d'obstacles, et d'avoir sauvé par un effet très-ingénieux de demi-teinte, cette bigarrure de vêtements et de couleurs, qu'exigeait le costume des mameluks et rendait l'harmonie très difficile.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁸Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De L'an 1806*, (Offprint from: Journal de l'Empire: Paris, 1806). 17th September 1806.2.

⁶⁵⁹Anon, *Dialogue Raisonné Entre Un Anglais Et Un Français : Ou, Revue Des Peintures, Sculptures Et Gravures Exposées Dans Le Musée Royal De France, Le 5 Novembre 1814*, (Paris, 1814).8.

⁶⁶⁰Quatremère de Quincy.1791.41.

⁶⁶¹Amateur.1817.271.

⁶⁶²Jacques Philippe Voiart, *Lettres Impartiales Sur Les Expositions De L'an Xiii*, (Paris : Dentu 1804).18.

In contrast Girodet complimented his fellow artist Gros on the scrupulous way in which he observed the accuracy of the Ottoman costume in his version of the *Combat d'Aboukir*:

M. Gros est partout scrupuleux observateur du costume; il a représenté ceux des Orientaux, si favorables à la peinture, avec la plus exacte fidélité, et a su tirer du nôtre, malgré les difficultés qu'il offre aux artistes, le parti le plus heureux.⁶⁶³

Clarac, however, did not agree with Girodet and was slightly concerned that Gros 'a trouvé moyen d'introduire des figures entièrement nues'⁶⁶⁴ and slightly overdone the draperies of the Turks:

Tous les détails du tableau de M.Gros sont très-beaux et largement faits; les armes, les ornements des hommes et des chevaux sont bien étudiés et d'une grande variété; le costume ample des orientaux a permis au peintre de faire de belles draperies, et peut-être en a-t-il un peu abusé.⁶⁶⁵

In this genre, most critics were content to enjoy the picturesque effects of exotic costume, but became critical of it as soon as it was seen to move beyond the boundary of imitation and the limitations of the genre.

6.3.1.1: La Peste de Jaffa

The most successful battle painting of the period was Gros's *La Peste de Jaffa*, which was the star of the 1804 Salon⁶⁶⁶ (Figure 6.5). This was in part due to the colourful, but accurate range of costumes included in the painting:

⁶⁶³ Anne-Louis Girodet Trioson, *La Critique Des Critiques Du Sallon De 1806 : Étrennes Au Connaisseurs*, (Paris : Chez Firmin Didot, 1807).39.

⁶⁶⁴ Charles Othon Frédéric Jean Baptiste Clarac, *Lettre Sur Le Salon De 1806*, (Offprint from: Archives littéraires de l'Europe, ou Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie, par une Société de Gens de Lettres: Paris:Chez Xhrouet, 1806).106.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.110.

⁶⁶⁶ Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De L'an Xii*, (Offprint from: Journal des débats Paris, 1804/1805). 25th September 1804. Paris.2.

Le Tableau de M. Gros n'est pas simplement l'ouvrage d'un habile homme, c'est celui d'un grand maître...Tous ceux qui ont participé à la glorieuse expédition d'Egypte sont d'accord que la vérité locale des costumes, d'architecture, de site, de température est rigoureusement observée: mais ce qui, surtout, est admirable dans ce Tableau, c'est l'harmonie, c'est la grande connaissance du clair obscur, c'est la vigueur du coloris.⁶⁶⁷

The mix of dress and nudity indicated an aspiration to the 'beau idéal', including portraying Napoleon as an idealised Christ-like figure. Durdent described the painting as having '...la teinte générale est historique, et digne d'un maître'.⁶⁶⁸ The painting evoked an emotional response from the *Annales des Arts* and the *Journal des Arts* who wrote of the way in which Gros had chosen one of the events 'les plus touchantes de la vie de Bonaparte', that highlighted his 'd'action heroïques'. They proposed that the expressive effect of the painting took it beyond 'un art purement mécanique' and since it 'offre même de grandes beautés'.⁶⁶⁹ However, it was precisely the fact that they had to petition for its recognition as a history painting that demonstrated that in reality it was only perceived as belonging to the genre of battle paintings. The mix of contemporary dress, draperies and nude 'académies' was seen to be in accord with the complex nature of the scene, although Gros's idealisation of Napoleon and the overall tone of the painting pushed the boundaries towards history painting for some.

⁶⁶⁷D.D., *Peinture: Exposition Publique Des Ouvrages Des Peintures Vivans*, (Offprint from: *Journal des arts, des sciences et de littérature* Paris, 1804). 29-30 . Voiart also remarked on the accurate yet picturesque nature of the dress.Voiart.1804.23.

⁶⁶⁸Various, *Critique Raisonnée Des Tableaux Du Salon : Dialogue Entre Pasquino, Voyageur Romain, Et Scapin, Disposée Selon L'ordre Du Livre De L'exposition, Avec Le Catalogue Des 129 Auteurs Cités*, (Paris : Debray, Delaunay 1804). 32-33. M. François Guillaume Ducray Duminil, *Salon De L'an Xii*, (Offprint from: *Nouvelles des arts*: Paris, 1804).

⁶⁶⁹Anon, *Variétés. Peinture. Salon De L'an Xii*, (Offprint from: *Annales des sciences, de la littérature et des arts*: Paris, 1804).241. & 244.

Section 6.3.2: Genre

Depicting stories of everyday rural life or individual moments of pathos and sorrow, painters such as Greuze and Chardin had charmed visitors to the Paris Salons in the 1760s and 70s, and evoked emotional, empathetic responses from critics such as Abbé de la Porte and Diderot.⁶⁷⁰ Jouy defined the characteristics of these particular types of painting as follows:

Les tableaux de genre ont un attrait particulier; ils délassent les yeux du fracas des grandes compositions; ces petites scènes villageoises, historiques ou romanesques, font l'effet d'un épisode attachant dans un ouvrage de longue haleine. Les morceaux de ce genre sont en très grand nombre au Salon; quelques-uns sont d'un ordre supérieur, et la plupart ne sont pas sans mérite; mais en général, je suis plus content de l'exécution que du choix des sujets: je trouve qu'on a trop abusé du costume chevaleresque, des vitraux et des châteaux gothiques.⁶⁷¹

Within the hierarchy of the genres, however, these 'genre paintings' were not regarded as 'great art' or aspiring to any ideal. According to Fried the emphasis given to these depictions of 'everyday' life as a reaction against the Rococo art of Boucher and his contemporaries were regarded even at the time as inconsequential, and somewhat of an embarrassment in relation to the history paintings that both preceded and succeeded it.⁶⁷²

Generally the critics appeared to be more flexible in their assessment of costume in this type of genre focusing on the picturesque effect of the clothing rather than its accuracy. However, some critics were concerned on the practical reality of how differentiations between a history painting and a painting from recent history should be made in terms of dress. In the 1801 salon review of his own painting *Le Pardon* Landon agreed with the different forms of dress for each genre that Quatremère had stipulated in the *Considérations*; i.e. ancient dress for

⁶⁷⁰Fried.8.

⁶⁷¹Étienne de Jouy, *Le Salon De M.Dccc.Xii*, (Paris: Chez Pillet, 1812).350.

⁶⁷²Fried.10.

history painting, but was concerned about the categorisation of paintings and the type of costume for scenes from contemporary history⁶⁷³ (Figure 6.6):

Si le costume antique seul constitue le tableau d'*histoire*, comme la plupart l'ont prétendu, on doit en conclure qu'un trait de l'histoire moderne ne fournira que la matière d'un tableau *de genre*, et qu'une scène domestique dont les personnages seront vêtus à la grecque ou à la romaine, sera un véritable tableau d'*histoire*.⁶⁷⁴

6.3.2.1: Toussaint Guillot

This disquiet over the categorisation of paintings according to costume was demonstrated in instances where artists, in an attempt to idealise a particular story or event that was seen to be of 'national pride', used antique costumes instead of ordinary clothes. An example of this is the debate over Taunay's painting of the young hero *Toussaint Guillot*, exhibited in 1801, which depicted a recent story that had caught the public imagination of a twelve-year-old boy saving two other children of his own age. Taunay had chosen to depict the young hero in antique costume, and this caused disquiet amongst the critics. Landon felt that Taunay's choice of dress for the young man 'est conforme au sentiment noble et gracieux qu'il imprime à tous les objets qu'il traite'.⁶⁷⁵ Ducray-Duminil on the other hand asked why 'le citoyen *Taunay*, a choisi le costume antique pour représenter une scène si honorable pour son pays?'⁶⁷⁶ Boutard was also against the use of antique draperies, stating:

Nous ne reprocherons pas à Taunay, comme font quelques-uns, de ne s'être pas assujetti, dans un sujet national, à l'imitation exacte du costume français, parce que nous croyons qu'il est toujours prudent de taire les vérités qui sont désagréables à entendre; mais je ne voudrais pas non plus qu'il eût donné à ses

⁶⁷³See Duro for some interesting observations on historical paintings. Paul Duro, 'Giving up on History? Challenges to the Hierarchy of the Genres in Early Nineteenth-Century France', *Art history*, 28 (2005).

⁶⁷⁴Landon. 1801.3.69.

⁶⁷⁵Charles Paul Landon, *Examen Des Ouvrages Exposés Au Salon*, (Offprint from: *Nouvelles des arts, peinture, sculpture, architecture et gravure*: Paris, 1802). 2.13.

⁶⁷⁶M. François Guillaume Ducray Duminil, *Exposition Publique Des Tableaux Des Peintres Vivants Dans Le Salon Au Louvre 1802*, (Offprint from: *Petites affiches de Paris* Paris, 1802). 22-54 & 36.

figures des draperies tout-à-fait semblables aux costumes anciens, parce que, dans aucun cas, il n'est permis de mentir.⁶⁷⁷

The solution for the author of the *Examen Critique* was for Taunay to dress the figures in local French costume, stating that this would be more authentic and that Taunay should emulate the work of Horace Vernet and not be ashamed of painting scenes from contemporary French history in local and everyday dress:

Le premier défaut de ce tableau, et celui que nous aurions dû d'abord reprocher à l'artiste, c'est d'avoir donné une physionomie étrangère à une action française. Pourquoi ne pas observer les costumes des lieux et des temps. Le costume français, dira-t-on, est désagréable en peinture; et l'on ne peut rien faire de noble, en les copiant servilement; mais répondrait-je à cela, le célèbre Vernet n'a pas craint de les observer, ces mêmes costumes dans ses ports de France; et cela n'empêche pas que ces tableaux ne soient de beaux et bons tableaux qu'on admirera toujours avec plaisir.⁶⁷⁸

There was therefore confusion amongst artists about the appropriate and accurate clothing for this genre of painting. Barbier-Walbonne's painting *Un Pêcheur napolitain*, exhibited in 1822 was an example of where the artist had dealt with this sense of uncertainty by dressing three figures in different ways; one in military uniform, another in a mix of local and antique costume and the third figure totally nude (Figure 6.7). Further confusion for Landon, was caused by the fact that the military fugitive in the painting bore an uncanny resemblance to Napoleon. Landon described the severe reservations that he had over this experimental mix of figures because they did not accord with the story of a fisherman out on a nightly expedition, but the mix of different form of costume illustrates how some painters dealt with changing opinions on the form of dress appropriate for particular topics by including everything.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁷ Boutard.19th- 20th September 1802.4.

⁶⁷⁸ Anon.1802.119.

⁶⁷⁹ Landon.1822.51-52.

In contrast, Bergeret's 1806 painting of *Raphaël* was praised by Clarac for being 'dans le costume du temps'⁶⁸⁰ (Figure 6.8). Bergeret's *Charles-Quint et le Titien* also demonstrated the appropriate degree of detail for a painting that Landon felt was appropriate for the 'style familier'⁶⁸¹ (Figure 6.9). Landon felt the same about Richard's painting *Valentine de Milan* which was regarded as a great success when it was exhibited in 1802. He described the costume as 'exactement celui de son siècle'⁶⁸² (Figure 6.10). Horace Vernet was universally applauded for the way in which he accepted and understood the parameters of his particular genre of painting, always choosing the appropriate form of dress for the subject matter and focusing on accuracy rather than effect. Both Delecluze and Thiers praised him as '...le peindre de la France et du dix-neuvième siècle, par la manière dont il représente notre nature et notre époque'⁶⁸³ (Figure 6.11). Thiers continued:

Il n'a pas contracté l'obligation ou de déployer des nus, ou d'imaginer certaines formes de draperies, ou d'observer certaines règles de genre, il prend les choses telles qu'il les voit, il laisse leur réalité; et il en résulte que, sans avoir prétendu faire ni de l'histoire nu du genre, il a fait de l'un ou de l'autre; il a été touchant, noble, terrible, ou bien spirituel, comique et original. Il est tout cela à la fois, parce que tout cela se trouve dans la nature. ...Cela est vrai, si on a voulu dire qu'ils copiaient la réalité, qu'ils ne cherchaient pas l'idéal, et ne le produisaient que parce que leurs sujets, tous élevés, les portaient à choisir ce qu'ils possédaient de plus nobles dans leurs souvenirs.⁶⁸⁴

The question of dress in this genre of painting was complex, but there appears to have been a degree of flexibility in the way it could be interpreted by an artist. It therefore makes sense that the most visible way in which artists breached hierarchical boundaries was through the inappropriate use of dress.

⁶⁸⁰Clarac.1806.121.

⁶⁸¹Landon.1808.2.46.

⁶⁸²Landon.13-14.

⁶⁸³Adolphe Thiers, *Adolphe Thiers, Critique D'art : Salons De 1822 Et De 1824*, (Paris : Champion, 2005).216. Delécluze.1819.177.

⁶⁸⁴Thiers.1822.217.

Section 6.3.3: Portraiture

In portraiture and battle painting the emphasis was placed on the accuracy and veracity of clothing and accessories, and the degree to which they were ‘pittoresque’ since it was generally accepted there should not be any aspiration to the ‘beau idéal’.⁶⁸⁵ As Boutard stated in his essay on the subject:

L’opinion la plus ordinaire est que le portrait, représentation exacte du modèle, n’exige aucun effort de génie; c’est qu’on n’a pas une idée bien précise de ce qui constitue le génie de la peinture, ou bien qu’on ne veut pas comprendre que le portrait n’exclut pas plus que les autres genres, le beau idéal.⁶⁸⁶

These examples demonstrate the way in which the clothing in portrait painting was viewed by critics. Jouy writing in *La Minerve* about Gérard’s portrait of *Madame la Duchesse d’Orléans* noted that ‘...les ornements sont de bon goût’ and then, referring to Madame de Genlis’s Dictionary of Fashion and Manners, applied the rule of accuracy and contemporary fashion to a judgement of the picture itself⁶⁸⁷ (Figure 6.12):

...je ne sais pourtant à quelle saison de l’année se rapporte un habillement composé d’une robe de velours et d’un schall de mousseline, c’est peut-être une règle d’étiquette; je chercherai dans le dictionnaire de madame de Genlis.⁶⁸⁸

Boutard praised Gérard as an excellent painter of ‘accessoires’, consigning his status as a portrait painter rather than a history painter by writing that it was not possible to be an excellent painter of both ‘accessoires’ and the ‘figure’:

La nécessité de sacrifier les accessoires à la figure, et les draperies aux chairs, est facile à comprendre: il est sans contredit plus aisé d’imiter la forme d’un meuble,

⁶⁸⁵Roque and Whiteley. Anon.1802.292-367. 370.

⁶⁸⁶Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De 1810*, (Offprint from: Journal de l’Empire Paris, 1810-1811). 9th January 1811.1.

⁶⁸⁷Stéphanie Genlis, *Dictionnaire Critique Et Raisonné Des Étiquettes De La Cour, Des Usages Du Monde, Des Amusemens, Des Modes, Des Mœurs, Etc... : Ou, L’esprit Des Etiquettes Et Des Usages Anciens, Compares Aux Modernes*, (Paris : P. Mongie aîné 1818).

⁶⁸⁸de Jouy.1819.561.

le tissu et la couleur d'une étoffe, que de faire passer sur la toile la figure de l'homme et l'apparence de la vie. Si le peintre applique également à ces deux sortes d'imitations toute la puissance de son talent, la seconde sera nécessairement moins parfaite, moins approchant de la nature que la première, et la perfection de celle-ci accusera l'impuissance de l'art dans l'exécution de l'autre.⁶⁸⁹

Gerard also had the same criticism applied to him in the Salon of 1814 by Durdent for his portrait of Louis XIII who noted that '...en un mot, l'exécution de cette tête me paraît inférieure à celle des draperies'.⁶⁹⁰ In contrast, Boutard commented that the Revolution, and 'l'excessive simplicité des vêtements', which contrasted with the habit for eighteenth-century portrait painters to include '...tous les moyens accessoires qu'ils pouvaient employer,... l'imitation exacte des meubles, des étoffes, du linge, des dentelles...' had given the false idea that ornaments damaged the picturesque effect of a painting. He particularly directed this advice towards the 'extrême simplicité' in the work of Robert Lefèvre suggesting that as with everything, it was clearly always a question of balance⁶⁹¹ (Figure 6.13). In contrast, Ingres's painting of Napoleon caused a scandal not for political reasons, but because the extravagance of the dress suggested that Ingres was trying to idealise a portrait.⁶⁹² The reaction of the critics demonstrated that they wanted to maintain the hierarchical boundaries and that Ingres's painting had overstepped this. Chaussard's response to the painting demonstrated not only how his views contrasted with the mainstream critical voice, but also how his remarks challenged the old hierarchies and definitions of ideal beauty.

⁶⁸⁹Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De 1812*, (Offprint from: Journal de l'Empire Paris, 1812-1813). 1st January 1813.2.

⁶⁹⁰René-Jean Durdent, *L'école Française En 1814 : Ou, Examen Critique Des Ouvrages De Peinture, Sculpture, Architecture Et Gravure Exposés Au Salon Du Musée Royal Des Arts*, (Paris : Delaunay, 1814). 94.

⁶⁹¹Boutard.6th October 1804.1.

⁶⁹²Siegfried.2009.

6.3.3.1: Napoleon 1^{er} sur le trône impérial

Critics were astounded by Ingres's skill in painting the velvet and embroidery in his 1806 portrait of *Napoleon 1^{er} sur le trône impérial* (Figure 6.14). Dandree exclaimed: 'Mais quelle étonnante perfection dans les accessoires! quelle vérité! On touche à ces étoffes, ces fourrures, cet ivoire; l'illusion est au comble'.⁶⁹³ Other critics, however, such as Clarac felt that the ornaments and accessories though 'très-beaux' rather overwhelmed the image itself.⁶⁹⁴ Critics such as Dandree, Boutard, Durdent and later Gault de St Germain also reacted negatively to the overall effect that Ingres had evoked through the magnificent draperies and the over-embellishment of ornaments.⁶⁹⁵ This was because of the way in which it crossed hierarchical boundaries by evoking the style and manner of gothic art. As Clarac wrote:

N'est-ce pas une idée trop bizarre que de vouloir faire revivre l'ancienne manière roide et gauche des premiers peintres du temps de la renaissance des arts?...M. Ingres bouleverse tous les principes qu'ils ont donnés et suivis, et le chemin nouveau et singulier qu'il prend pour fonder une nouvelle école; il a choisi, je crois, une mauvaise route, et il se perdra s'il ne se hâte pas de la quitter.⁶⁹⁶

Clarac then likened it to 'une peinture chinoise' and wrote that it had the appearance of 'une médaille gothique', before proceeding to criticise Ingres's portraits of both *Madame* and *Mademoiselle Rivière* which were exhibited at the same time for inaccuracy and over-embellished drapery⁶⁹⁷ (Figure 6.15). Boutard commented on its bizarreness and questioned why Ingres had taken to painting portraits this way:

Mais n'est-ce point une fantaisie assez extraordinaire que celle d'un jeune artiste qui, après de longues études sous un grand maître, et avec un talent véritable que

⁶⁹³Eugène Dandré, *À M. Denon, Membre De L'institut National, Directeur Général Du Musée Napoléon, De La Monnaie, Des Médailles, Etc.* (Paris, 1806).10.

⁶⁹⁴Clarac.1806.127.

⁶⁹⁵Dandré.1806. 9. Boutard.19th November 1808.2. Durdent.1814.83.Gault de Saint-Germain.1815.209.

⁶⁹⁶Clarac.1806.126.

⁶⁹⁷*Ibid.*127-128.

l'on reconnaît même dans ses égarements, essaye de remettre à la mode cette manière de peindre des siècles passés ? M. Ingres, a qui l'on ne peut s'empêcher de supposer ce caprice bizarre à la vue du portrait de S.M., ...bornerait-il son ambition à mériter l'espace d'estime que l'on conserve avec raison pour les vieux artistes dont nous venons de parler?⁶⁹⁸

Chaussard in common with his fellow critics criticised Ingres's 'baroque style' which evoked for him the work of Jean de Bruges, but then applied the principles of 'history' painting to the genre of portraiture:

Le principal but des arts est d'émouvoir, d'exciter les passions par le sentiment et l'illusion, ou d'enchanter et de plaire par l'unité de l'ensemble, par l'harmonie des détails, par l'imitation simple et vraie de la nature. Rarement la difficulté vaincue a produit ces effets. Ces formes si baroques si tourmentées de la mauvaise architecture et de la sculpture du siècle de Louis XV étaient aussi de la difficulté vaincue; il était fort pénible d'imaginer et d'exécuter ces dessins bizarres et ces formes contournées: cela ressemble trop aux acrostiches des poètes, et aux quadruples croches des musiciens.⁶⁹⁹

This demonstrates how the genre of portraiture was not expected to aspire to the ideal and again how Chaussard's opinions differed from the critical mainstream.

Section 6.3.4: History Painting

In history painting, as in sculpture, the purpose was to aspire to ideal beauty. In this genre, the composition, the 'pensée' and 'vérité' combined with movement, expression and imagination were bound together in order to create a sense of the 'beau idéal'. It was therefore considered even more important in this genre to adhere to traditional conventions. Girodet's *L'Apothéose* and David's *Les Sabines* were two paintings that confused critics; the

⁶⁹⁸Boutard.4 October 1806.2.

⁶⁹⁹Chaussard.1808.186-190.

former because of the mix of dress, and the latter because David had chosen to apply the rules of sculpture to painting and painted the male figures nude.

6.3.4.1: Girodet's *L'Apothéose*

Girodet's lengthy title, *L'Apothéose des Héros français morts pour la patrie pendant la guerre de la Liberté* was, in the minds of the critics, in accord with the complexity of ideas and contrasting figures, dressed and undressed that this painting displayed (Figure 6.16). Presented to the Salon in the format of an historical or allegorical painting in 1802, the inclusion of the recently killed young hero General Desaix and other French soldiers in uniform alongside the poet Ossian and naked nymphs perplexed many of the critics who found the mix of ideas and the mix of dress confusing and disorienting. Mme de Vandeul exclaimed:

Cependant, si j'avais la possibilité d'acheter un tableau, ce ne serait pas celui-là. Je n'y trouve pas assez d'espace pour tant de monde et pour tant de choses.⁷⁰⁰

There was no confusion that this painting was in any way the depiction of a contemporary event, though the verisimilitude, or 'portraits', of the heroes was remarked upon. Allegorical settings for images of French heroes were painted around this time such as Van Bree's *Allegorie de La France* and the anonymous painting of the *Allegorie du Concordat* (Figure 6.17a and Figure 6.17b), but the mix of female nudes with a draped Ossian and dead uniformed French heroes was considered bizarre, and the lack of congruity in the painting created questions about the morality and appropriateness of the work. Mme de Vandeul described the confusion she felt looking at the painting:

⁷⁰⁰Vandeul and Tourneux.126.

Les guerriers français, de l'aveu de tous ceux qui les ont connus, sont fort ressemblants; mais je vous avoue que ces héros, dans des nuages avec des habits d'uniforme, des bottes, des épaulettes, de gros chapeaux en main ou sous les bras font une discordance très déplaisante à mes yeux. Je ne puis faire à voir Ossian et sa troupe couverts de draperie d'air et de brouillard, ou nus ainsi que les têtes et d'autres parties du corps des femmes et nos guerriers habillés comme sur le champ de bataille ou dans la chambre.⁷⁰¹

Some of the critics also disliked it because they saw it as 'elitist' art.⁷⁰² Landon, however felt that 'la complication des idées ...et l'abondance des objets dont il a orné son tableau', was entirely justifiable as imagination was governed by its own rules. He also felt that, in addition to creating a work of imaginary genius, Girodet had managed to retain the integrity of resemblance in the portraits of the French heroes, Generals Desaix and Kleber.⁷⁰³ Not everyone agreed with this. According to Delécluze, even David found the painting difficult to understand, and although polite to Girodet at the time later remarked: "Ah ça! Mais il est fou, Girodet? Il est fou, ou je n'entends plus rien à l'art de la peinture; ce sont des personnages de cristal qu'il nous a faits là. Avec son beau talent il ne fera jamais que des sottises, il n'a pas le sens commun".⁷⁰⁴ Delécluze then went onto say that Girodet's painting was not a critical success except amongst '...les gens de cour ou de société. Cela flatte leur imagination qui ne se plaît qu'aux choses fantastiques et extra-intellectuelles, dans les arts qu'ils ne sentent ni ne comprennent vraiment pas'.⁷⁰⁵ Everyone agreed that 'il était compliqué', but that 'l'exécution en est parfaite' and that 'il prouve un talent éminent'.⁷⁰⁶

This unease about the balance between the imaginative flair and 'licence' of the artist with the conventions of French art can also be illustrated in the controversy over David's *Les Sabines*. As with Girodet's work, the quality of the execution was not the question. As well

⁷⁰¹Ibid.127.

⁷⁰²Ducray Duminil.1802.42.

⁷⁰³Landon.2.66.

⁷⁰⁴Etienne Jean Delécluze, *Journal De Delécluze, 1824-1828*, (Paris : B. Grasset, 1948). 17 Dec 1824. 67.

⁷⁰⁵Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶Anon.1802.106.

as the historical inaccuracy of the work the main issues that critics had with the painting was the way in which it appeared that David had applied the rules of sculpture to the genre of history painting.

6.3.4.2: Les Sabines

David had stated in his *Appendix* to *Les Sabines* that he had taken his inspiration for the male figures from antique statues. Critics were deeply concerned about this mix of genres both artistically and theoretically (Figure 6.18). They were also concerned about the broader effect of David's innovation on other painters.

Artistically, critics were concerned about the coldness and rigidity of the male figures. As Guizot stated 'une figure humaine, isolée au milieu de l'espace, paraît moins sèche, moins tranchante qu'une statue'.⁷⁰⁷ Guizot and Boutard compared the different methods used by sculptors in building up a statue, and by painters in using drawing as the first step for their work. Sculptors worked with the 'rondeur des formes' to build up the form from a bare skeleton and the concern Boutard had about David using a statue as a model for a painting related to the 'incommensurable' difference between 'du contour réel au contour apparent' since a real body and the surface of hard marble were significantly different.⁷⁰⁸ Guizot and Boutard were particularly concerned that the advantages sculpture had for rendering draperies expressively could not be transposed into the two dimensional form of a painting.

Painters, in contrast, built up their work from drawings, and had at their disposal effects such as gradation of colour and drapery to create a sense of movement, but in a two-dimensional

⁷⁰⁷Guizot.156.

⁷⁰⁸Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Salon De L'an IX*, (Offprint from: Journal des débats Paris, 1801). October 2nd 1801.3-4.

rather than three-dimensional form. One of Guizot's particular concerns about *Les Sabines* was that by mixing the genres David had lost the ease with which painters could manipulate colour and drapery to create an aesthetic effect. As a consequence, Guizot argued that by employing the nudity of sculpture in a painting David had simultaneously lost both the advantages of painting and those of sculpture.⁷⁰⁹ This had resulted in the male figures looking static and posed:

Ajoutez à cela que la sculpture ne représentant presque jamais qu'un état immobile et passif, la nudité y est bien moins invraisemblable, et dépend bien plus de la volonté de l'artiste que dans la peinture, qui, représentant presque toujours une action, ne peut, sans une inconvenance très forte, écarter les accessoires dont cette action est nécessairement accompagnée. Remarquez enfin qu'en sculpture les draperies forment des masses plus épaisses, plus lourdes, plus impénétrables, et par conséquent plus désavantageuses qu'en peinture, où l'artiste peut leur faire suivre les mouvements, les formes du corps, et même leur donner, dans certains cas, une transparence qui en diminue beaucoup l'inconvénient.⁷¹⁰

Boutard also had similar concerns. He stated that 'La copie très exacte d'une statue de marbre ne produira jamais qu'une figure sans vie'. Although Boutard and other critics believed that David's skill had surmounted this problem, the effect of this was that the figures had no sense of movement and in the words of the *Revue du Salon* 'elles posent'.⁷¹¹ The effect of this was that critics were concerned that David had compromised the possibility of ideal beauty in the painting. As Guizot stated, sculpture's purpose was to develop 'un sentiment pour le beau' for artists, but that did not involve a painting becoming a piece of sculpture. Since ideal beauty was a composite of each part of the entire process skilfully executed with imagination, neither the form nor the drawing was the finished product and could be the 'idéal'.

⁷⁰⁹Guizot.156.

⁷¹⁰Ibid.60.

⁷¹¹Anon.1802.187.

Boutard believed that David's licence in pushing the boundaries of conventional dress was acceptable, stating that as a 'grand(s) artiste(s)' with 'un talent supérieur' on the same level as Michelangelo, he was bound to receive criticism at the same time as his work being '... la source de mille beautés'. Despite this Boutard criticised David for undertaking 'un second de la même manière' with *Léonidas à Thermopyles*⁷¹² (Figure 6.19).

Guizot was much more critical of David seeing his decision to 'transporter le nu dans des tableaux d'histoire' as an 'idée fausse'. His theory was that it had been too tempting for David not to demonstrate his knowledge and skill of 'de connaissances anatomiques' and that his use of academy figures in *Les Sabines* had been to effectively show off.⁷¹³ In doing so David, in Guizot's eyes, had committed a 'violation absolue de la vérité et de la vraisemblance' and damaged both the genre of sculpture and that of painting because he had presented the male nude figure with colour and details that were simply not possible to replicate in a statue, and at the same time could not possibly hope to emulate the perfection of antique statuary in two-dimensional form.⁷¹⁴

Guizot's point that David just wanted to demonstrate his skill was also reflected in the concerns of other critics and broader concerns about the primacy of 'dessin' versus colour that had been prompted by Émeric-David's *Recherches*.⁷¹⁵ Stendhal was concerned about the effect of this mix of genres on the work of other less able painters stating that 'des pinceaux faibles...trouvé beaucoup de partisans'.⁷¹⁶ An anonymous critic used the controversy over the static poses of the male figures as an opportunity to compare David's skill in drawing in *Les Sabines* to Guérin's 'genius' in *Phédre et Hippolyte* particularly in the details of the draperies 'suivis fidèlement sur l'antique' which according to Ducray Duminil had been arranged 'avec

⁷¹²Boutard.3rd December 1808.3.

⁷¹³Guizot.58.

⁷¹⁴Ibid. 59-60.

⁷¹⁵Émeric David.1805.

⁷¹⁶Boutard.1808.3.

vérité', with 'une couleur vraie' and had contributed to giving the painting 'une harmonie parfait',⁷¹⁷ (Figure 6.20):

...dans le tableau de Guérin; s'il y a quelques reproches à faire au dessin, du moins tout y est plein de vie, d'expression et de mouvement; le génie a produit le tableau du Guérin, le pinceau fait tout le mérite du tableau de Sabines.⁷¹⁸

Chaussard felt the opposite to be true and in *Les Sabines* celebrated the foundation of a new school.⁷¹⁹ Chaussard's admiration for David rested precisely on the way that David had captured the 'sentiment de l'antiquité' through the mix of genres.⁷²⁰ His way of showing that David had achieved this was by connecting all three principal figures in the painting with antique statues and Winckelmann's thoughts on the depiction of Greek heroes:

Tous les héros de l'antiquité, dit Winckelmann, sont remarquables par le caractère tranquille de leur figure. En général, dit-il, on peut établir que l'art avait banni du système public des monuments toutes les passions violentes.⁷²¹

He then reinforced the connection with Winckelmann and sculpture by repeating words and using phrases that came from the *Histoire*. For example, he used the word 'type' to demonstrate that David had produced figures that represented man 'dans sa plus haute dignité'. He stated that the 'la variété et la diversité de l'expression' had evoked the 'grandeur du beau style'.⁷²² He compared the gesture and movements of the old woman on her knees to 'comme ceux du Laocoon'.⁷²³ Finally he likened the head of Hersilia to Venus and the remainder of her body to 'une statue antique'.⁷²⁴

⁷¹⁷Ducray Duminil.1802.22-54.52-53.

⁷¹⁸Anon.1802.187.

⁷¹⁹Chaussard.1800.40.

⁷²⁰Ibid.1.

⁷²¹Ibid.13.

⁷²²Ibid.13-14.

⁷²³Ibid.15.

⁷²⁴Ibid.27.

Another example of the way in which using nude figures taken from sculpture was seen to affect the painterly quality of the drapery can be seen in Boutard's criticism of Mongez's *Thésée et Pirithoüs* (Figure 6.21). Although Boutard admired Mongez's skill in drawing the nude figure with a 'vigueur de pinceau sans exemple dans une femme', he was concerned with the way she had arranged and executed 'les draperies...la seule partie de l'art dans laquelle cette dame n'ait pas fait des progrès très-sensibles'.⁷²⁵

Conclusion

This section on costume and drapery in the different genres has demonstrated that the type of dress was a strong indicator of the genre a work belonged to. In general, accurate costume belonged to the imitative genres of portraiture, battle painting and sentimental art and the use of antique costume and draperies was an important indicator that a painting aspired to achieve a sense of ideal beauty and belonged to the genre of history and allegorical painting. The response of critics was affected by the way in which artists dealt with the challenge of costume, and in particular, it demonstrates how critics disliked work where artists applied the rules of the 'idéel' genres to those that could only aspire to imitation. It also demonstrates that part of the negative response to *Les Sabines* was the way in which David had applied the rules of sculpture to painting, and how many believed that this had affected the ability of the painting to convey a sense of the 'beau idéal'. The next section will look at the importance of historical accuracy in clothing as part of ideal beauty, and demonstrate that this was another important reason for criticism of *Les Sabines*.

⁷²⁵Boutard.4th October 1806.4.

Section 6.4: Historical Accuracy

As can be seen from the costume dictionaries and the art dictionaries the historically accurate imitation of clothing was a vital part of the process of successfully putting together a history painting and achieving a sense of ideal beauty. There is evidence that some ‘licence’ could be given to artists for imaginative and artistic flair, but in general artists and critics alike knew that ‘vérité’ was going to be one of the criteria on which a painting would be judged. The complex example of David’s *Les Sabines* demonstrated how David both adhered to and broke the convention of historical accuracy in history painting. It also demonstrated how the critical mainstream responded.

Section 6.4.1: Les Sabines

6.4.1.1: Female Figures

As Delécluze wrote in his biography of David, the painter had extensively researched antique sculpture and dress for *Les Sabines*.⁷²⁶ Delécluze’s remarks are confirmed by the wide array of antique clothing and accessories in the picture. The critics remarked at the difference between the two main female figures (Figure 6.22). Without doubt, Hersilia was the most striking figure in the painting. Dressed in the classically inspired Doric peplos or montre-hanches (meaning literally ‘split thigh’ and also known as ‘thigh-showers’) her dress both invoked the contemporary fashion for antique dress and referenced the sexually and socially liberated women of Sparta.⁷²⁷ The low cut front of the dress with the outline of nipples evident under the light cloth bore a marked similarity in design and colour to David’s 1799

⁷²⁶Delécluze.1855.71.

⁷²⁷Blundell.151-155.

portrait of *Henriette de Verninac*⁷²⁸ (Figure 6.23), and the folds of the cloth modestly indicated the movement of Hersilia's legs as she stepped forward between the two male figures, the 'jet' of the cloth indicated her purposeful intent in stopping the two men fight. To her left, the kneeling woman with tousled chestnut hair hung loose in contrast to Hersilia's neatly arranged locks, presented a different image of womanhood and a more imaginative interpretation of classical costume. The capped sleeve of the latter's dress evoked David's portrait of Madame Recamier, the slipped 'chiton' revealing a bare breast again reminiscent of both Spartan dress and allegorically the figure of Artemis⁷²⁹ (Figure 6.24).

The clothing of the female figures in the painting was considered by critics to be broadly correct. David gave considerable attention to the accurate belting and harnessing of the 'chitons' and the detail of 'fibulae' holding together the sleeves (Figure 6.25). Symbolically, the swirls and shapes created by the drapery evoked movement, emotion and the anguish of the mothers suggesting, in their use of drapery, the expressive effect found in the statue of the *Niobe* and other antique statuary. In Chaussard's mind, the draperies of the woman behind the figure of Hersilia also echoed the work of Raphael⁷³⁰ (Figure 6.26).

Hersilia was generally described as 'belle' by critics, and other criticism focused on her expressive qualities, and the quality of her passion, emotion and feeling which together had persuaded the warring men to stop fighting.⁷³¹ There were some who were critical of the way in which David had painted her, but not her clothing. The Danish philanthropist Bruun-Neergaard, for example, felt that her colouring was 'trop blanc', her 'figure' was too 'maigre', and her hair 'ne sont pas naturels'.⁷³² Critics were mixed in their response to the

⁷²⁸Marianne Thesander, *The Feminine Ideal*, (London : Reaktion Books 1997). 48. Mackrell.

⁷²⁹Marina Warner, *Monuments & Maidens : The Allegory of the Female Form*, (London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985).277-279.

⁷³⁰Chaussard.1800.24.

⁷³¹Ducray Duminil.1808.183.

⁷³²Bruun-Neergaard and Roger.94.

other female figures in *Les Sabines*, but their dress was generally felt to be historically correct and in tune with historical depictions of Sabine and Roman women (Figure 6.27).

The similarity of the women's costume to contemporary Parisian fashions was also remarked on by many of the critics.⁷³³ The outsider Bruun-Neergaard commented appreciatively on the overall quality of French female dress, describing it as 'la plus belle que je connaisse'.⁷³⁴ Many remarked on David's interest in fashion and the fact that he had designed costume for the actor Talma and for male dress during the Revolution, and Consulate.⁷³⁵ David's combination of accuracy in costume, the folds of the dresses that outlined the shape of the women's bodies, and the 'jet' of the drapery which conveyed the emotional content of the painting, was applauded. Some critics encouraged by the combination of the frisson of elite fashion and the fame of the models described David as the contemporary Apelles, taking his pick from the most beautiful women in Paris.⁷³⁶

6.4.1.2: Male Figures

In the contrast many of the critics were both perplexed and annoyed by the way in which David had portrayed the male figures in the painting.⁷³⁷ Delécluze stated how David had been unsure about how to clothe the figures of Tatius and Romulus, and this is visible in the initial sketch plan of *Les Sabines* where the male figures were dressed in Roman military uniform (Figure 6.28). In the sketch version of the painting, the figure of Tatius had a similar stance to

⁷³³ Antoine Thomé, *Vie De David*, (Paris: Chez les marchands de nouveautés, Imprimerie de J. Tastu, 1826).

40. See also Grigsby; Lajer-Burcharth.

⁷³⁴ Bruun-Neergaard and Roger.13.

⁷³⁵ Delécluze.1855.36.

⁷³⁶ David.1880.336. Gault de Saint-Germain.1815.31. Thomé.1826.159. Pierre Alexandre Coupin, *Essai Sur J. L. David, Peintre D'histoire, Ancien Membre De L'institut, Officier De La Légion-D'honneur*, (Paris J. Renouard 1827).37.

⁷³⁷ Amaury Pineu-Duval, *Examen Du Tableaux Des Sabines*, (Offprint from: La décade philosophique: Paris, 1799). 229-230.

the final version. David also left the figure with the same shield, simply changing the style of helmet so that it would be more 'Greek' and then undressing Tatius.⁷³⁸ The scabbard attached to Tatius's cloak in the original version also gives an indication of where David may have originally placed it before he was obliged to cover Tatius's genitals for the re-exhibition of the painting in 1808.

The difference in the figure of Romulus as it appeared in the sketch compared with the final version of the painting was more dramatic. The shield, helmet and clothes in the sketch were more distinctly 'Roman' and the movement of his skirt and left leg indicated more forcibly his movement towards the figure of Tatius. This contrasted with the extravagance of Romulus's plumed helmet and shield and the very static nature of his pose in the final version. At least the costumes and accessories that the male figures did wear won approval from the critics. Fabre, for example, stated how he found 'ce beau idéal enfin que l'on retrouve...dans les accessoires, dans les armes et dans les vêtements' of *Les Sabines*.⁷³⁹

Although David would have been aware of academic conventions, the discrepancy of the subject being 'Roman' and the dress 'Greek' didn't seem to matter to him. David stated in his *Appendix* that his main objective in painting the male figures nude was to penetrate the 'Truth' so that 'de peindre les mœurs antiques avec une telle exactitude que les Grecs et les Romains, en voyant mon ouvrage, ne m'eussent pas trouvé étranger à leurs coutumes'.⁷⁴⁰ It was the mix of 'truth' and historic inaccuracy, however, which caused much of the controversy and unease over the painting. In addition, David's decision to paint the horses without any bridles caused surprise and ridicule amongst observers for the same reason.⁷⁴¹

The historical inaccuracy of the nudity was the primary focus of criticism for the painting.

⁷³⁸David also appears to have used different models for the sketch since the muscular structure of the bodies and the features are different to the final version. This supports Delécluze's remarks that the students took turns to model for David. Delécluze.1855.

⁷³⁹Fabre.1808.223.

⁷⁴⁰Chaussard.1800.16.

⁷⁴¹David.1880.363.Bruun-Neergaard and Roger.94.

The anonymous critic V*** wrote ‘...Allez donc vous habiller, le ... tableau n'a pas besoin de votre nudité’.⁷⁴² Others such as Bruun-Neergaard, felt that the nudity had a disruptive effect on the overall harmony and unity of the painting:

Je n'ai rien à dire contre la nudité en général, mais je ne crois pas qu'il y ait d'exemple qu'on ait jamais représenté, dans un tableau, le chef d'une armée nu, tandis que les autres sont habillés. On ne trouve pas assez d'ensemble dans la composition.⁷⁴³

In 1810, Baron de Boutard remarked that it was a bizarre decision to paint the figures of Tatius and Romulus nude because the contrast between the male and female figures didn't work and it did not make either historical or practical sense:

On ne peut s'empêcher de trouver étrange que l'artiste ait donné des vêtements aux Romains et aux Sabins, à l'exception de leurs deux chefs, qu'il paraissait cependant plus convenable de représenter vêtus et complètement armés, parce que leur conservation était du plus grand prix pour les deux peuples.⁷⁴⁴

Guizot simply described the use of nude figures as ‘la violation absolue de la vérité et de la vraisemblance’.⁷⁴⁵ Even twenty years after *Les Sabines* was first exhibited, the historical inaccuracy of the nude figures was still deeply troubling to critics. Whilst admiring the male figures as ‘de belles études faites sur la nature’, the Comte de Kératry pointed out that the whole point of a history painting was to create ‘une illusion complète’, so that the artist was able to transport the observer and ‘pénétrant... son esprit’ of ‘le siècle’ in order that ‘en rappelant même à notre mémoire l'action dont il a voulu se faire l'historien’.⁷⁴⁶ As he stated, it was unlikely that Tatius and Romulus had gone into battle naked:

⁷⁴²V***, *Salon De Peinture*, (Offprint from: Journal de Paris: Paris, 1802).23rd September 1802. 58-59.

⁷⁴³Bruun-Neergaard and Roger.94.

⁷⁴⁴Boutard.1810.3.

⁷⁴⁵Guizot.58.

⁷⁴⁶Kératry.186 -187.

Nous voilà donc obligés de supposer que Tatius et Romulus, dépouillés de tous vêtements, sont aux prises à la tête des deux armées, sans que leurs soldats, leurs filles et leurs femmes soient les témoins de cette nudité, qui certes les eût un peu étonnés; ou plutôt, exigeant une illusion de plus (car il faut sans cesse recourir à la baguette magique), nous serons condamnés à dire que les deux généraux sont nus pour le spectateur, mais qu'ils ne le sont pas pour les deux camps ennemis.⁷⁴⁷

In contrast Kératry and Coupin, found the nudity in David's *Léonidas* less condemnable than in *Les Sabines* because of its historical accuracy:

La nudité du sujet des Thermopyles est beaucoup moins condamnable. Les Spartiates s'exerçaient à la gymnastique en cet état; ils viennent de sacrifier aux dieux avant ou après ces jeux qui entraînent dans leurs institutions nationales et religieuses: cela est tout simple et cette excuse peut être admise.⁷⁴⁸

Although Chaussard questioned the historical accuracy of the age of the children in the foreground of the painting he described the nudity as 'une licence, mais une licence heureuse'.⁷⁴⁹ Delving into Pliny he quoted the phrase used by Winckelmann 'Le usage des Grecs est de ne rien voiler: c'est une coutume romaine et militaire de couvrir les héros d'une cuirasse' and from that tried to construct an argument that somehow connected Roman history with the right of men to appear nude in front of women:

Si l'on trouve des sujets romains traités dans un système contraire, il faut en conclure qu'ils sont l'ouvrage du ciseau grec ou étrusque: on sait que, pendant longtemps, les Grecs et les Etrusques furent les seuls qui exercèrent les arts au milieu de Rome....On trouve aussi parmi les lois promulguées par Romulus, la défense de paraître nu en présence des femmes.⁷⁵⁰

Chaussard and Landon both argued that David's purpose in painting the male figures nude instead was to convey the 'inner Truth' of the spirit of antiquity:

⁷⁴⁷Ibid.191.

⁷⁴⁸Ibid.191.

⁷⁴⁹Chaussard.1800. Jacques-Louis David, 'Le Tableau Des Sabines Exposé Publiquement Au Palais National Des Sciences Et Des Arts.', (Paris: De L'imprimerie de P.Didot L'Ainé., 1800).26-27.35.

⁷⁵⁰Chaussard.1800.35-36.

Le dessin des figures est vrai; non de cette vérité triviale qui caractérise tant d'ouvrages médiocres, mais de cette vérité noble qui résulte d'un bon choix, et rend aux différents contours leurs formes primitives. On peut ajouter qu'il a le grandiose de l'antique, et non de ces formes de convention, fruit d'une mémoire superficielle ou d'une imagination gigantesque.⁷⁵¹

In addition to the historical inaccuracy of the clothes in *Les Sabines*, Bruun-Neergaard and others argued that there was not the sense of disorder that would normally accompany a battle scene.⁷⁵² This was also another complaint of Kerarty's.⁷⁵³ According to Jules David, Napoleon himself also remarked on military inaccuracies in the painting noting that Romulus was holding the spear the wrong way and that the painting lacked 'de chaleur, de mouvement, d'enthousiasme' of a battleground.⁷⁵⁴

These inaccuracies were important. If David's intentions were those that he set out in his *Appendix*, that is to strictly adhere to the Truth, he was then in danger of being inaccurate on two levels; as a painter of history and as a painter of battles. Confusion increased when one took into account that the only basis on which David could claim to be correct was in the accurate rendering of 'portraits' that he used for his figures, many of whom were easily identifiable to contemporaries.⁷⁵⁵ This was appropriate for the genre of battle or portrait painting, but deeply inappropriate and against the concept of good taste for history and allegorical painting. The notoriety and scandal caused by using lower class male figures combined with elite Parisian society women as models for the painting added yet another layer of confusion for the critics and the public.⁷⁵⁶ Taking all these different aspects of historical accuracy into account meant that in its most fundamental sense *Les Sabines* could

⁷⁵¹Ibid.19.

⁷⁵²Bruun-Neergaard and Roger.94.

⁷⁵³Kératry.186-187.

⁷⁵⁴David.1880.363.

⁷⁵⁵Anon, *Exposition Au Salon*, (Offprint from: Journal de Paris: Paris, 1799).378.

⁷⁵⁶David. 1880.336. See Grigsby.

not aspire to the 'beau idéal', because it was not a history painting in the traditional meaning of the word and in the conventions of the genre.⁷⁵⁷

According to the jury report of the 'prix décennal', Girodet's *Le Déluge* beat David's *Les Sabines* precisely because the nudity of the male figure in Girodet's painting appeared more plausible and historically accurate than that of Romulus and Tatius in *Les Sabines*. As the Jury report stated '...dans les arts d'imitation, la première loi est de ne pas blesser la vérité et les convenances'.⁷⁵⁸ Despite the obvious quality of *Les Sabines*, the historical inaccuracy of the male figures was the reason why the painting did not win the prize. David's concluding remarks in his *Appendix* were that it would have been easier for him to dress the figures than leave them nude and that he had in this way created more difficulties for himself. In contrast to the opinion of Watelet, Maratta and others on the complexity of costume, David concluded with the remark that in seeking to 'pénétré(r) ...cette vérité', that which was more, that is clothing, was the least.⁷⁵⁹ The jury report for the 'prix décennal' responded to this statement by saying that it was not a question of nudity 'being more'. Instead the jury stated that David should have looked for 'le mieux'. They continued:

«On ne peut s'empêcher de leurs deux chefs, qu'il paraissait cependant plus convenable de représenter vêtus et complètement armés, parce que leur conservation était du plus grand prix pour le deux peuples.»⁷⁶⁰

It was David's inaccurate combination of Roman history, and 'Greek' dress that made the nude figures look incongruous, and which jarred with aesthetic conventions for historically accurate costume in French history painting since historical accuracy was an important component of ideal beauty. The reason why the nudity caused such a scandal was the way in

⁷⁵⁷ Delécluze stated how David had decided to make *Les Sabines* 'grec pur'. Delécluze.1855.62.

⁷⁵⁸ David.1880.462.

⁷⁵⁹ David.1800.16.

⁷⁶⁰ David.1880.462.

which David had breached the conventions of genre and the conventions of historical accuracy both of which were necessary components of ideal beauty. In contrast the female figures corresponded to the conventions of ideal beauty and David's attention to the detail and historical accuracy of the accessories and uniform of the male figures was seen to be ideal.

Section 6.5: Sedate and Grand Emotion

Another important component of ideal beauty was the 'sedate and grand' expression of emotion. In the French art dictionaries Watelet's definition of the term 'Expression' contrasted Winckelmann and Mengs's thoughts on the topic with those of Charles LeBrun and Dandré-Bardon. It is therefore interesting to see how the apparent conflict in these two different approaches was reflected in the response to Salon paintings. My reading of David's *La Douleur d'Andromaque* suggested that David had decided to express Andromache's grief in Winckelmann's 'noble and sedate' manner using her drapery as an emotional vehicle. In contrast Girodet's painting *Le Déluge* evoked a lot of negative criticism from critics because of the extreme nature of the expression on the face of the young male (Figure 6.29 which many critics found overwhelming and rather distressing. Voiart remarked how he felt a sense of terror, fear and concern for the doomed family.⁷⁶¹ Boutard described it as impossible to imagine a more disastrous and emotionally fraught scene:

Le Déluge ne saurait être le sujet d'un tableau d'histoire, ...le Déluge est l'aventure de l'univers; il faut un vaste champ où l'on nous montre les phénomènes du ciel; et, avec l'homme, les animaux et toutes les productions de la terre également enveloppes dans ce grand désastre. ...Il était difficile assurément

⁷⁶¹Jacques Voiart, *Lettres Impartiales Sur Les Expositions De L'an 1806*, (Paris : Chez M. Aubry, 1806).28.

d'imaginer une scène plus terrible: aussi l'effet qu'elle produit au Salon est général, et s'étend à toutes les classes de spectateurs.⁷⁶²

Dandree likened the intensity of the work to the images in Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*. He described how he also found the expression of the young man terrible, hideous and simply over exaggerated stating that '...le beau est toujours simple; l'expression exagérée le tue'.⁷⁶³ Clarac was also deeply critical of the convulsive expression on the young man's face whose distorted features he felt disrupted the beauty of the work. He dealt with the contrast between the beauty of Girodet's accurate rendering of the male 'académie' which he thought had been done in a 'beau style' and the horror of the expression on his face by describing Girodet's painting as an example of ideal ugliness:

Je sais bien aussi que depuis quelque temps on paraît avoir confondu la terreur et l'horreur, et que l'on voit des tableaux qui ne font pas peur et qui dégoûtent; mais la figure du principal personnage du tableau de M. Girodet n'est pas de cette espèce, elle n'est peut-être que trop effrayante; il se peut que l'expression en soit forcée, mais les traits en sont beaux, et nos grand maîtres en ont dans leurs ouvrages immortels qui sont encore moins agréables à voir, telles que le Possédé de la Transfiguration de Raphaël, qui tourne les yeux et se tord les bras.....plusieurs personnages allégoriques, représentant la peur, les crimes dans les tableaux de Rubens, et tant d'autres qu'on pourrait citer. Si nos plus grands peintres ont connu les règles de la beauté, ils ont cependant cru pouvoir s'en écarter quelquefois, et ils avoient une espèce de laid idéal, qu'on pourrait appeler une *belle laideur*.⁷⁶⁴

In contrast the response to the effect of Girodet's drapery in the painting was generally positive. There was some debate about their weight and whether or not the draperies and hair of the mother should be more accurate and 'mouillées' because it was a flood and there was water everywhere in the rest of the painting. Clarac thought that the draperies should be wet

⁷⁶²Boutard.21st September 1806.2-3. Clarac, Fabre and Landon also described the situation of the family as simply terrible.Clarac.1806.97-98. Marie Jacques Joseph Victorin Fabre, *Salon De 1806*, (Offprint from: *Revue philosophique, littéraire et politique*: Paris, 1806). 32. Landon.13.17.

⁷⁶³Dandree.1806.2.6-9.

⁷⁶⁴Clarac.1806.100.

because the rest of the painting was covered in water, and said that, ‘le peintre a sacrifié la vérité à l’effet’, but Fabre and Landon both felt that this was acceptable because the draperies would not have as much movement if Girodet had rendered them correctly to fit in with the story, and they were seen as an important expressive vehicle.⁷⁶⁵ In contrast the old man’s cloak was seen as ineffective and an unnecessary distraction.⁷⁶⁶

Critics writing later still felt much the same as those writing at the time the two paintings were first exhibited. In 1814 Gault de St Germain admired *Le Déluge* enormously, but he felt that it lacked beauty and grace.⁷⁶⁷ Guizot, writing about *Le Déluge* in 1810 when it was in competition against *Les Sabines* for the ‘prix décennal’ was furious about the use of the male ‘académies’ in the painting and history painting in general, blaming David for encouraging the practice and suggesting that Girodet had extended David’s ‘licence’ by including exaggerated facial expressions which simply did not work on canvas. Guizot described this as an ‘influence fâcheuse’ which he thought was the result of the excesses of the Revolution, stating that instead the modern school should ‘formée d’après l’antique’ and embody an elegant and graceful means of expression.⁷⁶⁸ His reaction to the exaggerated features of the young man demonstrated a deeper fear that the extreme depictions of terror were symbolic of Revolutionary excesses and violence and might inspire the same in those seeing them.⁷⁶⁹

Girodet himself remarked with surprise at accusations of horror from the critics, but was pleased by the response of two soldiers looking at the painting who were emotionally affected by the work.⁷⁷⁰ Only Fabre and Clarac appear to have found something beautiful in the over-exaggeration of the facial expression; Clarac noted the ideal ugliness that Watelet and Quatremère had referred to and Fabre simply wrote that ‘les tableaux de M. Girodet se font

⁷⁶⁵Ibid.101.Fabre.1806.33-34.Landon.13.18.

⁷⁶⁶Fabre.35.Clarac.100-101.Landon.13.18.

⁷⁶⁷Gault de Saint-Germain.1814.104.

⁷⁶⁸Guizot.53.

⁷⁶⁹Ibid.156.

⁷⁷⁰Girodet Trioson.37.

surtout remarquer par la beauté et la perfection du dessin. Celui-ci me parait un chef-d'œuvre de ce genre'.⁷⁷¹

There was therefore an interesting dichotomy of opinion over the nature and form of expression. It appears that Girodet had decided to use both the expressive impact of draperies as proposed by Winckelmann, and the facial gestures of LeBrun's *Passions* in trying to convey the emotional impact of the story in *Le Déluge*. He was successful in achieving this, even though this painting defied conventions in many respects and didn't really please any of the critics. Of particular interest is the association of male 'académies' with the concept of 'laideur'. The word 'laideur' rarely occurred in the art criticism of this period and only started to appear in response to the work of Géricault and Delacroix from 1819 onwards. It would be interesting to explore in more detail the association of male nudity with ugliness at this time.⁷⁷²

Section 6.6: Dress, Morality and Ideal Beauty in Sculpture

The genre of sculpture was particularly associated with an aspiration to ideal beauty thanks in part to the work of Winckelmann. As Griener demonstrated, the public and monumental nature of the medium contextualised its place in post-Revolutionary France as symbolic of the state of French art and the antique art that had been transported to France provided French sculptors with a living connection to the past glories of Greece and Rome.⁷⁷³

⁷⁷¹Fabre.1806.34.

⁷⁷²Amaleena Damlé and Aurélie L'Hostis, *The Beautiful and the Monstrous : Essays in French Literature, Thought and Culture*, (Oxford ; New York : Peter Lang 2010).Gatty.

⁷⁷³Griener.1989.

Nudity was a convention in this genre. Delécluze and Stendhal for example, despite enjoying intense rivalry in respect to the aesthetic value of ‘Romanticism’, both categorically stated that the nude was an essential component of sculpture. Delécluze wrote that for ‘l’art du statuaire...sans l’emploi du nu, il ne peut y avoir de sculpture’.⁷⁷⁴ Stendhal echoed these feelings:

...mais les mœurs modernes repoussant le nu, qui pourtant est l’unique langage de la sculpture, et sans lequel, à proprement parler, il n’y a pas d’art statuaire. C’est fort bien fait d’encourager, de temps à autre, la création d’une belle statue nue; mais ce n’est pas tout.⁷⁷⁵

Despite the theoretical preference for nudity, there were major concerns and a deep moral unease over the use of nudity both in the genres of painting and sculpture. In this section on dress, morality and ideal beauty, I will focus mainly on how critics and sculptors tried to negotiate a solution between the desire to aspire to a sense of ideal beauty, the conventions of the genre and the needs of the French public. The different ways in which figures were clothed echoed many of the recurring themes of this thesis; the demands of the French academic tradition and the hierarchy of genres, the incorporation of Winckelmann’s thoughts on the best way to convey a sense of ideal beauty, the importance of historical accuracy and how this reflected on the status of the French school. The following examples will demonstrate some of these nuances and the response of critics to the different problems associated with clothing and ideal beauty in the genre of sculpture.

I will first provide some examples of the moral unease over nude sculpture and briefly demonstrate how this affected the use of nude and semi-nude figures in painting as well. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that critics often had a problem with nudity and it was not necessarily seen as synonymous with ideal beauty. I will then examine the different ways in

⁷⁷⁴Delécluze.1819.517.

⁷⁷⁵Stendhal.1824.148.

which contemporary ‘heroic’ figures such as Napoleon and General Desaix were depicted. I will look at the form of clothing that was considered appropriate for other modern figures. Finally I will give examples of sculptures that, in the eyes of critics, achieved a sense of ideal beauty. I will suggest that nudity appeared to be acceptable in allegorical figures or allegorical depictions of contemporary figures, but less often when there was no symbolic or allegorical reference attached.

Section 6.6.1: Nudity and Moral Unease

As seen in previous chapter, the balance between the needs of ‘imitation’ and the ‘ideal’ was one that particularly concerned Quatremère de Quincy. The decision by Pigalle and the subscribers for the statue of *Voltaire* to depict Voltaire as a withered old man scantily wrapped in draperies was an example of how Enlightenment thinking on the importance of the ‘inner’ truth being conveyed in an outward ‘vérité’ caused a lot of disquiet and unease in artistic circles. In the eyes of the critics the inner ‘vérité’ was often better clothed and expressed in draperies rather than undressed. This discomfort with the nude form can also be seen in the remarks by critics on the effect that the antique nude statuary on display in the Louvre might have on young innocent minds. In 1806 the critic Pierre Lelièvre expressed his concern about the effect of nude images on public sensibilities and morals. This passage, which I have quoted in full, demonstrates the sense of contemporary anxiety about the effect of nudity:

Je demande, écrit-il dans le compte-rendu du Salon de 1806, si les mœurs sont en sûreté quand de jeunes personnes qu'une curiosité innocente et souvent louable amène au milieu des chefs-d'œuvre de nos artistes sont forcées de promener leurs regards sur ces nudités donc une mère vertueuse doit dérober le spectacle à sa fille...je dis forcée, car nul autre passage ne conduit au salon que la galerie des antiques. Le respect des bienséances a été regardé comme une petitesse d'esprit, une hypocrisie de mœurs indigne d'un esprit élevé. Ce sont les artistes qui ont fondé ces doctrines et cette nouvelle coutume. C'est depuis qu'ils ont acquis dans

la société une influence qu'ils n'avaient pas, que nos jardins et nos monuments publics ont souffert les images que réprouve la pudeur. ...Nous avons des règlements qui défendent sous des peines graves de se montrer nus en public; il y a quelque temps qu'on exigea même des femmes publiques qu'elles voilassent des attraits dont les femmes honnêtes nous prodiguent libéralement la vue. Ces règlements sont-ils tombés en désuétude? Je ne chercherai point à examiner ce qui se passe dans la cœur de la jeune vierge qui, pour la première fois, traverse ces salles si périlleuses...peut être ces réflexions seront-elles un appât...? et peut être qu'en réclamant en faveur de la décence et de la pudeur j'aurai moi-même provoqué des naufrages qui n'auraient pas eu lieu.⁷⁷⁶

Lelièvre's remarks demonstrate the environment in which David's *Les Sabines* was exhibited and contextualises the response of many critics to the painting despite its quality and David's skill. The morality of the nude figures in *Les Sabines* and *Léonidas* had been one of the many complaints about the pictures, with critics remarking on the indecency of the figures and the effect that *Les Sabines* had on other artworks appearing in the Salon. Delécluze's remarks that in *Les Sabines* and *Léonidas* David had been seen as showing off his 'science', or 'exciter les passions les plus grossières' demonstrates that he was probably criticised for precisely those reasons. Delécluze stated that nudity had been a 'un accident trop grave' in the history of art because it had been systemised.⁷⁷⁷ It was for this reason that the *Revue du Salon* criticised the use of nude figures in Grandin's *Un tableau représentant des bergers, qui se disputent le prix du chant*, blaming David's *Les Sabines* for encouraging unnecessary nudity in painting (Figure 6.30):

La nudité de ces bergers n'est pas plus motivée que celle des combattants du tableau des Sabines, de David, dont vous êtes l'élève; et vous devez savoir que l'erreur du maître ne peut, en aucun cas, servir d'autorité pour l'élève; imitez les beautés de David, mais non pas ses défauts.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁶Pierre Lelièvre, *Le Salon De 1806*, (Paris, 1953).70.

⁷⁷⁷Delécluze.1855.217.

⁷⁷⁸Anon.1802.35.

Boutard also described how ‘l’opinion publique ne lui est pas favorable’ to the nudity of the male figures in *Les Sabines*.⁷⁷⁹ The 1808 Salon of the *Examen* remarked how ‘...beaucoup de personnes trouvent de l’inconvenance dans les costumes de Romulus et de Tatius’,⁷⁸⁰ and Fabre mentioned how David’s adjustments to the figure of Tatius had ‘satisfait aux critiques qui lui reprochaient trop des nudités’.⁷⁸¹ Kérarty simply stated that although Greeks permitted the use of nudity ‘notre pudeur actuelle défend le nu’.⁷⁸²

Other objections to the nudity rested on what Stendhal described as ‘lazy imitation’. His objection to the paintings of David’s pupils and much of the sculpture exhibited at the Salon was not the nudity itself. His frustration was against those, in both genres, who imitated antique statues for the sake of it. He believed that most contemporary French sculptors fell into this category and instead felt that ideal beauty and grace rested both in the choice of forms and the creation of something unique and new:

Ce n’est pas en copiant l’antique, c’est en choisissant, comme les sculpteurs grecs parmi les traits que présente la nature, en choisissant ce qui peut nous toucher au dix-neuvième siècle.⁷⁸³

He admired Canova precisely for this reason, because Canova had created his own unique style of sculpture that combined what Stendhal described as a sense of grace with a contemporary desire for ‘l’esprit et le sentiment’. This, he argued was the essence of what the Greeks had done for their time; they had incorporated the spirit of their age (‘la force physique’) with a choice of forms from Nature. He admired the work of the Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen and the French sculptor Bosio for the same reason (Figure 6.31). Instead of subscribing to an imitation of ideal beauty that was just a replica of antique sculptures, both

⁷⁷⁹Jean Baptiste Boutard, *Beaux-Arts. : Salon De 1808. Mes.[Dames] Mongez, Benoist, Le Brun, Etc.* (Offprint from: *Le petit magasin des dames*, 1809: Paris: Solvet 1809).3.

⁷⁸⁰Anon.1808.74.

⁷⁸¹Fabre.1808.223.

⁷⁸²Kérarty.1822.526. See also David.1880. 363.

⁷⁸³Stendhal.1824.150.

of them, like Canova, had found their individual voice and expression of ideal beauty. He railed against David, not because he thought it was wrong of David to paint nude figures, but because his influence had ‘immobilised’ French painting, and had spawned a whole school of boring painters who believed that the only way to produce a good painting was to copy an antique statue.⁷⁸⁴

There was also considerable amount of unease over scantily dressed figures in paintings. In the last chapter I showed how Chaussard had defended the nudity in *Les Sabines* with the reference to Fragonard’s *Le Sacrifice de la rose*. The reaction of critics to Robert Lefèvre’s painting of *Les Callipyges grecques* demonstrates how the limits of decency was stretched by this painting in the eyes of the critics compromising both the integrity of the story and the propriety of visitors to the Salon. As a number of critics remarked, this was not the first time there had been nudity in painting, and the story of *Les Callipyges grecques* was well known.⁷⁸⁵ Although the public reaction was dramatic there was considerable debate between the critics as to exactly why there had been such a strong reaction.⁷⁸⁶ V*** writing for the *Journal de Paris*, believed that the issue lay in the subject matter, but for the writer of the *Décade philosophique*, it was less the manner and treatment of the subject and more the way in which the subject had been treated by Lefèvre.⁷⁸⁷ Landon located the source of the problem in the treatment of dress and its resemblance to contemporary costume.⁷⁸⁸ Boutard thought it was the lack of ‘decency’ and appropriateness, as well as the resemblance of their clothing to modern day fashion that was the issue rather than nudity:

...ce qui la blesse ici, ce n’est point la nudité, mais le dévergondage des personnages, c’est cette fantaisie plus que bizarre de ces sœurs grecques, trop ressemblante à *nos sœurs de l’Opéra*; c’est la présence, l’action, l’expression de

⁷⁸⁴Ibid.128.

⁷⁸⁵Boutard.5th September 1802. 3.

⁷⁸⁶Landon.1802.27.

⁷⁸⁷V***.59. Anon.1802.107.

⁷⁸⁸Landon.2. 27. Grigsby.

physionomie du jeune Grec. ... Par exemple, de ces deux sœurs, dont l'action est la même; l'une est beaucoup plus indécente que l'autre, parce qu'elle a l'air moins coquette, plus tranquille, et que sa tunique, plus ample, moins légère, et roulée sur les reins, ressemble davantage à un cotillon. C'est donc un sujet qui ne convenait nullement à une exposition publique.⁷⁸⁹

The scandalous reception of Lefèvre's painting resulted in it being removed from the Salon and it was suggested by Boutard and others that Lefèvre should stick to portrait painting.⁷⁹⁰ Although the response to this painting may have been extreme, it demonstrates the sensitivity over the use of nude and semi-nude figures in painting. It also demonstrates that there was no sense in which either male or female nudity was seen as automatically synonymous with the expression of ideal beauty, although plenty of paintings and sculptures featuring nude and semi-nude figures were exhibited at the Salon. By looking at different categories of sculpture and the different forms of dress appropriate to each I will demonstrate where ideal beauty could be found.

Section 6.6.2: Modern Costume and Drapery

In 1813 Boutard remarked how he admired 'les draperies dans quelques statues antiques'. He believed that these were important because they conveyed the sense of the 'mouvement du personnage', they could follow 'les plus belles lignes du corps, à découvrir à propos quelques uns des parties les plus larges', and finally they were able to indicate 'l'ensemble de la figure'. Boutard made these remarks in the context of discussing the problem of how to dress contemporary figures in works of sculpture so they could also convey a sense of timelessness and emulate Winckelmann's concept of the 'heroic' ideal.

⁷⁸⁹ Boutard.17th September 1802.3.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.4.Vandeul and Tourneux.132.

6.6.2.1: Contemporary Figures

Boutard set out the dilemma of how best to depict contemporary figures in his 1813 essay on the topic. This essay focused on the balance that needed to be found between accurate imitation that established the identity of the figure, and drapery that indicated movement and outlined the shape of the body.⁷⁹¹ He used as examples three different statues that Houdon had produced of Voltaire; a ‘portrait-bust’ where there was no drapery, a full-length figure of Voltaire seated in antique drapery, and another ‘portrait-bust’, but this time with a wig and Voltaire dressed in eighteenth-century costume (Figure 6.32). Referring back to Winckelmann and the importance Winckelmann had placed on clothing as a way in which to place a figure historically, he made the point that no portrait was recognisable by itself. In the absence of knowledge that posterity would have on the identity of model, what remained was, in his eyes, the ‘tradition’. In the case of Voltaire, if his face stopped being recognised, at least it was possible to establish through his clothing the age in which he lived:

On craint que l’absence, ou l’exacritude des costumes ne soit pour la postérité un obstacle à reconnaître les statues des héros dont nous voulons lui transmettre l’image; vaine objection. Nul portrait n’est reconnaissable par lui-même, et si, à défaut de la présence du modèle, il n’est accompagné d’une tradition. Or, tant que cette tradition se conserve, le costume n’est pas nécessaire; et, sitôt qu’elle est perdue, il ne sert de rien.⁷⁹²

The deeper issue of how to transmit a sense of ‘glory’, the glory of Voltaire and France for instance was the broader issue at the back of Boutard’s mind and one that concerned critics, sculptors and sitters alike. Napoleon in a letter dated 8th March 1808 addressed to the members of the *Institut des Beaux Arts*, stated there was something anachronistic and strange about dressing contemporary figures in the style of another nation and another time to celebrate French success and glory:

⁷⁹¹Boutard.13th February 1813.1.

⁷⁹²Boutard.1813.2.

Athènes et Rome sont encore célèbres par leurs succès dans les arts; l'Italie, dont les peuples me sont chers à tant de titres, s'est distinguée la première parmi les nations modernes. J'ai cœur de voir les artistes Français effacer la gloire d'Athènes et de l'Italie. C'est à vous à réaliser de si belles espérances. Vous pouvez compter sur ma protection.⁷⁹³ ...J'aimerais beaucoup mieux qu'on habillât les gens tels qu'ils sont habituellement que des les habiller d'un costume qui n'est pas le leur. Habillez...les Grecs et les Romains comme ils l'étaient dans les temps anciens, mais habillez les Français de nos jours comme ils sont au XIX^{ème} siècle. Faire autrement chose est ridicule et bizarre.⁷⁹⁴

Despite Napoleon's comments on the topic, most people agreed with Quatremère on the unattractiveness of contemporary clothing. The critic Voiart neatly summarised the issue when he wrote that '...Il est certain que l'ingratitude du costume présentait de grandes difficultés'.⁷⁹⁵ Boutard described the artistic limitations of modern dress as follows:

Rien de tout cela (ne) se peut-il faire avec notre costume moderne? costume composé de je ne sais combien de petits pièces, qui, après avoir coupé la figure en quatre parties dans sa hauteur, la partagent en ceux de haut en bas, puis se brisent encore elles-mêmes en une infinité des subdivisions à chaque mouvement du corps; et cela toujours par des plis horizontaux, précisément en travers des lignes de la nature.⁷⁹⁶

Boutard pointed out in his Salon of 1812 that in the previous year's Salon there had been four statues of generals fully dressed in contemporary French uniform and another four including Dupaty's *Statue de Général Leclerc* in various forms of undress (Figure 6.33). Personally he found the four dressed figures 'infiniment plus désagréables' than those which were semi-nude or nude. As he wrote, 'Des vestes, des chausses, et des bottes colossales seront toujours un objet choquant'. The main reason for this was the three dimensional nature of sculpture and the fact that in his eyes the coats and uniforms simply did not work within a space the

⁷⁹³ Joachim Le Breton, Denis Woronoff, and Udolpho van de Sandt, *Beaux-Arts*, (Paris : Belin 1989).83.

⁷⁹⁴ Quoted Benoit, J. 'L'image officielle de Napoléon'. Jérémie Benoit and Philippe Kaenel, 'Napoléon 1er Vu À Travers La Caricature', (Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2003).78.

⁷⁹⁵ Voiart.1804.5.26.

⁷⁹⁶ Boutard.13th February 1813.1.

same way that the depiction of a nude body did.⁷⁹⁷ Cartellier's *Connétable de France* seems to have been one of the few statues in his eyes that managed to overcome the obstacles of French clothing:

Les lignes, les méplats du nu se laissent voir çà et là sous le vêtement; le torse n'est pas, comme la plupart des statues, avec le costume moderne, une masse informe à laquelle la tête, les bras, les jambes semblent autant de parties ajoutées. Ici, le vêtement est, sous tous les rapports, exécuté très artistement.⁷⁹⁸

These difficulties over costume are particularly evident when looking at the different ways in which contemporary 'heroes', such as Napoleon, were dressed. The variety of costume used in these statues and the different opinions on the topic demonstrates the unease over dress and whether or not figures should be depicted accurately or evoke Winckelmann's 'heroic' ideal because of their 'historic' significance. Taking into account Napoleon's personal view on the use of antique drapery in sculpture it is interesting to look briefly at the different ways in which he was portrayed. I have also compared these different depictions with the varying ways in which images of *Général Desaix* were clothed because of the scandal over the bronze sculpture of him by Dejoux for the column in the Places de Victoires.

6.6.2.2: Napoléon and Général Desaix

In Chaudet's sculpture for the Column of the Grande Armée in the Place Vendôme Napoleon was depicted in Roman costume. He was also represented in a toga in two works by Antoine-Denis Chaudet, *Le consul Napoléon Bonaparte* (1802-3), *Napoléon en législateur* (1804-5),

⁷⁹⁷Boutard.13th February 1813.4.

⁷⁹⁸Boutard.1810.1.

and François Frederic Lemot's colossal *Napoléon en triomphateur* (1806-8)⁷⁹⁹ (Figure 6.34). Landon admired Chaudet's depiction of Napoleon in draperies and was also appreciative of Roland's attempts to negotiate the difficulties of imperial dress in his 1808 *Modèle de la statue de S.M. l'Empereur et Roi, pour la salle des séances publiques de l'Institut*.⁸⁰⁰ (Figure 6.35):

M. Roland a su vaincre les difficultés que présente l'imitation du costume impérial. Le manteau, noble et magnifique pour l'usage personnel, mais ennemi du nu, dont il dérobe les proportions et les formes, est extrêmement difficile à ajuster dans un tableau, et semble encore être moins favorable à la sculpture. L'emploi qu'en a fait M. Roland paraît ne laisser rien à désirer. En substituant à la tunique longue d'usage une tunique courte, qui ne descend que jusqu'au genou, il a pris une licence dont on ne saurait le blâmer: elle lui donne le moyen de faire ressortir la jambe gauche; ce que contribue à donner de l'élégance et de la légèreté à la statue.⁸⁰¹

The story of Napoleon's response to Canova's depiction of him in the nude as *Napoléon en Mars pacificateur* is well known.⁸⁰² It is worth briefly revisiting however, because as well as touching on the difficult boundary between the demands of portraiture and the use of nudity it also demonstrates the different interests involved in the decision making process of the commission of public monuments (Figure 6.36).

The sculpture was first discussed in 1802 when Napoleon was only First Consul. At that point discussions with Canova via Napoleon's brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, centred on Napoleon being depicted in military uniform on horseback, rather than in 'historical' dress, i.e. nudity.⁸⁰³ Canova was not interested in the commission, but Napoleon persisted, and eventually by various means Canova agreed to come to Paris and undertake the work.⁸⁰⁴ At that point, Canova was in the driving seat regarding the commission. He not only was able to

⁷⁹⁹David J. E. Gilks, 'Some Notes on Canova's Napoleon as Mars the Pacifier', (2008).7.

⁸⁰⁰Landon.1808.29.

⁸⁰¹Ibid.1808.32.

⁸⁰²Gilks; Johns; O'Brien; Quatremère de Quincy; Wardropper and Rowlands.

⁸⁰³Quatremère de Quincy.1834.124.

⁸⁰⁴Johns.1998.

negotiate his asking price of 120,000 francs, but also lobbied Napoleon on a number of political issues important to him.⁸⁰⁵ At that point, Napoleon was also still only First Consul, and as Quatremère pointed out later in his biography of Canova, at the time of the commission no one was certain as to the longevity of Napoleon's political life.⁸⁰⁶ Although Quatremère felt that it was safer all round for Napoleon to be depicted in military uniform on horseback, and the nudity reportedly disturbed Napoleon from the outset, it was Canova, and the antiquarian Ennio Quirino Visconti, who was curator of antiquities at the Louvre, who argued in its favour.⁸⁰⁷ Vivant Denon also supported a nude sculpture, and pleaded for a return to 'good taste', which for him meant nudity in sculpture. In 1808 Napoleon had questioned the nudity of the male figures in David's *Les Sabines*, and the extensive male nudity in his *Léonidas aux Thermopyles*, so it was not a convention that he naturally embraced or felt comfortable with.⁸⁰⁸ This is possibly one of the reasons why, despite much eager anticipation by the French public when it arrived in Paris in 1811, and despite Canova regarding the statue as one of his best works, Napoleon ordered it to be put into storage instead of being put on public display with the reason given that it was 'too athletic'.⁸⁰⁹ The response by critics to Canova's sculpture, however, was largely positive. Describing the monument as 'la statue héroïque en marbre' the anonymous critic B*** saluted Canova's work with the words: 'Bravo, M. Canova! votre statue a de la noblesse, de la sagesse et de la fierté dans l'exécution; c'est un des plus beaux morceaux de sculpture moderne'.⁸¹⁰ Marie

⁸⁰⁵Ibid.92.Bordes.42-43.

⁸⁰⁶Quatremère de Quincy.1834.124.

⁸⁰⁷For Visconti's attitude, see Malamani, *Canova*, p.113, and F.Boyer, L'histoire du "Napoléon colossal" de Canova', *Rev Et Nap*, 42 (1940), 193-4. Quoted O'Brien.359.

⁸⁰⁸Gilks.2008.7.

⁸⁰⁹See O'Brien.359.

⁸¹⁰B***, *Les Artistes Traités De La Bonne Manière : Ou, L'ami Des Peintres Vivans*, (Paris : Se vend chez Maudet, 1810).11.

Jacques Joseph Victorin Fabre was also enthusiastic about the piece describing it as ‘la plus brillante de la dernière exposition’.⁸¹¹

Gilks has pointed out how *Napoléon en Mars* was not the only nude sculpture of Napoleon so speculation as to why Napoleon may have reacted this way has rested on the 1809 scandal where a monumental bronze sculpture portraying the late *Général Louis-Charles-Antoine Desaix* by Dejoux for the Place des Victoires, in heroic nudity was greeted with laughter at its unveiling, and subsequently removed from public view⁸¹² (Figure 6.37). Previous images of Desaix ranged from those in which he was depicted in French military dress, such as Gois’s 1802 plaster monument of him crossing the Rhine, which was praised for the energy and movement that it conveyed, to the 1804 *Bas-relief du Tombeau de Desaix* by Moitte where Desaix was dressed in draperies but surrounded by French soldiers in contemporary uniform⁸¹³ (Figure 6.38 and Figure 6.39). In his *Annales du Musée* Landon hinted at how he was going to try and explain the reasons why the sculpture of Desaix hadn’t worked, but in the end he simply tried to bolster Dejoux’s reputation in a more general sense defending him as an artist who was held in high public esteem.⁸¹⁴ Landon used this piece to provide a general justification of the use of nudity for those who had sacrificed their life for their country or served the public good in some other way, stating that antiquity would have recognised this contribution by raising a statue.⁸¹⁵ The reason why some nude depictions of contemporary figures worked while others didn’t wasn’t entirely obvious.

The comparison of the public response to Dejoux’s nude sculpture of Desaix and Canova’s nude statue of Napoleon demonstrates that on the surface there was no clear rule or convention about the nudity in sculpture and what was and was not acceptable to the French

⁸¹¹Marie Jacques Joseph Victorin Fabre, *Salon De Peinture*, (Offprint from: Mercure de France: Paris, 1810-1811). 94.

⁸¹²Gilks.2008.7.O’Brien.359.

⁸¹³Voiart.22.

⁸¹⁴Landon.1808.2.48-31.

⁸¹⁵Ibid.1812.35.

public. Ducray-Duminil's review of Julien's statue of *Poussin*, however, demonstrates where the boundary lay between the use of drapery and the use of contemporary dress. It also demonstrates the way sculptors, like painters, sometimes applied the incorrect conventions of clothing to a subject.

6.6.2.3: Julien's Statue of Poussin

In this statute the figure of Poussin was modestly draped, the folds of the material wrapped around the seated figure and only the bare right arm and lower armpit demonstrating that Poussin was nude underneath the drapery (Figure 6.40). Despite the voluminous nature of Julien's draperies and a modest amount of exposed flesh, Ducray-Duminil heavily criticised the sculptor Julien. His essay on the topic first of all exaggerated the extent of Poussin's nudity. Speculating on the reason behind the sculptor's choice of drapery for Poussin he mocked him by suggesting that the way Julien had dressed him, meant to indicate that either Poussin lived in Italy or some other hot country where he could spend the day with no clothes on. Alternatively he suggested that it was an image of Poussin in the middle of the night having just risen from his bed. In Ducray-Duminil's eyes although Poussin was a famous artist he was neither a god nor a hero, so he could find no other explanation for Julien's choice of dress.⁸¹⁶

The *Critique raisonnée des tableaux du Salon* of 1804 featuring a dialogue between the two imaginary Roman travellers Pasquino and Scapin was more forthright, stating that statues ought to represent either 'les grandes actions en général, ou l'état propre et habituel de leurs auteurs'. The imaginary character Pasquino continued:

⁸¹⁶ M. François Guillaume Ducray Duminil, *Beaux-Arts : Salon De Peinture*, (Offprint from: Petites affiches de Paris Paris, 1804-1805).96.

Homère, Virgile, Raphaël, Poussin n'ont pas de moments. Il faut les représenter poètes ou peintres. Quand je vois une belle statue d'Homère ou de Virgile, je me ressouviens de tous les travaux de ces deux poètes illustres. Ainsi quand je verrai une noble statue de Poussin, je me ressouviendrai de tous ces tableaux qui ont si fort illustré sa vie. C'est donc à l'histoire à transmettre à la postérité les actions des grands hommes, le statuaire ne doit transmettre que les traits de leurs figures.⁸¹⁷

The response to Julien's *Poussin* and Boutard's thoughts around the topic of clothing and how to situation a figure in its historical context demonstrates that these figures were not expected to aspire to a sense of ideal beauty despite the timeless nature of the genre and an expectation that some connection and reference to antiquity might be appropriate. It demonstrates that although drapery was often seen as the obvious compromise for the depiction of modern figures, the nuances of how this might work in practice was not straightforward. The next section will look at how nudity did appear to be acceptable in allegorical sculpture and how it was also associated with ideal beauty.

Section 6.6.3: Allegory

With allegorical subject matter the convention was that figures could be nude. As with antique statuary, drapery acted as a counterbalance to break up the 'dryness' of the figure on its own. The response by critics to allegorical statues demonstrates that there appears to be an acceptance of nudity in these images and they were also seen to convey a sense of ideal beauty. After looking at a few allegorical statues I will also briefly look at the response to a few allegorical representations of the Imperial Family, and ask if the convention of allegory was one of the reasons why Canova's nude statue of *Napoléon en Mars pacificateur* was a critical success whereas Desaix's nude statue was not.

⁸¹⁷Various.1804.82.

The nude statue of *Œdipe, enfant, rappelé à la vie par le berger qui l'a détaché de l'arbre* by Chaudet in which the figure of the shepherd was balanced with a small amount of drapery elicited almost universal praise and it was seen as representing an expression of ideal beauty (Figure 6.41). Delécluze in his *Salon de 1819* described the sculpture as exhibiting '...la vérité avec noblesse... en lisant l'expression de la bonté et du génie'.⁸¹⁸ In a similar manner, Chaussard believed that it achieved his own particular and unusual vision of the sentimental 'beau idéal'.

Chaudet's sculpture of *Cyparisse* was also praised by Chaussard for evoking a sense of ideal beauty and having draperies that 'tombe avec le meilleur goût' combined with '(une) pureté du dessin':⁸¹⁹

Toutes les compositions de cet artiste sont marquées au coin de la sensibilité; il recherché par goût les scènes attendrissantes, et cette disposition de son esprit fait l'éloge de son cœur. Il est beau, il est utile que le ciseau proclame la compassion, nous instruisse aux affections douces, nous formes aux passions généreuses.⁸²⁰

Boutard used the example of the draperies in Chaudet's *Cyparisse* as a way of demonstrating how a skilled artist could create a sense of unity, and a sense of natural and elegant movement.⁸²¹

Canova, like David was an exceptional talent, and he had his own particular form of expression that did not necessarily fit into French academic tradition. One of the reasons that Quatremère particularly admired Canova's work was because he felt Canova was able to combine accuracy of 'imitation' as one would find in a portrait or statue-portrait, with an

⁸¹⁸Delécluze.1819.319.

⁸¹⁹Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Beaux-Arts. Exposition Des Ouvrages De Peinture, Sculpture, Architecture, Gravure, Dessins, Modèles, Composés Par Les Artistes Vivans Et Exposés Dans Le Salon Du Musée Central Des Arts, Le 1er Fructidor an Vii De La République*, (Offprint from: La décade philosophique: Paris, 1799).539.

⁸²⁰Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard, *Salon De 1801*, (Offprint from: Journal des arts, des sciences et de littérature: Paris, 1801).221.

⁸²¹Boutard. 26th February 1811.2.Ft.2.

‘ideal’ sense of form characterised by the sensuous and tactile nature of work.⁸²² As with the statue of *Psyché et Amour*, where Quatremère had advised on the draperies, the waxed finish of the draperies that covered ‘la partie inférieure de la figure’ and the furnishings of Canova’s semi-nude statue of Napoleon’s sister Paolina Borghese as *Vénus Victrix* are examples of Quatremère’s ‘ideal’ sense of form (Figure 6.42). Another example of the successful allegorical representation of a member of the Imperial family was Canova’s statue of *Madame Mère*, exhibited in 1808.⁸²³ In this sculpture Canova presented Napoleon’s mother in antique dress (Figure 6.43). The response by critics to this sculpture was very positive. Boutard felt that the mix of ‘les principes généraux de la beauté à la figure’ with the ‘habitudes d’un modèle particulier’ epitomised his understanding of what the term ideal beauty meant. Boutard added that portraits executed after these principles not only were the most beautiful, but also the most ‘ressemblants’, and made it possible, in the case of *Madame Mère*, to ‘élever un portrait jusqu’à la beauté idéale’.⁸²⁴

These few examples demonstrate the way in which Canova managed to convey a sense of ideal beauty even in a form of representation that would not normally be considered ideal. Canova’s allegorical representations of Napoleon’s family demonstrated the way in which Canova managed to balance the demands of portraiture and ‘imitation’ and at the same time convey a sense of ideal beauty and timelessness. It might also explain why Canova’s nude statue of Napoleon was a critical success even if Napoleon himself felt that it was too ‘athletic’. It seems that the allegorical representation of an image meant that a figure represented could be ‘nude’ rather than ‘naked’, a difference in wording that symbolically represented the difference between nudity that was acceptable and appropriate, and nudity that was inaccurate and immoral. The balance between the two different representations of

⁸²²Quatremère de Quincy.1834.149-159.

⁸²³O’Brien.

⁸²⁴Boutard.8th January1809. 2.

nudity was fine. David had referenced ancient and contemporary allegorical sculpture as the inspiration for the nudity in *Les Sabines*. The incongruity of this in a painting that represented a historical rather than allegorical scene was possibly one of the reasons why many of the critics responded to the painting with charges of indecency.

Conclusion

The range of examples that has been given so far in this section on dress, morality and ideal beauty demonstrate that in sculpture the nuances of how to dress figures was difficult for everyone to negotiate. Although there was the belief that nudity was the correct form of dress for sculpture in reality this appears to have only been with allegorical or semi-allegorical figures. With these, the perfect form of the body accessorised with a piece of drapery was often felt to convey a sense of ideal beauty. Outside that particular range of subject matter there was a great unease about the topic of nudity for moral reasons, which is why Quatremère and others believed that antique drapery was the ideal compromise. Looking at the different ways in which Napoleon and his generals were depicted demonstrates the uncertainty over the question of how to dress contemporary figures in a style that evoked the heroism and grandeur of the age without offending public sensibilities or appearing ridiculous. The different styling of images of Napoleon and General Desaix demonstrate that with a few exceptions nudity was not the preferred form of depiction and expression of contemporary figures, unless they were given the umbrella of allegory disassociating nudity from portraiture. This possibly accounts for the different response to the nude statues of Napoleon and General Desaix. In the depiction of modern figures who were not public figures or ‘heroes’ the rules of portraiture appear to have applied despite the desire by many artists to use drapery to evoke a sense of timelessness. At the same time, the importance that Winckelmann gave to the placement of historical figures within their own time was also given important consideration. These different ways in which Winckelmann’s work was used

to support different arguments in turn once again demonstrates the degree of influence that his work commanded in French art theory and practice.

Of particular interest even though it has no immediate relationship to the topic of ideal beauty, is the way in which Napoleon allowed himself to be depicted draped and nude despite him clearly stating his own personal preference for contemporary clothing. This perhaps demonstrates an insecurity in the way in which he fashioned himself in art, which allowed him to be influenced by figures such as Denon and Canova.

In conclusion, the definition of ideal beauty in art and art criticism was complex and there was no clear association between the use of the male nude figure and the definition of ideal beauty. On the contrary, more carefully nuanced qualities such as the appropriateness of genre a painting or sculpture belonged to, the historical accuracy of the image and the sedate expression of emotion appear together to have conveyed and defined a sense of the 'beau idéal'. Within this drapery as well as the form of the body was an essential component of ideal beauty, since drapery was often the clearest indicator of a genre a work belonged to as well as been able to express qualities like historical accuracy, a sense of movement and emotional effects. This chapter, as with previous ones, demonstrates the importance of Winckelmann's work on costume and drapery in French art and how both the connoisseurial interest in costume and aesthetic qualities that he attributed to drapery were reflected in art theory and art practice. The significance of Winckelmann's role in France is evident by the way in which his work was used in different ways to support different definitions of ideal beauty. Using costume and drapery as a hermeneutic to explore his work and the art theory and art criticism has therefore enabled us to see different perspectives and opinions on the nature and definition of ideal beauty in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century France.

Thesis Conclusion

Although this thesis is divided into three sections, methodologically its focus really falls into two parts. These two parts deal with the definition of ideal beauty in different ways.

The first part set up a proposition that costume and drapery formed part of the definition of ideal beauty in the French work of Winckelmann and in the art theory of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. By examining in detail the extensive research that Winckelmann undertook on antique clothing, the materials used, the ornaments and styles worn it has focused our attention on a number of key factors that made up Winckelmann's definition of the ideal. Examples of this include the importance that Winckelmann attached to 'extremities' because of their expressive effect, whether these were parts of the body such as the hands, the hair or the ear of an antique statue, or whether they were the borders and tassels on cloaks, the pierced earrings on statues of goddesses, or the number of straps on a sandal. Other examples are the way in which Winckelmann charted historical periods through costume, and teleologically the way in he used the superiority of Greek costume and drapery to not only prove that Greek art was the best but also to propose that contemporary artists should take account of the lessons about the expressive effect of the fold and the throw of cloth in their own work. With this approach to the material I have also been able to offer insights into how Winckelmann envisaged the spiritual qualities of grace and the ideal being manifested in works of art. Most importantly has demonstrated the scope and range of Winckelmann's research and approach to the topic of ideal beauty and the balanced way in which he sought to combine and connect the essence and the essential part of art.

Examining the costume dictionaries and art dictionaries of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century France shows a similar wealth of interest in the connoisseurial details of

antique costume and their aesthetic and expressive effect. Not only does it contextualise the work of Winckelmann deeper into French artistic life, it also shows the different ways in which Winckelmann's work was used to support different approaches and readings on the topic of ideal beauty. It highlights the importance of Mengs in French artistic theory and also hints at a deeper connection between Winckelmann's definitions and concepts of grace, the role of drapery and the 'je ne sais quoi'. This supports other historical research on the impact of Winckelmann in France. It also demonstrates the way in which Winckelmann's work was used to support the call for the regeneration of the French school of painting. The nuances of how Winckelmann's work was adapted to meet the needs of the French public are also important to note. In particular the hermeneutic of costume and drapery has shown that in contrast to a definition of ideal beauty being configured solely in the emblem of the male nude in France, there were moral problems with the use of representation of nudity in art.

These two sections demonstrate that there is a case to make that the definition of ideal beauty was a combination of the form and contour of the body combined with the expressive effect of drapery which was able to convey qualities such as movement, harmony, emotion and grace. The final section of this thesis has applied this approach by looking at a small selection of theoretical work on the nature of ideal beauty and on a significant collection of salon criticism. The approach has demonstrated that there were conflicting voices in the debate over the construct of ideal beauty and its artistic representation. It separates out the obtuse and highly theoretical quarrel between Quatremère de Quincy and Éméric-David into a clearly demarcated distinction between a preference for drapery by Quatremère and a rejection of the spiritual qualities of ideal beauty symbolically represented by the preference for the nude figure as its emblem by Éméric-David. With the critic Chaussard, it demonstrates the way in which he tried to appropriate the work of Vien and David for his

own purposes and challenge the hierarchy of the genres by praising elements of the ideal in works of art that were not able to aspire to it.

Looking at the salon criticism has been equally illuminating. It has demonstrated how the hierarchy of the genres held fast in this period. It demonstrates how historical accuracy was important for the status of the French school of history painting. It also demonstrates that the stated preference for the expression of emotion was through clothing rather than through LeBrun's formulaic *Traité de Passions*. It also shows the anxiety about the nude 'académies' as symbolic of the threat of ugliness in art. Finally it demonstrates the complexity of dress in the genre of sculpture, and how even in this medium there was anxiety about the use of the nudity. The negotiations between the needs of the French public for modesty, the wish to convey the heroism of the time, the requirements of accurate portraiture and the unattractiveness of contemporary French male dress can be seen the different ways in which contemporary figures were depicted in painting and sculpture.

In coming to the end of my thesis not only do I believe I have made a contribution to the definition of ideal beauty and to Winckelmann studies, but I am intrigued about the other questions that it prompts for art in this period; the complex figure of David and his intentionality in using nude figures in *Les Sabines* and *Léonidas*, other ways of looking at the use of male nudity by some of David's pupils, the meaning of dress and nudity in the work of Delacroix and Géricault, and the exploration of the abject and the anxiety that the prospect of ugliness rather than beauty that was prompted amongst the artistic establishment by their work.

FIN

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