

Body, Beauty, and Decorum: The Language of Art and Dance Texts in Caravaggio's Time

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I. Introduction

Dance and visual art are considered to be related each other under the name of art which reflects human society. However, study of dance in art history seems trivial. In this research, I study language used by art critics and dance masters to reveal the intimate relationship between the two arts. I want to clarify that it is language that I want to compare, not the appearance in the pictures. By studying the language of art critics and dance masters, I expect to get an insight about people's perception of an image, rather than proving how people actually move in a certain ways. Hence, the main subject of analysis and comparison in this study is the language, and the pictures are used as secondary for the better understanding of the written accounts. I discuss the account of art critics and dance masters, centering Michelangelo Merisi de Caravaggio (1573-1610) and indecorous factors in his works, which have been

the main focus of assaults by informed critics.

Michelangelo Merisi de Caravaggio is universally admired today as one of the greatest Baroque artists; however, his oeuvre have lived through three centuries of scorn from critics. Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1616-1696)-- the antiquarian, art theorist, and ‘the most reliable of [Caravaggio’s] seventeenth century biographers’¹⁾-- criticizes Caravaggio’s style for lacking decorum and beauty.²⁾ Caravaggio, among Italian Baroque artists, gets shoved out from the category of artists of dignity and decorum, while Agostino Carracci(1560-1609) and Nicolas Poussin(1594-1665) are the ones who occupy the category.³⁾ Although Caravaggio’s art is admired today, the Naturalism or Realism of Caravaggio is known to depict nature or a model without idealization and was regarded as lacking decorum and beauty by informed critical opinion for three centuries afterward. John Ruskin, an art historian in the twentieth century, discovered in Caravaggio’s work ‘...horror and ugliness and filthiness of sin.’⁴⁾ However, what is ugly and what is beauty, what is filthy and what is decorous? What is the goal that the idealization would achieve? Here I do not discuss the ideal of great artists who generated numerous Mannerists. Rather, I look at the notion of the decorum and beauty in the description, interpretation, and evaluation of Caravaggio’s art. What notions of the ideal had or have made people view that Caravaggio’s art lacks decorum?

How do we know who or what is decorous? At glance, the concept of ‘decorum’ might sound like a rather metaphysical idea that is so noble that it has nothing to do with something vulgar like mortal bodies. Yet, can we say

1) Alfred Moir(1989). *Masters of Art: Caravaggio*. (New York (concise ed. of orig. 1982 ed.), p.9.

2) Giulio Mancini; Giovanni Baglione; Giovanni Pietro Bellori; Helen Langdon(2005). *Lives of Caravaggio*. (London : Pallas Athene), p.89.

3) See Paul Legass(ed.)(2000). *Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition*. (New York : Columbia University Press).

4) *Quoted in Moir(1989)*, p.1.

‘decorum’ without referring to physical world? I have a doubtful view for the question. As a dance researcher who is constantly required to search for meaning in the body and its movement, I believe that the abstract judgment of what is decorous firmly roots in something tangible, feasible, and visible.

The idea that physical movement revealed the inner self has been accepted since Aristotle, and is found in interpretations of Caravaggio’s art. For example, hands and feet in Caravaggio’s paintings tell who the person is, how the person feels, and what the person is doing. According to Moir, ‘the tapering long-fingered boneless hands of 「The lute player」(1600), the vigor of Saint Paul’s short fingers and square hands, the gnarled right hand of Saint John, the beloved kneeling over the Virgin’s body.... the feet in the 「Rest on the Flight」(1596-97) or in 「The Calling of Saint Matthew」(1599-1600)’⁵⁾ speak the condition and personality of the figures. Even Caravaggio’s physical trait is read as a factor of his style. Saying that Caravaggio’s style is restored to his physiognomy and appearance, Bellori reasons that Caravaggio’s dark colouring in his painting is a natural reflection of his dark appearance.⁶⁾ In addition, in the descriptions about Caravaggio’s paintings, which I will elaborate on later, I encounter the word decorum along with the words of body parts, attires, gestures, and deportment. How can I put together the idea of decorum in the art historians’ texts of viewing Caravaggio’s work and in the dance historians’ accounts of viewing body movements?

Examining words used for movement descriptions in art, Sharon Fermor, an art historian, in “Movement and Gender,” points out that art historians have frequently assumed such descriptions ‘say relatively little about the actual perception of an image.’⁷⁾ According to her, the language of art criticism has been related primarily to its borrowings from the theory and vocabulary of

5) Moir(1989), p.30.

6) Mancini *et al*(2005), p.92.

rhetoric, poetry or philosophy, while its relationship to the social discourses of manners of behaviour remains obscure. Linking, two well-known art critics of Renaissance and Baroque, Ludovico Dolce's (1508-1568) and Vasari's (1511-1574) accounts to writings on dance and behaviour, she concludes that the discussion of movement in dance practice can give 'a more precise and historical purchase on a body of art criticism which has too often been considered as neutral, generalized, and at best purely aesthetic in meaning.'⁸⁾

The scholarly accounts of both an art historian and a dance historian confirm that the concept of decorum or etiquette already closely relates to the physical world in the sixteenth century aristocratic circle. Fermor states that the discussions of behaviour 'during the sixteen century...focused increasingly on the presentation of the body, and particularly on the body in movement.'⁹⁾ Correspondingly, Joan Cass, a dance historian, in *Dancing Through History*, explains that specific etiquette for all kinds of situation, which was written down and followed as a part of education, includes daily activities such as dressing, manner of entering a room, and timing of sitting and standing.¹⁰⁾

In the age of Caravaggio, it was dancing masters who taught lessons of manner, etiquette, or courteous behaviour for aristocrats and sub-aristocrats. Walter Sorell notes that already in early Renaissance days, dancing masters appeared as a new profession providing the behavioral guidance and etiquette, which once was taught by troubadours.¹¹⁾ Cass points out that 'many noble houses had in residence a dancing master who taught the steps and proper

7) Sharon Fermor(1993). "Movement and Gender." in Kathleen Adler; Marcia R Pointon. *The Body imaged : the human form and visual culture since the Renaissance*. (Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press), p.129.

8) Ibid., p.145.

9) Ibid., p.131.

10) Joan Cass(1993). *Dancing through history*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice Hall), p.52.

11) Walter Sorell(1981). *Dance in its time*. (Garden City, N.Y. : Anchor Press/Doubleday), p.36.

bearing.’¹²⁾ As early in the fifteenth century, a dancing master Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro (1420-1481), who was a member of the court of the Medici in Florence, had already published one of the most classical texts in dance history, *De Pratica seu arte tripudii vulghare opusculum* (On the Practice of the Common Art of Dancing) (1463). Already in Guglielmo’s time, the art of dance was regarded to reflect virtues and morality through physical manifestations.¹³⁾ Following Guglielmo’s example, Thoinot Arbeau’s (1519-1595) *Orchesography* (1588) left an important mark embracing dance as ‘one very necessary to the ordering of public affairs.’¹⁴⁾ Using Arbeau’s text, Fermor argues that languages in descriptions of movement both in dance and visual art agree with each other.

The relationship between art and dance in the sixteenth and seventeenth century is the subject that I want to discuss here. I believe when the words ‘decorum’ or ‘beauty’ are used with regard to human figures in a visual art work in particular, the abstract concepts of ‘decorum’ or ‘beauty’ come to reside in visible elements of the physical world, because evaluations or interpretations would depend on the descriptions of what is seen. Focusing on Caravaggio’s art, I will discuss the shared notion of decorum between texts on behaviour, on manners and on dance and the descriptions of Caravaggio’s art.

In the usage of the term decorum or decorous, I consider the concept of decorum in an extensive way, embracing value-judgmental words such as beautiful, vulgar, well-bred, and filthy. Also, I use the term decorum which is interchangeable with etiquette and good manner. I limit the time frame of artworks and texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century around

12) Cass(1993), p.54.

13) Jennifer Nevile(c2004). *The eloquent body : dance and humanist culture in fifteenth-century Italy*. (Bloomington, IN : Indiana University Press), p.136.

14) Thoinot Arbeau(1925). *Orchesography; a treatise in the form of a dialogue whereby all manner of persons may easily acquire and practise the honourable exercise of dancing*. (New York, Dance Horizons), p.17.

Caravaggio's life time. Artworks of inquiry include Caravaggio's oeuvre and artists of the subject time period such as Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1653). Contemporary texts include records of three of Caravaggio's biographers (Giorgio Mancini (1558-1630), Giovanni Baglione (1566-1643), and Giovanni Peitro Bellori), Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchesography*, and a very prominent Renaissance author, Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (Il Libro Del Cortegiano) (1604). Concerning body description, interpretation, and evaluation, I will examine how bodies and movements in Caravaggio's art were viewed as connecting to the concept of decorum or beauty, and what is the concept of decorum or beauty in the text of Thoinot Arbeau, and Baldassare Castiglione.

II. Decorous Body Posture in Art and Dance

With his classicist belief, Bellori kindly enumerates indecorous elements in Caravaggio's works: 'the offensive portrayal of the Virgin with the nude Christ child' in 「Madonna and Child with St. Anne」 (Dei Palafrenieri) (1606), 'a man depicted raising his flask in the act of drinking, with his mouth wide open as the wine flows coarsely into it' in the 「Seven Works of Mercy」(1607), and 'the vulgar conception of the two Apostles and of the Lord is who is shown young and without a beard' in the 「Supper at Emmaus」(1601-02).¹⁵⁾ Although his criticism might come from malice, it indicates there are certain manners for daily activities such as drinking or standing, and certain attires for each figure.

12) Cass(1993), p.54.

13) Jennifer Nevile(c2004). *The eloquent body : dance and humanist culture in fifteenth-century Italy*. (Bloomington, IN : Indiana University Press), p.136.

14) Thoinot Arbeau(1925). *Orchesography; a treatise in the form of a dialogue whereby all manner of persons may easily acquire and practise the honourable exercise of dancing*. (New York, Dance Horizons), p.17.

However, in the description of 「Rest on the Flight to Egypt」, Bellori gives one of his rare praises. He writes, ‘The angel is very beautiful, and by turning his head in sweet profile, displays his winged shoulders and the rest of his nude body, which is covered by a little drapery.’¹⁶⁾ In this account, a specific position-- ‘turning his head in sweet profile’-- appears as an element of beauty. Moir suggests that the angel was inspired by the figure of Annibale Carracci’s 「Choice of Hercules」(1596).¹⁷⁾ Considering that Carracci is one of the artists who Bellori admires, the angel similar to the figure of Carracci’s work must be seen as beautiful with his classicist eyes.

Discussing the figure of the Magdalen in 「The Ecstasy of Saint Cecilia」 (1514-16) by Raphael (1483-1520), who also was admired by Bellori, Fermor points out that Vasari describes the figure as standing in *un posar leggiadrissimo*.¹⁸⁾ According to Fermor, the word *leggiadria* (loveliness or prettiness) is a term which denotes a movement that is deliberate and carefully measured. In this posture, the body should be held upright and contained.



<Figure 1> Rest on the Flight to Egypt

Oil on canvas, 133,5 × 166,5 cm, Galleria Doria-Pamphili, Rome

15) Mancini *et al.*(2005), pp.90-91.

16) Ibid., p.62.

17) Moir(1989), colorplate 8.

18) Fermor(1993), p.134.



<Figure 2> Choice of Hercules

Oil on canvas, 167 × 273 cm,
Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples



<Figure 3> The Ecstasy of Saint Cecilia

Oil on wood, 220 × 136 cm,
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna

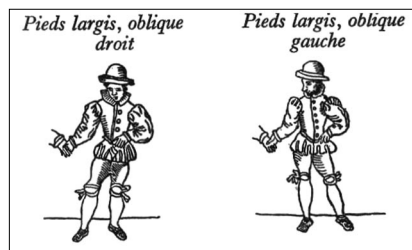
Fermor argues that the uprightness and apparent composure of Raphael's Magdalen shows 'subtle transformation of the mode of conventional contrapposto.'¹⁹⁾ As a result, Magdalen stands on one foot, but the torso is erect and held in a straight line with the sense of weight actively suspended.

Meanwhile, in *Orchesography*, Thoinot Arbeau starts his lesson on dance with reverence followed by six positions: *Peids joints*; *Peids joints, oblique droit*; *Peids joints, oblique gauche*; *Pieds largis*; *Pieds largis, oblique droit*; *Peids largis, oblique gauche*. The important point that I want to make here is that these positions are similar to contrapposto in that every position is made when one foot supports the weight of the body and the other rests. Articulating how to execute the moves, Arbeau instructs that 'one foot be [sic.] so placed as to support the whole weight of the body and the heel of the other foot be brought close up to it so that the toe joints at an oblique angle.'²⁰⁾

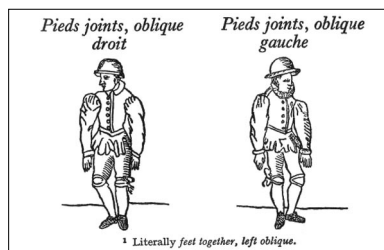
It is not too daring to compare the dance moves to contrapposto, a term of visual art. Indeed, when he is asked which positions are the most suitable, Arbeau answers with this reason:

19) Ibid., p.138.

20) Arbeau(1925), p.68.



<Figure 4> Pieds largis, oblique droit; Peids largis, oblique gauche



<Figure 5> Peids joints, oblique droit; Peids joints, oblique gauche

One of those where the foot rests at an oblique angle seems to me the most beautiful, because we see on medals and antique statues that men standing on one foot look the more artistic and more pleasing.²¹⁾

With these words, Arbeau reveals that the notion of beauty for body posture was shared with visual arts. Although he does not name which antique image he is referring to, I argue that the image of *Peids joints, oblique droit* resembles the poise of the angel in 「Rest on the Flight」, resting his weight on one leg and turning his head ‘in sweet profile.’

However, unlike the elaborated feet movement, the instruction of arm movement is scarcely found in Arbeau’s text. In dance history, credit for being one of the first to introduce and to lay down rules for use of the arms is given to Pierre-François Beauchamp (1636-1705?).²²⁾ Yet, by 1700, arm positions were restricted to the shoulder level. For example, Raoul Feuillet (1653-1709), a French dance master and inventor of a dance notation system, taught dancers to hold their elbows and hands ‘in a line with the pit of the stomach.’²³⁾ Even when hands are on the level of shoulders, elbows remain lower position, close to the body, consequently creating curves in whole arms. Arm positions above

21) Ibid., p.71.

22) Selma Jeanne Cohen(ed.)(c2005). *International encyclopedia of dance*. (New York : Oxford University Press), p.332.

23) R. A. Feuillet(1700). Published by author, Paris. *Orchesography*; trans.John Weaver. (Farnborough, Gregg, 1971), p.113.

the head appear in Gennaro Magri 's *Trattato teorico-Prattico di ballo* published in 1779. Still, those positions were described as 'forced arms' and were permitted to certain characters, such as the *groteschi*, playing comic roles.²⁴⁾ In short, dance treatises had tabooed raising arms high and regarded those positions as grotesque. Arbeau's text also briefly mentions limited arm movements, such as how to hold partner's hand and when to release it. I believe arms movements in dance were quite limited during the Caravaggio's and Arbeau's time, and remained at a lower level close to the body.

Interestingly, Fermor's account of *leggiadria* includes mentions of the limbs position. Fermor quotes Agnolo Firenzuola (1493-1545), an Italian poet and litterateur, and Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), a Italian cardinal and scholar, who suggest *leggiadria* appears with the limbs held close to the body.²⁵⁾ The uprightness and erectness of bearing is choreographed with the limbs held close to the body to compose the smoothness of the whole. Not only Raphael's Magdalen as Fermor argues but also Caravaggio's angel marks similarities with the account of *leggiadria* in writings of dance and behavior. Angel's elbows are held 'in a line with the pit of the stomach' and even his right hand holding the bow remains at the shoulder level. The beauty and ugliness on the arm movement as well as the feet movement are reflected equally in art and dance.

III. Decorous Movement Quality in Art and Dance

The term *Leggiadria* refers not only the movement structure, but also to the movement quality. *Leggiadria* is used along with other terms like beauty and sweetness. 'The smoothness of a well-considered movement,' 'the ease and

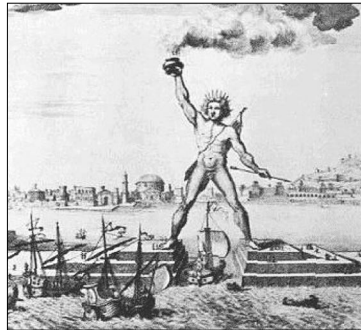
24) Gennaro Margri(1779). *Trattato teorico-prattico di ballo*. Naples. Trans. Mary Skeaping as Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Dancing.(London), 1988.

25) Fermor(1993), p.137.

equilibrium,' and 'the soft and airy sweetness of movement,'²⁶⁾ the phrases Fermor uses to describe the *liggiadria* of a posture, can also be found in writing on dance and behavior as a decorous deportment.

Advising how to execute *Peids largis*, Arbeau gives another comparison to a visual art. He emphasizes that feet are 'not in a forced and cramped manner like the feet of the colossus representing the statue of the Sun cast in copper by Colossus or Chares-- pupils of Lysippus-- erected at Rhodes...' ²⁷⁾ Comparing to the image of *Peids largis* and the Colossus of Rhodes, one would notice that the difference of positioning weight accompanies the change of the posture qualities. According to Baldessar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, one 'should maintain a certain dignity' while his movements show 'the lightness and delicate grace,'²⁸⁾ which contrast to a forced and cramped manner.

In addition to the angel in 「Rest on the Flight」, lightness and sweetness in Peid joint or Peid largis can be found in several other works of Caravaggio and also of Artemisia Gentileschi. The figures 「Alof de Wignancourt」(1607-08) shows the image of *Pieds largis*, oblique. Artemisia Gentileschi's



<Figure 6> the Colossus of Rhodes by an unknown artist

26) Ibid., p.138.

27) Arbeau(1966), p.70.

28) Baldessar Castiglione(1967). *The Book of the Courtier*. Trans. George Bull. (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books), p.118.

「Gonfaloniere」(1622) also shows Peids joints, though the figure is looking forward. Centileschi's another work, 「Clio」(1632), though the painting shows only the third quarter of the figure, presents similar posture to that of Caravaggio's 「Alof de Wignancourt」. None of examples above show a forced and cramped manner, but they do maintain dignity. Their confident, calm, and easy poses meet what is read in another translation of Castiglione's book, made in 1561, that one should move 'with a handsome and sightly [sic.] sweetness of gestures, and for all he feeleth [sic.] himself very nimble and to have time and measure at will.'²⁹⁾ In sum, both art critics and dance masters mentioned decorous and beautiful movement quality as smoothness, ease, equilibrium, soft, airy sweetness, and well-considered movement, while a forced and cramped manner were rejected. Such decorous manner was adopted by the noble who danced in the balls as well as posed in the portraits.



<Figure 7> Alof de Wignancourt
Oil on canvas, 195 × 134 cm,
Mus e du Louvre, Paris



<Figure 8> Gonfaloniere
Oil on canvas, 208 × 128 cm,
Palazzo d'Accursio, Collection. 1.27m × 0.975m
Bologna



<Figure 9> Clio

Oil on canvas, Private
Collection. 1.27m × 0.975m

29) Castiglione, Baldessar(1561). The Book of the Courtier. Trans. Sir Thomas Hoby, ed. Walter Raleigh. London: David Nutt, 1900. Renaissance Edition; <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/courtier/courtier2.html> Nov. 13. 2005.

IV. Indecorous Figures in Art and Dance

Not only the beautiful and decorous figures, but also the indecorous figures in Caravaggio's works are significant in terms of the concept of decorum. Specifically, the first version of 「The Inspiration of Saint Matthew」³⁰⁾ (1602), 「The Madonna of Loreto」 (1603-4), and 「The Death of The Virgin」 (1605-6) were subjected to most of the harsh criticism for lacking decorum.

First, as Alfred Moir also notes, Baglione and Bellori report that the clergy rejected the first version of 「The Inspiration of Saint Matthew」 as indecorous.³¹⁾ Bellori mentions this painting by saying that ‘the figure with its legs crossed and its feet rudely exposed to the public had neither decorum nor the appearance of a saint.’³²⁾ While quoting the three biographers' descriptions of this painting, Helen Langdon states the saint is ‘burly,’ ‘plebeian,’ and ‘insufficiently dignified.’³³⁾ Moir writes, ‘They could see no sanctity in the yokel saint, and his naked foot,’ and suggests that the effect of the projecting foot ‘over the alter must have distressed them.’³⁴⁾ Meanwhile, his description of the second version connects dignity and nobility with ‘bearded face and bald head, and his robes reminiscent of an ancient philosopher’s.’³⁵⁾

In 「The Madonna of Loreto」, the subject of accusation was also bare foot. This time, it was not only mere bare feet, but also dirty feet. Baglione and Bellori point out the muddy bare feet and legs of one of the two pilgrims. With worn-out clothes, the bare feet and legs link to pettiness and poorness in both writers' stories.³⁶⁾

30) Mancini *et al.* (2005), p.16. Langdon calls it “a first version of an altarpiece of St Matthew and the Angel (destroyed; formerly Berlin, Kaiser-Freidrich Museum).”

31) Moir (1989), p.13.

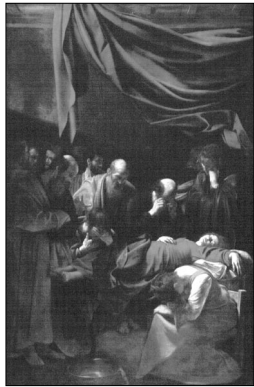
32) Mancini *et al.* (2005), p.66.

33) *Ibid.*, p.16.

34) Moir (1989), p.13.

35) *Ibid.*, colorplate 15.

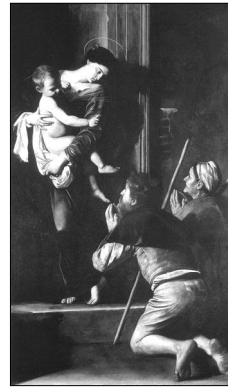
36) Mancini *et al.* (2005), p.46 and p.69.



<Figure 10> The Death of the Virgin
Oil on canvas, 369 × 245 cm,
Mus e du Louvre, Paris



<Figure 11> The Inspiration of Saint Matthew
Restoration



<Figure 12> The Madonna of Loreto
Oil on canvas, 260 × 150 cm,
S. Agostino, Rome

The bare feet appear again in 「The Death of the Virgin」 in the Chiesa della Scala. However, the difference is that those are of a woman. The Virgin's bare legs and swollen belly is interpreted as representing not only 'little decorum'³⁷⁾ by Baglione, but also a working class woman or even 'a courtesan'³⁸⁾ and 'dirty prostitutes'³⁹⁾ by Mancini.

Writings on behavior and dance also explain what is indecorous deportment, including discussions of exposing feet and legs. In regard to beauty in women, Castiglione gives detailed instruction. According to him, beauty is not in displaying delicate hands, white teeth, or make-ups. He states that 'Elegance in a place where it is invariable hidden from view must be uncontrived and natural rather than carefully calculated, and that it cannot be intended to win admiration.' Particularly, about revealing lower limbs, he articulates that it is a truly graceful sight if she 'raise just enough of her skirts

37) Ibid., p.48.

38) Ibid., p.29.

39) Ibid., p.34.

to reveal her foot and often a little of her leg as well... showing her velvet ribbons and pretty stockings.⁴⁰⁾ Flauntingly exposed legs are the most ungraceful.

Arbeau also, explaining what is decorous movement and gesture, expresses what is against decency in the art of dancing. Particularly, elaborating the *Voltes* in Gaillarde, Arbeau and his counterpart, Capriol, discuss the decency and bare legs within the dance.

(Arbeau) At the present time, dancers have none of these modest considerations in their *Voltes* and other similarly lascivious and wayward dances which have been brought into use, in the dancing of which the damsels are made to jump in such a manner that they very often show their bare knees if they do not keep one hand on their dresses to prevent it.

(Capriol) This manner of dancing seems to me neither beautiful nor decent, unless you are dancing with some buxom serving wench.⁴¹⁾

In this conversation, showing a woman's bare legs is considered as opposite to beauty and decency and also was identified with a certain class of women. It seems to echo the description and interpretation of bare feet and legs in Caravaggio's art in that they are the sign of indecorum. In the text of the art critics and the dance masters, projecting bare feet and legs, as the most salient factor of indecorum, were subject to scorn and, in woman's case, such posture were linked to a certain class.

V. Conclusion

In short, the concept of decorum and beauty in the description and interpretation of Caravaggio's work corresponds to the appearances of bodies,

40) Castiglione(1967), p.87.

41) Arbeau(1966), p.76.

attires, gestures and poses in writings on dance and behavior. Projecting bare feet are regarded as the most indecorous element, and especially in a woman's case it was regarded as a sign of immorality. A smooth and flowing posture was admired. Particularly, the angel of 「Rest on the Flight」, who also repeats a smooth and flowing posture, carries a concrete example of a beautiful body and deportment. Arbeau's and Castiglione's texts provide identical descriptions of decorum and beauty. The movement structure as well as movement quality of the dancing practices support certain kind of beauty and contribute to the idea of decorum, which is also reflected on the description, interpretation, and evaluation of Caravaggio's art.

I believe that both arts-- dance and visual art-- relate reciprocally. This is because the core of both arts center around human beings. As revealed through the discussion above, texts of both arts are mirrors reflecting one another. On one hand, Fermor suggest that art historians' accounts use the same language of dancing masters. As she mentions, 'the terms most common in debates about movement and its implications in this wider social context' also appear in 'descriptions of movement in art, most notably in Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*.'⁴²⁾ On the other hand, there is Arbeau acknowledging that people learn what is beautiful from visual arts. The critical languages of dance and of painting were closely interdependent. Mutual understanding could help us to keep a better perspective not only of art and dance, but the nature of humans as well.

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Abstract

몸, 미(美), 그리고 예(禮):
카라밧지오 시대 미술과 무용 비평 언어를 중심으로

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본 연구는 카라밧지오(1573-1610)의 예술을 중심으로 16, 17세기 미술과 무용의 이론가, 평론가, 역사학자들의 언어를 비교 고찰하는데 목적을 두었다. 특히 많은 카라밧지오의 그림은 여러 미술 평론가들로부터 ‘예의 없는, 천격한’(indecorous)이라는 평가를 받았다는 점에 주목하였다. 이에 당시의 예의와 미에 대한 개념이 어떻게 미술에 대한, 그리고 무용과 매너에 대한 원문들에서 드러나는지 살펴보고 그 상관관계를 연구하였다.

카라밧지오의 예술에 대한 묘사와 해석에 나타난 예의와 미의 개념은 무용과 예의범절에 관한 글에서 나타나는 신체 자세, 차림새, 제스처, 포즈와 일치한다. 앞으로 내밀어진 맨발은 가장 예의바르지 못한 요소로 간주되며 특히 여성의 경우 부도덕의 표시로 생각되어진다. 부드럽고 흐르는 듯한 자세는 바람직한 요소이다. 그 중에서도 「이집트로의 탈출」의 천사가 취하고 있는 부드럽고 흐르는 듯한 자세는 아름다운 신체와 품행의 구체적인 예를 보여준다. 아르보와 카스틸리오네의 글에서 역시 예의와 아름다움에 대한 동일한 묘사를 볼 수 있다. 무용의 움직임 구조뿐 아니라 움직임 특질 또한 카라밧지오 예술의 묘사, 해석, 평가에서 되풀이 되는 일정한 미와 예의의 개념을 충족시킨다.

두 예술-- 무용과 시각예술--은 그 중심에 인간을 위치시킨다는 점에서 서로 상호적으로 연관된다고 할 수 있다. 위의 논의에서 밝힌 바와 같이, 두 예술의 텍스트는 서로를 비추는 거울이 된다. 한편으로 Fermor는 미술사가들의 이야기는 댄스 마스터들과 같은 언어를 사용하고 있다고 말한다. Fermor가 언급했듯이, ‘움직임에 대한 논의와 보다 광범위한 사회적 맥락에의 적용에서 가장 흔하게 사용되는 용어들’은 ‘미술작품 속의 움직임에 대한 묘사, 그리고 가장 주목할 만한 Vasari의 『미술가 열전』에서 나타난다. 다른 한편에는 사람들이 시각 예술로부터 무엇이 ‘미’ 인가를 배운다는 사실을 인지한 아르보가 있다. 무용과 그림에 대한 비평적 언어들은 매우 밀접하게 상호 의존성을 드러낸다. 그러기에 미술과 무용에 대한 보다 나은 시각을 가지기 위해서 뿐 아니라 그 중심에 서 있는 인간에 대해 보다 나은 이해를 구하기 위해서는 두 예술의 서로에 대한 관심과 탐구가 뒤따라야 할 것이다.

주제어: 카라밧지오(Caravaggio), 아르보(Arbeau), 카스틸리오네(Castiglione), 예의 개념(The concept of decorum.), 언어비교(language comparison)