Drew University
College of Liberal Arts

***Parla come mangi*:**

Food, Presentation, and the Break from Tradition in Italian Visual Culture

A Thesis in Italian Studies

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirments

for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts

With Specialized Honors in Italian Studies

May 2024

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Professors Occhipinti, Kuntz, and Harrison for their tireless efforts as my thesis committee. Thank you all for your guidance and honest feedback on this thesis and in all of my academic endeavors. *Grazie tantissimo*.

Thank you to my mom for introducing me to my love of art and to my dad for my love of food. Thank you for your endless encouragement.

Lastly, my deepest and most sincere thanks to my dearest friends, Maura Kelly and Nadja Ifill, without whom this project would not have been possible. Thank you for all of your support on this thesis and in our years together at Drew.

Abstract

This thesis studies societal ideas of etiquette and food in culinary literature from three periods of Italian history and how these are reflected visually in these same periods. Throughout each chapter, I study how these visual elements display contemporary ideas of how an individual should present themselves. I specifically focus on Giovanni della Casa's *Galateo* and Venetian manners in Veronese's *Marriage at Cana*, the classification of upper and lower-class foods in Baldassare Pisanelli's *Trattato della natura de' cibi et del bere* and the passing of time in a selection of Caravaggio's paintings, and new ideas of etiquette and dining from F.T. Marinetti's *La cucina futurista* and how these are actually rooted in the historical traditions from chapters one and two. Culinary literature should be enfolded into art historical context as it captures important cultural information that is otherwise overlooked in visual culture. By making connections to these culinary literatures and contemporary visual representations, I aim to show that the literature surrounding food can expand or enforce the perspectives from which art historians approach works of art.

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Introduction

Visual art is a crucial part of Italian history, and the subjects of paintings and sculpture capture important themes and topics from the periods of their creation. Culinary arts like banqueting are another form of visual art, as the presentation of food and the organization of the meals become a performance of their own. Food and dining are not new in the discipline of art history, as the symbolism of food and the significance of banqueting have been studied thoroughly by scholars.

What is new, however, is the connection between these aforementioned topics in visual culture and culinary literature. Throughout my research, books of etiquette, food classifications and cookbooks were largely missing from scholars discussing images of food, the very place they should be incorporated. This thesis is titled *Parla come mangi* (talk like you eat) in part to signify the deep connection that food has in Italian culture, both past and present.

Culinary literature should be enfolded into art historical context when appropriate, as it captures important cultural information that is otherwise overlooked in the study of visual arts. This thesis aims to show that the literature surrounding food can expand or enforce the perspectives from which art historians approach works of art. This thesis does so by studying the connections of food in art, presentation, and the culinary literature in which these ideas are reflected.

The definition of presentation that this thesis uses is "the manner or style in which something is given, offered, or displayed."[1] This thesis is not about the act of eating but rather how in art, food aids in the presentation of the self and the physical body; themes that culinary literature enforce. The three culinary books in this thesis are all different in function, but reflect

[1] "Presentation, n. Meanings, Etymology and More | Oxford English Dictionary," accessed May 4, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/presentation_n.

societal beliefs surrounding food and dining in their contemporary periods. Giovanni della Casa's *Galateo: The Rules of Polite Behavior*, is a book of etiquette written in Venice outlining correct manners in dining and how one should present themself. Baldassare Pisanelli's *Trattato della natura dei' cibi et del bere* (or Treaty of the Nature of Food and Drinking) was originally a book categorizing food based on their interactions with the four humors, an early medical understanding of the body. It later became a book classifying appropriate food for the upper and lower classes. Lastly, *La Cucina futurista* is the cookbook/manifesto from F.T. Marinetti, one of the founders of the futurist art movement in the 20th century. The futurists wanted to rid themselves of all aspects of Italian history, including rich culinary traditions, and this cookbook contains new recipes as well as new ideas surrounding etiquette and dining.

Chapter one puts della Casa's *Galateo* in conversation with Paolo Veronese's painting *The Marriage at Cana,* to demonstrate how della Casa's rules of etiquette are both followed and broken at this Venetian feast. In chapter two, I present how Caravaggio diverged from the Northern still life style, and how decaying fruit show the passing of time while beautiful male subjects are preserved in their youth. In chapter 3, written in Italian to fulfil requirements for the Italian Studies honors, I look at *la Cucina futurista* for new ideas of presentation and etiquette in the 20th century, and discuss their connections to past traditions.

Art Historians have focused on these aforementioned aspects of etiquette, class, symbolism, and beauty in Italian art history as separate entities from the visual representations of food they often coincide with. My thesis aims to weave these ideas of presentation together by using the presence of food as a starting point, incorporating culinary literature as an additional source of historical and cultural context. The literal presentation of food acts as a reference point to study the larger themes at hand, and is key in unlocking the full story of each work of art.

State of the Literature:

The majority of artworks that I bring together in this thesis have been well studied by art historians, and thus there is a substantial body of scholarly writing on them. In order to effectively argue for my ideas of presentation, my research was limited to the most relevant material for the arguments of each chapter. It should be noted that while this honors thesis is grounded in art historical material, it is engaging context that falls outside visual analysis alone.

Banqueting has long been a topic of art history research, and general background for this paper is from gained from texts such as Ken Albala's *The Banquet*: *Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe*, Silvia Malaguzzi's *Food and Feasting in Art*, John Varriano's *Taste and Temptation: Food and Art in Renaissance Italy*, and François Quiviger's *The Sensory World of Italian Renaissance Art.* These books focus on banqueting and dining culture as a whole in the Renaissance, with some conversation of culinary and etiquette books. Katherine McIver's "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," for instance, goes into greater depth about Venetian banquet culture and especially how the dining experience for the Benedictine monk's is reflected in *The Marriage at Cana*. Many of the outlined topics of my first chapter originate from her article, including the information about the monks at San Giorgio Maggiore and the numerous roles of staff at the banquet like the *bottigliero* and the *trinciante*. McIver analyzes the societal norms reflected in Veronese's painting, yet there is no consideration of *why* these are the norms. To expand upon her scrutiny of Venetian banqueting and *The Marriage at Cana*, I introduce the rules of banqueting etiquette from della Casa's *Galateo*, as these ground some of McIver's concepts in contemporary literary context. My analysis of della Casa's rules provides a deeper understanding of the societal norms reflected in the painting, including the handling objects like

glass *tazze* and silverware with care, the use of napkins, the lack of eating, and the inclusion of the toothpick–all of which are rules outlined by della Casa in *Galateo*.

The traditions of still life painting had been long established in Northern Europe, and the food represented in these paintings often held allegorical significance. Sheila McTighe's "Food and the Body in Italian Genre Paintings" was foundational for the ideas of food and the human form that I use, as she reviews the importance of Northern Italian still lifes and labor scenes, and how paintings from this time presented ideas of an artificial social order. McTighe introduces Baldassare Pisanelli's *Trattato della natura de' cibi ed del bere* in order to present food and class and how these were represented in the works of Vincenzo Campi, Bartolomeo Passarotti, and Annibale Carracci. McTighe introduces the idea of the symbolism of these foods moving away from Flemish allegory paintings and instead representing food appropriate for the specific classes. I continue her research by looking at a selection of Caravaggio's paintings that include baskets of fruit.

My discussion of Caravaggio's realist style is largely from Keith Christiansen's publication "*A Caravaggio Rediscovered: The Lute Player*." Christiansen's research contextualizes Cardinal del Monte's sponsorship and protection of Caravaggio, and how Caravaggio's style changed under del Monte's mentorship. It was del Monte's bias toward Venetian art that inspired Caravaggio to render his figures and fruit naturalistically.

The del Monte household is also where Caravaggio studied classical subjects and contemporary culture. In *Caravaggio and the Antique*, Avigdor Posèq presents del Monte's collection of classical sculptures, how Caravaggio's depictions of male subjects are similar, both in subject matter and physical position, and how these representations have an inherently sensual nature because of their classical themes. On the topic of contemporary culture, John Varriano's

"Caravaggio and the Decorative Arts in the *Two Suppers at Emmaus*" looks at historical discrepancies of objects such as an oriental carpet and crockery. This chapter of the thesis expands upon both of these scholar's research: they consider these topics separately and without the connection to food symbolism or Caravaggio's interest in capturing moments in action.

The topic of antiquity continues with the research of symbols of Christ and his presentation within the *Supper at Emmaus*. Susanne Warma's "Christ, First Fruits and the Resurrection: Observations on the Fruit Basket in Caravaggio's London 'Supper at Emmaus,'" centers around the basket and its contents, arguing that they are symbolic of Christ, the Resurrection, and the interpretations of fruits in antiquity. Here, Warma's compares these fruits' symbolic meanings as well points out the hidden fish motifs, and I use her comparison to reintroduce the subject matter of Pisanelli's text.

Charles Scribner III looks at another way in which Caravaggio's knowledge of antiquity is present in the *Supper at Emmaus,* specifically in the peculiarity of Christ's youthfulness. Scribner presents the idea that Caravaggio is justifying why the disciples do not recognize Christ, as Christ is being depicted *In Alia Effigie* (in another light). While Scribner examines the exact moment this painting occurs through Christ's clean-shaven appearance and the other figures' poses, I argue that Christ's youthfulness is a sign of time being frozen in this moment of recognition.

The Futurist food movement is the least researched of the three subjects in this thesis, and therefore there is not much literature to incorporate. Much of the information about the Futurists is knowledge I have accumulated through numerous Italian courses. For the most part, chapter three analyzes Marinetti's *La cucina futurista*, as themes of Futurist presentation and the connection to historical traditions have not been addressed in scholarly literature. The video

Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food published by *The Guardian* has provided significant visual material I have incorporated into my analysis, including how a modern group of performers have changed ingredients or sensory elements in their performance instead of following the instructions from the original cookbook. This chapter ties the full thesis together by comparing the previously stated ideas in chapters one and two with Marinetti's rules, such as Marinetti's abolishment of silverware in a Futurist banquet and della Casa's decree to use napkins and to be mindful of cleanliness.

Amanda Arnold's "Inside the Intentionally Scandalous 'The Futurist Cookbook' of 1932" from *Bon Appetit* magazine discusses the intentionally outlandish nature of the cookbook. While she introduces ideas of how Futurist ideas were the precursor to contemporary food trends like diet pills, I make a direct connection to the culture of haute cuisine and themes from the futurists. To do so, I look at how courses from the 2022 film *The Menu* display current adaptations of presentation and satire from the Futurists, as well as ideas of presentation and etiquette from chapters one and two.

Chapter 1*: La bella e la brutta figura*: Etiquette as represented in Veronese's *Marriage at Cana*

An island in the Adriatic Sea and just off the coast of mainland Italy, Venice became one of the leading trading ports of the world in the 16th century, establishing contact with the Ottoman Empire to import raw materials and export the luxury objects produced.[2] This abundance of wealth led to grandiose celebrations, often in the form of banquets. Venetian banquets were so over-the-top that legal action was taken on such events, with the Venetian senate "[decreeing] that these banquets were too costly and forbade many things, including pheasants, peacocks and 'confections.'"[3] *The Marriage at Cana* (1563) by Paolo Veronese (1528-1588) is the optimal subject for studying Venetian banquets, as it reveals a plethora of complexities specific to the dining culture and etiquette of the time. The manners of diners, the order of dishes, and the roles of the servers were crucial aspects of a banquet. There was no "working class" in Venetian banqueting, because those who were doing the service were from the wealthy class as well.

Books such as Giovanni della Casa's *Galateo: The Rules of Polite Behavior* from 1558 outlines the rules of etiquette and appropriate behavior that showcased *la bella figura*–or the appearance of being well-mannered in the public eye.[4] This is where the theme of presentation becomes visible, as "Dining was an expression of social aspirations, civility, and splendor. The banquet, a choreographed event, was a ritual of aristocratic hospitality communicating wealth and power."[5] Take for example the conical goblets, or *tazze* that guests drink out of. [6] Guests were expected to represent their status through their ability to handle delicate objects, as "the

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[2] R. J. Barendse, "Trade and State in the Arabian Seas: A Survey from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century." *Journal of World History* 11, no. 2 (2000).
[3] Casini, "Banquets, Food and Dance," 184.
[4] Though the term "*bella figura*" is from the 20th century, I am using it here to emphasize the importance of personal appearance throughout the history of Italian culture.
[5] Katherine McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table in Sixteenth-Century Venice." *Gastronomica* 8, no. 3 (August 1, 2008) 8.
[6] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," 8. I return to this discussion of the *tazze* later in the chapter.

finesse required to handle the wide range of fragile crystal and precious cutlery demonstrated one's master of courtly manners in the company of others."[7] By handling these glass objects carefully, they are presenting themselves as knowing the rules of proper etiquette. Here in *The Marriage at Cana*, the drinking glasses represent Venetian artisanship but also call attention to the guest's ability to use these *tazze* without spilling, alluding to the larger behaviors one must follow to present themselves correctly.

Pina Palma, in her article "Of Courtesans, Knights, Cooks and Writers: Food in the Renaissance," writes that "food–along with the setting in which it is consumed–serves to identify the complex motifs connecting individuals to historically, economically, and philosophically determined environments."[8] Palma's statement is crucial in the following analysis of Venice and this painting, as understanding the nuance and complexities of 16th century Venice help to paint a bigger picture of what is going on in *The Marriage at Cana* and how it reflects these determined environments. The feast in *The Marriage at Cana* is not just a celebratory meal but a political statement of power through the display of material splendor and proper banqueting etiquette at the dining table. In *The Marriage at Cana*, Veronese is not just making reference to the rules of etiquette defined by della Casa's *Galateo* but comments on the upper class's manners during Venetian banquets. By displaying a break in proper etiquette, these banquet guests are presenting themselves in poor taste.

The Marriage at Cana (fig.1) was commissioned originally by–and for–the Benedictine monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice and was hung in the refectory.[9] As opposed to the more typical image of the Last Supper, the monks broke from tradition and specifically chose the

[7] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," 10.
[8] Pina Palma, "Of Courtesans, Knights, Cooks and Writers: Food in the Renaissance." *MLN* 119, no. 1 (2004), 38.
[9] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," 8.

Marriage at Cana for their refectory scene. Though the Monks live an often-ascetic lifestyle with simple meals, the Benedictine Order at San Giorgio Maggiore also followed St. Benedict's rule to provide hospitality to guests; to be generous hosts for those who visit the monastery, which likely included the hosting of banquets in a similar extravagant fashion.[10]

At the center of Veronese's painting, Jesus is seated, recognizable by the shining halo around his head as well as his beard and long hair. To the viewer's left is Mary dressed in blue, whose identifying halo is less radiant than her son's, peeking out from behind her veil. Surrounding them is the chaos expected of a large banquet: The table, which takes up most of the bottom half of the painting, appears to be located in a palace courtyard–and this is supported by of a vast blue sky in the background and the singers from the tops of surrounding buildings. The table is lined with numerous guests dressed in lavish outfits whose clothing are likely made of materials like silk and satin hinted at by a luminescent sheen. Some peer outwards at the viewer while others engage in deep conversations. At the center of the courtyard are a group of musicians, entertaining the guests as the next course is prepared.[11] While some attendants are serving food on platters or in charge of mixing the wine, the majority are bustling behind the balustrade. These attendants, dressed in bright pinks, oranges and greens, are preparing the next courses to be brought out. They appear to move in a linear fashion, with attendants on the left hold onto the columns and take dishes off of the wall, passing them along to others lower down. These attendants then pass these plates over the counter, in turn bringing the plates to be laden with food. Just behind Christ a man slices food, and attendants on either side get their platters ready to bring to guests. On the far right, a new course is being brought to the man at the center,

[10] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," 8.
[11] Referenced in the footnotes of her article but not relevant to my discussion, McIver mentions that the musicians are often thought to be Veronese, Titian, Tintoretto and Jacopo Bassano, the four most prominent artists of Venice in this time.

so that as soon as the current course has been sent off, he can prepare the next one. Also on the right-hand side is an attendant passing back an empty container for wine, which are collecting behind the banister.

The painting depicts the New Testament story of the marriage at Cana, where Jesus performs his first public miracle–turning water into wine. At the wedding at Cana in Galilee, Mary and Jesus were both present, and when the wine had run out Mary urged Jesus to perform this transformation. Jesus said to the servants at the marriage to fill the six stone water jars, and to then draw some out and give it to the head of the feast, who did not recognize where the wine came from, but believed it to be better quality than the previous wine.[12] The miracle of wine is seen most prominently on the right-hand side of the painting, where the large stone jar pours out wine into the empty vessel. On the other side of the painting, the king is being presented wine from another stone jar. The importance of these motifs not only emphasizes Christ's miracle, but also how busy and overwhelming these banquets were: only the few attendants and one guest surrounding the stone jars have realized what has occurred.

Under Napoleon's instruction, *The Marriage at Cana* was moved from its place behind the head table of the San Giorgio Maggiore refectory to the Louvre Museum in Paris in September of 1797, where it remains today.[13] The painting's original location provides important context. The monks may have perceived that their meal was an extension of the one in the painting, as McIver notes that they would eat side by side with the painted figures: "In effect, the monks shared the meal, becoming part of the miracle portrayed in Veronese's grand banquet."[14] Furthermore, monks often ate simple meals, but the food laid out in the painting's feast could

[12] "Douay-Rheims Bible, John Chapter 2:1-11," accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.drbo.org/chapter/50002.htm.
[13] Alex Greenberger, "The Louvre's Looted Renaissance Masterpiece: New Book Explores the Plundering of a Veronese Painting," *Artnews,* May 10th 2021.
[14] IBID.

very well have been similar to dishes that the monks themselves would eat when entertaining.[15] For the monks who devoted their lives to religious study the miraculous subject of this painting is expected, however Veronese's work as a whole is key to understanding a different aspect of 16th century Venice. While these monks may not have read della Casa's *Galateo*, Veronese almost certainly references this book in his painting as it was published in Venice in 1558, just 4-5 years prior to the painting's commission. The context of banqueting in both real-life and in Veronese's painting reveals a unique social hierarchy and highlights the significant role that etiquette played in upper-crust Venetian culture.

To understand the visual commentaries that Veronese makes of the wealthy's etiquette, it is important to introduce the context in which these banquets were made possible. According to economic historian Richard Goldthwaite, "although the world has become infinitely more cluttered… an argument can be made that modern consumer society, with its insatiable consumption setting the pace for the production of more objects and changes in style, had its first stirrings, if not its birth, in the habits of spending that possessed the Italians in the Renaissance."[16] *The Marriage at Cana* is the perfect case study for the consumerism referred to by Goldthwaite. It showcases how wealth is displayed through material objects and numerous courses of food, which will be discussed in close detail later on. Furthermore, Goldthwaite writes that "the vigor of any market depends, first, on the amount of wealth available for spending and, secondly, on the structure of that wealth - that is, on its distribution, which determines the number of consumers and the level of their consumption, and on its redistribution or fluidity, which determines the process by which demand is renewed and therefore sustained."[17] The

[15] IBID.
[16] Richard A. Goldthwaite, "The Economy of Renaissance Italy: The Preconditions for Luxury Consumption," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 2 (1987). 16.
[17] Goldthwaite, "The Economy of Renaissance Italy," 18.

wealth structure in Venice was formed only considering the upper class. Instead of distributing the wealth, as Goldthwaite mentions, the upper-class Venetians kept this money to themselves to fund these lavish banquets, where items went to waste at the hands of the participants. Therefore, the number of consumers was small but their level of consumption was large and unsustainable in the long run.

The economy of 16th century Venice is a subject of study in its own right but effectively provides insight into this discussion of banqueting and context for the many components that made up these luxurious feasts. As McIver writes, "Feasting scenes often did not emphasize the food; rather, the focus is the conspicuous display of material goods for which the Venetians were famous."[18] Banquet culture, as we might call it, dates back to antiquity when the Greeks, Romans and Etruscans would host elaborate meals accompanied by some form of entertainment and dine by reclining on *triclinia*.[19] Dining upon *triclinia* for these ancient cultures signified a period of relaxation–as the consumers of these meals, everything was done for them by servants, and all that was required of them was to enjoy the festivities. The customs surrounding feasting changed and developed into the extravagant banquets of the 16th century as Silvia Malaguzzi writes: "The great banquets of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance gave the aristocracy a means of expressing their economic power."[20] Banquets could be held for a variety of reasons, but the most well-known reasons were weddings and state affairs as "banquets and family-related meetings were opportunities for participants 'to become aware of group solidarity.'"[21] In the case of Venetian banquets, these lavish experiences were often held for welcoming guests or allies–in

[18] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," 10.
[19] Silvia Malaguzzi, *Food and Feasting in Art*, trans. Brian Phillips (University of Michigan: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008). "Banquets."
[20] Silvia Malaguzzi, *Food and Feasting in Art*, trans. Brian Phillips (University of Michigan: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008). "Banquets."
[21] Matteo Casini, "Banquets, Food and Dance. Youth Companies at the Table in Renaissance Venice," 184.

other words, to strengthen business connections. The Venetians would shower their guests in luxury objects and lavish feasts, often incorporating items made from the raw materials that these allies or guests were importing to Venice. The Venetian trade alliances with the Ottoman Empire was perhaps the strongest and was due to a couple of factors. First, the Ottomans had an extensive empire with vast amounts of resources from its different conquered regions. R.J. Barendse's article, "Trade and State in the Arabian Seas: A Survey from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century," emphasizes this by stating that "such 'engines' of the economic boom of the late fifteenth century as Venice, Marseilles, and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) depended on the Ottoman Empire for a wide array of products, not merely for typical 'luxury goods' like silk and textiles, but also for bulk goods such as grain and wine (from Greece and Asia Minor), rice (from Egypt), wood (from the Balkans), and wool, copper, iron, and textiles from Anatolia."[22] Second, Venice was primed for trade because of its location on the Adriatic. Boats filled to the brim with goods and materials could travel in and out of both the seaports and canals of Venice, making the global transport of items that much easier. Considering both the transport of goods and the alliances between two powerful entities, it is clear to see how wealth in Venice accumulated quickly and in great quantity.

Though the purpose of banqueting was varied, these large feasts and gatherings were generally a way to establish the host's wealth and connections in Venetian society and to strengthen their alliances through a shared meal. The Venetians were presenting themselves as good-mannered and gracious hosts, leaving a good impression (*a bella figura*) on their guests. However, presentation also takes its form in the sequence these banquets were orchestrated in. Valerie Taylor, in her article "Banquet Plate and Renaissance Culture: A Day in the Life," wrote

[22] Barendse, "Trade and State in the Arabian Seas," 189.

that "official *banchetti* were never conceived as loosely structured gatherings and, in addition to the cost of the food itself, required a substantial investment in people and their performance."[23] In order for the hosts to present themselves in a *bella figura*, the attendants must also present themselves properly to convey this message. Prominent in Venice were the *Compagnie della Calza* (or the Companies of the Hose), societies made up of wealthy youth that not only hosted many banquets but took great pride in serving their guests, "organizing all sorts of celebrations such as marriages, public festivals, visits by important foreign dignitaries, Carnival parties, and others."[24] Just as other regions of Italy had guilds or clans based on occupation or their birth district, each company had their own name: Potenti ("powerful"), Zardinieri ("gardeners"), Accesi ("stimulated"), to name a few.[25] They wore different types of leggings (hence, hose), that were made of embroidered cloth with the emblem of the company the individual belonged to. The leggings were a fashion statement of youth during this time period, and "emphasized masculinity and membership of a specific group."[26] Though the acknowledgment of the *Compagnie della Calza* at this Venetian banquet has been disregarded by scholars due to the lack of insignia or striped leggings, their depiction in this painting is only logical to presume because of their presence at Venetian banquets. It showcases presentation shifting towards performance, especially as the *Compagnie degli Accesi* were performers of the *commedia dell'arte*, or improvised Italian comedy.[27] Rather than with hosiery, I propose that Veronese instead makes reference to these companies by dressing these attendants in similar colors to one another.

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[23] Valerie Taylor, "Banquet Plate and Renaissance Culture: A Day in the Life," *Renaissance Studies* 19, no. 5 (November 2005), 626.
[24] Casini, "Banquets, Food and Dance. Youth Companies at the Table in Renaissance Venice," 182.
[25] I state this knowledge after spending time in both Orvieto and Siena, where I learned about the tradition of occupational guilds or *contrade* (Siena).
[26] IBID, 182.
[27] "Compagnia Degli Accesi | Renaissance, Florence & Drama | Britannica," accessed April 15, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Compagnia-degli-Accesi.

Though most of the figures shown in Veronese's painting are dressed lavishly, we can infer that some of the servers, namely the figure on the left-hand banister in the background (fig.2) are members of one of these *compagnie*. Though only his torso is visible, it is clear that he is a youthful individual, wearing a green and gold striped shirt. Other attendants, both up in the balcony and presenting food to the banquet guests, are dressed in various shades and patterns of green. The attendants on the balcony (fig.3), and a couple others dispersed on the stairwell and the back of the table, all wear garments in shades of pink, orange, or green. These colors appear most prominently within the clothing of the attendants, and rarely in the guests' attire. Perhaps this is a distinction less for the monks but for their guests, who may not be familiar with the *compagnie* themselves but would understand the attendants being of a lower class through their less ornate clothing.

The wine-bearer, or *bottigliero,* is a key point of study in Veronese's painting. Here the *bottigliero* becomes part of the biblical subject at hand: the wine that he inspects is in fact the water that Christ had turned into wine.[28] McIver writes that "as one of the principal officers of the table, the wine steward was responsible for mixing the wine with water and tasting it; he had to decide whether the wine should be diluted only slightly or whether water should predominate, depending on the stage of the meal. Because he also poured the wine for the hosts and guests, he needed good timing and coordination to avoid spillage."[29] Not only does the *bottigliero* represent a crucial role in banqueting, but his prominent inclusion emphasizes the miracle that took place at this feast. Here he inspects the water-turned-wine to see not that it has been diluted but instead transformed entirely, and perhaps this transformation into pure wine is why the king states the

[28] IBID, 8.
[29] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," 8.

best wine had been saved for last.[30] In Veronese's painting, the *bottigliero* is towards the righthand side, holding up a glass of wine to closely inspect (fig.4). Next to him is another servant, who pours the wine into a smaller mixing vessel. It is interesting to note that the pouring of the wine is split into two jobs: mixer and inspector. This job is normally completed by one person, but the presence of two people doing this work is a demonstration of the wealth and status of these hosts, and highlights the miracle that has just occured.

While those who worked at the banquet were held to high standards, so too were the guests that attended. It is especially important to note that della Casa's *Galateo* does not pertain solely to a Venetian court but to the good manners of all individuals. Though della Casa outlines many rules, there are a distinct few that Veronese references in *The Marriage at Cana*. For example, regarding attendants, the majority of rules pertain to cleanliness and not raising suspicion of poisoning or any devious behavior. As della Casa writes, "those who serve the plates and the glasses must diligently abstain during that moment from spitting, from coughing, and moreover from sneezing. Because, in such actions, suspicion of misbehavior is as annoying to diners as certainty, so the servants must take care not to give their masters reason to be suspicious…"[31] Additionally, the placement of hands was important in maintaining sanitary conditions and needed to be kept in the line of sight at all times. Della Casa writes, "the noble servants who wait on gentlemen's tables must not, under any circumstance, scratch their heads or anywhere else in front of their master when he is eating, nor put their hands on any part of the body that one covers up… they must rather display their hands in the open and outside of any suspicion, and keep them carefully washed and clean, with nothing grimy on any part."[32] To the

[30] See citation 15.
[31] Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo: Or, The Rules of Polite Behavior* (University of Chicago Press, 2014). 12.
[32] Della Casa, *Galateo*, 11, 12.

viewers' left from Mary, a young attendant (fig.5) perfectly encapsulates this aforementioned rule. His hand is placed below the silver tray that he holds, ensuring that he does not touch the food at all. This idea of appearing well-mannered, or *la bella figura*, was important for all aspects of the banquet. Banquets were, after all, a way of showing off wealth–and being well-mannered would have gone hand-in-hand.[33] This rule pertaining to the visibility of hands is also seen with the banqueters in the painting; all the hands that are visible are placed firmly on the table or used in gestures (fig.6). Observing the guests in the painting, few actually handle the *tazze* mentioned previously, but rather the glasses sit at most of these place settings untouched. Della Casa further states a rule about the cleanliness of a guests' hands: "A man of good manners must therefore watch himself that he does not smear his fingers so much with grease that his napkin is left filthy: it is a disgusting sight."[34] Some guests in the righthand background hold napkins to their bodies (fig.7), using them to wiping their mouths or holding them during conversation. Though these napkins may have been used to clean their hands, these guests are putting their napkins on display, which della Casa explicitly mentions is ill-advised behavior: "…it is not proper to clean your teeth with a napkin…"[35] While these two figures are not actually cleaning their teeth, della Casa's rule is still relevant as these two gentlemen show the filthy napkins that should instead remain hidden in their laps–the only accepted time for hands to disappear from plain sight of the other guests.

In connection with the aforementioned inappropriate actions, Veronese also comments on other rules for guests outlined by della Casa. In particular, della Casa writes that "when speaking with someone, do not get so close as to puff on the person's face, for you will find that many do

[33] Palma, "Of Courtesans, Knights, Cooks and Writers," 38.
[34] Della Casa, *Galateo* 11.
[35] Della Casa, *Galateo*, 73.

not like to inhale someone else's breath, even though there may be no bad odor."[36] Although it might be hard to differentiate close proximity due to the chaos and number of guests at the banquet, della Casa's rule is certainly broken in this painting where the bride ignores the gentleman and woman on the left who encroach her space (fig.8). They appear to be concentrating on her jewelry or perhaps her hands, while the bride makes eye contact with the viewer yet refrains from reacting and keeps her expression neutral. In another scene, facial expressions reveal the discomfort that comes from breaking della Casa's rule. He also writes that "one should also pay attention to how one moves his body, especially when speaking, for it often happens that one is so concerned with what he is thinking that he does not pay attention to anything else."[37] Two gentlemen to the right of Mary (fig.9) are in a very intense conversation; the gentleman in blue leans inwards to talk and brings his left hand into the other gentleman's space, disregarding his close proximity to the other guest. The other gentleman, looking down at his hand, contorts his face in a grimace and purses his lips in a tight, downturned line of disapproval.[38] Though both the woman and the gentleman in the striped headdress have their spaces invaded, neither move to act upon it. This shows that although guests are demonstrating poor manners as outlined by della Casa, it would be worse to acknowledge the ill-mannered behaviors–or even worse, behave in the same fashion.[39] This rule of della Casa's is notable not just for its importance to 16th century Venice but for how deeply ingrained it remains at the core of modern Italian comportment: an aspect of *la bella figura* that is still significant to this day.

[36] IBID, 12.
[37] IBID, 78.
[38] Della Casa wrote on 77 that individuals should not contort their faces into a grimace, which the gentleman in the striped headdress in fact does.
[39] Della Casa wrote "it is not pleasant to lose one's temper at [the] table, no matter what happens." 18.

Although there is not an explicit rule mentioned by della Casa, we might continue to discuss the ways that dining habits are portrayed in *The Marriage at Cana*. Della Casa believed that it was better to fit in rather than stand out, writing that "you should not… oppose common custom in practices… but rather adapt yourself to them with moderation."[40] The Ottomans were Muslim and would not have consumed alcohol or prohibited animal products, yet in this painting the Turkish guests have servings of wine at their place-settings (fig.10). [41] This is not necessarily a rare depiction by Veronese but rather a theme della Casa discusses in *Galateo*. Della Casa continues: "…whatever the case may be, you must not refuse what is brought to you, as it will seem that you either despise or rebuke the man who has brought it."[42] The man in reference here is not the attendant but instead the host who provided the wine itself. As they were not Italian, Turkish guests would likely not have read *Galateo* or held to the same standards, yet della Casa's idea of accepting what has been offered is one that exists across many cultures. Here, the Turkish guests accept the wine just like their Venetian counterparts, taking part in the cultural customs of Venice as both a sign of alliance between the two powers and respect for their Venetian hosts.

Clothing is yet another way that assuming the host's cultural customs is portrayed in Veronese's painting. Della Casa writes that "not only should one's suit be of fine material, but a man must also try to adapt himself as much as he can to the wardrobe of other citizens and let custom guide him, even though it may seem to him less comfortable and attractive than previous fashions."[43] Both Venetian and Ottoman guests are swathed in clothes made of expensive fabrics such as silk, particularly visible with the bride and groom, the *bottigliero*, and a guest on the far-

[40] Della Casa, *Galateo*, 11, 12.
[41] I state this knowledge as a result of an introductory religions course, taught by Karen Pechillis in Spring of 2021. It should be mentioned that in modern Turkish culture, some do consume alcohol due to cultural practices that differ from other countries where Islam is the predominant faith.
[42] Della Casa, *Galateo*, 74.
[43] IBID, 15.

right end of the banquet table (fig.11). The fabrics they wear are highly decorated with floral and vegetative patterns, further demonstrating the costliness of the material due to the craftmanship. The Venetians were producing garments with silk imported from the Ottoman Empire, and therefore it is understandable that the Turkish guests would be wearing clothing of the same material as their Venetian hosts. At the same time, the Turkish guests maintain their own identities through their headdresses. The groom and four other gentlemen (fig.12-15) wear distinctive, elaborate headpieces. Though della Casa believed that it was best to adapt to the styles of the host's culture, the Turkish figures blend the fashion of Venice with traditional Turkish elements, reflecting a trade alliance and the merging of these two cultures through the import of raw materials from the Ottomans and the export of fine goods by the Venetians.

While the attendants, perhaps members of a company of the Hose, wear garments that are not of the same patterned cloth, their clothing does not appear to be of inexpensive fabric either. It has a reflective sheen to it, suggesting a high-quality fabric like silk or satin. (fig.16). The high-quality fabric may be because, as mentioned previously, "most senior members of the service staff were members of the nobility and considered it an honour to serve the [host]."[44] Serving was not a menial job but rather a position of honor for those of aristocratic status, and therefore their clothing represents their social status. Moreover, the attendants that interact directly with the guests wear more lavishly designed clothes. According to Taylor, "any kind of contact that brought an individual into close proximity with the ruler, such as the finger-washing ceremony, implied a greater level of responsibility, trust and privilege."[45] As such, these individuals wear more luxurious clothing due to their higher status and increased visibility amongst the guests, making sure to appear aligned with *la bella figura*.

[44] Taylor, "Banquet Plate and Renaissance Culture," 625.
[45] Taylor, "Banquet Plate and Renaissance Culture," 629.

The service of food and wine were not just for eating and drinking purposes but also to entertain all of the senses of the guests: the performance of presentation was just as important as the food itself. Another important performative role at the banquet is that of the *trinciante*, or meat carver (fig.18). Normally, hot dishes were prepared in a kitchen and brought out to guests, but in *The Marriage at Cana*, the hot dish is being prepared on the balcony above, perhaps to emphasize this role. McIver writes that "here, the man at the service table carving meat just above Christ's head likely represents a talented carver who was expected to carve the meat in midair so that it would fall on the plate in a decorative pattern of slices, providing both entertainment and a service to the guests."[46] Additionally, as della Casa writes that it would be unwise for diners to use their fingers, utensils made of silver appear at each place setting (fig.19, 20). Upon close inspection, it is clear to see that although there are numerous dishes of food being presented continuously, not one of the guests has lifted a fork to eat, just as the *tazze* of wine remain on the table. This perhaps relates to della Casa's advice that "we must also be careful not to gobble up our food…this shows that the banquet does not have sufficient dishes and that they are not evenly distributed, for one person has too much and another not enough, and this could humiliate the lord of the house."[47] As such, the food that is presented in the *Marriage at Cana* further demonstrates that banquets were intended to showcase the wealth of the host through the display of the table and the performance of presentation. Not consuming the food–at least not quickly–allowed for guests to show appreciation for the efforts of their host and to present themselves as well-mannered through their appearance and ability to use delicate objects.

[46] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table," 8.
[47] Della Casa, *Galateo,* pp. 73, 74.

All the wedding guests in the painting participate in the scene in different ways, either engaged in conversations with other guests or with attendants. However, one figure stands out among the guests. At the lefthand corner of the table, a woman tilts her head down with a hand raised to her mouth (fig.21). Upon closer inspection, the action of the woman is revealed as she holds a large toothpick to her mouth. Elaborately decorated toothpick cases were another symbol of wealth in 16th century Venetian culture as an object of luxury that showcased being aware of the cultural norms and up-to-date on current fashion trends. However, they fell out of fashion around the 1550s as seen in *Galateo*.[48] Della Casa believed that toothpicks were incredibly disrespectful, claiming that "those who carry their toothpick tied to chains around their necks… [besides] being a strange tool for a gentleman to be seen taking out of his breast pocket, it reminds us of those instruments for extracting teeth we see standing on dentists' benches."[49] Though the shift in mindset is unknown, this guest embodies falling short of della Casa's rules and is out of the loop on what is considered fashionable.[50]

Once again, we shift our consideration back to the behaviors of those for whom this painting was created: the monks at San Giorgio Maggiore and their guests. This painting holds numerous points of significance. One reason is simply to remind the monks of the religious occurrence at Cana and of Christ's first public miracle turning water into wine. More importantly, while they may eat off of more lavish plates when hosting their guests, the monks are reminded of manners they should and should not convey. Veronese's painting criticizes that even though a fashionable lifestyle is full of feasting and extravagance, the wealthy class can still fall out of fashion by breaking unspoken societal rules of manners. Veronese expertly utilizes

[48] Nicholas Penny, "Introduction: Toothpicks and Green Hangings," *Renaissance Studies* 19, no. 5 (2005): 581–90.
[49] Della Casa, *Galateo*, 73.
[50] McIver, "Banqueting at the Lord's Table." McIver writes on 9, "is she uncouth or merely unfashionable?"

della Casa's *Galateo* to portray proper and improper etiquette and on a broader scale provides a window into one of the most prominent aspects of 16th century Venetian culture. The woman with her toothpick does not just represent breaking della Casa's rules of etiquette but that she "is well equipped and prepared to serve [her] gluttony."[51] These monks are therefore reminded during their meals that they should not give into said gluttony or a *brutta figura*; that it is better to live plainly and well-mannered than lavishly with bad etiquette.

[51] Della Casa, *Galateo*, 73.

Chapter 2: *I frutti caravaggeschi:* Tradition, Symbolism and Beauty

The height of Caravaggio's career began in Rome when he was hired by Giuseppe Cesari, better known in the art world as Cavaliere d'Arpino, "to paint fruits, flowers, and other still-life elements– the kind of work that was generally deemed too modest for the master."[52] In Caravaggio's case, his interest in these otherwise less important elements became crucial in his paintings, and the attention to detail he provided has made room for various schools of symbolic interpretation. Representations of food already had a longstanding tradition in both Northern Renaissance art and in the northern regions of Italy, with the still life tradition focusing on painting inanimate objects like fruit and insects realistically. Veronese's *Marriage at Cana*, posing as the religious story in the painting's title, uses the Venetian banquet as a mode of discussing class and etiquette in the 16th century. Caravaggio's art also incorporates food to address class, but with different goals. In addition to the regional influences from his upbringing, Caravaggio's inclusion of fruit in his work is directly influenced by his patrons, namely Federico Borromeo and Cardinal del Monte. For each of these patrons, the significance of the representations of fruit differs: in Borromeo's, the paintings of fruit are eternal symbols of the divine, whereas the fruit in del Monte's paintings bring forth a sexual nature to both the painting's original patron and current audience. Scholars like Franca Trinchieri Camiz have questioned both del Monte and Caravaggio's sexuality, as the male subjects of a number of his paintings have been painted in a very seductive manner.[53] Others like Keith Christiansen argue that sensuality in some of Caravaggio's works are not due to Caravaggio's homosexuality but

[52] Jesse Locker, "Caravaggio's Artichokes," *Gastronomica* 19, no. 4 (2019): 20–27. 21.
[53] Franca Trinchieri Camiz, "The Castrato Singer: From Informal to Formal Portraiture," *Artibus et Historiae* 9, no. 18 (1988): 171–86, https://doi.org/10.2307/1483341. Camiz is discussing the *Lute Player* at the Hermitage Museum, but proposes the question of del Monte and Caravaggio's sexualities. Camiz writes, "Sexual ambiguity of the sitter for the Hermitage Giustiniani picture, on the other hand, has been read as an expression of Caravaggio's or Del Monte's homosexual proclivity." 172.

rather byproducts of painting from life.[54] Regardless of the sexuality of Caravaggio or his patron, the artist's images of food shift how human subjects are represented, moving away from large scale banquets and towards his patron's individual, personal desires. This chapter examines how Caravaggio's fruits diverge in style and subject from the northern European traditions of still lives and labor scenes. With a deeper inspection of the books about food in Caravaggio's time and the reflections of his patrons, I argue how Caravaggio's fruits increasingly symbolize the presentation of class and beauty, portray fleeting moments and signify the passage of time.

The tradition of still life painting was developed in the Northern Flemish regions of Europe, and trickled its way downwards to the Northern regions of Italy, where artists like Campi, Carracci, and Passarotti learned of this style. These artists became established in the tradition of labor and market scenes, in which the working-class subjects are shown completing a variety of tasks or selling their products. Though there is a very distinct connection with the Antwerp style of labor scenes that precedes these Italian painters, the Italian take on these scenes is completely devoid of the religious allegory that appears in the Flemish works.[55] This emerging tradition is significant because it marks "the birth of a realist genre painting in Italy," directly impacting Caravaggio's oeuvre.[56] Moreover, the significance within these displays of food can also be studied alongside the contemporary Baldassare Pisanelli's *Trattato della natura de' cibi et del bere* (Treaty of the Nature of Food and Drinking). Whereas Della Casa's *Galateo* distinguishes classes based on their knowledge of manners, *"*[Pisanelli's] text was originally a table listing various foods and charting their uses in relation to the doctrine of the four humors

[54] Keith Christiansen, "Caravaggio and 'L'esempio Davanti Del Naturale,'" *The Art Bulletin* 68, no. 3 (1986): 421–45, https://doi.org/10.2307/3050975. Christiansen writes, "What has been read as an expression of Caravaggio's reputed homosexuality–the supposedly solicitous gaze of the model–perhaps should be viewed as the byproduct of his pictorial method." 422.
[55] Sheila McTighe, "Foods and the Body in Italian Genre Paintings, about 1580: Campi, Passarotti, Carracci," *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (2004): 301–23, https://doi.org/10.2307/3177419. 301
[56] McTighe, "Foods and the Body," 301.

[and] it was quickly expanded into a discursive commentary."[57] In her article "Foods and the Body in Italian Genre Paintings, about 1580: Campi, Passarotti, Carracci," Sheila McTighe analyzes various paintings by these artists with Pisanelli's rules of appropriate food for the upper and lower classes to eat. McTighe writes that "Pisanelli went beyond individual people and their humors to assert that some foods by their delicacy were suited for noble and delicate people."[58] Just as Pisanelli established appropriate food for the upper and lower classes, these Italian still life artists depict images of class through paintings of food. While McTighe uses numerous examples between the three artists, the most important to look at for the sake of this chapter are Passarotti's *Poulterers* and Campi's *Fruit Vendor* scenes. The *Poulterers* (fig. 22) depicts two women amongst a variety of birds in different states, and the background is lined with some of the birds hanging by their necks. According to Pisanelli, poultry was among the noblest of foods the upper class could eat.[59] However, McTighe argues that there is a distinct difference between the food presented and the working-class subjects of the paintings. In Campi's *Fruit Vendor* scenes (fig. 23, 24), each depicts a lone woman surrounded by copious groups of pears, figs, grapes, cherries, and more. As McTighe stated, "the isolated women in Campi's two *Fruit Vendor* paintings display fruits that were, according to Pisanelli's text, appropriate for 'Signori,' or masters."[60] In both Campi and Passarotti's works, the peasants are shown in the states of production, but never consuming these foods. In fact, Campi goes so far as to even represent two women in the background of figure 23 just barely reaching the branches of fruit. McTighe writes, "the food on display in [these] scenes, presumably having been produced, raised, or caught by the peasant protagonists shown in the background of the scenes, was food that they were

[57] McTighe, 307-308.
[58] McTighe, 308.
[59] McTighe, 310.
[60] McTighe 311.

forbidden to eat by their very 'nature.'"[61] The notion that the fruit is "out of reach" by the very nature of their status, even as the vendors are in close proximity to the fruit, certainly confirms the connection that McTighe makes between Campi and Passarotti's work and Pisanelli's text. These laborers go through the effort and struggle to obtain these products, and yet never consume these foods–a literal symbol that the status these peasants desire will never be obtained.

Following the Flemish still life tradition means that Campi and Passarotti are both interested in naturalist representations of their subjects, but have not quite captured it.[62] In both versions of his *Fruit Vendors*, Campi's female subjects both appear to be youthful, beautiful women, each gingerly holding a pear or a bunch of grapes. In the version with the pear (fig. 23), the woman's eyes are too far apart and look in two slightly different directions, while she barely holds the pear that she is peeling. Her body twists towards the viewer as if to address a customer; this may not seem unusual at first however this action reveals the disproportion of her legs to the rest of her body. In Passarotti's *Poulterers*, the two women are different ages: the woman on the left cranes her neck away from the viewer, exposing creases and wrinkles. The skin on her hand appears wrinkled as well as she holds the chicken. These motifs of aging are stylized, as the wrinkles seem overly visible in the position of this woman's body. Her counterpart, a much younger girl, sits facing the older woman with her head turned outwards towards the spectator. The position of her body upon further inspection is unnatural; her shoulder droops too low and the perspective of her breasts should be from more of a side angle, but are instead too forward-facing. Much like the woman in figure 23 her legs are much too large for her body, especially the

[61] McTighe, 311.
[62] McTighe makes much more connection to the Flemish tradition, including allegorical reasons for stylizing, which do not relate to the discussion of this chapter.

right leg that crosses into the foreground, seemingly resting on her left knee but does not rest on anything.

Though Campi and Passarotti are foundational in the Italian painting tradition of food, Caravaggio's work moves away from this style and morphs into a realism that pays close attention to rendering the physical body–and subjects of fruit–with their imperfections.[63] Caravaggio's *Young Sick Bacchus* (fig. 25) is the optimal example for his early realism, as it showcases his interest in physical movement and the ability to portray it accurately: the "complicated and daring poses" of his subjects were inspired by Mannerism.[64] The *Young Sick Bacchus* is among Caravaggio's most daring poses in his oeuvre, using an exaggerated position to demonstrate his understanding of anatomy. Here, the subject of the *Young Sick Bacchus* is positioned in profile, with his right shoulder folding inwards towards himself. The pronounced musculature is a result of this shift in posture, as the forearm flexes and clutches a bunch of grapes. Like with Campi and Passarotti, a closer inspection of the subject's body reveals that the Bacchus's head twists intensely towards his audience in an unnatural position. Perhaps the contorted pose of the Bacchus is due to Caravaggio using a mirror to depict himself, studying his own anatomy during a six-month hospitalization where the artist likely had a case of malaria.[65] This supports why Caravaggio depicts the Bacchus with skin that has a greenish-yellow pallor, gaunt around his cheeks and nose, and his eyes appear dull, sunken-in and lifeless–physical symptoms commonly associated with malaria.[66]

[63] E. P. Richardson, "The Fruit Vendor by Caravaggio," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts of the City of Detroit* 16, no. 6 (1937): 86–91. 87.
[64] E. P. Richardson, "The Fruit Vendor by Caravaggio," 87.
[65] Borghese Gallery, "Young Sick Bacchus by Caravaggio."
[66] Borghese Gallery, "Young Sick Bacchus by Caravaggio."

Other aspects of this painting allude to the natural (and therefore realistic) process of decay, such as the wilting crown of ivy: it is as if by wearing this crown the Bacchus is transferring illness to the leaves.[67] The fruits on the table are the healthiest part of the work, however the grapes that the Bacchus holds appear to have all of the color drained from them, just like the Bacchus' skin. The two grapes closest to the Bacchus' thumb and palm are darker in color and shriveled up, as if they were further along in the maturation process–therefore the Bacchus's malaise is central in representing the natural occurrence of decay and the artist's own period of a decline in health. While Campi and Passarotti's figures appear in good health and shape but are not represented with true accuracy, the *Young Sick Bacchus* shows that Caravaggio studied his own anatomy–especially while suffering an illness–in order to realistically capture the human form even in an unpleasant state of health.

Within his other paintings of fruit, none of the human subjects are portrayed in this same sickly manner. To continue his own interest in veristic portrayals of nature, Caravaggio instead turns to fruit in varying stages of ripeness which he painted with meticulous detail. In fact, Caravaggio "depicted [fruit] with such precision that [botanists] have been able to determine what kind of fungus, moth, or other blight afflicted his imperfect models."[68] Another of his works, the *Basket of Fruit* (fig. 26) in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, is unique in Caravaggio's oeuvre. The still life depicts a large woven basket filled to the brim with various fruits, such as grapes, figs, apples, pears, and apricots or plums, while worm-eaten leaves dry up and fold onto themselves. The fruits are in varying stages of ripeness: the apple in the foreground has bruised skin and worm-eaten holes, the pear to the right has moldy black spots, and the skin on the fig between them is splitting and waxy in appearance. On the bunch of grapes in the background

[67] Borghese Gallery, "Young Sick Bacchus by Caravaggio."
[68] Locker, "Caravaggio's Artichokes," 21.

there are two grapes shriveling up in their over-ripeness, just like the grapes in the *Young Sick Bacchus*.

The reason for a still life instead of portraiture may relate more to the patron who commissioned the painting than Caravaggio's artistic intentions: Federico Borromeo, a Milanese archbishop in the Catholic Church who had an interest in the natural world.[69] In the span of his time in Rome, Borromeo collected sixteen Flemish landscape paintings and one Italian still life (by none other than Caravaggio), and it was the first still life that he acquired.[70] Borromeo's affinity for art of the natural world is recorded within his own writings, as they "reveal that he appreciated landscape and still-life paintings because, as a Christian optimist, he regarded nature as a manifestation of God's goodness."[71] Borromeo's reflections are key to understanding not only his interpretation of God's goodness but possible insight into the commission of the *Basket of Fruit*. He wrote that "the pleasures of the Christian mind were nature, ecstasy and communion with God. Contemplation of nature was a means of becoming close to the Creator, because his presence was found in all things."[72] As Borromeo understood even the most minute details in the natural world to be touched by God, the *Basket of Fruit* is a celebration of God's goodness at the smallest of scales.

Borromeo enjoyed spending time in nature, and he collected works depicting the natural world in a perfectly preserved image. He wrote to his mother, in May of 1599, that he enjoyed spending time in gardens in solitude as it cheered up his spirit.[73] Borromeo wrote "'…[when I am in my study and] it is hot, flowers are pleasing to me, and some fruit on the tables…Then

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[69] Pamela M. Jones, "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600," *The Art Bulletin* 70, no. 2 (1988): 261–72, https://doi.org/10.2307/3051119. 261.
[70] Jones, 262.
[71] Jones, "Federico Borromeo," 261.
[72] Jones, 264-265.
[73] Jones, 262.

when winter encumbers and restricts everything with ice, I have enjoyed from sight–and even imagined odor, if nor real–fake flowers…expressed in painting…and in these flowers I have wanted to see the variety of colors, not fleeting, as some of the flowers that are found [in nature], but stable and very endurable.'"[74] Though Borromeo's interest lied more in God's presence in nature, his fondness of the natural world (and therefore the desire to preserve fruits and flowers forever in an image) led to the commission of this slowly dying basket of fruit. Caravaggio is capturing these fruits in a transitory state of life and death–even as these fruits are preserved from the elements in their painted form, Caravaggio still subjects them to desiccation by worms and insects. According to Pamela Jones, "given Borromeo's tendency to contemplate created things as a means toward elevating his soul to a higher reality, he presumably interpreted the worm-eaten fruit and desiccated leaves as allusions to the transitory character of life on earth."[75] Caravaggio's capturing of when the fruit starts to decompose aligns well with Borromeo's understanding that death and decay were just as much part of the beauty of God's goodness.[76]

Borromeo's appreciation of beauty is, on a larger scale, based on "his conception of God's world and man's place in it."[77] His belief that God's presence is in all things aligns well with the painting tradition in the Lombardy region where both he and Caravaggio hailed from, which heavily focused on detailed images of fruit and flowers.[78] Caravaggio's artistic style shifts under the patronage of Francesco Maria del Monte, who was Venetian born and baptized and deeply favored styles of Venetian artists like Giorgione.[79] Like Borromeo, del Monte was a supporter of the arts and would mentor artists while also sponsoring them in his home–

[74] Jones, 269.
[75] Jones, 270.
[76] Jones, 269.
[77] Jones, 271.
[78] Keith Christiansen, *A Caravaggio Rediscovered: The Lute Player*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990). 9.
[79] Christiansen, *A Caravaggio Rediscovered*. 12, 16.

Caravaggio included.[80] Del Monte lived in Rome, had interests in classical materials, and was a collector of antique sculptures which Caravaggio became familiar with during his time in the del Monte household.[81] As Avigdor Posèq writes, the artist was "combining the literary inspiration with his visual impressions of antique sculptures, [and] he staged his models in elaborate poses that were meant to convey a distinctive contemporary meaning as well."[82] Another of del Monte's houseguests, a young boy he particularly favored, is believed to be the subject of many commissioned paintings, as "[del Monte] combined these intellectual pursuits with an equally lively appreciation of the charms of pretty boys."[83] His affinity for the youth in the years that Caravaggio remained under del Monte's protection may have led to these commissions where the boy-turned-model is prevented from aging– the direct opposite of Borromeo's desire for nature as God intended, and an exception to Caravaggio's realist style. Instead, Caravaggio's fruit is used to convey the passage of time.

The first of the two paintings is the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* (fig. 27), also titled *il Fruttivendolo* or the *Fruit Vendor*, from around 1593. A youthful male stands and gazes out at the viewer. His body is relaxed and seems at ease; his eyelids are heavy, with flushed cheeks and slightly parted lips, while his head is tilted slightly backwards and to the side. Though not directly depicted as Bacchus (particularly noting the absence of his crown of leaves), the figure's at-ease nature is certainly an allusion to drunkenness and therefore the god of wine.[84] Like the *Young Sick Bacchus*, Caravaggio has depicted this male with accurate anatomy. His physique is muscular and easily seen in the roundness of his shoulder and the concave divot of his

[80] Avigdor W. G. Posèq, "Caravaggio and the Antique," *Artibus et Historiae* 11, no. 21 (1990): 147–67, https://doi.org/10.2307/1483388. 149.
[81] Posèq, "Caravaggio and the Antique," 149.
[82] Posèq, 149.
[83] Posèq, 149 and Amelia Arenas, "Sex, Violence and Faith: The Art of Caravaggio," *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 23, no. 3 (2016): 35–52, https://doi.org/10.2307/arion.23.3.0035. 37.
[84] Posèq, 151.

collarbone. The produce for sale in the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* are, on the surface level, ripe and ready for consumption. The handwoven wicker basket is abundant with cherries, figs, apples, pears, grapes, and a partial pomegranate hidden behind a wide leaf. At first glance the leaves around the edges of the basket start to brown and shrivel up. While most of the fruits are ripe, the pear at the center is noticeably starting to bruise. As Caravaggio is clearly focused on painterly realism at this point of his career, both the fruit and the male subject are carefully depicted with accuracy.

Still under the del Monte household, Caravaggio was commissioned in 1596 for another painting that reflected the Cardinal's classical interests, and is strikingly similar to the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*. In the *Uffizi Bacchus* (fig. 28), the male subject is depicted with a fuller head of hair and a crown of leaves, with the same flushed cheeks and heavy eyelids of the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*. Both figures are very muscular with a protruding collarbone, yet the Bacchus is much more exposed as his shirt has completely fallen from his right shoulder. The bowl of fruit is filled with an assortment of fruits that have just started to rot: including apples, pears, grapes and a pomegranate. Bacchus is shown with a glass carafe of wine, and a wide-mouthed drinking glass similar to the Venetian *tazza* mentioned in the previous chapter.[85] A notable change between this *Bacchus* and the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* is the clothing the two figures wear. While the boy in the *Basket of Fruit* wears a contemporary shirt, the Bacchus wears a toga of the classical period.[86] Under del Monte's mentorship, Caravaggio's study of classical literature and sculpture allowed him to depict a Bacchus in the appropriate contextual style, "which to him was not the antithesis but rather the necessary complement of the Classical tradition."[87] Caravaggio's

[85] As mentioned in footnote 11, Caravaggio was inspired by Venetian tradition. Richardson, 87.
[86] Posèq, 151.
[87] Posèq, 163.

interest in accuracy was previously established, yet it is additionally intriguing to consider how del Monte's mentorship added to Caravaggio's abilities to paint naturalistically.

Though Caravaggio rendered his figures with accurate anatomy, the baskets of fruit are truly where Caravaggio's naturalism lies in these paintings. Alongside the beautiful model these fruit at first appear to be lush and ripe, but a prolonged study of them reveals bruising and the beginning stages of decay. Of the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*, Posèq writes "The exquisite rendering of the ripe fruit, a conventional symbol of 'sexual gluttony,' might have been perceived as an allusion to the sophisticated pleasures offered by the youth, and at the same time as a subtle comment on the youth's losing his innocence as quickly as the fruit would rot or wither and dry."[88] Though Posèq argues that this comment is subtle and more about the youth's loss of innocence, I argue instead that del Monte's intentions for this commission were focused on the preservation of beauty and youth, an argument only made stronger through the slowly-rotting fruit. Caravaggio's beautiful male figures are presented in a way that promotes an eternal youth, and would be kept forever frozen in this moment if not for the fruits' initial stages of over-ripening. The idea that fruit is being used to signify the passing of time is certainly clear through the sensual presentation of both figures in these paintings.

In the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*, the male figure is sensual both in the way his shirt slips off of his shoulder and his direct gaze with his audience. In their initial stages of over-ripeness, the blemishes on this fruit would deter someone from consuming produce that has already started to go bad. The fruit will only continue to go bad as time passes unlike the boy–alluding to the notion that the fruit is not the item being offered. In the *Uffizi Bacchus*, the selection of fruit is barely enticing: the pears and quinces are bruised, the apple has a worm-eaten hole, and the

[88] Posèq, 149.

pomegranate is split open not in a burst of freshness but rather like the skin has given way. Caravaggio has now shown careful attention towards both the fruit and male subjects, but only the fruit in these paintings for del Monte are represented in their true and imperfect form. Though del Monte's sexuality was never officially documented, his sponsorship–and Caravaggio's continuous use of this same model, identified by Franca Trinchieri Camiz as the Spanish castrato singer Pietro Montoya–represent at the very least a desire by the Cardinal to capture the model's beauty.[89]

The subject's sensuality is also visible in the *Uffizi Bacchus*, which has additional elements present in the painting that suggest this. McTighe had written that "very dark red wine was again fit only for the kind of laborers whom Campi paints at their meals."[90] Though not labor in the same sense that Campi had depicted nor what McTighe is analyzing, the dark red wine present in the *Uffizi Bacchus* alludes to the subject's social status. With a deeper observation of the painting, the Bacchus seems less a depiction of a deity and more of a model swathed in a costume–del Monte's favored guest all of a sudden appears out of place, looking at the dirt on his fingernails or the redness of his hands. The dirty fingernails of the Bacchus refer to an uncleanliness previously discussed in Veronese's *Marriage at Cana*: visibly dirty hands were considered impolite–signifying that the model is in a position to be unaware of upper-class etiquette. The Bacchus' fingers are perhaps the most erotic aspect in this painting aside from the exposed arm, as they highlight two elements. The hold on the *tazza* is incredibly light, as the Bacchus grazes the stem with his thumb and forefinger. The Bacchus seduces his viewer by toying with the black velvet sash, as if he is in the initial moments of undressing himself for his audience.

[89] Camiz, "The Castrato Singer." 172.
[90] McTighe, 308.

The seductiveness of Caravaggio's *Bacchus* is also rooted in classical representations, his intoxicating stare is "inviting the viewer to join him in a sensuous *symposium.*"[91] As Brice Erickson discusses in his article, "Public Feasts and Private Symposia in the Archaic and Classical Periods," symposia date back to the Classical period and were feasts and drinking events for the elite.[92] This type of feast was briefly mentioned in chapter one as the precursor to the Renaissance banqueting tradition and del Monte's interest in the classical world led him to recreating symposia.[93] In the historical symposia, one cup of diluted wine is shared by the table during the meal and another is served afterwards.[94] In the second cup the young men at the table share a bowl to mix wine with water (the same way water was diluted in Venetian banqueting), but the older men present can drink more if they choose.[95] In the Uffizi Bacchus, the subject holds the *tazza* as if to offer more wine to the viewer (del Monte). This creates a sense that this Bacchus is not only inviting the viewer to enjoy the wine, but the viewer is also invited to partake in something much more intimate. At del Monte's symposia, guests were encouraged to engage in sexual activities otherwise frowned upon in their contemporary time, as it was reenacting a historic ritual.[96] Therefore, the sensuality of the Bacchus alludes to activities that transpired at del Monte's symposia.

Whether or not the artist himself is taking creative liberty in these sexual presentations of the model, these connections are still prevalent as Caravaggio shows time passing solely through the imperfect fruit. In this desire for naturalistic paintings, Borromeo and del Monte's

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[91] Posèq, 151-152.
[92] Brice L. Erickson, "Public Feasts and Private Symposia in the Archaic and Classical Periods," *Hesperia Supplements* 44 (2011): 381–91.
[93] Avigdor Posèq, "Bacchic Themes in Caravaggio's Juvenile Works." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 115, no. 1454. (1990). Quoted by Meaghan Bratichak, "Living Antiquity: Classical Quotations in the Paintings of Caravaggio." *The Drew Review*, vol. 1, 2008. 34.
[94] Erickson, "Public Feasts," 382.
[95] Erickson, "Public Feasts," 382.
[96] Posèq, "Bacchic Themes," quoted by Bratichak, "Living Antiquity," 34.

commissioning of Caravaggio are intertwined. Both religious figures were interested in preserving beauty through Caravaggio's paintings, even though their perceptions of beauty differed: Borromeo found natural beauty in organic things from the earth, where del Monte found beauty not in nature but rather in his favored young guest. Borromeo had written that "painted flowers would never wither, fade, and die: their beauties were permanent."[97] Rather than flowers, Caravaggio is painting this male subject in a perfect way to capture his beauty forever, preventing the process of aging within the painting. Caravaggio's figures are the idea of beauty in a way that Campi's and Passarotti's figures are not–they are anatomically accurate and yet have been rendered without any semblance of flaw, so that one does not think that Caravaggio has stylized them. And yet, intentional decisions were made not just in the depictions of this male model, but in the surrounding elements that aid in the painting's narrative. It is only upon studying the relationship between the fruit and male subjects that one realizes del Monte's boy is frozen in his youthful age, with only the decay and blemishes of the fruit around him to signify the passing of time.

To tie these discussions of symbolism, naturalism, and youth together, I turn to one final painting–*The Supper at Emmaus* (fig. 30). Made for Cardinal Girolamo Mattei in 1601, the painting serves in this chapter as the culmination of Caravaggio's influences and artistic choices throughout his career. The painting depicts the biblical story of the Supper at Emmaus, when Christ reveals himself to the disciples Cleophas and an unnamed disciple and subsequently vanishes before their eyes.[98] As the story goes, the two disciples walked to Emmaus shortly after Christ's resurrection, and as they walked, they discussed the events that had occurred. At this

[97] Jones, 269.
[98] Philip H. Pfatteicher, "Caravaggio's Conception of Time in His Two Versions of the 'Supper at Emmaus,'" *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 7, no. 1 (1987): 9–13. Pfatteicher introduces the idea that Peter is the unnamed disciple.

same time, Christ drew closer to the two disciples but they did not recognize him. The two disciples shared their disbelief with the unrecognized Christ and upon reaching Emmaus invited him to stay with them for the evening. At the table, Christ blessed bread and subsequently gave each a piece, and with this they recognized him and he disappeared.[99] Caravaggio is capturing the very moment the disciples recognize Christ.[100] Cleophas is on the right side of the table while the other disciple is on the left is on the left; between the two disciples is Christ who holds his hands out and blesses the food on the table while turning the water in the glass into wine.[101] Charles Scribner writes that "as Christ thrusts his right hand forward to bless the loaf of bread, the disciples react as if thunderstruck."[102] Scribner acknowledges that this is the instant they recognize Christ, but does not realize how split-second it actually is. Cleopas on the left grips onto the chair as he braces to jump up, whereas the other disciple stretches his arms out wide and connects the scene to the audience's space.[103] Because these moments are not finalized, Cleopas has not fully stood up, and the innkeeper stands unaware as he has yet to recognize Christ.[104] Unlike Cleopas' raised eyebrows the innkeeper's face is neutral, as is the other disciple's expression, even though the position of his arms signifies that he has recognized Christ. The physical positions of these subjects show the initial stages of movement yet the actual bodies are frozen in motion. These diametrically opposed concepts show Caravaggio's careful attention to human form and a continual interest in timeless imagery.

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[99] "Douay-Rheims Bible, Luke Chapter 24," accessed April 21, 2024, https://www.drbo.org/cgi-bin/d?b=drb&bk=49&ch=24&l=12-#x. v.13-31.
[100] Charles Scribner, "In Alia Effigie: Caravaggio's London Supper at Emmaus," *The Art Bulletin* 59, no. 3 (1977): 375–82, https://doi.org/10.2307/3049670. 377.
[101] Susanne J. Warma, "Christ, First Fruits, and the Resurrection: Observations on the Fruit Basket in Caravaggio's London 'Supper at Emmaus,'" *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte* 53, no. 4 (1990): 583–86, https://doi.org/10.2307/1482555. 583.
[102] Scribner, "In Alia Effigie" 377.
[103] Pfatteicher, "Caravaggio's Conception of Time," 9.
[104] Scribner, 376.

While aforementioned paintings have incorporated fruit to represent the passing of time alongside a beautiful subject, Caravaggio utilizes many more symbols to signify the transitory nature of this moment. The youthful, clean-shaven Christ may very well tie timelessness–*agelessness*–to the preservation of youth and beauty from del Monte's paintings. Here Christ is represented in the clean-shaven "Apollonian type," derived from much earlier Christian art and more youthful than the typical bearded Christ of Caravaggio's contemporary time period.[105] With Christ's youthful depiction, perhaps Caravaggio's intention was to "justify the disciples' lack of recognition along their journey to Emmaus," and with the presentation of this unexpected Christ, the audience is included in this moment of recognition.[106] Both the Uffizi *Bacchus* and Christ are represented beardless, this connection to frozen time is hard to ignore. Clothing additionally aids in representing class and time in this ambiguous setting. Like in the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*, the clothing that some of the figures wear are contemporary pieces: while Christ is dressed in antique robes, Cleopas' jacket is seemingly more in line with 17th century fashion, and a torn area in the elbow may indicate a lower class.[107] The innkeeper and the unnamed disciple also wear "rustic" clothes.[108]

With the lack of historical accuracy in mind, other elements of the painting begin to appear out of place. Objects like ceramic pitchers and the carpet that stretches across the table are all items of Caravaggio's contemporary period, whereas eating utensils common of the same era are missing from the table.[109] John Varriano writes that "although information on Italian dining habits of the period is not extensive, there is evidence that better inns and private homes

[105] Scribner, 379.
[106] Scribner, 378.
[107] Varriano, "Caravaggio and the Decorative Arts," 222. Keith Christiansen also discusses Caravaggio's use of torn clothing to represent a lower status, as mentioned in *A Caravaggio Rediscovered*, 17.
[108] Scribner, 365.
[109] Varriano, 222.

used silver or pewter instead of crockery."[110] As the biblical events of the Supper at Emmaus occur in an inn, the inclusion of ceramics (crockery) and the lack of utensils are out of place in the context of appropriate dining ware.[111] Varriano's point, on a larger scale, argues in favor of my discussion of a timeless image. It is not that this scene is only freezing time, like the transitional poses of Caravaggio's figures, but that the tableware is out of place both in regards to the status of these figures and the time period when this story occurs. The combined ambiguity of the clothing, tableware and cross-cultural elements signify that the biblical story in this painting is occurring outside of the passing of time. This confusion of time supports that this painting, like others previously discussed, is attempting to preserve a moment forever in suspense.

There are a number of foods present at the *Supper at Emmaus* table, the first of which in turn relates back to Pisanelli's text pertaining to food and social class. However, a lack of contemporary tableware or a certain clothing style makes it unclear what the status of the figures should be. Though presented in this unrecognizable style, Caravaggio has incorporated hidden details that not only signify Christ's holiness, but incorporate Pisanelli's classifications of high and low foods. Pisanelli said, "the finest, most delicate, and noblest of foods were thought to be poultry and fish."[112] At the center of this table is a roasted fowl, a type of poultry and appropriate for the upper class staying in an inn. The fowl is a symbol of the passion of Christ, as Pfatteicher presents it announced Simon Peter's denial of Christ's resurrection, and a symbol of Christ's triumph over the devil.[113]

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[110] Varriano, 222.
[111] Varriano, 222.
[112] McTighe, 311.
[113] Pfatteicher, "Caravaggio's Conception of Time." Pfatteicher discusses in more depth the symbolism of the fowl on pages 10-12.

Additionally, the fish is associated with Christ as "the Greek word for fish… also forms the initials for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior…"[114] Caravaggio includes two antique symbols of Christ in the painting, connecting fish (a high-class food) with Christ, the son of God and a holy figure. The leaves in the basket of fruit cast a shadow of a fish's tail, as do two frayed pieces of the wicker basket. Fish had also become associated with Christ as it was the food of the Eucharist in Early Christianity, the very ritual being enacted in the *Supper at Emmaus* with the blessing of the bread and wine.[115] Pisanelli classified fish as one of the most noble foods, and Christ is regarded as one of the most noble because of his holy status.

This puzzling image of class and historical time blur the stark class distinctions Pisanelli had created. In his school of thought, "to eat the foods suited to one's social group meant life, however circumscribed by the 'natural' boundaries of high and low stature…"[116] Caravaggio adds to his timeless image by creating this confusion of social classes, through their clothes and the food at the table. The fruit basket is crucial in the full understanding of this painting, especially when considering the momentous recognition of Christ. Just as Cleopas and Luke are identifying Christ, so sudden that the innkeeper is still unaware, the fruit basket sits halfway over the edge of the table, unstable and about to tumble to the ground.[117] Similar to the baskets of fruit previously discussed, this one is filled with fruits in varying stages of ripeness and decay. Caravaggio's contemporary critics had "major objections [with] the inclusion of the fruit basket which [was] too close to nature because it is merely 'a plate of grapes… and pomegranates out of season.'"[118] Just as the clothes aid in the timelessness of the painting, the fruit Caravaggio chose

[114] Warma, "Christ, First Fruits, and the Resurrection," 585.
[115] Warma, 585.
[116] McTighe, 312.
[117] Warma, 583.
[118] Warma, 583.

are intentionally incorrect for the time of year in which the Supper occurred, instead alluding to symbols of Christ. Grapes are symbolic of the Eucharist, and they were also attributed to fertility gods of antiquity (like Bacchus). The plum is a symbol of the Passion of Christ, and pomegranates symbolize Christ's resurrection as well as Church and congregation.[119] With each of these fruits being present in this scene and in the baskets from Borromeo and del Monte's paintings, there is a clear underlying theme of religion that represents different aspects of Christ (the apples and pomegranates that appear in the *Uffizi Bacchus* and the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*, and the grapes that appear in each basket as a symbol of Christ and Bacchus). The presentation of dying fruit alongside beautiful figures that never age establishes death and decay as a natural passing of time.

The fowl, fish symbols and fruit in the *Supper at Emmaus* present a diametrically opposed question of class and status. Does Caravaggio, who is inconsistent about historical accuracy, include these foods to signify a higher status of these religious figures, despite the biblical account of the disciples being travelers? Or is it perhaps the fruit has the same symbolic significance of passing time in a momentary image? Scribner presents the idea of the heavenly food of the Eucharist "juxtaposed with its earthly opposite," in this case the fowl and fruit on the table.[120] Though his connection supports an idea of rebirth, it is worth considering the connection to Pisanelli's text. The "heavenly food," Pisanelli's fowl and fish, are being eaten by "earthly" people, thus mixing the two classes in a shared meal. Pisanelli wrote, "To transgress the line that divided one diet from another was to invite death."[121] And yet, with the painting stuck in a

[119] Warma, 585.
[120] Scribner, 382.
[121] McTighe, 312.

continuous still of Christ's recognition, there can be no death of these heavenly bodies. The only thing that Caravaggio will let die, of course, is the fruit.

Capitolo 3: Assaggia con gli occhi, invece della bocca nella cucina futurista

Il Futurismo fu un grande movimento artistico italiano durante la prima parte del XX secolo. Anche se operarono in un periodo molto breve–solamente tra il 1909 e il 1916– i futuristi diventarono un esempio per l'arte in Italia e nel mondo. Il movimento si sviluppò a Milano, una città già moderna durante questo periodo, e cercò di distinguersi dalla storia e dalle tradizioni molto ricche del passato. Inoltre fu associato al fascismo perché Benito Mussolini apprezzò il movimento per il suo patriottismo.[122]

I futuristi furono interessati a cambiare tutto quello che consideravano Italiano perché secondo loro, l'Italia ed il resto del mondo dovevano eliminare tutte le tracce di un mondo vecchio. Specificamente, loro proposero la distruzione dei musei, delle arti antiche e degli prodotti degli altri Paesi.[123] C'era anche un desiderio di cambiare il modo in cui gli italiani mangiavano, non solo con gli ingredienti locali, ma inventando nuovi piatti in cui il fulcro sarebbe stato quello di rappresentare queste idee come un'avanguardia. Al quel tempo queste idee sul cibo furono considerate radicali per una cultura, come quella italiana, in cui la pasta era una grande parte della dieta, quindi « una guerra sulla pastasciutta » sembrava inconcepibile.[124]

Nei capitoli scorsi ho parlato delle rappresentazioni del cibo nei dipinti e allo stesso modo i futuristi credevano che il cibo e gli ingredienti, le tecnologie e le presentazioni dei pasti fossero una forma d'arte così importante come scolpire e dipingere, e Marinetti disse: « mangia come arte per agire come arte. »[125] Il concetto della cucina come forma d'arte non fu portato avanti da Marinetti, perché pensava che la cucina fosse una *nuova* forma d'arte. Marinetti, nel manifesto del futurismo, scrisse: "Perché dovremmo guardarci alle spalle? Noi abbiamo già sperperati

[122] Corso con Heather Cammarata-Seale, Primavera 2022.
[123] "Futurism | Definition, Manifesto, Artists, & Facts | Britannica," accessed February 13, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/art/Futurism.
[124] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *La Cucina Futurista*, 1932.
[125] Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. CUPIDOLUCA, "La cucina futurista", IL *SETACCIO* (blog), April 28, 2017, https://ilsetaccio.eu/2017/04/28/la-cucina-futurista/.

tesori, mille tesori di forza, di amore, d'audacia, d'astuzia e di rude volontà; li abbiamo gettati via impazientemente, in furia, senza contare, senza mai esitare, senza riposarci mai."[126] Nonostante questo desiderio di profondo cambiamento le idee di Marinetti riflettevano i concetti passati nella storia dell'arte italiana. Nathan Myhrvold, nel suo articolo "The Art in Gastronomy: A Modernist Perspective," ha scritto: "Food can engage our senses, our minds, and our emotions… our relationship with food is even more intimate because we consume it directly."[127] Per queste ragioni il cibo deve essere arte e in questo capitolo parlerò dei collegamenti tra il movimento futurista e le tradizioni passate, discusse nei due capitoli precedent, da cui Marinetti volle allontanarsi.

Scritto da F.T. Marinetti nel 1932, il manifesto della cucina futurista ricordò le credenze del movimento futurismo, con cibo come fulcro. All'inizio del manifesto c'è una storia che si chiama « un pranzo che evitò suicidio. » In questo racconto, l'amico di Marinetti, Giulio Onesti (uno pseudonimo), vuole suicidarsi: « Quindi mi suiciderò questa notte! »[128] Per fargli cambiare l'idea, Marinetti dice: « …a meno che tu ci conduca immediatamente nelle tue ricche e fornite cucine. »[129] Nelle cucine, Marinetti, Onesti, Fillìa ed Enrico Prampolini (alcuni «aeropittori») fanno delle sculture. Mentre dormivano, Onesti mangiava tutte le sculture– e questa diventa la cura del suo problema: « Era insieme sgombro, liberato, vuoto e colmo. Godente e goduto. Possessore e posseduto. Unico e totale. »[130] Questo racconto, anche se strano, è importante per capire il pensiero eroico che guidava i futuristi, era come se la loro cucina avesse delle proprietà curative.

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[126] "Fondazione e Manifesto Del Futurismo – Italian Futurism," accessed February 3, 2024, https://www.italianfuturism.org/manifestos/fondazione-e-manifesto-del-futurismo/.
[127] Nathan Myhrvold, "The Art in Gastronomy: A Modernist Perspective," *Gastronomica* 11, no. 1 (2011): 13–23, https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2011.11.1.13.
[128] Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. *La cucina futurista*, 1932. 11.
[129] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 11.
[130] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 20.

I futuristi introdussero alcune ricette ideali e Marinetti elencò le sue 11 regole per un «pranzo perfetto. »[131] Le prime tre regole parlano dell'unicità dei pranzi futuristi: « Un'armonia originale della tavola (cristalleria vasellame addobbo) coi sapori e colori delle vivande, » «L'originalità assoluta della vivande, » e « L'invenzione di complessi plastici saporiti, la cui armonia originale di forma e colore nutra gli occhi ed ecciti la fantasia prima di tentare le labbra. »[132] Come un bel quadro, l'armonia delle forme e colori nella presentazione del cibo fu una parte cruciale nell'esperienza alimentare futurista. L'idea di mangiare prima con gli occhi sicuramente crebbe in popolarità durante il periodo futurista, però il concetto era già presente nella storia dell'arte come abbiamo visto nei due capitoli precedenti. Con *il Fanciullo con canestro di frutta*, l'idea di bellezza è prominente. Il protagonista del dipinto di Caravaggio era molto bello, però la frutta appare putrida al contrario di quello che accadeva nell'arte futurista in cui la presentazione dei piatti era di fondamentale importanza. In quel modo, la consumazione del cibo è secondo alla presentazione, come l'importanza delle presentazioni dei piatti futuristi.

La quarta regola è un buon esempio del distacco dalle regole del passato: « L'abolizione della forchetta e del coltello per i complessi plastici che possono dare un piacere tattile prelabiale. »[133] Con Veronese e della Casa, l'uso delle posate era nuovo però era un segno di una persona con buone maniere. Invece Marinetti richiede l'uso delle mani, prendendo definitivamente le distanze dalla tradizione passata.

Un pranzo futurista doveva coinvolgere tutti i sensi. Non solo la presentazione ma anche i sensi tattili sono importanti per l'appetito, con l'aggiunta di suoni ed elementi olfattivi. Infatti la quinta e sesta regola prevedeva « L'uso dell'arte dei profumi per favorire la degustazione, » e

[131] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 30.
[132] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 30-31.
[133] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 32.

«L'uso della musica limitato negli intervalli tra vivanda e vivanda perchè non distragga la sensibilità della lingua e del palato e serva ad annientare il sapore goduto ristabilendo una verginità degustativa. »[134] Nelle *Nozze di Cana*, al centro dell'immagine, un gruppo di musicisti suona per i partecipanti al banchetto e probabilmente tra una portata e l'altra.[135] Quindi, l'uso della musica che accompagnava i piatti esisteva prima e la regola di Marinetti si basava sulla tradizione dei banchetti.

Inoltre, la settima regola cita l'eloquenza tanto importante per della Casa: « L'abolizione dell'eloquenza e della politica a tavola. »[136] Durante il tempo della creazione delle *Nozze di Cana*, come ho scritto prima, l'eloquenza e le buone maniere erano molto importanti per i partecipanti dei banchetti. Marinetti citava il passato quando era contrario, infatti i futuristi volevano cambiare tutte le cose e idee vecchie, come le idee presenti in questo quadro. Per allontanarsi dal passato, Marinetti decretò che a tavola le persone sono uguali, però in realtà questo non è corretto. Certo, i partecipanti alle cene futuriste erano uguali, ma come nelle *Nozze di Cana*, ci sono camerieri che portano i piatti e facilitano tutti gli elementi futuristi come i profumi oppure la musica. Inoltre, l'idea « dell' abolizione della politica a tavola » era sicuramente satirica perché alla base del movimento futurista c'era un messaggio politico che diventò più politico quando Mussolini diede il suo appoggio.

Il movimento e il dinamismo furono elementi essenziali per il pensiero futurista, e questi sono evidenti nelle regole per un pranzo perfetto. Marinetti scrisse, nella sua ottava e nona regola, dell'importanza dell' « uso dosato della poesia e della musica come ingredienti improvvisi per accendere con la loro intensità sensuale i sapori di una data vivanda » e della

[134] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 33.
[135] Cfr. Capitolo uno.
[136] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 33.

«presentazione rapida tra vivanda e vivanda, sotto le nari e gli occhi dei convitati, di alcune vivande che essi mangeranno e di altre che essi non mangeranno, per favorire la curiosità, la sorpresa e la fantasia. »[137] Con questi movimenti fluidi, i piatti hanno lo stesso dinamismo delle tecnologie industriali che si svilupparono in quel periodo. I movimenti fluidi richiamavano l'organizzazione delle vivande nelle *Nozze di Cana*, in cui ogni piatto (ed erano tanti) era portato dai servitori.

La decima regola descrive la brevità con cui i partecipanti mangiavano: « La creazione dei Bocconi simultanei e cangianti che contengano dieci, venti sapori da gustare in pochi attimi. Questi Bocconi avranno nella cucina futurista la funzione analogica immensificante che le immagini hanno nella letteratura. Un dato boccone potrà riassumere una intera zona di vita, lo svolgersi di una passione amorosa o un intero viaggio nell'Estremo Oriente. »[138] Il tempo è un elemento comune tra la frutta del Caravaggio ed il movimento futurista. Mentre ogni boccone durante un banchetto futurista doveva essere molto veloce, il tempo nei dipinti di Caravaggio appare molto lento, tranne la maturazione della frutta. In questi due casi, il cibo è sinonimo di momenti fuggevoli, ma ha due obiettivi diversi. In una cena futurista, la brevità dei bocconi emula il movimento rapido delle nuove tecnologie, però nei dipinti di Caravaggio, la frutta rappresenta il passaggio del tempo anche se il ragazzo appare giovane e bello per sempre.

Infine, l'undicesima regola è quella più in linea con il futuro perché con lo sviluppo delle nuove tecnologie in città come Milano e Torino, rappresentate nelle loro arti, è ovvio che i futuristi pensarono di usarle anche in cucina: «Una dotazione di strumenti scientifici in cucina: ozonizzatori che diano il profumo dell'ozono a liquidi e a vivande, lampade per emissione di

[137] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 33.
[138] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 33.

raggi ultravioletti. »[139] Siccome i futuristi vissero durante una nuova età tecnologica, questo era necessario anche in cucina in cui erano ancora usati i metodi tradizionali del passato.

Le regole furono molto importanti per la nuova ideologia futurista, ma rimasero solo a livello teorico fino a quando ristoranti futuristi come Penna D'Oca oppure la Taverna Santopalato, le misero in pratica.[140] L'otto marzo 1931, la Taverna Santopalato fu inaugurata con il primo pranzo futurista, con piatti come *Aerovivanda, Carneplastico, Paesaggio alimentare,* e *Mare d'Italia.*[141] In particolare, *Aerovivanda* e *Carneplastico* rappresentavano perfettamente alcune delle regole di Marinetti. *Aerovivanda* si « compone di una fettina di finocchio, di una oliva e di un chinotto, » ed evoca tutti i sensi.[142] Quando un partecipante li mangiava c'era anche « un pezzo di velluto, un pezzo di raso e un pezzo di carta vetrata » che il partecipante doveva tenere allo stesso momento.[143] Mentre i partecipanti mangiavano questi piatti, gli assistenti dovevano spruzzare profumi sulle loro nuche per invocare i sensi tattili, gustativi e olfattivi in un singolo momento fluido.[144] Non c'era l'uso delle posate come descritto nella quarta regola e c'era l'uso dei profumi teorizzato nella quinta.

Carneplastico, l'altro piatto significativo di questo pranzo, rappresenta la terza regola. Il piatto « è composto di una grande polpetta cilindrica di carne di vitello arrostita ripiena di undici qualità diverse di verdure cotte, » e la regola parlava della creazione di « complessi plastici saporiti. »[145] Inoltre, siccome c'erano allusioni sessuali nel manifesto di Marinetti, il cilindro aveva una forma fallica (fig. 30). Questo si collega al secondo capitolo per le idee della sensualità del protagonista nei dipinti commissionati da del Monte. Nel *Fanciullo con canestro*

[139] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 34.
[140] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 23, 94.
[141] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 94.
[142] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 113.
[143] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 113.
[144] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista* 113.
[145] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 32.

di frutta e nel *Bacco degli Uffizi*, tutti e due i protagonisti invitano in modo sensuale i loro osservatori con gli sguardi, le mani ed i corpi. Il *Carneplastico* è ovviamente un oggetto sensuale, ed il concetto della sensualità è chiaro, invece in questi due quadri di Caravaggio la sensualità deve essere scoperta dall'osservatore.

Sebbene ci siano tante testimonianze di questi pranzi con dettagli dei piatti, è più interessante analizzare un pranzo futurista in azione. Nel 2009 fu ricreato in Inghilterra un *Aerobanchetto*.[146] In questo video, un gruppo moderno fa una cena secondo gli ideali futuristi degli aerobanchetti a Novara, Chiavari e Bologna.[147] Nell'aerobanchetto bolognese, l'atmosfera del banchetto sembra come quella di un vero aereo, ed in questo banchetto l'idea era la stessa.[148] Però, questo video mostra che le regole dei futuristi non hanno funzionato bene in pratica.

All'inizio del video vediamo un "check-in" come in un aeroporto e poi il presentatore, Tim Hayward, assaggia un boccone molto simile a quello dell'*Aerovivanda*.[149] Però le somiglianze finiscono qui perché assaggia un kumquat e un pezzo di tessuto, invece del finocchio, dell'oliva, del chinotto e degli altri tessuti inclusi nella ricetta *Aerovivanda* nel libro di cucina. Non c'è l'uso del profumi, ma le assistenti di volo parlano con i partecipanti oppure usano parole astratte come « wallpaper, tarmac, soft, smooth, gravel, silk, olive, scents, smell, tortoise. »[150] In questo caso, le parole usate durante l'assaggio richiamano l'ottava e decima regola perché l'uso della poesia (forse in questo caso solamente le parole) crea un'immagine nelle teste dei partecipanti come le immagini nella letteratura.

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[146] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7_XaD6nE2c.
[147] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 111, 125, 130.
[148] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 131.
[149] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 0:16.
[150] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 0:51-1:14.

Durante il « check-in », gli assistenti, vestiti come assistenti di volo, e il comandante ricordano un'atmosfera simile a quella di un aereo e dietro la sedia di Hayward vediamo un ventilatore nero, che simula l'aria durante un volo, ma anche probabilmente per diffondere i profumi intorno ai partecipanti.[151] Poi, i primi assaggi del pasto « in volo » sono *Geraniums on a Stick*, il *Cubist Vegetable Patch*, l'*Italian Sea,* ed il *Dates in the Moonlight*.[152] Anche se tutti questi sono in piccoli porzioni, il *Cubist Vegetable Patch* e l'*Italian Sea* sono i due piatti più intriganti, perché ci sono somiglianze, tra la forma ed il concetto, alle altre ricette futuriste. Una ricetta possible è *Ortocubo,* include: « cubetti di sedano di Verona fritti e cosparsi di paprica; cubetti di carote fritti e cosparsi di rafano grattugiato; piselli lessati; cipollini d' Ivrea all' aceto cosparsi di prezzemolo tritato; barrette di fontina. »[153] Però, il piatto di questo aerobanchetto non sembra fatto secondo le istruzioni della ricetta. Sui piatti dei partecipanti il *Cubist Vegetable Patch* sembra avere una forma verde e gelatinosa, con carote e zucchine a dadini, e Hayward lo descrive come un « gazpacho jelly. » [154] Molto probabilmente il *Cubist Vegetable Patch* è un'emulazione tra l'*Ortocubo* e del piatto futurista *Elettricità atmosferiche candite,* che sono « care ed indimenticabili "elettricità" avevano la forma di coloritissime saponette di finto marmo, contenenti nel loro interno una pasta dolciastra formata con ingredienti che solo sarebbe possibile precisare con una paziente analisi chimica. »[155] Entrambi l'*Elettricità atmosferiche candite* ed il *Cubist Vegetable Patch* seguono la regola undicesima del libro di cucina futurista, come era avvenuto con la tecnologia sofisticata dell'uso dei metodi tradizionali. Comunque una

[151] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 1:16.
[152] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 1:38-1:56.
[153] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 224.
[154] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 2:04.
[155] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 128.

gelatina sembrerebbe normale in una società moderna, è una forma che il cibo non assume naturalmente, e quindi si deve incorporare chimica e scienza per esistere.

Non fedele al libro della cucina futurista è l'uso di una forchetta da parte di Hayward mentre mangia il *Cubist Vegetable Patch*. Infatti si chiede: "what is the appropriate utensil for this?"[156] Anche questo richiama una regola della Casa, in cui si suggerisce alle persone di non ingozzarsi del loro cibo.[157] Nelle *Nozze di Cana*, Veronese dipinse le posate usate dai partecipanti al banchetto.

L'*Italian Sea* è un piatto del primo pranzo futurista a Taverna SantoPalato. [158] Sebbene nessuna ricetta o descrizione siano inclusi in questo banchetto, il piatto è elencato come l'ottavo piatto a SantoPalato. [159] L'interpretazione dell'*Italian Sea* è rilevante come *l'Aerovivanda*, perché gli ingredienti erano scelti dal gruppo inglese del video. Gli ingredienti per tutti e due i piatti furono omessi perché il gruppo non voleva scioccare i partecipanti con abbinamenti disgustosi. La ricetta di Fillìa, alla fine del libro di cucina, è « un piatto rettangolare [che] si dispone [su] una base formata da striscie geometriche di salsa di pomodori freschi e di spinaci passati in modo da creare una precisa decorazione verde e rossa. Su questo mare verde e rosso si pongono dei complessi formati da piccole cotolette di pesce lesso, fette di banana, una ciliegia e un frammento fico secco. Ognuno di questi complessi è reso organico da uno stuzzicadenti che trattiene verticalmente i diversi elementi. »[160] La versione del piatto di Hayward includeva tonno affumicato su uno spiedo con della salsa su ogni parte, una è arancione e l'altra è nera, e sul lato lontano dal piatto c'è un metà di un fico. [161] Gli ingredienti della ricetta originale di Fillìa

[156] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 2:06.
[157] Cfr. Capitolo uno, nota 44.
[158] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 94.
[159] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 94. La ricetta è giù nel paragrafo.
[160] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 207.
[161] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 1:46.

avrebbero creato un abbinamento molto strano, il gruppo moderno ha fatto una scelta più sicura, anche se ancora un po' strana con il pesce ed il fico.

È cruciale considerare l'importanza della presentazione in ogni tradizione presentata in questa tesi. I dipinti per Borromeo e Del Monte sono espressioni della presentazione, che significavano la bellezza della natura e la bellezza del modello. Il cibo nelle *Nozze di Cana* serve a Veronese per commentare sul ceto e le maniere. Nessuno mangia nel dipinto, invece il cibo (sulla tavola e sui vassoi portati dei servitori) è usato per mostrare la ricchezza dei veneziani e tutti gli elementi del dipinto sono la presentazione dell'opulenza attraverso il cibo. Lo stesso potrebbe detto sui banchetti futuristi, in cui il banchetto è più come una mostra d'arte invece di un evento per mangiare.

Nella stessa maniera di presentazione, c'è un'altro piatto cruciale a questo aerobanchetto. Con origine all'aerobanchetto a Bologna, il piatto *Carneplastico con fusoliera di vitello* è « una scaloppa di vitello, alleata a un esile salsicciotto; e il contorno comprende due cipolline e due marroni fritti. »[162] In questo caso, la fusoliera era di maiale invece che di vitello e sembrava un aereo, con ali ed un pezzo sopra come una spina dorsale. La presentazione è importante per la forma del piatto, perché è portato a tavola come se fosse nel cielo. Viene in mente il Trinciante nelle *Nozze di Cana*, mentre taglia la carne a fette davanti agli sguardi dei partecipanti. La forma e la presentazione creano un'atmosfera teatrale contribuendo alla grandezza delle rappresentazioni.

Nell'ultima parte di questo banchetto il comandante dice che l'aereo deve fare un atteraggio d'emergenza e tutte le persone, i partecipanti e gli assistenti di volo, escono dall'aereo in modo drammatico come se fossero in un vero incidente aereo con scoppi molto forti e fumo per

[162] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*, 134.

rappresentare i problemi del motore.[163] Mentre escono viene servito un dolce: gelatine con colori vibranti e diversi e biscottini a forma di aereo.[164] Siccome l'interazione con i pasti era fondamentale per i futuristi, questo era il modo migliore in cui le persone potevano provare un «piatto completo » secondo le regole dei futuristi.

Per Marinetti il manifesto della cucina futurista fu una fonte intenzionale di turbamento per prendere in giro le cose ritenute importanti nei libri di cucina.[165] Per un movimento molto breve nel tempo, gli effetti sulla cultura del cibo furono grandissimi.[166] Ancora oggi ci sono tracce di alcune regole dei futuristi come le diete, le sostituzioni del pasto, oppure il modo in cui si presentano i piatti nei ristoranti. È importante studiare la relazione tra i futuristi e le tradizioni della storia dell'arte perché la cultura culinaria proposta da Marinetti nel suo manifesto ha avuto radici (non sappiamo se in modo consapevole o inconsapevole) nelle tradizioni del cibo presentato nei dipinti più famosi della storia dell'arte italiana.

[163] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 3:14, 3:19.
[164] *Dining at an Aerobanquet of Futurist Food*, The Guardian. At timestamp 4:01.
[165] Amanda Arnold, "Inside the Intentionally Scandalous 'The Futurist Cookbook' of 1932 | Bon Appétit," accessed February 13, 2024, https://www.bonappetit.com/story/the-futurist-cookbook.
[166] Marinetti, *La cucina futurista*. 23.

English Summary:

The Futurist movement of the early 20th century was shocking and provoking–Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto proposed a new age with innovative technology, dynamism, and the rejection of past Italian culture. Though the movement was short lived (from 1909-1916), it's impact on Italian culture was prominent, including approval from Benito Mussolini because of the movement's intention to unite the country. Since the Futurists wanted to completely revolutionize all aspects of Italian culture, traditions of food and dining were scrutinized and thrown out in Marinetti's Futurist Cookbook (*la cucina futurista*). His manifesto proposed cuisine was a new artform just as important as sculpting and painting, alongside new ideas about etiquette, presentation, and new types of dishes. Though Marinetti believed he was reinventing the Italian culinary scene, his 11 rules for a "perfect lunch" have visible connections to traditions from the previous two chapters.

The first three rules Marinetti proposed for a perfect lunch were 1. An original harmony of decoration, color, and tastes; 2. Originality in dishes; and 3. The invention of original and complex molded dishes. The Futurists are engaging with the visual sense and putting the aesthetics at the forefront of the meal, like Caravaggio's *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* where aesthetics is also a prominent aspect of the painting. The boy is very beautiful but the fruit is rotting and putrid, and therefore the consumption of food is second to visual appeal. The Futurists were interested in the presentation of dishes first and eating second, and in this way the ideas of aesthetics are parallel.

Futurist meals were meant to invoke all of the senses to whet guests' appetites. The fourth rule was to abolish the use of cutlery to promote tactile sensations. While della Casa wrote that using utensils was proper etiquette, Marinetti has now flipped this to be improper, reversing this

historically important invention. The Futurists wanted to engage all of the senses, and this was done with auditory and olfactory elements: rules five and six were to use perfumes in favor of digestion and music between courses to continuously engage the sensitivity of the tongue and palate, while ridding the guests from enjoying flavor. At *The Marriage at Cana*, the musicians play between the presentation of courses similar to the aforementioned rule.

The seventh rule also relates to della Casa, calling for the abolition of eloquence and politics of the table. While manners and etiquette are crucial elements of Venetian banquets like the one in *The Marriage at Cana*, in abolishing them Marinetti is making the everyone at a Futurist meal equal. The diners of Futurist banquets are certainly equal, but just like *The Marriage at Cana* there are waiters who bring dishes and facilitate all the elements like the perfumes and music. This rule additionally has satirical undertones, as the heart of the Futurist movement was a political message.

In his eighth and ninth rules, Marinetti wrote that poetry and music were improvised ingredients to increase sensual intensity of the dishes' tastes, and that the rapid presentation of dishes–some of which only select guests ended up eating–piqued curiosity and surprise of the diners. This was reflective of the Futurists' interest in movement and dynamism of new technologies, and also the tenth rule where small bites would contain a multitude of simultaneous flavors that quickly changed during consumption. The idea of time is also seen in Caravaggio's works from the previous chapter, where the images seem to be frozen in time except for the slowly decaying fruit. In these two cases, food is synonymous with fleeting moments with two diverse objectives: In a Futurist dinner, the quickness of flavors emulates the speed of new technologies, whereas in Caravaggio's works the fruit represent the passing of time while the male subjects appear young and beautiful forever. In the eleventh rule, new technologies are put

into practice with the use of ozone machines and ultraviolet lamps in the creation and presentation of dishes.

These new rules of banqueting were important for the Futurists, but have only been theoretical thus far, and their significance can be much better analyzed in practice. The Futurists held banquets at Penna D'Oca (goosebumps) and Taverna Santopalato (holypalate), restaurants created with Futurist dining in mind. *Aerovivanda* and *Carneplastico* are two of the dishes served at these restaurants that best represent some of Marinetti's aforementioned rules. The *Aerovivanda* was comprised of a piece of fennel, an olive and a chinotto, and the participant eating this dish would simultaneously touch pieces of velvet, silk, and sandpaper. At the same time, a waiter would spray perfume on their necks, and all of these elements combined invoked tactile, gustatory and olfactory senses in a single fluid moment.

The other dish, the *Carneplastico*, represents the third rule about complex molded structures, as the dish is composed of a large cylindrical veal meatball filled with eleven varieties of vegetables and then roasted. The phallic appearance of this dish should not be ignored, as it also calls back to the sensual nature of del Monte's commissioned works. In the *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* and the *Uffizi Bacchus*, both subjects are sensual and propose an invite to the viewer with their gazes, hands, and positions of their bodies. Though the sensuality of Caravaggio's subjects must be discovered by the viewer, the sensuality of the *Carneplastico* is obvious in its' shape.

In 2009, a group in England recreated an *Aerobanchetto*, a type of Futurist meal from the cookbook, and the Guardian was invited to document it. Like the *Aerobanchetti* in the past the space was decorated to seem like an airplane, one of the new technologies during the Futurists' time and part of the namesake of the *Aerobanchetto*. After a fake airport security check-in, the

Guardian reporter, Tim Hayward, is presented a bite very similar to the *Aerovivanda* discussed previously, with a kumquat and a piece of fabric. While there is no spraying of perfumes, a "flight attendant" says words like wallpaper, tarmac, soft, smooth, gravel, silk, olive, scents, smell, tortoise. In the reproduction of this dish, the English group is instead using the eighth and ninth rules of using spoken words to create an image in the diners' minds.

After sitting, Hayward is presented the first course of bites which were dishes called *Geraniums on a Stick*, the *Cubist Vegetable Patch*, the *Italian Sea,* and *Dates in the Moonlight*. the *Cubist Vegetable Patch* and the *Italian Sea* are the most intriguing due to their similarities to actual dishes from the Futurist cookbook. The *Cubist Vegetable Patch* is similar to the *Ortocubo* recipe, which included cubes of fried celery and carrots, peas, small onions in vinegar with parsley, and fontina. The dish presented to Hayward was a green jelly, with diced carrots and zucchini. The *Cubist Vegetable Patch* is probably also an emulation of the dish *Elettricità atmosferiche candite,* because of its gelatinous shape made possible by the use of chemistry like the eleventh rule stated. Like the *Aerovivanda*, some of the more shocking ingredients for the *Italian Sea* were replaced by the English group. Instead of the recipe's fish, banana, cherry and figs, the version Hayward receives was smoked tuna with a half of a fig. Like the historic *Aerobanchetti*, there is a *Carneplastico con fusoliera di vitello*, and in this case it was made of pork and molded like an airplane. Just as the Trinciante's role of carving the meat in *The Marriage at Cana*, this *Carneplastico* speaks to the importance of presentation of dishes at Futurist banquets. At the very end of the dinner, the whole "plane" is evacuated due to a fire and dessert is served outside in the "wreckage."

Marinetti's Futurist Cookbook was intended to be a shocking and daring change to Italian food culture, and it was successful in this endeavor. To this day, traces of Futurist food can be

seen in diet culture and haute cuisine, like meal substitutes and the outlandish presentation of food in restaurants. Through this analysis of Futurist banquets, it is recognizable that Marinetti's so-called new ideas have a distinct relationship to historical ideas of presentation and etiquette from the previous chapters.

Conclusion:

Now that three periods of Italian art and food history have been discussed it begs the question of how these ideas of presentation and food are seen in our modern time. To bring this thesis to a close, I want to discuss the rise of haute cuisine as an artform and how these ideas of food and presentation have manifested in current society. Restaurants like Bro's in Lecce, Italy, The French Laundry in California and Noma in Copenhagen each embrace the seriousness of food, from the ingredients to the presentation of dishes and all the way to engaging the majority of the senses for a memorable dining experience. Though much of haute cuisine has elements seen most prominently from the futurists, ideas of presentation and symbolism in contemporary dining culture can now also be linked to the concepts detailed in the first two chapters.

In 2022, the movie The Menu was released as a dark satire poking fun at the serious-unseriousness of haute cuisine–exclusive dining experiences that people would die for (and in the case of the movie, literally do). *The Menu* starts off very light and calm but as the movie progresses, the plot becomes much darker and much bloodier. The participants of the dinner, who were each handpicked to be there based on their background or connection to executive chef Slowik, take a boat to the fine-dining restaurant Hawthorne on a remote island. Throughout each of the many courses in the film, it is revealed that the restaurant's dinner service is not what it seemed and the executive chef has a vendetta to kill each customer, his staff, and himself.

To further bridge past and present ideas surrounding food, I would like to briefly analyze two dishes from the film against the forms of presentation discussed throughout the chapters of this thesis. The first is the "Breadless Bread Plate," (fig. 31) a dish of various sauces and dips made by the kitchen. This service is a course typically consisting of in-house baked bread and butter, and in this case the bread has been omitted from the guests' plates. Here the lack of bread is

literal and metaphorical, referring to the term “breadwinner” and the idea that the common people have to work to then be able to eat. The idea behind this is, as Chef Slowik says when the dish is distributed, that the denial of bread is because the guests are all wealthy and have never struggled to find food. Connecting it back to the historical ideas within the thesis, this dish directly relates to the futurists, who would exclude diners from certain dishes. In this case, everyone at the restaurant is excluded for the first time from something they have always had access to. Like the guests in *The Marriage at Cana*, the diners at the restaurant must choose between following rules of etiquette or participating in the meal by using their fingers to eat.

The second dish from the movie is the Dessert course (fig. 32). At the end of the film, it has been revealed that Slowik’s plans to destroy his restaurant with his diners and staff inside. The staff begin to spread crumbled graham crackers around the room and spoon sauces onto the floor in decorative swipes. The diners are adorned with marshmallow coats and chocolate hats, and finally enormous marshmallows on sticks are placed on a graham cracker mound at the center of the room to symbolize a campfire. The dessert course is the literal execution of the chef’s plan, where the staff turn the restaurant into large, deconstructed S’mores.

In this finale, the participants of the dinner become a work of art because they are the dish itself. This full immersion of the participants relates back to the futurists, who felt that all of the senses should be invoked for a complete dining experience. Here, the guests are fully immersed with accessories made of food and the other ingredients surrounding them. This also relates to *The Marriage at Cana* where the numerous courses, roles of servants, smells and rules of etiquette to follow capture the full scope of a Venetian banquet. The banquets from chapters one and three are works of art in their own right, comprised of many elements that come together to form the art of dining, and this film alludes to the same idea. Through the full immersion of the

participants this meal becomes a work of art specific to the moment in time it occurs in. This relates the film to chapter two, in that this moment of time only exists within this time and space, and will soon fade like the beauty and the fruit in Caravaggio's artworks.

This movie at its core is about the disconnect between the wealthy and working classes, showing how the wealthy's interest in exlcusive experiences have rendered them out of touch with what it means to be an ordinary person. They have presented themselves as all-knowing, well-mannered, and overall better people; each course of food has knocked them down peg-by-peg until their ultimate demise in a decadent death. Just before ignition Slowik says that "the purifying flame nourishes us, warms us, reinvents us, forges and destroys us; we must embrace the flame."[167] In death these wealthy guests, kitchen staff and executive chef all become equal.

The presentation of oneself throughout each chapter certainly differs from one another. In chapter one, Veronese's painting displays conforming to proper ideas of etiquette, and how much one stands out when breaking from these ideas. Chapter two instead focuses on presenting the beauty of the human form: Caravaggio connects his patron's perspectives of beauty through abundant fruit, and the slow decomposition of these elements showcase an understanding that beauty is never permanent. Lastly, chapter three shows that even with proposed new ideas of eating and etiquette from the Futurists, their origins will forever be recognized in the traditions from chapters one and two. In a hundred years from now the culture of haute cuisine will be studied just as I have studied the Futurist Cookbook. This research, in addition to documented reactions like the film, can serve as a record of this cultural phenomenon just like della Casa's, Pisanelli's, and Marinetti's books have captured societal beliefs surrounding food, etiquette and class.

[167] Mark Mylod and Peter Deming. "The Menu," November 18 2022. *Searchlight Pictures.*

FIGURES:

(Figure 1) Paolo Veronese. 1563. *Marriage at Cana*. Oil on canvas, 6.77m x 9.94m. Originally in San Giorgio Maggiore Refectory in Venice, now in Musée du Louvre, Paris.

https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010064382#


(fig.2) detail of Company of the Hose gentleman, *The Marriage at Cana*.


(fig. 3) detail of attendants, *The Marriage at Cana*.


(fig.4) detail of the wine bearer or *bottigliero*, *The Marriage at Cana*.

 (fig.5) detail of attendant correctly holding serving dish, *The Marriage at Cana*.


(fig.6) detail of hands atop the table, *The Marriage at Cana.*


(fig.7) detail of napkins, *The Marriage at Cana.*


(fig.8) detail of encroaching on the bride's space, *The Marriage at Cana.*


(fig.9) detail of the gentleman who encroaches on the others' space, *The Marriage at Cana.*


(fig.10) detail of Turkish guests with wine, *The Marriage at Cana.*

 (fig.11) detail of well-dressed guest, *The Marriage at Cana.*

 (fig.12)  (fig.13)

 (fig.14)  (fig.15)

four details of Turkish headdresses, *The Marriage at Cana*.


(fig.16) detail of attendant's clothing, *The Marriage at Cana*.


(fig.17) detail of the *tazze*, *The Marriage at Cana*.

(fig.18) detail of the *trinciante*, *The Marriage at Cana*.

(fig.19)

(fig.20)

details of the silver utensils, *The Marriage at Cana*.

(fig. 21) detail of the toothpick, *The Marriage at Cana*.

7 Campi, *Fruit Vendor.* Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera (photo: Alinari/ Art Resource, NY)

Figure 22. Campi, *Fruit Vendor.* Image from McTighe, 2004

2 Campi, *Fruit Vendor.* Private collection (photo: Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art)

Figure 23. Campi, *Fruit Vendor*. Image from McTighe, 2004

14 Passarotti, *Poulterers.* Florence, Fondazione Roberto Longhi

Figure 24. Passarotti, *Poulterers.* Image from McTighe, 2004

Figure 25. Caravaggio, *Young Sick Bacchus,* 1593. Oil on canvas, 67 cm × 53 cm. Borghese Gallery and Museum, Rome, Italy.

Figure 26. Caravaggio, *Basket of Fruit,* 1597-1600. Oil on canvas, 54.5 cm × 67.5 cm. Pinacoteca Ambrosiana.

Figure 27. Caravaggio, *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*, 1593-1595. Oil on canvas, 70 cm x 67 cm. Borghese Gallery and Museum, Rome, Italy.

Figure 28. Caravaggio, *Bacchus* 1598. Oil on canvas, 95 cm x 85 cm. The Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Figure 29. Caravaggio, *Supper at Emmaus,* 1601. Oil and tempera on canvas, 141 cm x 196.2 cm. National Gallery, London, England.

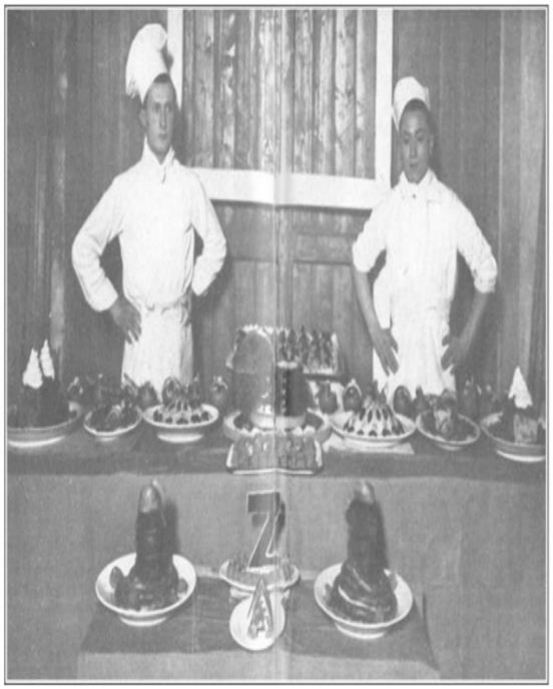

Figure 30. Image of the *Carneplastico* from the *Cucina Futurista*, 1932.

Figure 31. Still of the *Breadless Bread Plate* from *The Menu*, 2022.

Figure 32. Still of *Dessert* from *The Menu*, 2022.

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