Chapter 52

Anthea Callen

IDEAL MASCULINITIES

An anatomy of power[1]

IN THE SEARCH for an affirmative answer to Montesquieu's question 'Does natural law submit women to men?', the question of the 'nature' of woman became a priority of Enlightenment research in the eighteenth century.[2] Human anatomy was an important focus of this preoccupation in medical science: the male body provided an anatomical norm against which femaleness could be construed.

The terms 'male' and 'female' here refer to biological distinctions of gender, with the proviso that the sciences are, in themselves, culturally produced and by no means ideologically neutral or trans-historical. I link the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' to the cultural naming and attribution of human characteristics according to binary principles: they work to define difference with respect to gender in ways that valorise particular qualities over others. This process of differentiation is cultural, serving to position men and women within a hierarchical social order.

Visual representations of the body are particularly powerful in this respect: their impact is direct and immediate. They depend upon a common visual vocabulary – of marks, of lines, shading, and sometimes color – a vocabulary learned and as such admitting those with educational privilege to shared view and meaning which excludes others; all may look (if they have access to the image) but for some the body is 'foreign', undecipherable. In the present context I look here specifically at classicism – the language of an educated elite – as a style, and of the messages it contains. Visual images are, then, potent mediators of the lived experience of the body, our own and others, giving us ways of conceptualising and describing the bodily. In pictorial images we recognise likeness or difference; we identify ourselves, or find a different 'other,' an other which, equally powerfully, serves to reinforce our image of our own bodily existence. Yet however carefully observed, the represented body is an abstracted body: the product of ideas that are culturally and historically specific, and in which the social formation of the producer determines the appearance and meanings of the body; its meanings are then further modified

in the act of consumption. The making and meaning of the visual body's cultural message is, therefore, a dynamic process under constant re-vision.

My argument therefore assumes that there is no such thing as a 'natural' body: all bodies – whether an historical anatomy or a Raphael nude – are socially constructed; all are representations which embody a complex web of cultural ideas, including notions of race, class and gender difference. Our own bodies, and our experience of them are also culturally mediated. My particular interest is in the overlap between art and medicine in visualising the body, and most notably in anatomies which could serve the needs of both disciplines – anatomies which focused on the outwardly visible structures: the skeleton and superficial muscles. This essay concentrates on the skeleton, and my principal example for analysis is an Albinus *Human Skeleton*, published in Leiden in 1747.[3] The fact that 'human skeleton' refers to a male skeleton is symptomatic of the normative function of the male body in anatomical paradigms. My interest is in decoding the visual language of anatomies: the messages contained not simply in their subject matter, but in the choice and use of medium, of pose types, proportions, setting and accessories. What view of masculinity was constructed in medical and artistic anatomies, and how was that view materially embodied? In a close visual analysis of the Albinus, I want to show what such material can reveal.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century anatomies sexual difference was not a principal concern. Early eighteenth-century thinkers still considered the only anatomical differences between men and women were to be found in their sexual organs. Yet it is clear from extant examples that differentiation appears both in the choice of the sex of the subject depicted, and in the dissected examples selected for illustration. Thus the vast majority of 'in depth' dissections – of internal organs, veins, nervous system, etc. – depicted the male body, whereas the female body was used almost exclusively to illuminate woman's sexual difference – her reproductive organs and the gravid uterus.[4] The assumption implicit here was that male and female bodies are essentially the same, and that the male anatomy could represent both in all respects apart from reproduction.

However, by the mid-eighteenth century this assumption came under attack, as physiological bases for gender difference – for man's 'natural' superiority – were sought. In 1775, for example, the French physician Pierre Roussel reproached his colleagues for considering woman similar to man: 'The essence of sex is not confined to a single organ but extends, through more or less perceptible nuances, into every part.'[5]

Up until the early seventeenth century, then, the human skeleton was synonymous with the male skeleton. Thus, although *gravida* images were common, the first known illustration of a female skeleton dates from 1583, in a crude engraving by Platter, redrawn and reversed in 1605 by Bauhin.[6] Detailed investigation of a distinctively female anatomy only began in the second half of the eighteenth century. As has been shown in respect of the Scot William Hunter's obstetrical atlas, published in 1774, 'seeing was knowing':[7] the visual held primacy, and illustrations of natural phenomena were taken to constitute reality. Thus the visual evidence of skeletons – or rather, and crucially, of their culturally mediated form as *illustrations* of skeletons – came to be used as objective scientific proof of woman's 'natural difference'. Given its long and unquestioned visual history and hegemony, the male

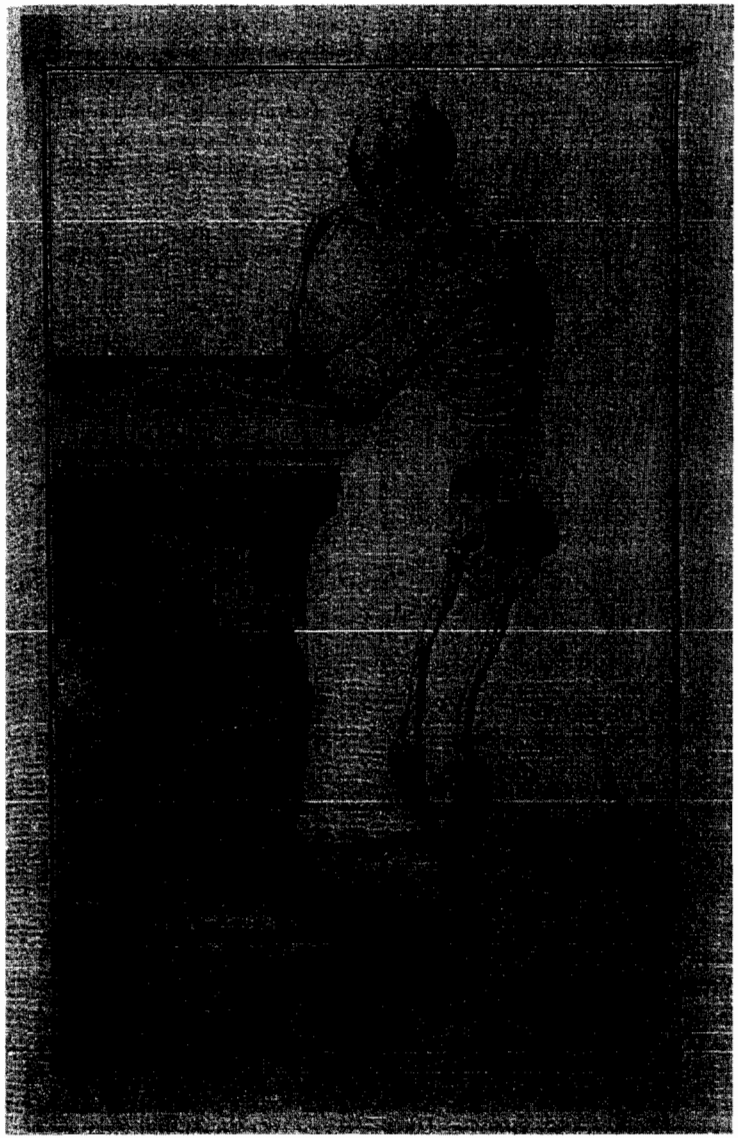

Figure 52.1 Lateral view of the human male skeleton, by Bernard, after Andrea Vesalius (Courtesy the Wellcome Institute Library, London)

skeleton provided an established norm; it was thus against a male skeletal paradigm that the female skeleton came to be measured – and found wanting. In particular, medical and artistic authorities accepted the male skeleton by the Netherlandish anatomist Bernard Siegfried Albinus (Figure 52.1), which remained unsurpassed for at least three-quarters of a century. My analysis depends upon the view that anatomical prints, like all other visual images, work actively in the production of cultural values – in this case ideals of the male body and of masculinity.

Pose and proportions

Anatomies are, of course, representations of the human body – albeit bodies stripped in varying degrees to the skeleton. This Albinus figure – it is constructed as such – stands upright and gestures evocatively as if still living. The pose is meaningful both in the practical sense, in that it displays the skeletal structure in an informative manner, and discursively through its iconographic references. Set in a landscape, the figure's eloquent left index finger, the spread right hand, the tilt of the head and the classical *contrapposto* communicate the graceful melancholy of a Poussinesque *et in arcadia ego* (Figure 52.2). Such symbolism was common in anatomical prints, and can be seen even more explicitly in the Vesalius *memento mori* anatomy, 'Bones of the human body,' in which the male skeleton reflects upon a tomb (Figure 52.1).

The pose chosen for the Albinus figure is not accidental. Drawn directly from the classical tradition, in a form which would have been immediately recognisable to his elite, classically educated Enlightenment audience, it is based on the Apollo Belvedere (Figure 52.3) – according to Winckelmann the 'highest ideal of art among the works of antiquity that have escaped destruction':

> His build is sublimely superhuman, and his stance bears witness to the fullness of his grandeur. An eternal springtime, as if in blissful Elysium, clothes the charming manliness of maturity with grace and youthfulness, and plays with soft tenderness on the proud build of his limbs.[8]

A French writer following Winckelmann echoed these sentiments, finding the Apollo the Greek statue which, 'by his air of grandeur, stirs your passion, penetrates you and makes you sense the flash and brilliance of a super-human majesty which he sheds . . . all around him.'[9] Albinus's choice of pose thus intentionally imbued the male anatomical ideal with connotations of the Sun God – the god of intellectual, moral and, according to eighteenth-century thinkers, (homo)erotic en*light*enment.[10] Kenneth Clark was more circumspect in his admiration than his eighteenth-century precursors:

> [Apollo] was beautiful because his body conformed to certain laws of proportion and so partook of the divine beauty of mathematics . . . Since justice can only exist when facts are measured in the light of reason, Apollo is the god of justice, vanquisher of darkness.[11]

And hence ignorance. The Albinus anatomy thus signals reason dispelling ignorance, and simultaneously, the dark shadow of the other, the feminine. Commonly taken to represent the moment after the youthful Apollo's slaughter of the Pythian serpent with an arrow, for Winckelmann the sculpture was 'an ideal conflation of the austerely sublime and sensuously beautiful', with the 'potential to be the focus of competing fantasies of unyielding domination and exquisite desirability.'[12] The combination of supreme power and vulnerability identified in the Apollo Belvedere

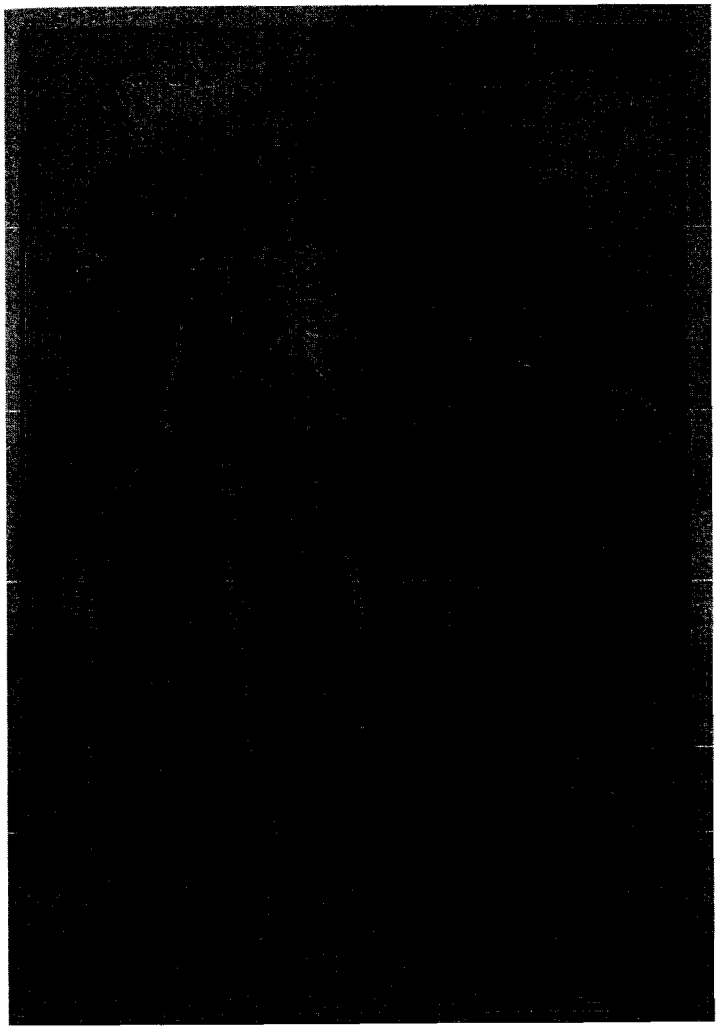

Figure 52.2 Bernard Albinus, 'The Bones of the Human Body' (From *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis humani*, Leyden, 1747. Courtesy the Wellcome Institute Library, London)

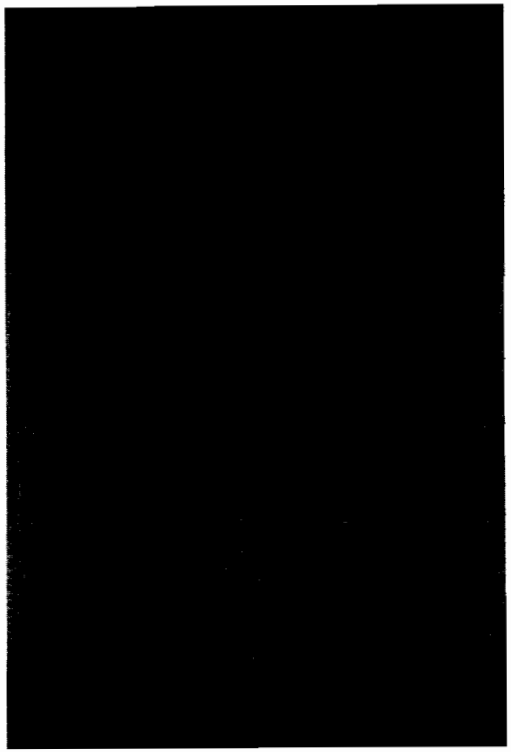

Figure 52.3 *Apollo Belvedere*, Vatican Museum, Rome (Courtesy of the Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art)

by eighteenth-century writers, is reinforced in the image of the skeleton, where an ambiguous mortality suggests both vulnerability and power.

Just as the Apollo was based on carefully calculated, 'mathematical' proportions, so too – in the Renaissance Humanist tradition – was the Albinus skeleton. The anatomist's approach fused a classical aesthetic with an almost obsessive Netherlandish scientific empiricism. He was explicit about his methods in the introduction to the 1747 volume, *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis humani*, pirated, in translation, in London in 1749.[13] Albinus chose his dead subject on the basis of two criteria. First, the body's beauty – 'I cannot help congratulating my good fortune' on finding the right corpse, he wrote. He emphasised the need for the subject to be 'elegant and at the same time not too delicate; so as neither to show a juvenile or feminine roundness and slenderness; nor on the contrary an unpolished roughness and clumsiness.' Here is clear evidence of gender- and class-specific determinants guiding Albinus's selection of an ideal, a Platonic ideal, rather than purely scientific concerns. The second criterion was Albinus's ideals of male proportion. These he then explicitly improved upon in the manner of classical art:

> As therefore painters, when they draw a handsome face . . . render the likeness the more beautiful [by removing blemishes]; so these things which were less perfect, [in the skeleton] were mended in the figures . . . care being taken at the same time that they should be altogether just.[14]

Just – 'fit, proper, accurate, precise, impartial'; the *just*ice of Apollo.

The wish for a selective, idealised beauty was combined with a desire for mathematical precision in the accurate recording of the skeleton. Albinus's methods were novel, and extravagant in their cost and rigour. He suspended his anatomical example by a complex arrangement of ropes and pulleys, with rings in the ceiling, to establish the pose with its weight on the right foot: the classical *contrapposto*. A live model of comparable stature was posed alongside the skeleton, to enable Albinus to set up and correct its lifelike pose; by pulling the cords and using wedges, the position of the naturally articulated skeleton could be adjusted – a procedure which took some days to complete. 'Naturally articulated' means the bones still held together by the bodily materials, cartilage, etc., which held them together in life.

Albinus's engraver was Jan Wandelaar, and the artistic product of such a collaboration clearly depends greatly on both the skills of the artist and the quality of his relationship with the anatomist. The *Tabulae sceleti* took over twenty years to complete, so the two men worked closely over an extended period. Wandelaar lived in Albinus's house and was very much under the anatomist's direct authority: he was evidently a hard taskmaster. The copper plates were preceded by careful drawings. In order to save the engraver from stooping while working in front of his subject, his work was positioned on a tripod on a table. Effectively this also meant that the engraver did not have constantly to change his angle of vision and move his eyes from the line of the model when transferring his observations to the plate – hence the arrangement was designed to improve the accuracy of his pictorial record.

Albinus considered taking measurements from the skeleton too time-consuming:

> I foresaw that the . . . [drawing] would be very incorrect . . . if it was taken off by merely viewing the original, as ingravers [*sic*] commonly do . . . [to take a measurement of every part] was an infinite task, nor could it possibly be done without some certain infallible rule to direct the ingraver.[15]

Albinus's solution was to use a more sophisticated version of Dürer's perspectival grid (Figure 52.4): in place of a single grid, Albinus used two nets, or grids of small cords. One grid was placed directly in front of the skeleton, the other, with squares a tenth the size, was positioned four 'Rhenish feet' (30.8 cm × 4) away from the skeleton.

> The ingraver [*sic*] placing himself in the most proper situation near the skeleton . . . endeavoured to make some point where the cords of the lesser [net] . . . coincide to the eye with the corresponding decussating point in the cords of the greater one; and the part of the skeleton which was directly behind these points, he drew upon his plate

Figure 52.4 Albrecht Dürer's perspectival grid, 1525 (Courtesy of the Whit Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, and Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna)

> . . . which was similarly marked out. [He] was to find out a proper place for viewing [the skeleton] through the [nets], by means of a fixed hole, not very large; which by applying his eye to, he could see what parts of the skeleton answered to [the cords of the grid] . . . According to this method then (which as it answered the intention, so it occasioned an incredible deal of trouble to the ingraver) a fore view of the skeleton was first drawn as it stood.

This was followed by back and side views, at which point the skeleton was disarticulated and the bones cleaned completely, each one then being drawn to natural size, which served, he said, as practice for the artist.[16] This grid technique would, given the constraints of observing the subject with a single eye through a small hole (as in the Dürer), have required the engraver to adjust the positioning of the hole – his viewpoint – a number of times, sideways, and up and down, in order to piece together a view of the complete skeleton as a whole.[17] Simultaneously, Wandelaar would have had to maintain an equal viewing distance on the vertical skeleton, from top to toe: any change in the perpendicular angle of vision – and hence to the viewing distance from the skeleton – which would result from gazing up, down or across, would have produced distortions (parallax) in the final image. Albinus's method would have further complicated Wandelaar's work because of the need to take the eye from the hole while transferring the observed data to the depiction, and then to re-focus at the eye-hole.

It is clear from these meticulous procedures the degree of Albinus's concern with scientific precision in his anatomical figures. Of course, the chosen methods themselves also carry meaning. However accurate the grid system may in fact have been – and its success depended greatly on the talents of the engraver – Albinus's methods endowed him with the authority of a man of science. His search for precision was, as we have seen, wholly in keeping with eighteenth-century ideals of classical beauty: the divine beauty of mathematics, the beauty of harmony and symmetry and, in this context, the beauty of the masculine. The chosen proportions of the skeleton also conform to classical ideals of perfection: it is a figure of eight heads; in other words, the head divides seven times into the length of the body.

Composition and medium

Compositionally, the Albinus skeleton is positioned to fill the pictorial space. Placed close to the picture plane, it makes full use of the engraved surface of the plate. In the print, the skeleton's extremities reach close to the framing edge on all four sides, giving optimum display while creating a dynamic tension between figure and frame which heightens the sense of figural animation. Obviously the disposition of the figure is partly determined by the scientific purposes of the print – the need to inform the viewer by exposing the maximum information possible in a two-dimensional image. The pose permits a fair degree of empirical detail, but the limitations of the print medium and flatness exclude much of medical interest, not least the forms in-the-round of the bones: a series of different views (front, side and rear) of a skeleton are required to 'add up' to a fuller anatomical picture. Three-dimensional examples of human anatomy, like those in wax, can be far more informative but were primarily used for representing internal organs: the technical limits of the wax medium constrain its use in complete skeletons. Apart from the plaster cast reproductions after sculpted flayed figures (*écorchés*) which were in widespread use for teaching, anatomical sculptures, whether in wax or wood, were costly one-offs which did not offer the same potential for dissemination as the printed image.

The question of dissemination is in itself highly pertinent here, and a grand volume such as this initiated by Albinus himself (engraved surface of the plates in this series *c.*56 × 40 cm) were by no means cheap to produce or buy: the *Tabulae* took an estimated twenty-two years to complete; the engraving alone took eight years.[18] As far as professional medical usage was concerned, the most successful volumes tended to be the practical anatomies like Bauhin's *Theatrum anatomicum* . . . of 1605, a chunky quarto of 1,300 pages, which were relatively small and portable. The audience for anatomies like the Albinus was by no means exclusively medical; such exquisite images were greatly sought-after for gentlemen's cabinets of curiosities: well-off physicians, surgeons, men of letters, aristocrats and connoisseur-collectors acquired such tomes, but not medical students. Indeed, although human anatomy promised a greater understanding of the body's constituent parts, it had only limited practical application for the medical profession (with the exception of obstetricians and midwives) before the advent of anaesthetics, antiseptics and deep surgery in the late nineteenth century;[19] thus anatomical prints like those of Albinus were chiefly of intellectual, taxonomic and curiosity interest. And, I would argue, of great ideological importance.

Medical science and scientific accuracy were not the exclusive motives behind the Albinus print's conception. It does represent, however, a prototypical male nude. Whether nude or skeletal, the male figure in art is consistently shown as inhabiting and defining its own space. Here, the full-frontal view, the out-turned feet, the spread-eagled arms, all extend the male body to show man's ownership of the world around him.

The commanding pose of the Apollo Belvederesque skeleton communicates an expansive openness; but it is not open in the sense of receptive, rather of complacent self-assurance – notably paradoxical given that it is a skeleton. The pose suggests an authority based on command both of the self, and of knowledge; a mutually reinforcing self-control and control of the environment. These ideas are rehearsed by

anatomist and engraver in the actual making of this image which, through the very process of its materialisation enacts man's claim to rational authority over (feminine) nature: nature cleaned up, perfected, ordered and reduced to the cool engraver's medium – the crisp burin mark in copper, the classical certainties of line: 'black and white', as we say. Engraving requires absolute precision, for mistakes are not readily changed or erased: burnishing can be used to efface only the shallowest of cuts. The engraver's tool stands for the scalpel, its incision a metaphor for the process of dissection itself. The resulting engraved lines, paradoxically a mirror-image of the original subject reversed in the printing process, form a language connoting clarity, cleanliness and objectivity which gives the viewer an illusion of control over the 'natural' body in all its gory unpredictability. Equally, the physical disorder of the medium, the oily black printer's ink which gets everywhere and filthies the (craftsman) engraver's hands in the process of printing, is a gory mess contained in the workshop and rendered invisible in the perfection of the finished print: the viewer is intended to register the message rather than the medium. Such images, then, rehearse a macabre pantomime of human frailty; terror of the material body and its functions is laid bare and simultaneously contained within the reassuring conventions of the classical idiom: hence the body is returned to man's ownership.

The Apollo Belvedere embodies the notion of masculine authority: alert and commanding, he is literally a man of vision. Although the skull and 'gaze' of the Albinus figure are lowered, suggesting a more introspective demeanour, a greater interiority, reflection is posited as the product of *knowledge* (in this case of man's mortality) and knowledge ensures authority. Hence the historical link to the Belvedere provides, in this *memento mori*, an assurance of spiritual immortality thanks to man's enlightened state. The early Christian iconographic tradition, in which Apollo transforms into Christ, reinforces this reading of the Albinus skeleton. At the same time, the erect stature and almost arrogant dignity of the skeleton's pose ensure its embodiment of the Belvederesque ideal of a dominating masculinity. This is reinforced in the spatial arrangement of the skeleton in its setting. Where Albinus's elaborate copying methods eliminate a specific viewing position on the figure itself, Wandelaar's landscape setting – with its low horizon and thus viewpoint – constructs the spectator's eyeline as well below that of the skeleton. Thereby inscribed in a position of pictorial, and thence social and moral, inferiority, the spectator 'looks up' to/at the super-human perfection of the skeleton. However, where in the Belvedere the elegantly twisting torso is achieved by non-alignment of hips and shoulders, and sensual vitality is enhanced in the accentuated spinal 'S' curve, the Albinus is more squarely frontal and 'grounded,' suggesting a greater civic *gravitas*. In the equation domination–desirability which Winckelmann found exquisitely balanced in the Apollo Belvedere, the Albinus skeleton tips the balance away from the sensual (which arguably depends on flesh and muscle) and towards the powerful. Thus masculine power is idealised through the male anatomical figure's embodiment and subtle modification of particular classical associations, reminding the spectator to identify a normative masculinity with that formal idea.

By naturalising the Belvedere pose within a medical discourse which also served to inform artists and their patrons, Albinus underwrote the ideal physique of the classical statue with an authenticity guaranteed by the natural sciences. In this

reflexive relationship of meaning, the two figures are mutually validated and ensure each other's authority; so, too, the professional status of the anatomist himself. Artists sought both to give anatomical conviction to the forms of their male figures, and to imbue them with higher meaning; the Albinus–Apollo pose was thus the outstanding exemplar for full-length male portraiture of the period. The Apollo Belvedere had already been assigned this role in seventeenth-century France, when Charles Lebrun, Director of the Académie Royale de Peinture, adopted its pose for a victorious Louis XIV. Lebrun thus elaborated an iconography of the Absolute Monarch as sun-god which simultaneously affirmed the statue's privileged status while recuperating its authority within the visual language of the Académie. Democratised during the course of the eighteenth-century, aristocrats, professionals, politicians and bourgeois patriarchs alike were portrayed in this meaningful guise, which ascribed to them an elevated power and civic *gravitas* by association with classical authority. Employed throughout the West, the Belvedere was equally exploited in painted and sculpted portraits to authorise the power of, for example, politicians and the landed gentry in Britain (Ramsey, Reynolds and Gainsborough),[20] French Revolutionary heroism (David)[21] and New World leaders (Figure 52.5). Thus,

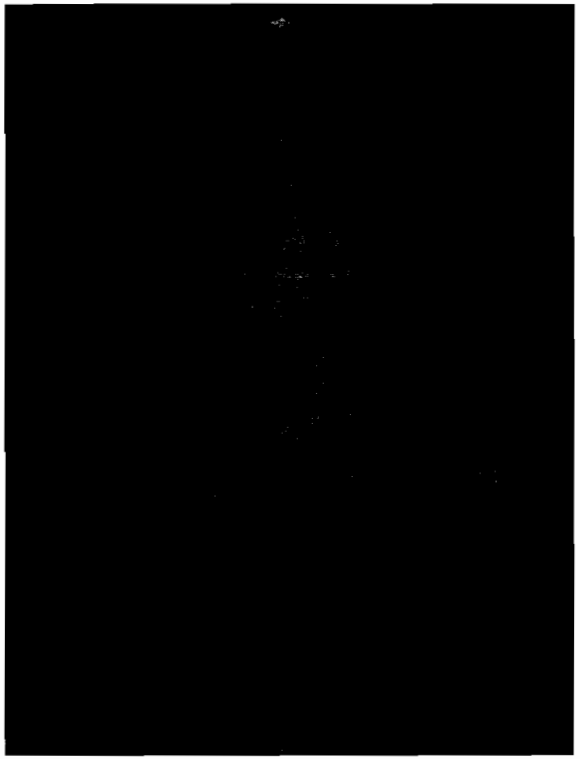

Figure 52.5 J.A. Houdon, Statue of George Washington, 1788–92 (Courtesy Bridgeman Art Library)

although the political inflection of the embodied meaning might be diametrically opposed according to time and place, the ubiquity of the Belvedere and its seemingly transparent legibility made it readily adaptable within a formula whose common denominator was patriarchal dominance.

Accessories

The Albinus print is not atypical in its inclusion of accessories not strictly required in a purely anatomical study; the anatomist argued that the landscape setting improved the illusion of relief in the skeleton, which certainly looks flatter in impressions printed without it. Thus Albinus explained that his backgrounds were not only to 'fill up the empty spaces . . . and make them appear more agreeable' but that they ensured 'the light and shade of the figures might be preserved and heightened and the figures themselves appear more raised and rounded.' He suggested that the plates be looked at through the cupped hand 'in the manner of a spy-glass,'[22] an idea which has parallels in the classical tradition of viewing Claudian landscapes. Not surprisingly, Albinus used Claudian pastoral settings, often complete with classical architecture; these motifs depended again on the particular skills of his engraver. Jan Wandelaar was also a botanical illustrator, and the accuracy of his empirical studies notable in the foreground details of the Albinus prints derived from this expertise. However, these elements also add a further layer of ideological meaning.

Setting the skeleton in a landscape has the effect of figuratively 'naturalising' the anatomist's vision: linking it with the natural world thereby makes it authentic; the 'natural world' in this context is, of course that of the natural sciences, a world ordered by masculine reason and not 'untamed' nature. The scientific authority of the image is further validated by the inclusion of Wandelaar's detailed, precise renderings of natural flora and fauna in the Enlightenment manner of the botanical taxonomist; their very abundance stands in poignant contrast to the skeleton. Their iconographic significance adds weight to the anatomist's theme – the thorns of gorse and bramble are a reminder of Christ's Passion.

Most startling, however, is a small winged putto or angel holding a dark billowing shroud; like a sinister cloud of shading, which throws the pale skeleton into relief, the putto unveils for the viewer this fascinating, macabre, but at the same time wholly convincing scientific display. The shadow of death falls, quite literally, across the infant face, plunging it into obscurity in yet another reminder of mortality. It is significant that female skeletons were rarely represented as embodying the *memento mori* theme (we have seen the Platter/Bauhin example which carries an hourglass); they were commonly represented as not privy to knowledge: the female skeleton bore the material, the reproductive, rather than the productive, spiritually or intellectually meaningful symbolism.

Ideal scientific anatomies such as the Albinus skeleton were rarely divorced from connotations of the *memento mori*; as Ludmilla Jordanova argues,

> Lessons about death are often contained in the gesture and position of the figure, and the background and accompanying objects. These are far from extraneous to the image: on the contrary, it is they that render it meaningful. They frame the image, give it a location and guide the viewer as to what he should attend to.[23]

In such images the artist/anatomist dissects the dead, she argues, 'in order to reveal, lay bare and ultimately comprehend the living.' But their meaning goes beyond straight revelation, or even the 'unveiling' of some pre-existing cultural construct: these images are directly implicated in the production of cultural meaning. Thus I would posit a much more active ideological role for pictorial anatomies, which here can be seen to construct a certain ideal of masculinity as universal and normal – and such ideals of masculinity have a formative impact on the ordering or reinforcing of hierarchical or social roles. Anatomies like the Albinus, then, worked actively within the complex socio-historical developments which, by the final years of the eighteenth century, culminated in a polarisation of cultural gender distinctions.

Notes

1 I am particularly grateful to Michael Rosenthal for sharing his ideas with me, and for reading and suggesting changes to the present essay. Beyond the remit here, the links between anatomy and race are addressed in A. Callen, *The Spectacular Body: Science, Method and Meaning in the Work of Degas*, New Haven and London, 1995, ch. 1, and will be pursued in greater depth in A. Callen, *Art and Anatomy from Albinus to Charcot* (Yale, in preparation).

2 Quoted in L. Schiebinger, 'Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy', in C. Gallagher and T. Lacquer (eds), *The Making of the Modern Body*, California, 1987, p. 43.

3 Analysis here refers to the text of the shorter, London reprinted edition in English of Albinus's *Tables of the Skeleton and Muscles of the Human Body* (1749).

4 For example, Guidi, *De anatome*, 1611, title-page.

5 Schiebinger, op. cit., p. 51.

6 See K.B. Roberts and J.D.W. Tomlinson, *The Fabric of the Body: European Traditions of Anatomical Illustration*, Oxford, pp. 220–25 and plate 54, pp. 23–1.

7 L. Jordanova, 'Gender, Generation and Science: William Hunter's Obstetrical Atlas', in W.F. Bynum and R. Porter (eds), *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 385.

8 *Geschichte*, p. 392, quoted in A. Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, New Haven and London, 1994, p. 118.

9 François Raguenet on the Apollo Belvedere, 1700, quoted in F. Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art*, London, 1976, p. 109, n. 71 (my translation).

10 See Potts's discussion of the homoerotic in relation to classical sculpture in eighteenth-century France, in Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*; on the Apollo Belvedere, esp. pp. 118ff.; beyond the bounds of the present essay, I pursue the theme of the homoerotic in relation to male anatomies in *Art and Anatomy from Albinus to Charcot* (Yale, in preparation).

11 K. Clark, *The Nude*, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 26.

12 Potts, op. cit., p. 118.

13 It is on this edition that the present discussion depends.
14 Albinus, London edn 1749, quoted in Roberts and Tomlinson, op. cit., pp. 324–25.
15 Quoted in ibid., p. 324.
16 Quoted and paraphrased in ibid.
17 For his eye to take in the complete figure, Wandelaar needed to be placed at a distance from his subject equivalent to three times its height: e.g. for a 6-foot figure, 18 feet away.
18 Roberts and Tomlinson, op. cit., p. 322.
19 Ibid., p. 623.
20 Cf. D. Solkin, 'Great Pictures or Great Men? Reynolds, Male Portraiture, and the Power of Art', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 42ff., and A. Smart, *Allan Ramsey*, 1992, pp. 81ff.
21 See Potts, op. cit., esp. pp. 223–30.
22 Roberts and Tomlinson, op. cit., pp. 326–27.
23 Jordanova, 'William Hunter . . .', op. cit., pp. 411–12.

Chapter 53

Tamar Garb

THE FORBIDDEN GAZE

Women artists and the male nude in late nineteenth-century France

IN 1883 CHARLES AUBERT, author of mildly titillating, sometimes smutty pulp fiction, published a short story with a woman artist as its central character. This was one of thirteen tales of sex and seduction by the same author, entitled *Les Nouvelles amoureuses*, which were to be collated into one volume in 1891 and illustrated by Jul. Hanriot, the engraver who had provided a frontispiece and engraving to accompany the 1883 publication (Figure 53.1).

The story begins as a conversation between the narrator and a prim, self-righteous, older woman who expresses outrage at the request of the wealthy young Isabelle, the heroine of the tale, to see the body of a naked man. She, and the reader, are assured of the innocence of the heroine's motive by the revelation that she is an artist, incarcerated in her luxurious Parisian *hôtel* and closely guarded by her mother-in-law, while her husband, a captain, is away at sea. To pass away her time in her husband's absence she has turned to painting religious scenes and has been thrown into a state of utter confusion and distress by being offered a commission to paint a St Sebastian.

From the beginning, therefore, the story invokes a range of anxieties and potential threats. What is primarily articulated at this stage in the narrative, albeit in a disingenuous tone of concern, is the threat to the modesty of the woman artist, representative here of upper-middle-class femininity, who is caught in an impossible situation in which she is bound to be compromised. A classic staging of resistance (her piety, innocence and loneliness are stressed) and the inevitable path to seduction (beneath the veil is a rampant and unfulfilled desire) is set up. What subtends the linear narrative thrust, which in itself has only the richness of banality as its defence, are subtle and deeply rooted anxieties which invoke the power structures at stake in the scopic field as encoded in narrative and image in *fin-de-siècle* Paris.

One cannot underestimate the banal or the repetitive as historical material. For in the clichéd resolutions and cheap gratifications offered by much caricature and