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A Food Odyssey: The Role of Food in Kubrick's *Lolita*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Barry Lyndon*

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Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Anglo-Americanos,
orientada pelo Professor Doutor Jorge Bastos da Silva

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto

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Table of Contents

Declaração de honra	2
Agradecimentos	3
Resumo.....	4
Abstract	5
Introduction	6
Cinema, Kubrick and food studies.....	6
Food in art	9
Food in literature	10
Food in painting	11
Food in film	12
1. <i>Lolita</i> (1962)	17
2. <i>A Clockwork Orange</i> (1971)	29
3. <i>Barry Lyndon</i> (1975)	40
4. Memorable food moments in Kubrick's filmography	50
<i>Paths of Glory</i> (1957).....	50
<i>Spartacus</i> (1960)	51
<i>Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb</i> (1964).....	52
<i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i> (1968)	52
<i>The Shining</i> (1980).....	53
<i>Full Metal Jacket</i> (1987)	54
Conclusion	56
References.....	60

Declaração de honra

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Ana Daniela Sousa Novo

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“I’m Spartacus!”.

Resumo

Esta dissertação incide sobre o realizador norte-americano Stanley Kubrick, com o intuito de analisar o papel que a comida e os símbolos associados à mesma contribuíram para a sua filmografia. Com especial foco em *Lolita* (1962), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) e *Barry Lyndon* (1975), a análise permite compreender o papel da comida nas narrativas. Esta análise terá em consideração inúmeros aspetos, entre os quais a sexualidade, a violência e o estatuto social, tendo em conta os temas presentes nos filmes acima mencionados. Como forma de complementar este estudo, a restante filmografia de Kubrick será também mencionada, quando necessário, bem como obras de outros realizadores que possuam temas e cenas similares.

Palavras-chave: Stanley Kubrick; Cinema; Estudos sobre comida

Abstract

This dissertation focuses on North American film director Stanley Kubrick, with the purpose of analyzing the manner in which the role of food and its symbolism have contributed to his filmography. With a special emphasis on *Lolita* (1962), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Barry Lyndon* (1975), the analysis helps to understand the role of food in the narratives. This analysis will take into account many aspects, among which sexuality, violence and social status, taking into consideration themes that are presented in the films mentioned above. As a way to complement this study, other titles from Kubrick's filmography will be mentioned when necessary, as well as works from other filmmakers with similar themes and scenes.

Keywords: Stanley Kubrick; Film; Food Studies

Introduction

The main purpose of this dissertation is to show how Stanley Kubrick used food and food-related symbolism in his works as a way to characterize and shape characters' behavior and personality, and how these same traits often impact the narrative. The focus of this analysis will be on *Lolita* (1962), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Barry Lyndon* (1975) by referring to scenes and quoting directly from the films. To do such task, it is crucial to provide input on the role and purposes of film, and then deepen the field of food studies with a framed context on literature and painting, so the central examination of Kubrick's work can ensue with the necessary ground.

Cinema, Kubrick and food studies

The seventh art, as it is called, is perhaps the most complex of all arts. Cinema is made of detailed and vital parts that all together must create a final product not only enjoyable to the eyes and ears (silent films did not have dialogue nor synchronized sound, yet they had audio), but also engage the feelings of the viewer and every now and then, the critic. Film is now an art spread worldwide, which, just as any other, has highly benefited from technological advances and discovered techniques throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It has served as a distraction from the concerns of the real world; it has made people dream; and it has taught lessons in subtle yet touching ways — cinema's role in society since its birth until the present time is, therefore, immeasurable.

From its very beginnings, cinema provided romance and escapism for millions of people all over the globe. It was the magic carpet that took them away from the harsh realities of life. The movies offered a panacea in the years of the Great Depression in the US; were the opium of the people through World War II and continue to transport the public away from reality throughout the following decades. (Bergan, 2011, p. 7)

The constant improvement of motion picture techniques permitted those with creativity, means and passion for the craft to create film as a way to instruct, while

others did it with the single intent to entertain; some had the ability to achieve both purposes within a single object. Film has also served as a tool for other finalities — from nationalist propaganda such as *The Triumph of the Will* (dir. Riefenstahl, 1935) and *Battleship Potemkin* (dir. Eisenstein, 1925) to Disney's and Studio Ghibli's magical worlds for children, where a love for nature and diversity reigns. Along the decades many directors have given their input, values and ideas into the world of film. D. W. Griffith's invention of flashback and split screen for instance served as a revolutionary outbreak in the early twentieth century (Bergan, 2011, p. 207). Other filmmakers such as David Lynch have brought surrealism to the mainstream, a role originally taken by directors such as Buñuel in his short film *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), and Kurosawa's filmography preserved even after his death the Japanese culture through the themes of the samurai or the mentor's honor.

However, amid many other names, there is one that has influenced many in their aesthetics, symbology, symmetry and satire — Stanley Kubrick, an authentional author. The definition of such word has changed throughout the years, and its intent to connect the term to *Nouvelle Vague*, seldom feels fitted today. "In other arts, the author is the one that produces the piece of art, the one that writes a book, composes a score or paints a painting. Cinema is a collective art and its individual creation is rare" (Aumont/Marie, 2001, p. 26). Therefore, if one is capable of writing, producing and directing a motion picture, one might be closer to be an author. Kubrick is not only notable for the three abilities above, but also for his meticulous way of putting together a film, through a scrupulous and exhausting study of the subject. Proof of such is the making of 1964's *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, for which the director read about fifty books on nuclear war. He is also responsible for what critics would later call "the greatest movie never made", a Napoleon biopic that was never turned into film. Kubrick stated in an interview published in *Le Monde*, in 1987, when asked if he regrets the decision of giving up on the movie:

I haven't given up on it yet. At the time it was a real blow. I'd spent a lot of time on the project. I'd read most of the five hundred books I'd collected on the subject, and I was writing the script myself. (Heymann, 2016, p. 738)

However, there is something also quite fascinating in his filmography — the fact that it is not an extensive one when compared to his fellow directors. Kubrick only directed thirteen full length films (and three documentary shorts in the beginning of his career), some of them over a decade apart — which nevertheless he translated into solid projects, with similarities among them: his protagonists share a trait — “I find madness a very strong dramatic device” (Heymann, 2016 p. 741). This madness is witnessed for example in Humbert Humbert’s perverted desires, Barry Lyndon’s ambition, Alex Delarge’s ultra-violence and HAL 9000’s pride which would ultimately lead the characters to ruin.

A complete oeuvre that varies in *genre* — Kubrick directed satirical comedies, science fiction films, romances, war, historical and even horror movies. The characters the director adapted were so complex, that they began to exist parallel to their source material, giving an even bigger impact to the objects Kubrick has created and attributing them a timeless and favorable *critique* that has only bettered throughout the years after his passing. A man whose career has lasted almost fifty years, whose films and life have been analyzed over and over, whose thorough work mirrored a staggering attention to detail, Kubrick never left a single element of his films to chance. It is known that the role of food in his work was no different — a subject that over the years has been examined in the most varied art mediums but has rarely been mentioned when it comes to the director’s work.

Stanley Kubrick was preoccupied with eating and drinking as symbolic acts. The motif is so important in his work that his handling of it gives a kind of access to the logic of his films generally. Kubrick’s use of the food motif is doubly interesting because his movies are so various, so complex and so carefully constructed. (Nicholson, 2001, p. 279)

Due to the emergence of food studies and the frequency of food found in his films as well as the palpable importance of it in its narrative, it was clear that this issue could be further explored. Even though works such as *Paths of Glory* (1957), *Spartacus* (1960), *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *The Shining* (1980) and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) also touch

this particular matter, *Lolita* (1962), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Barry Lyndon* (1975) offer distinguished yet fascinating material on the theme of food — how it can reflect a character's behavior, how gender roles are presented when it comes to food preparation and arrangement, how food can very heavily convey implicit or explicit sexuality and how it can work as a foreshadowing of conflict, among others dynamics. *Lolita's* lollipop, the glass of milk in *A Clockwork Orange*, the disbelief on Redmond Barry's face when he is forced to drink from a "beaker full of grease" are just some of the instances where the director used food to reinforce the behavior and personality of his characters on screen.

Food in art

When thinking of art in general, its analysis frequently covers aspects such as the artists' techniques, the aesthetics and its symbology. Its analysis attempts to extract a meaning behind the artist's work that was included either in an implicit or explicit way. This symbology can be represented through color, expression, form or any other element chosen by the artist. Food is often portrait in art and has been for the longest time — not only as a symbol but also as a reflection of the act of eating, which is the most basic of human needs, present in everyday life. However, often enough, it can also convey multiple meanings such as a link to religion, sexuality or social criticism. Studies, in particular those of Sigmund Freud have shown that "food and the social conditions and parental behavior surrounding eating are important personality determiners" (Lyman, 1989, p. 6). Lyman also states that food can therefore play an important role in humans' psychological and biological growth, since "the thoughts, images, ideas, feelings, and even full-fledged emotions evoked by food touch on every aspect of our conscious and unconscious mental life" (p. 7).

Consequently, since art portrays real life issues, emotions and ideas, food and its associations are frequently found in literature, painting, photography and cinema, amongst other arts. This is the reason why it is fundamental to understand how food

was first perceived in literature and painting to understand the path it has made in more recent artistic mediums such as film.

To strengthen the impact of food not only in art, but in culture and society, British cultural critic Terry Eagleton stated in his essay *Edible Ecriture*¹ that “If there is one sure thing about food, it is that it is never just food. Like the post-structuralist text, food is endlessly interpretable, as gift, threat, poison, recompense, barter, seduction, solidarity, suffocation.”

Food in literature

Literature and painting were the first of the so-called high arts to include food in their objects. In the first, food is presented more than within any other art form.

For the literary authors ... food and its consumption operate as potent and multi-faceted symbols. Food is sometimes present simply as what gets eaten but more often ... it functions as a conduit for something else, signalling wealth or poverty, cultural difference or a sense of belonging, status and identity in terms of rank, gender and moral standing, and sometimes (but never simply) fashion. (Boyce, Fitzpatrick, 2017 p. 3)

Studies made on many canonical authors of the English language such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Percy Shelley and Woolf have shown that food within texts “can help explain the complex relationship between the body, subjectivity and social structures”. (Boyce/Fitzpatrick, 2017, p. 3). For instance, the authors argue that in *The Canterbury Tales* “food is the object of the tales from the outset, providing the impetus for the stories told”, that the Medieval author used elements such as an apple to symbolize the original sin and that “in The General Prologue the portraits of the pilgrims often make reference to food and feeding as a way of suggesting something about their moral character” (p. 35). In Shakespeare, it is claimed that even though the references to food in his work are innumerable (p. 78), some are crucial to the narrative, such as the

¹ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/cn/features/edible-ecriture/104281.article>

fact that “an argument is often resolved with an invitation to dine” in plays such as *Henry V*, “when Bardolph tells Nim that he and Pistol ought to be reconciled”. The sixteenth century playwright also used drunkenness as a problem in works such as *Othello*, “when a drunken Cassio becomes obstreperous” (pp. 80-81).

Other authors like Percy Shelly used references to food in his work as a way to defend his values and criticized those that did not follow his moral code — “Percy Shelley deployed representations of consumption not only to convey the current, degraded state of humankind but also to imagine its future perfectibility” (p. 180). To the Romantic writer “all sentient beings live together in universal vegetarian concord, in a paradisiacal environment” (p. 182), since in his view vegetarianism was a reflex of the idyllic world and he fought for a change in food habits. When it comes to Woolf, “the food of her writings remains in an objectified state. It almost always functions to explore the network of human interaction” (Shahani, 2018, p. 51). Naturally, many other relevant authors have used food as references in their works for the most varied reasons — the characterization of the aliments would sometimes reveal the state of mind of the characters, their journey, or sometimes simply reveal the way things were around the house or any other space where the narrative was taking place.

Food in painting

In painting, at first, food and the act of eating were seen as comical and unimportant. Meals and aliments have appeared more frequently as a major aspect on canvas since the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, even though food had already been depicted many centuries before, in wall paintings from Ancient Rome, for instance. It has since established and distinguished traits such as classes, religion (mostly biblical associations) and medical beliefs (Bendiner, 2004, pp. 7-8). According to Bendiner “the most theologically significant food scenes ... relate to the Garden of Eden and the Last Supper. The fruit of Eden ... from the sixteenth century onward it [*sic*] almost universally appears in representations of the Fall of Man as an apple” and this sin has almost always been serving as a metaphor for sexual intercourse between Adam and Eve (p. 12). Da

Vinci's *The Last Supper* is perhaps the most famous painting in the world, where food and its circumstances have a main role in the symbolism of the object: the last meal Jesus shares with his Apostles in which he reveals that one among them has betrayed him.

Naturally, there can be more interpretations of an apple other than the original sin, such as Paul Cézanne's *The Basket of Apples* and many others works by the same author depicting this fruit. In fact:

Apple's longstanding association with Adam and Eve and the judgement of Paris thus acquired a competing meaning in the visual arts. The apple became a homage to Cézanne and all he represented as a modern artist. Yet the distinction become blurred. (Bendiner, 2004, p. 103)

However, most art historians and artists look at his works depicting apples as "purely decorative elements, studies of form and color", conveying little or no other meanings associated to it (p. 104). This is an example of the reason why an object should be analyzed within its context and the society that surrounds it, as well as the intent or not to portray that same symbolism by the author.

More recently, works such as Andy Warhol's 1962 *Campbell's Soup Cans* might just mean the intent of increasing society's consumption of soup. What changes the way this particular piece of art is seen resides in its context. If the thirty-two cans were seen on a supermarket advertisement, it would not have the same impact as seen in Museum of Modern Art in New York. Either way, for Bendiner his attempt was to transform the organic (food) into an object and that "His works of this sort are fundamentally social criticisms of a world become insensitive, inhuman frivolous, dead an overrun by commerce" (pp. 28-29).

Food in film

Just as it happens in literature and painting, "food is integrated into films' mise en scène and narrative design in ways that shape viewers' perception of the characters and their interactions, the social dynamics explored in a film, and the ideological

perspectives conveyed by a film” (Baron, 2006, p. 94). Baron further states that film’s historical research includes “esthetic, economic, cultural and technological developments” (p. 99). These studies can and should be entangled with those of food studies on film as a way to deepen the knowledge of scholars into this particular theme. The development of food studies on individual films would also deliver “larger pattern of cultural interaction” in the field of both food and film studies (p. 94). This would later facilitate the further analysis of other films concerning the symbolism of food. Due to its longer existence when compared to film, it is not hard to find a “difference between the volume of scholarship on food in literature and amount of work on food in film” (p. 96). However, cinema is also among the visual arts the one with most amount of writing regarding food, ahead of painting, television and theater (p. 95).

Character dynamics have been interpreted by looking carefully at characters’ eating protocols and food preferences, their use of food as a gesture of hospitality, their substitutes for food nourishment, their use or misuse of food preparation tools, and their relationship to settings such as markets, picnic areas, kitchens, diners, cafes and restaurants. (2006, p. 102)

The depiction of food in film is not recent. As Baron states, food has had appearances since the very first footages of the Lumière brothers by the end of the nineteenth century, where their intent was to use the camera to show the domestic scene and its common affairs (p. 4). However, not all usage of food in film can turn it into a food film.

What are the conventions within the emerging “food film” genre? To begin with, food, as mentioned above, has to play a start role, whether the leading characters are cooks ... or not. This means that often the camera will focus in on food preparation and presentation so that in closeups or panning shots, food fills the screen ... And the film’s narrative line will consistently depict character negotiations, questions of identity, power, culture, class, spirituality, or relationship through food. (p. 6)

Part of the reason why film has not used food as a key element early on, having used it mostly as a prop was due to “its cost and inconvenience of having to replace food (often hot) in front of actors ... when a scene might require five, ten or twenty takes”

(Zimmerman, 2009, p. 25). This was not a cultural issue, since these conditions were also found when analyzing foreign films (those outside the United States). Zimmerman states that: “even ... France, a country famed for its culinary traditions, were [*sic*] marked by the same lack of interest. Rather than finding creative ways to show food, filmmakers deliberately devised ways to obscure it or didn’t bother to show food at all” (p. 26). It was only after the second World War that the role of food in film started to get the recognition it deserved, and work was being put into making it “look astonishingly beautiful” (p. 26). Naturally not only but also the technical advances that have arisen since then, most importantly the use of color in film, have helped food earn a role of more importance and in many cases, its own spotlight.

Some food scenes are so unforgettable in film, that it is almost impossible to mention the film itself without this theme. If the cupcakes in Sofia Coppola’s *Marie Antoinette* (2006) symbolize the title character’s (played by Kirsten Dunst) eccentricity, the *courtesan au chocolat* in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (Dir. Wes Anderson, 2014) signifies both Agatha’s (Saoirse Ronan) perfectionism and professionalism. Food in film can convey main traits of the characters’ personality, as well as their behavior, past traumas and even how they treat others — for this matter, it is indispensable to study not only what food is eaten, but who makes that food and how that food is served. The way food can be used in film to help the viewer understand the characters’ morals is simple — if on the one hand the character is on screen asking for a steak “bloody as hell” like Vince Vega (John Travolta) in *Pulp Fiction* (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1994) the viewer would immediately connect the meaning to a somewhat aggressive type of personality, on the other hand, a character eating ice cream or any other type of sugar food, it is easier to link it to a more childish type of behavior, such as Tim Burton’s 1985 *Pee Wee*. Even when thinking of Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) in *The Silence of the Lambs* (dir. Jonathan Demme, 1991), the viewer immediately recalls his cannibalism. According to Zimmerman, in *The Godfather* (1972), Coppola uses food to enrich his characters, more precisely a dish extremely representative of the Italian *cuisine* such as a lasagna. After revealing Kay (Diane Keaton) some dark family secrets, Michael (Al Pacino) asks

her “Do you like your lasagna?” using this type of pasta and its many layers of ingredients as a metaphor for the layers of secrets that run in the Corleone family (2009, p. 29).

There are, however, also iconic scenes connected to food in locations such as the restaurant in *When Harry Met Sally...* (dir. Rob Reiner, 1989). Sally (Meg Ryan) and Harry (Billy Crystal) are discussing over lunch whether or not men can recognize women’s fake orgasms, when Ryan’s character promptly starts moaning and faking one. While everyone in the restaurant looks in shock towards their table, Sally goes back to eating, leading to one of the most quoted movie lines of all time by another of the restaurant’s costumers: “I’ll have what she’s having”.

Also, not only the viewer establishes a relation between character and food and spaces, but even outside the film, it is easy to associate specific foods to activities — popcorn is quickly associated to movie theaters, cake to birthdays and in North American culture bacon means breakfast (Lyman, 1989, p. 22). The preparation of food can offer insight on the character’s independence, or lack of it, and the way it is served can show the viewer aspects regarding wealth and social status. For instance, in Jon M. Chu’s *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), the dumplings can be seen as a metaphor for Young’s family’s difficulty to accept a new member to the family (Nick’s girlfriend) — the dumplings are baked under the supervision of the eldest of the family, and the same happens to Nick (Henry Golding) and Rachel’s (Constance Wu) relationship. Of course, this practice has been in the family from earlier generations, and when Nick’s grandmother criticizes his mother’s dumplings, the viewer gets a glimpse of what the latter went through, foreshadowing a possible similar behavior of Nick’s mother towards Rachel.

Directors who go beyond this eating-as-mimetic-detail use food as a symbolic object, consciously dwelling on eating as an act charged with cinematic power and resonance; ... Betrayal has been associated with meals since at least the Last Supper, mainly because meals are the basic marker of hospitable relations, and the violation of hospitality is thus a metaphor for the most heinous treachery. (Nicholson, 2001, p. 279)

More than just a background character, the role food plays in films is most of the times more significant and is often a crucial part of the narrative. Baron defends that the

analysis of symbolism present in films is repeatedly based in “the film’s narrative design and *mise en scène*...in light of larger esthetic traditions and /or the material realities of a film’s production and reception contexts (era, national cinema, marketplace position , and so forth)” (2006, p. 97). In this way, in order to appreciate the film itself it is as important to examine food as its context. This examination helps to create a sense of “the character’s inner experiences, dramatic conflicts, narrative developments, a story’s social circumstances, and a film’s underlying mood or point of view” (p. 102).

Subgenres like spaghetti western are logically not about spaghetti itself. The expression was created to refer to westerns with Italian directors or produced by Italians, such as *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (dir. Sergio Leone, 1960) and *Django* (Dir. Sergio Corbucci, 1966). However, *Drzal-Sierocka* agrees with Epstein when stating that food in film has benefited from genres such as the Western due to its inclusion of the saloon as a main location. The scholar also mentions other genres, such as slapstick comedy and its use of cake fights (2015, p. 55). To add to this last idea, Baron also recalls aspects such as the banana peel on the sidewalk and the pie throwing in this type of comedy, and reminds us of more tender uses of food in film, such as in *The Gold Rush* (1925), where Charles Chaplin transforms forks and dinner rolls into dancing feet to impress the women around him (in the same film he also eats his own shoe) and the scene in *It Happened One Night* (dir. Frank Capra, 1934) where Peter Warn (Clark Gable) teaches Ellie Andrews (Claudette Colbert) how to dunk donuts in coffee (Baron, 2006, p. 98). For Peter Warn, “dunking is an art”.

1. *Lolita* (1962)

Although food and its presentation on screen to convey sexuality is not always explicit, is it possible to link specific food to sex. If on the one hand phallic shapes are easily found in fruits and vegetables such as bananas, cucumbers and carrots, on the other hand, oysters, oranges and papayas resemble vulvas, due to their shape and to the fruits' fluids, similar to lubrication. In Abdellatif Kechiche's 2013 film *Blue is the Warmest Color* (*La Vie d'Adèle*) for instance, the moment Adèle (Adèle Exarchopoulos) eats the oysters is a moment of realization and acceptance of her homosexual tendencies.

The way food is chewed or taken in one's mouth can also resemble sexual acts and desires; the same way that preparing food for someone can help to conquer someone's love interest.

Films such as Luca Guadagnino's *Call Me By Your Name* (2017) where the peach scene is more than just a moment of self-pleasure and a metaphor for buttocks — it is the moment Elio (Timothée Chalamet) fully realizes his love for Oliver (Armie Hammer), which is reciprocated when the latter tries to eat the fruit. A similar analogy can be found in the 1997 adaptation of *Lolita* (dir. Adrian Lyne). While in Humbert's (Jeromy Irons) study, Lolita (Dominique Swain) sticks her chewing gum in his diary when she hears her mother arriving home. Humbert, not able to unstick the chewing gum, rips off the page and puts it in his mouth, seconds before Lolita's mother enters the room. Another film by the same director, *Nine 1/2 Weeks* (1986) used food textures and symbols such as cherries, jalapeños, jelly and honey to portray the intensity of Mickey Rourke and Kim Basinger's characters on screen. As a more "aggressive" use of food, Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (*Ultimo Tango a Parigi*, 1972) is a good example — when Paul (Marlon Brando) utters "Go, get the butter" to Jeannie (Maria Schneider), followed by a quite uncomfortable sex scene.

The study of food and sexuality can be even more interesting during a period where symbolism had to be inserted very carefully into film. With a heavy censorship during the 1960s, the choice to bring stories with a heavy sexual charge to the big screen

was not an easy task. A proof of this and of Kubrick's willingness and resilience to turn any project he envisioned into reality is his adaption of *Lolita* in 1962, a screenplay written together with Nabokov, that earned both an Oscar nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay – despite Kubrick using merely twenty percent of Nabokov's input (Phillips, 2006, p. 235). The literary classic adaptation caused quite a stir, due to the nature of the relationship between the two main characters, a heavy criticism that the novel had already received. *Lolita* was Kubrick's first film to be shot in England, where he moved to in 1960 and lived until his death in 1999. The director was then obliged to make a film that would follow the censorship rules.

The big problem with the movie ... was "how we were going to get this picture made, with the censorship restrictions" they would have to cope with. Kubrick and Harris were aware that the industry's censorship code forbade any explicit depiction of pedophilia. The film had to receive the industry censor's official seal of approval, because most exhibitors would not book a movie that lacked the industry seal. (Phillips, 2016, pp. 241-242)

One of the first measures to permit the making of the movie and facilitate the censorship control the production was under, was to make *Lolita* a fourteen-year-old, whereas in the book the character is twelve. Still regarding age, actress Sue Lyon was not allowed to attend the New York premiere of the film in June 1962, because she was considered too young to watch it. By turning sixteen in July, Lyon was allowed to attend the London premiere in September. Nabokov also believed that the criticism *Lolita* received was in part for the main character to be a female: "My poor *Lolita*, is having a rough time. The pity is that, if I had made her a boy, philistines might not have flinched" (Phillips, 2016, p. 233).

Lolita carries an intense sexual symbolism regarding food. It is also relevant to stress that "color is unquestionably critical to depicting food, especially in a medium like film, which is unable to convey taste or smell" (Zimmerman, 2009, p.27), which means that this kind of symbolism is harder to portray in black and white films such as *Lolita*. Starting from its marketing, food is presented in the very first aspect of the film

presented to the public, its poster², designed by Kubrick's long-time friend Bert Stern, who like the director worked for *Look Magazine* at the age of 16. The well-known artwork exhibits Sue Lyon as Lolita wearing the iconic heart-shaped sunglasses, while sucking on a lollipop. However, interestingly enough, the heart-shaped sunglasses are never shown in the film, being replaced by cat-eye sunglasses. The same happening with the lollipop — it is never present in the film. Even for those that never had contact with Nabokov's novel, the poster's controversial and suggestive graphism and its tagline "How did they ever make a movie of Lolita?" intrigues the viewer concerning the nature of the film and shows how hard it was to get it past the censors (Phillips, 2016, p. 222).

The poster can be connected to a pornographic, or at least a somewhat erotic content, due to the suggestive lollipop, quite often associated to a phallic shape, hence a reference to fellatio. Notwithstanding the fact that a lollipop is the type of food that children typically desire, and that elongated objects such as this are emphasized by Freudian psychoanalysts for their strong sexual symbolism (Lyman, 1989, p. 102), this mix of sexuality and innocence was the perfect match to express how Lolita's character develops, namely her desires and loss of this same innocence.

The understanding that the poster depicts an underage female, suggesting the sexual innuendo is the initial medium that uses food to convey or suggest a meaning to a character's personality or behavior. The shock value of the poster is still reproduced nowadays, with other versions being as equal or even more scandalous, such as the one created for *Spoke Art's Stanley Kubrick Art Show* held in San Francisco in 2014³. It portrays a large lollipop, over a pink background, easily resembling a girl's legs, with the lollipop's stick right in the middle. The optical illusion offers a visual innuendo – the eatable part of the lollipop resembles a vagina, the lollipop's stick works as a young woman's thigh gap, and the pink background as the girl's legs. Also, quite perceptible is part of the stick inside the edible part, an easy association to coitus. A third and last

² https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/pt/9/91/Lolita_1962_Kubrick.jpg

³ https://pro2-bar-s3-cdn-cf4.myportfolio.com/3a9abb7940e8826d4046f23c433fbfff/506c51c6a12f5a11ab521efb_rw_1920.jpg?h=367bbdd09f54535ece1f9d9af2302dd1

example is Renato Aranda's version.⁴ The Mexican graphic designer presents an unwrapped candy, resembling a vagina, a focus on a child's sexuality in a more minimalist way, which makes the poster look even more raw and shocking.

Last but not least, concerning lollipops, it is noticeable the phonetical resemblance of the word and the name *Lolita*. In the 1997's adaptation of the novel, this symbol is replaced by chewing gum, not in the film poster, but in the film itself. This version also presents food to convey sexuality but uses other foods such as bananas and raspberries. In the novel, however, lollipops are not a symbol at all. Lollipops will also later be a theme while examining a scene from Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971).

Naturally, this was only one of the innuendos used to leave traces of how sexually charged the movie was. In an interview with Terry Southern, Kubrick is asked if details like the name of Lolita's summer camp "Camp Climax" and how the line "Wednesday she's going to have a cavity filled by your uncle, Ivor." were ever noticed by the censorship, which Kubrick denies (Southern, 2016, p. 282). When Humbert (James Mason) picks up Lolita from the summer camp, after the death of her mother, Humbert waits for her in a sort of living room filled with teenage girls. He is carrying a tennis racket which he uses to hit a stuffed beaver lying on a table (Kubrick, 1962, 01:10:14), right after he gets a glimpse of four young girls that walk by (beaver is a vulgar name for female genitalia). Also, another suggestion of these terms for female sexuality is the name of Lolita's best friend, Mona. The word in some Italian dialects is equivalent to the word *cunt* in English. The film worked so carefully with innuendos, that even though the audience does not have the chance to see the smallest passionate kiss between the protagonists, they acknowledge that their involvement was much more intense than that.

The very beginning of *Lolita* is a foreshadow of its ending. On screen, the viewer witnesses a confrontation between Humbert Humbert (James Mason) and Claire Quilty (Peter Sellers) at the latter's mansion, moments before the Quilty's death. Diving into the film, the food-related elements start to unveil.

⁴ <https://img.culturacolectiva.com/content/2018/07/26/1532631700628/lolita-high.jpg>

Quilty's living room in the opening scene is filled with broken furniture, shattered objects and rubbish as if the house has not been inhabited for quite some time or if it was the stage of an endless number of parties. Humbert finds Quilty sitting in an armchair, covered with a sheet, and noticeably drunk. On the top of the ping pong table, in the center of the room, there are wine and champagne bottles, empty plates and glasses (00:03:34). These elements give away a glance of Quilty's state of mind, his destruction and disgrace, since solitary drinking is usually "negatively evaluated" and sometimes even "proscribed", according to a 1998 report entitled *Social and Cultural Aspects of Drinking*⁵ (p. 16). Of course, this moment also comes off as somehow comical, which was another of Kubrick's methods to bring *Lolita* a lighter, less melodramatic tone — Quilty's various disguises throughout the film also help this purpose, something that Sellers would do again two years later by playing three characters in *Dr. Strangelove: or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964).

The objects mentioned above, particularly the champagne bottles can also be associated to the character's wealth and status, which is stressed by his successful career as a playwright, that Charlotte (Shelley Winters) often mentions.

Studies of food in film can be facilitated by increased attention to ways in which a film's integrate narrative and audiovisual design creates impression of wealth and poverty, for example, or generates insights into character's emotional state and social circumstances. (Baron, 2006, p. 104)

Here, food takes this role. The champagne bottles are easily linked to characters such as Gatsby and to the many characterizations of James Bond, that besides their wealth, are notable for their socialization and frequent gatherings with those of upper class, the elite, much like Quilty.

Lolita is perhaps the film directed by Kubrick that better presents a dynamic of relationships not only between genders but also between adults and a child. In fact, besides *Barry Lyndon* (1975) and *The Shining* (1980), this is his only motion picture with

⁵ http://www.dldocs.stir.ac.uk/documents/social_drinking.pdf

a child as one of the crucial characters in the story, and the one where the child has the utmost impact in the narrative, being the title character.

It is clear that Charlotte feels infatuated by Humbert from the moment the two met. At first, when showing him her place and knowing he is a man of letters, Haze tries to conquer his trust by showing him the art pieces in her room. She then proceeds to a more common approach — his stomach, by bragging about the prizes she has won with her pastries (00:17:04). This sequence eventually leads to the first food innuendo of the film concerning sex.

While in the garden, Charlotte mentions that she can offer “a comfortable home, a funny garden, a congenial atmosphere, my cherry pies” (00:17:44), while the camera focus on Lolita. Is it crucial to note that this is the first scene in which both the viewer and Humbert himself have a glimpse of Haze’s daughter. Humbert seems quite pleased upon laying eyes on the fourteen-year-old girl and suddenly decides that this is the house he wants to rent a room in. When asked about what the decisive factor was, Humbert utters “I think it was your cherry pies” (00:18:33), with once again, the camera meeting Lolita, who is taking a sip on a drink, a seductive movement for the professor, who from this moment on has corrupted intentions involving the girl.

The term “cherry pie” mainly refers to a virgin’s vagina, which was Humbert’s assumption of Lolita’s condition at the time. Cherry pies represent female purity and virginity, which was, once again, a way Kubrick found to insert sexual charge in the film without being censored. Besides, “a cherry pie in particular has certain sexual connotations that reflect its balance between sweet (or innocent) and tart (or promiscuous)” (Horton, 2016). Terms such as “popping the cherry”, for instance, refer to the disruption of the hymen. Later, in 1990 this symbolism would be used by director David Lynch on his critically acclaimed TV Series *Twin Peaks* — the characters Laura Palmer and Audrey Horne have similar traits to those of Lolita, and Lynch has said on multiple occasions that *Lolita* is one of his favorite films. When thinking of other cinematic examples, Fabienne (Maria de Medeiros) in *Pulp Fiction* also presents a pie as a symbol but portrays it as a “a sign of weakness and lack of self-control” when she asks Butch (Bruce Willis) for “Blueberry pie to go with the pancakes and on top, a thin slice

of melted cheese". This scene also reveals a criticism of America's culture and consumption (Epstein, 2004, p. 200). As a last example, the 1999 comedy *American Pie* plays with the concepts of teenagers and sexuality, memorable for its scene where Jim Levenstein (Jason Biggs) penetrates a pie in the kitchen.

Now, taking into account the way relationships work in *Lolita*, the dynamic is not surprising. Similar to many films during the same period and even afterwards, Charlotte is more than his landlady and later wife — she takes the role of Humbert's maid, which throughout history has been a role mostly assigned to women. Lolita's mother provides for him by cooking his meals and doing the chores when their maid is not present. A good example of this is the scene where he closes himself in the bathroom writing on his diary, somehow mourning the leaving of Lolita to the Summer Camp. Haze asks him if he wants some coffee, to which he responds, "Please do that, like a good little wife" (00:51:26), and just as at the beginning of the film, she again tries to please Humbert by providing him food. Nicholson states that "food is a marker of power relations, a means of demarcating the powerful from the less powerful — those who eat, from those who are eaten (or who provide food)" (2001, p. 280). These roles are automatically attributed by the viewer who naturally perceives Humbert as "the powerful one" and Charlotte as "the less powerful".

When socially, this dynamic does not change. At the Summer Dance at Lolita's high school, Charlotte brings him cake and a drink, again a chore commonly relegated to women. Right after, without Humbert even touching the food, Charlotte takes the food out of his hands and utters "We can go home now and have a cozy little dinner for two, huh?" (00:28:45). It is also interesting to mention, moments before when Humbert is near the table choosing something to eat, a friend of Charlotte (and mother of Lolita's friend, Mona) asks him, quite subtly about how "open minded" she and her husband are, suggesting a sexual get-together between the four of them (00:23:00).

At home, Charlotte makes him dinner, puts on an animal print dress, plays a song by Nelson Riddle and opens a bottle of champagne as a way to turn the festive moment into a more intimate one. Lolita interrupts this moment, having found her friend's party "a drag", hence returning home (00:32:55). Humbert promptly tells Lolita he will make

her a sandwich, showing concern for her, the same type of concern and need to please that Charlotte shows for him — but that he only displays for Haze once, in a scene that will be examined later. Charlotte, angry that her daughter has ruined her intimate moment with Humbert, tells her to go to sleep and that she can have a sandwich as long as it is upstairs. After some resistance, Lolita goes to her room, and once again food symbolism is present but now through male sexuality: while Charlotte mumbles about Lolita, Humbert begins to crack nuts (00:35:22), as if he has lost his sexual appetite, since Lolita is now asleep and he is again in the company of her mother. Although nuts are commonly depicted in paintings and other mediums, its association with male sexuality have been theorized going as far as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Rubinstein, 1989, p. 84).

The next morning, Charlotte makes breakfast for Humbert. Clearly still upset about her frustrating night, she starts a fight with her daughter simply for having her elbows on the table. Even before Lolita can grab a bite of her cereal bowl, her mother asks her to deliver Humbert's breakfast upstairs. She eats the pieces of bacon on the way towards his room. Upon arriving she utters "Don't tell mom, but I've eaten all your bacon" (00:38:52), as if the bacon becomes a metaphor for the secret the two would later share, or even as a piece of meat, associating it to Humbert's penis. In fact, the association to food, more particularly meat to male genitalia is common. When analyzing *Como agua para chocolate* (dir. Alfonso Arau, 1992), Rodriguez states that "several of the words used in Mexican slang to name the male sexual organ, such as pájaro ('bird') and chorizo ('sausage'), also refer to food" (Rodriguez, 2004, p. 63).

She then proceeds to eat his toast (00:38:50). While reading *Ulalume*, an Edgar Allen Poe poem, as a way to seduce her through intellect — in the novel, Humbert says that his first love was a girl named Annabel Leigh, a similar sound to *Annabel Lee*, another of Poe's poems. She then feeds him an egg (00:41:47), a symbol usually connected to fertility and life.

In the language of Egyptian hieroglyphs, the determinative sign of the egg represents potentiality, the seed of generation, the mystery of life ... the natural curiosity of the Egyptians about the phenomena of life — must have been stimulated by the realization that a secret animal-growth comes about inside the closed shell, whence

they derived the idea, by analogy, that hidden things (the occult, or what appears to be non-existent) may actively exist. (Cirlot, 2001 p. 94)

Following this idea, the egg can symbolize both their sexual relationship that was about to come, but also a secret the two might share. This is complemented by his promise not to tell a soul about a secret she wants to tell about her friend Mona. “You can have one little bite” she says, provocatively. The content of the secret is not perceptible to the audience. The way he eats the egg is in itself somehow sexual, as if he is biting the sinful apple bitten by Eve in the Garden of Eden. In other films such as *Freaks* (1932), in a scene where the character of Cleopatra offers the character of Hercules an egg, Davis claims that “the egg being a symbol of the female fertility, their culinary foreplay becomes an appropriate metaphor for the offscreen sex that will soon occur” (2004, p. 286). This same dynamic of foreshadowing sexual intercourse could have been present in this particular scene in *Lolita*. This image of a woman feeding the main male character will also reappear in a scene from *A Clockwork Orange*.

The way Humbert tried to conquer Lolita and keep her around was the same way Charlotte tried to maintain him closer: through food. When Lolita calls from the Summer Camp she was sent to, her mother finds out Humbert regularly sends her candy (00:56:43). This was his way of keeping Lolita satisfied through what is usually portrayed as children’s favorite food. By sending her candy, Humbert is now part of one more of their secrets. This link between candy and seduction can be found in other films. In *Years of Hunger* (dir. Jutta Bruckner, 1980), when describing the first interaction with her father, Ursula’s mother says “‘He got me candy, ... and we must have eaten at least a pound of it between the two of us’. The parallel between eating and courtship expresses the mother’s confusion of the two kinds of pleasures” (Joglekar, 2004, pp. 185-186).

After realizing Charlotte is upset upon finding out, the excuse Humbert uses is somewhat aggressive:

Even in the most harmonious households, such as ours not all the decisions are taken by the female especially when the male partner has fulfilled his obligations beyond the line of duty...Yes, I'm happy. I'm delighted to be bossed by you, but every game has its rules. (00:56:57)

Once again the symbol of food works as a lever in the narrative, since this can be described as Humbert and Haze's first fight, where he once again stresses the way his wife should behave and makes sure she understands the roles both of them should take in the relationship.

There is one single shift in this dynamic — upon Charlotte's reading of his diary and finding out his obsession for the daughter, she locks herself in the room, while Humbert starts to panic, offering her a drink and making her believe the notes she found are merely fragments from a novel he is writing (01:01:30). This is the only moment throughout the entire film where the narrator offers her any kind of food or drink, his only intent being not to care or provide for her, but to calm her down and make her believe in his false excuses. Charlotte ends up dying in an accident in the following scene.

After his wife's death, Humbert picks up Lolita from the Summer Camp. While driving around the country with her, he buys her chips and cola, with once again the intent of making her happy. He now cooks for her and provides her with everything. In fact, even the moment Lolita finds out about her mother's death was intentionally preceded by an eating moment (01:33:57), Kubrick himself having called for a Coke and a bag of potato chips for Sue Lyon, because he thought it would add the right amount of incongruity in the scene (Phillips, 2016, p. 258). Humbert provides the child with fast food, as a way to coax her, and perhaps even soothing her for the cruel information she was about to receive and also as a way to comfort her in the aftermath. After receiving the devastating news, Lolita stops chewing and starts to cry.

Perhaps the last major food related symbol found in the film are Cola-Cola bottles, presented in two of the last three scenes in the film. In the first, Lolita is drinking from a bottle through a straw (while Humbert does her nails), which can be perceived once again as a phallic shape, similar to the earlier mentioned lollipop (01:39:32). It can also serve as a way to link the soda's popularity to Lolita's "popularity" around boys and men since Coca-Cola was (and still is) such a mainstream American drink, that frequently symbolizes the American way of life.

The second scene features Clare Quilty disguised as Dr. Zemph, a psychologist from Beardsley High School who is talking to Humbert in his place about how bad

behaved Lolita has been (01:44:15). There are two empty Coca-Cola bottles in the table with straws. These bottles have also been allied to a certain symbolism regarding a woman's body, and one can also look at both bottles as if they represent what is left of Lolita's innocence — a lack of, an emptiness, after her involvement with both men. Coca-Cola would also appear in the next Kubrick film, *Dr. Strangelove: or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* two years later — Capt. Lionel Mandrake (Peter Sellers) asks Colonel "Bat" Guano (Keenan Wynn) to shoot a Coca-Cola vending machine in order to obtain coins for a payphone call with the President of the United States. Guano does so, but warns him "Okay, I will get the money for you. But if you don't get the President of the United States on that phone, you know what's gonna happen to you? You're gonna have to answer to Coca-Cola Company" (Kubrick, 1964, 01:12:27), adding an emphasis to the whole nature of satire in the film. As in *Lolita*, Kubrick uses this scene to criticize in a symbolic way the American way of life.

Another meaning attributed to the scene of the conversation between Humbert and Quilty can also rely on the concept of the double. Scholars have defended that Quilty is Humbert's evil double (Meyer, 2009, p. 7), therefore the bottles can also represent their lack of morality. However, it is significant to remember that the story is being told by an unreliable narrator, Humbert himself. Therefore, the information the viewer gets about him and his rival is biased. Despite Humbert's despise for Quilty, he knows that both have committed the same sin. To add to the idea of double is the name of the two men: "Humbert Humbert" is a repetition and the name "Clare" has similar phonetics to "Quilty".

Lastly, as a clear opposite to Claire Quilty's opening scene with Humbert, the last encounter between Lolita and the latter involves a less exquisite drink than Quilty's: beer. Lolita's husband offers Humbert a beer, which he rejects (Kubrick, 1962, 02:26:51). As an opposite of Quilty's champagne, beer is a cheaper kind of drink, where the viewer can easily understand (also with other provided visual information, such as the house Lolita and her husband live in) that their economic situation is indeed not at its finest. A clear dichotomy with the beginning of the film: champagne versus beer or wealth versus misery.

Since Humbert and Quilty are “doubled”, the killing of Quilty is in fact, a kind of self-destruction; the weapon has served its suicidal purpose. When we consider that Quilty dies masked by the portrait, the symbol is extended: Humbert, Quilty, Lolita and even Charlotte are drawn into a kind of metaphoric identification in death. (Burns, 1984, p. 250)

While analyzing *Pulp Fiction* (1994), Epstein stated that the latter “defines excessive appetite as feminine ... this food-based mode of articulating highly charged female sexuality is highly condemnatory, and each female character within the film endangers the man with whom she comes in contact” (2004, p. 200). The same can be said about Lolita, that is perceived as being the reason why Humbert went to jail and later dies, and Quilty, who despite having a good number of champagne bottles in his place, ends up shot by Humbert, due to jealousy. She is then, the ruin of both men.

2. *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)

1971's *A Clockwork Orange* is certainly Kubrick's most provocative and controversial work. The film, adapted from Anthony Burgess's 1962 novel, was banned in several countries, and in the United Kingdom, for instance, its screening was suspended until Kubrick's death in 1999 — a ban imposed by the director himself after “a spate of copycat violence” spread over the UK, leading to threats to the director's family (Bergan, 2011, p. 46).

The film was nominated for four academy awards, including three to Kubrick for best picture, director and adapted screenplay (which the director adapted solely by himself for the first time in his filmography) and a nomination for Bill Butler for his work with the film editing. The film came out empty-handed at the 44th edition of the ceremony — with the exception of *Barry Lyndon*, *Spartacus* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, no other Kubrick film has won an Academy Award. However, *A Clockwork Orange* was the first science fiction film in history with the honor of being nominated for the best picture category.

A Clockwork Orange is another great example of how food placed in film can discuss themes of sexuality and corrupted childhood and how paradoxical the moral of an individual can be. However, in this film, it is not only the presence (and symbolism) of food that conveys its meaning in the narrative, but also the way Kubrick directed and edited these specific scenes.

Interestingly, some of the most memorable scenes of food in film appear in films that often break continuity editing conventions. Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941) and Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) all create memorable images of food and eating in part because they employ bravura moments of graphic match editing, thematically keyed rhythmic editing, disturbing crosscutting and unconventional point-of-view shots. (Baron, 2006, p. 105)

This paradox starts with the title of the film. According to IMDb's trivia, although it was insinuated that Burgess originally named the book after the word *orang* (meaning *man* in Malay), since he lived in Malaysia during the Second World War, many critics

believe this was not the title's origin. In this first hypothesis the title would have meant something like "a clockwork man", whereas it was also discussed that it derived from the UK slang "clockwork fruit".

However, the idea for the title according to the writer came from East London slang and derived from "as queer as a clockwork orange", which "conveys the duality between the mechanical (clockwork) and organic (orange)" (Ciment, 2016, p. 516). It is believed, however, that the creation of the phrase is entirely credited to Burgess. Nevertheless, his time in Malaysia, particularly the assault suffered by his wife involving four American GIs that resulted in a miscarriage, was the main influence for the story.

[B]y definition, a human being is endowed with free will. He can use this to choose between good and evil. If he can only perform good or only perform evil, then he is a clockwork orange — meaning that he has the appearance of an organism lovely with colour and juice but is in fact only a clockwork toy to be wound up by God or the Devil or (since this is increasingly replacing both) the Almighty State. (Burgess, 2009)

Another hypothesis is that the word "orange" could be a reference to "orangutan" (from a similar etymology). The orange primate is an animal often used by scientists in behaviouristic studies due to their similarities in DNA with humans. Alex goes through an experiment, the Ludovico Treatment (Costa/Noletto, 2017, p. 259). Naturally many other symbolisms are attributed to oranges, such as virginity and fertility, and the Chinese, for instance, have a tradition of linking the fruit to immortality (Bruce-Mitford, 2008, p. 98).

In its opening scene, *A Clockwork Orange* immediately confronts the viewer with the first food-related symbol of the film, and perhaps its most important: milk. Alex (Malcolm McDowell), a seventeen-year-old boy (fifteen in the novel) who also works as the narrator, seems to be enjoying a get-together with his group of *droogies*, in the Korova Milk Bar (*Korova* being Russian for "cow" and *Moloko*, written on the bar's wall, means "milk"). Although similarly to the novel, some of the film's language is fictional (*Nadsat* is a mix of English and Russian — nevertheless, more present in the novel than in the film), it is not hard to guess that "milk plus vellocat or synthemesc or drenocrum" is a reference to multiple drugs. This is emphasized by Alex saying, "They would sharpen

you up and make you ready for a bit of the old ultraviolence”, after raising his glass of milk and making a toast towards the camera (Kubrick, 1971, 00:01:05).

Violence is thus omnipresent, as is sexuality, which here is no longer subversive, as it was at the time of the surrealists, but is part of a fastidious and blasé celebration. Proof of this is found in the decoration of the Korova Milkbar with its statues offering the milk of artificial paradise, the phallic snake in Alex’s room, the paintings and sculptures in the Catlady’s home, and the obsession with breasts throughout the film. (Ciment, 2016, p. 518)

The image of these teenagers drinking milk as a group, despite their aggressive behavior throughout the film, serves as a reminder that these are not adults yet. Milk is, however, what still links them to childhood and the drugs added are the factor that corrupts this same childhood and innocence. Milk is, therefore, a symbol of duality in the film, due to its nature (the innocent maternal side) and mischief (the drugs).

However, the way the drink is served adds extra meaning to this act: a coin is inserted into a machine, and a woman-shaped statue drops milk from its breasts, after a lever is pulled (00:14:00). The aesthetics of the bar itself, with the many other woman-like figures presented in the bar used as tables for instance, stresses the misogynist tone of the narrative, and offers the viewer the first hint about Alex and his friends’ nature.

This future world is one where women are constantly objectified or under threat. The Korova Milk Bar is decorated with naked female mannequins, reduced to body parts, including plastic breasts that dispense the bar’s milk. The violence in the opening rampage by Alex and his gang is largely directed at women. As with the Milk Bar mannequins, they are reduced to objects. The camera does not offer a close-up of the woman who is about to be raped by a rival gang in a disused music hall, nor does the film humanize the two girls whom Alex meets in the record store. (Henderson, 2018, p. 54)

Furthermore, since the drink is served through female breasts, this link to maternity is even more evident. Lyman states that “it has been suggested that adults who enjoy drinking milk have a mother fixation or haven’t quite grown up” (1989, p. 29), showing once again the issues that Alex and his friends might be dealing with. However,

it is important to highlight that there are adults frequenting this space. Alex refers to some of them as “sophistos from the TV studios” (00:14:14).

The milk in the Korova Milk Bar is probably even more dangerous than the alcohol consumed by the homeless man (Paul Farrell) beaten by the four young men. Here, Alex criticizes the man, calling him a “filthy old drunkie” (00:02:52). In fact, the protagonist even states he really cannot stand drunk homeless people, which is interesting since the milk he himself takes is a drug, just like alcohol itself. However, it is clear that the criticism Alex makes is mainly directed at the poor, and not at those that alter their behavior while intoxicated.

In the next scene Alex also uses food to insult the members of another gang led by Billy-Boy (Richard Connaught), when Alex’s gang finds their rivals trying to rape a girl. “How art thou, thou *globby* bottle of cheap stinking chip-oil? Come and get one in the *yarbles*, if you have any *yarbles*, you eunuch jelly, thou.” (00:06:05) These insults are seen as childish, a behavior that mirrors their age. This leads to a fight between the two groups of teenagers.

As noted by Nuget (2017), other memorable examples of the use of milk in film are *Rebel Without a Cause* (dir. Nicholas Ray, 1955) and *Léon* (dir. Luc Benson, 1994). The first features James Dean as Jim, in a scene where the teenager bursts in anger and yet reminds the viewer that he is still a just a teenage boy by drinking a bottle of cold milk and using it to cool himself down, by rubbing it in his face. In *Léon*, however, the title character (played by Jean Reno) is an adult hitman who seems to enjoy having a big glass of milk, something that can be perceived as bizarre and somewhat misplaced, due to the drink’s connection to children. However, this action can be explained by his growing necessity to take care of Mathilda (Natalie Portman), as a parent would, after the death of her family. Here milk again is a symbol of maternity (or paternity in this particular case).

As a way to show the not-so-innocent side of characters, filmmakers can portray adults having milk with darker intentions. Nuget also agrees that in movies such as *No Country for Old Men* (dir. Ethan Coen and Joel Coen, 2007) and *Inglourious Basterds* (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2009) this device is used for the character to be perceived as more

powerful. They drink milk so they can show how the consumption (in this case destruction) of something more maternal and innocent can make them stronger. Likewise, other themes, such as race, can be raised with the symbol of milk. In *Get Out* (dir. Jonathan Peele, 2017), the character Rose Armitage (Alisson Williams) drinks a tall glass of milk. This foreshadows the racist conviction of white power within her and her family. This same character eats cereals (Froot Loops) without the milk, emphasizing “white supremacy” (in this case separating the milk from cereals as white separated from non-white).

In *A Clockwork Orange*, Alex’s relationship with his friends also seems to alter what he drinks and how he drinks it. Alex starts thinking that he is losing the gang’s leadership, that his friends are not completely transparent to him, and that they are somehow acting behind his back. This leads him to hurt two of the members, by throwing one of them to a nearby river and slashing his hand with a knife, and by kicking the second one (00:34:00). In the following scene the four boys order alcohol in a bar named Duke of New York (00:35:22). Alcohol here may not symbolize Alex’s passage from a teenager to adulthood, but it marks the crescendo of violence that was about to come. He has shattered his bond with his friends, he has therefore lost all his remaining innocence, and has become obsessed with power. Alex is never seen drinking milk from this moment on, even though that element would reappear.

Alex tells the viewer his thoughts:

I had not cut into any of Dim’s main cables. And so, with the help of a clean *tashtook*, the red, red *kroovy* soon stopped. And it did not take long to quieten the two wounded soldiers, down in the snug of the Duke of New York. Now they knew who was master and leader. Sheep thought I. But a real leader knows always when, like to give and show generous to his *unders*. (00:35:06)

He then warns his friends, “Well! Now we’re back to where we were. Yes? Just like before, and all forgotten? Right, right, right?”. The three *droogies* have no other option rather than agreeing, noticeably upset.

Despite this scene, milk is still, the most important drink in the film. It would even be present in the moment where Alex is framed, which leads him to jail and consequently to the traumatic Ludovico Treatment he accepts to experience. After

breaking into a woman's house, in the middle of another of the group's delinquencies, the three boys decide to take revenge on Alex for his violent behavior towards them. Alex is unaware that the three boys are waiting for him outside, not as part of the planned robbery, but because they seek revenge on him. Once he leaves the woman's house and tells them to leave, before the police arrives, Dim slashes a bottle of milk on his head, leaving him in pain and disoriented, while the three boys flee, bursting in laughter. "You bastards! I'm blind! I'm blind, you bastards. I can't see!" (00:43:06). From this moment on, Alex's life is forever changed. Meanwhile the police arrive. Alex gets a fourteen-year sentence.

Kubrick, however, would also use a food-related symbol in *A Clockwork Orange* that appeared in an earlier film, *Lolita*. Being an avid fan of Beethoven, Alex visits a record store, where he meets two women who immediately catch his attention. Both suck on lollipops with clear and intentional phallic shapes. "Enjoying that, are you, my darling?" he says to one of the women, "A bit cold and pointless, isn't it, my lovely?", Alex utters to the other one. "What's happened to yours, my little sister?" he says, noticing that the first girl is sucking on a lollipop resembling a flaccid penis (00:27:10).

The lollipops here obviously mean sexuality and can be counted among the numberless phallic shapes presented in the film. However, this particular symbol, just like the milk, also serves to remind us that these are underage girls, who in the film are close to his age but in the novel are only ten years old. Alex, then proceeds to invite the two young women for a three-way *rendez-vous*, "What you got back home little sister to play your fuzzy warbles on? I bet you've got little pitiful, portable picnic players. Come with uncle and hear all proper. Hear angel trumpets and devil trombones. You are invited."

Alex's goals and desires with these comments are fulfilled since the three would engage in sexual intercourse in Alex's bedroom, while Gioachino Rossini's *William Tell Overture Finale* plays, in a fast-forward scene (00:28:10). In Burgess's novel the girls are drugged and raped, whereas in the film, they seem to have sex in a consensual way. The scene in the record store also works as an Easter egg in Kubrick's filmography — when Alex asks the employee about an order he has placed, the cover of a *2001: A Space*

Odyssey record is visible, which makes it more believable that the lollipops are an ode to *Lolita*.

Now concerning Alex's imprisonment, when the police officers are taking his belongings, the half chocolate bar in this pocket serves to highlight once again that this delinquent is still a teenager. His narcissism is also stressed during Bible study in the prison library, when Alex fantasizes about the company of three women, while one feeds him grapes, in a quite sexual scenario (00:56:50). This fruit can be quickly associated to Bacchus, a symbol of fertility, pleasure and revelry. The reference in Christian tradition directs grapes to the blood of Christ (Bruce-Mitford, 2008, p. 99). Similarly to the lollipops and the *2001: A Space Odyssey* record, this can also be a reference to another of Kubrick's films, *Spartacus*, which story is about the Roman Empire and the slave in the movie's title.

Another food-related moment during Alex's prison time is the amount of cake and tea in the police officer's desk when he is arrested, which serves as a contrast to the life of the prisoners (00:44:58). It is also in prison, under the Ludovico Treatment, that Alex begins to experience nausea, which in his case translates to a sudden will to vomit, not only every time he witnesses something violent or sexual but also when he hears the music of his hero, Beethoven. After being released from jail and apparently "cured", he goes back to his parents' house, in hopes that everything remains as the happy home he lived in before.

When analyzing other aspects such as Alex's relationship with his parents through food, *A Clockwork Orange* presents the most common dynamic: Alex's mother provides for him and cooks all the meals. Still within the household, the food served at breakfast seems to be quite typical of English culture, including eggs, toast and coffee (00:21:07). Curiously enough, it is during the course of this particular meal that Alex is confronted with a massive change in his family dynamic.

It is in shock that he sees a young man having breakfast with his parents. "There's a strange fellow sitting on the sofa munchy *munchy-wunching lomticks* of toast" (01:30:00), he utters. His parents inform him that they have taken a young man as a lodger who is now allocated in his former room. The young man, named Joe, tells Alex:

I've heard about you. I know what you've done. Breaking the hearts of your poor, grieving parents. So, you're back, eh? Back to make life a misery for you lovely parents once more, is that it? Over my dead corpse you will. Because, you see, they've let me be more like a son to them than like a lodger. (01:30:45)

Alex feels nauseated when attempting to attack Joe after such words. His father tells him that his family has disposed of all his belongings and that his pet snake has died. Alex feels hopeless: "I've suffered, and I've suffered, and I've suffered. And everybody wants me to go on suffering", to which Joe replies: "You made others suffer. It's only right that you should suffer proper. You know I've been told everything you done, sitting around the family table." (01:34:44)

Alex visibly struggles with the information, starts crying and leaves. The intimate nature of a breakfast as well as its importance as the first meal of the day stresses how much Alex feels replaced by the young man. Even though Alex is never seen on screen having breakfast with his parents, there is a scene earlier in the film when, pretending to be sick, Alex avoids going to school. His mother says, "I'll put your breakfast in the oven" (00:20:50) and goes to the kitchen to have the meal with her husband, where they wonder where "he goes to work of evenings".

After being replaced by his parents, while walking around the city, Alex finds the homeless man he had beaten up years earlier. When he is recognized by him, Alex is beaten up by a group of homeless men. He is then taken by two police officers, who turn out to be his former friends, the same ones that framed him. He is beaten up again, this time with his head underwater (01:40:06). It is interesting to remark that his friends frame him by slashing milk into his head earlier, and now use water as a way to torture him — the sign of maternity and purity respectively.

Completely lost, Alex accidentally returns to a house where he and his former friends have raped and killed a woman, leaving the husband injured (01:44:14).

The man of the house, a writer, feeds Alex spaghetti and insists that he drink "some wine". The scene of Alex nervously drinking and eating, and commenting on how good the wine is, is surprisingly funny. Alex does not know it, but the drink is drugged, like the "milk" in the milk bar at the start of the movie. He promptly falls into

unconsciousness. The drug acts so fast his head actually drops into the place of spaghetti in front of him, as if he were now the eaten instead of the one eating. The grotesquerie of the head plunged into food that looks like blood-covered entrails coheres with the theme of nausea, of physical revulsion, which is so prominent in this film. (Nicholson, 2001, p. 284)

Here, the spaghetti also mirrors the young man's tangling situation and the mess he has put himself into since the beginning of the film, as he is now (quite literally) facing it, even though the drugs were in the glass of wine and not in the spaghetti itself. However, in this scene, when Mr. Alexander (Patrick Magee) pulls up Alex's head, the image of him fainted with the face covered in food gives the viewer a certain discomfort, almost touching the nausea Alex has been feeling since his treatment (01:57:48). Nausea would also be a motif in Kubrick's next film, *Barry Lyndon*.

In 1995 director David Fincher references this imagery in a scene from *Se7en*, where a character dies with his head sunk on a spaghetti dish: in this case, the spaghetti symbolizes the sin of gluttony. In addition, a deleted scene from the film included Alex taking the two girls he met at a record store to a Pasta Parlour. However, in films such as 2013's *Blue is the Warmest Color* (*La Vie d'Adèle*, dir. Abdellatif Kechiche), Adèle eats spaghetti as a symbol of her confusion and uncertainty about her sexual orientation, as well as to portray her family's social status, belonging to the working class (which is lower when compared to the oysters she eats at her girlfriend's house).

In *A Clockwork Orange* it is, however, the wine that poisons Alex. Wine, also a symbol for the blood of Christ, works as an irony here, as if the character is being punished by Christ itself, by the religious morals he corrupted due to all the atrocities committed by him and his friends. This association can be explained by the fact that Burgess was raised as a Roman Catholic. According to the Anthony Burgess International Foundation, when interviewed by *Paris Review* in 1973, Burgess stated: "The novels I've written are really medieval Catholic in their thinking". A statue of four Jesus figures is present in Alex's room while he is listening to Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Kubrick does many close-ups to this particular object.

In *The Shining*, 2001 and *Barry Lyndon* Kubrick has also introduced meaningful scenes with characters spoiling, breaking and taking alcoholic beverages.

Alex is then trapped in a room when, upon hearing Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, he attempts suicide by jumping out of a window. It is as if all the harm committed by Alex comes back to him in a way: he is beaten up by those he had mistreated before, he is replaced by his parents, and he cannot even listen to his favorite musician due to nausea (02:00:18).

Here, Kubrick presents a powerful satirical image of corrupt authority; the urbane Minister of the Interior is shown feeding the bandage-wrapped Alex in his hospital bed while promising him "a good job and a good salary" on condition that Alex becomes a co-operative agent in bolstering and securing the government's popularity. Alex's future criminal activities will presumably be sanctioned by the state for as long as it is mutually beneficial. (Ng, 1996)

When waking up in the hospital, the young man is visited by his parents who bring him a basket of fruits. Alex is then fed by a nurse. When the Minister of the Interior (Anthony Sharp) arrives, he takes the place of the nurse, and starts feeding him (02:00:09). The treatment has failed miserably. The Minister proceeds to feed Alex, taking a role that used to belong to his parents. It is also possible to see this as the state versus the individual. In an essay reflecting on the novel and the film, Burgess stated that

[w]e probably have no duty to like Beethoven or hate Coca-Cola, but it is at least conceivable that we have a duty to distrust the state. Thoreau wrote of the duty of civil disobedience; Whitman said, "Resist much, obey little." With those liberals, and with many others, disobedience is a good thing in itself. In small social entities—English parishes, Swiss cantons—the machine that governs can sometimes be identified with the community that is governed. But when the social entity grows large, becomes a megalopolis, a state, a federation, the governing machine becomes remote, impersonal, even inhuman. It takes money from us for purposes we do not seem to sanction; it treats us as abstract statistics; it controls an army; it supports a police force whose function does not always appear to be protective. (Boaz, 2014)

Burgess supports, therefore, the idea that the state is also fallible. The Minister (who here represents the State) has the role of protecting its citizens. Even if the treatment had been successful, it would have always been immoral for the State to use its individuals for such experiences. The state has failed Alex, and has also failed its

people, by, for instance, having hired two of Alex's former friends as policemen, whose conduct is at the very least questionable. This feeding moment is a façade. There are no good intentions in helping Alex or feeding him, the purposes are solely based on the need for good publicity. The Minister (the State) is, then, more of a criminal than Alex himself.

3. *Barry Lyndon* (1975)

After the release of *A Clockwork Orange*, Kubrick began working on the period drama *Barry Lyndon*. The 1975 film is based on 1884's *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* by English author William Makepeace Thackeray. Due to his change of heart on directing a film about Napoleon, the director saw potential in the novel and wrote the script all by himself, just as he had done previously with *A Clockwork Orange*. However, the shooting was proven not to be easy: due to the threats he received because of his last film, Kubrick feared he could be set as a target by the IRA, since *Barry Lyndon* would be shot mostly in Ireland. As a way to attenuate it, numerous scenes had to be cut.

The film won four academy awards in the categories of cinematography, art direction and set decoration, costume design and original score, making it the Kubrick film with the highest number of the golden statuettes. However, it lost in the other three categories it was nominated for, all of which belong to Kubrick himself — best picture, director and adapted screenplay. Nevertheless, the film is truly a groundbreaking project. Technically aspects such as the lighting were completely pioneering — the use of lit candles in many scenes offered the film an extraordinarily natural atmosphere, that according to the film's IMDb trivia page, in order to be captured had to be shot with a lens, with the largest aperture ever used in film.

Barry Lyndon is therefore, much more than its narrative, since “properly interpreting a Stanley Kubrick film, ... requires analyzing more than just the story, images, and score. Much of Kubrick's message lies in the tension between dissonant elements of his films” (Brown, 2011, p. 1). Unlike the previously analyzed films, *Barry Lyndon's* food-related symbolism does not orbit around sexuality. The food found in the narrative is, just like the movie itself, a reflection and sometimes criticism of the social status of its characters and, interesting enough, it mainly works as a premonition of some of the action sequences, as if were a foreshadowing of conflict.

Kubrick divided the picture in two parts: the first tells us the story of Barry before meeting Lady Lyndon, and the second depicts his life as Barry Lyndon. Starting at Part 1, entitled *By What Means Redmond Barry Acquired the Style and Title of Barry Lyndon*,

the viewer learns that Redmond Barry's (Ryan O'Neal) misfortune starts with the death of his father. Nonetheless, it is the Irish man's tough luck of falling in love with his cousin, Nora Brady (Gay Hamilton) that launches his seeking for social rising. Nora becomes engaged to another man, Captain Quin (Leonard Rossiter). "Besides, Redmond, Captain Quin is a man. And you're only a boy, and you haven't a guinea in the world" (Kubrick, 1975, 00:10:33), she tells Barry in the woods. For certain, the young man feels that his lack of wealth is an obstacle to conquering the love of the woman he desires.

When Quin becomes aware of Barry's intentions with Nora, he threatens to withdraw from the marriage. "It is not the English way for ladies to have two lovers", he utters. Upon hearing such, Nora's brother (Liam Redmond) accuses Barry: "Hang ya for a medllin' brat. Your hand is in everybody's pie. What business had you to come quarreling here with a gentleman who has fifteen hundred a year?" (00:14:32). As discussed in *Lolita*, the term "pie" here is not used merely to tell him to stay out of other people's business, but also serves to tell him specifically to stay away from Nora. This is due to the earlier mentioned connection between pies and female sexuality.

Upon the toast celebrating the engagement of his cousin, preceded by a speech by Nora's father, Mr. Brady, Barry presents his first moment of revenge to the viewer. The whole family is reunited at the event, with Barry being the last one to seat down, visible devastated. After the announcement, he throws a glass of wine at the Captain, voicing "Here is my toast to you, Captain John Quin" (00:18:26). As noted by Nicholson

[t]he decisive turning point in *Barry Lyndon* — the point at which the shape of the rest of the movie is cued — is the engagement feast of Redmond Barry's girlfriend to another man, an English officer. Barry plays the role of uninvited guest (an important motif in stories) by interruption the joyous feasting and toasting ... The interruption of the feast is related to the breaking of the wine glass. (2001, p. 282)

It is first important to understand that dinner scenes can be crucial in film due to the ways they can induce conflict. According to Nugent (2015), dinner is one of the most relatable experiences the viewer gets to see in the movies. However, watching someone eat with no influence at all in the narrative or in the personality of its characters seems like a waste of a scene. The way dinners are conducted by characters, and how they act

during the meal, can say a lot about the way they interact with each other. The memorable scene in *American Beauty* (dir. Sam Mendes, 1999) where Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey) throws the asparagus' plate on the wall is more than just a brief moment of anger. The viewer gets one more glimpse of the extremely toxic relationship he shares with his wife Carolyn (Annette Benning).

When analyzing the breaking of an object in film, the act can signify the breaking of values or the loss of innocence. Joe Wright's *Atonement* (2007), for instance, features a scene in which Cecilia (Keira Knightley) breaks her uncle's vase, an object that has been in her family since the First World War. Here, the breaking of the vase means a rupture in the family tradition or values, which would ultimately translate in the wrongful rape accusation of her boyfriend Robbie (James McAvoy). A film containing a similar symbolism is *The Usual Suspects* (1995, dir. Bryan Singer). The breaking of the mug in one of the final scenes is also the moment Agent Kujan (Chazz Palminteri) figures out that Keyser Söze (Kevin Spacey) is much less innocent than he appears to be.

Barry in *Barry Lyndon* brings shame to his family the moment he chooses to interrupt his cousin's engagement toast, therefore somehow also breaking family values and above all, their opportunity to get financial advantages. It is also relevant to state that this is Barry's last meal with his family, due to the conflict that would derive from this moment of anger. It is, in a way, his Last Supper with his family, since even though he is not crucified like Jesus Christ, he has to sacrifice himself by leaving the country. This is emphasized by the wine and bread on the table. There is, nevertheless, another scene in the film (that will be examined later) concerning a glass of wine that stresses this idea, but where Barry can be perceived more like Judas and less like Jesus.

The breaking of a glass is also present in two other Kubrick films. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, in one of the final scenes, Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea) drops a glass while having a meal, which makes him notice himself, much older, lying in bed (Kubrick, 1968, 02:17:20). Critics have argued over the years the many possible interpretations of the scene, the most discussed points to Bowman confronting himself with his own fragility. Dullea, however, has said that he simply needed a reason for his character to look towards the bed, and Kubrick took on his suggestion of taking down the glass (Handy,

2018). In *The Shining*, the waiter spoils a glass of champagne on the main character Jack Torrance (Jack Nicholson), which leads him to the bathroom, where significant details about the movie's central mystery are revealed (Kubrick, 1980, 01:24:45).

The dinner scene in *Barry Lyndon* leads to a duel between Barry and Quin, the first of many conflicts after a meal or a toast during the film. At the end of the said duel, Barry is tricked into thinking he killed Quin. After a conversation with his mother and one of Nora's brothers over tea, they decided that the best option is for him to elope in order to avoid judicial retaliations.

Barry's destination is Dublin, where he faces his very first obstacle. Two men outside a tavern ask him if he wants to join them for a drink or if he desires something to eat. Barry kindly declines the offer (Kubrick, 1975, 00:28:49). In the following scene, however, he is stopped by these same men, who present themselves as being Captain Feeney (Arthur O'Sullivan) and his son, Seamus (Billy Boyle). Barry is robbed, losing his horse and his money.

The first scene concerning food that shows Barry's eagerness to rise socially takes place after the title character enlists on the English Army. As a way to run from his supposed crime, Barry joins King George's army. The men "meeting the qualifications will immediately receive His Majesty's royal bounty of one and a half guineas with complete clothing, arms and accoutrements", which seemed to be a good alternative for Barry, after losing all his possessions. He could, consequently, also get the honors associated to those that fight in the war.

Among one of their meals, Barry presents his repulsion on its conditions: "Hey lad. Lad? Lad! Can I have a new beaker? This one is full of grease" (00:35:56), he shouts. All his fellow soldiers begin to laugh. "Covered in grease! Give the gentleman a towel and a basin of turtle soup", yells a soldier named Toole, that promptly gets up and drinks the liquid from Redmond's "greasy beaker". The men around applaud — for them, Barry has an equal status, he is also at the bottom of the pyramid when it comes to the army. It is not only the way the beaker looks that makes Barry feel repulsion, but also what it signifies when it comes to status. For Toivonen

...[t]he choice of food is hedonistic: what is the taste, smell or look of food ... However ... a food item or dining type can be chosen because it belongs to the norms or style of an ethnic group, generation, social group, etc. Mennell stresses this dimension strongly, 'People have always used food in their attempts to climb the social ladder themselves, and to push other people down the ladder'." (1997, p. 331)

Although Barry's family was not wealthy (that was the reason why it was convenient for his cousin to marry Quin), now that he has no money at all, he is even more deprived of any kind of luxury. A clean beaker is a luxury for all these men. Naturally, the man who actually drinks from his beaker also did it as a statement of bravery, so he can be perceived as stronger than Barry in front of other men.

Bong Joon Ho's *Snowpiercer* (2013) deals with social class differences in a post-apocalyptic world. In the film, it is possible to witness a parallel with the beaker scene. The people that live "on the back" of the train have black "protein bars" as meals. This is the only food they are offered by the people "on the front". Once one of the characters finds out about what these "protein bars" are made of, they respond with repulsion — they are made of cricket flour. However, the man responsible for their production (who is also controlled by the people "on the front") eats one of them, to prove that they are not that bad — similar to the man that drank from Barry's beaker. The "protein bars" in the film are the only option that the people "in the back" have. The same applies to Barry: it is the "greasy beaker" or nothing.

To better understand the link of aspiring social status in film to food, another of Bong Joon Ho's films, 2019's *Parasite* (*Gisaengchung*), is the perfect example. The film depicts the Kims, a poor family living in a Seoul basement whose job is to fold pizza boxes. The main action of the film centers on the enormous scam they come up with in order to start working for the Parks, a wealthy family, by becoming their son's tutor, their daughter's art teacher, the family's chauffeur and housekeeper. The Kims' diet is based on soda cans, bags of chips and sliced bread, whereas the Parks have the highest quality of food (as well as quantity). When the wealthy family is not present, they drink their wine, eat their food and use their house as if it is their own. Naturally, the story's connection to status goes further than food, but the Parks' oversupply versus the food shortage of the Kims has an impact on the narrative. The "ram-don" scene ("ram-don"

is a name invented for a dish in the film) stresses these differences, when Mrs. Kim prepares a mix of noodles and cubed meat for the Parks — she does a totally different recipe than the one Mrs. Park is used to. Surprisingly, Mrs. Park enjoys it, but again, the viewer is reminded that the Kims can try all they want, but social status does not appear overnight. Of course, the Kims' greediness eventually leads them to ruin.

Barry's fate is no different. Even though he comes from a modest family, his greediness and desire to earn a higher status mark his life with a series of unfortunate events. He steals, lies incessantly, deceives, and even commits infidelity. Although his family was not as poor as the Kims, their methods to ascend in life were similar, and on top of that, they also end up destroying the lives of other characters around them. Kubrick corroborates this idea having stated that, concerning *Barry Lyndon*:

Thackeray referred to it "as a novel without a hero". Barry is naïve and uneducated. He is driven by a relentless ambition for wealth and social position. This proves to be an unfortunate combination of qualities which eventually leads to great misfortune and unhappiness for himself and those around him. (Ciment, 2016, p. 606).

A deeper interpretation of the scene sees traits of toxic masculinity, with Robé (2017) stating that "the tension builds beneath the surface between the two men until Barry insults Toole where it counts: attacking his masculine pride by suggesting he's afraid of his wife". Just as the wine glass thrown at Quin, this action also led to a fight between Barry and this same soldier (00:37:50). As per usual, the protagonist wins and is held in the shoulders of his fellow men.

Barry's career advances, while fighting in the Seven Years War. He observes two Prussian soldiers (English allies) being intimate with each other in a nearby lake and steals one of the man's outfit and papers so that he can pass for a member of their army, deserting once more. When arriving in Holland, the protagonist meets a woman, Lischen (Diana Körner), and uses the motif of food as a way to approach her. "I have not eaten anything all day. No food. Is there an inn nearby where I might receive a meal?", he says, to which the woman replies "No, I don't think so. There is nothing to eat something since Grünberg" (00:52:20). However, the woman welcomes the young man into her home and offers him food while feeding her one-year-old child. The protagonist eventually

gets romantically involved with her, upon knowing her husband is in the war. However, shortly after, he leaves, as usual.

The next character appearing on Barry's journey is Captain Potzdorf (Hardy Krüger), to whom Barry presents himself as Lieutenant Fakenham, among other lies. He is offered "a meal and a bed for the night" (01:01:19), which Barry accepts. During the course of his stay, he creates multiple stories about his past, such as being the nephew of the British ambassador in Berlin. Naturally, the Captain starts to doubt all of his farfetched tales of bravery, and at night, after both have a toast (01:02:50), he is certain of his fabrications. If in the earlier scene the toast led to a fight, here the aftermath is bittersweet — he is exposed in front of the men. Barry is not arrested but is forced to join the Prussian army. This deed, though, goes extremely well and the now Corporal Redmond Barry is praised for saving Captain Potzdorf in a battle. He is rewarded "with the sum of two friedrich d'or".

Barry is then assigned the mission of befriending the Chevalier de Balibari (Patrick Magee), who is suspected of being a gambler, and described as a libertine "fond of women, good food, polished, obliging" and is suspected of being a spy. In their first meeting, the Chevalier is having a meal, all by himself, in an enormous room, which explains the man's complete alienation and loneliness (01:14:58).

Barry decides to tell him the truth and starts to feel emotional hearing the story from his fellow countryman. He chooses to work for the Chevalier (backstabbing Captain Potzdorf), by becoming his valet during his gambling evenings. Food here works as a motif for deceiving. While serving champagne and punch to the guests, Barry's functions are to "keep a good lookout on the trumps". The narrator tells the viewer:

If, for instance, he wiped the tables with a napkin, it was to show the enemy was strong in diamonds. If he adjusted a chair, it meant ace king. If he said, "Punch or wine, my lord?" hearts was meant, and so forth. (Kubrick, 1975, 01:19:44)

As Nicholson states, "when Barry ... acts as a spy for the duc de Berri-berri [*sic*], a professional gambler and a crook, he is carefully portrayed pouring wine for his patron's victims, even while he betrays them" (2001, p. 282). As an opposite to the earlier scene in his cousin's engagement, this scene can also be associated to the Last

Supper, but now Barry plays the role of Judas, the betrayer. This association is accentuated by the connection between wine and the Blood of Christ.

It is while having a meal with the Chevalier that Barry eventually lays eyes on Lady Lyndon for the first time — “a woman of vast wealth and great beauty” and “the wife of the right honorable Sir Charles Reginald Lyndon” according to the narrator. However, they lock eyes for the first time on the gambling table (01:34:31). “While it is true that Barry is shown philandering with other women, Lady Lyndon is the only wealthy woman he ever pursued (which is curious if all he cared about was marrying for money and stature)” (Brown, 2011, pp. 4-5). Sir Charles Reginald Lyndon, aware of the proximity between his wife and Barry, has an argument with the latter. Sir Charles eventually dies “at spa in the Kingdom of Belgium”, leaving Barry’s path clear to marry Lady Lyndon, a year later.

Moving to part two, entitled *Containing an Account of the Misfortunes and Disasters Which Befell Barry Lyndon*, the viewer gets to know the story of Barry’s life after his marriage to Lady Lyndon, as well as his consuming relationship with his stepson, Lord Bullingdon (Dominic Savage as a young child and Leon Vitali as an adult). The latter’s monologue to his mother works as the best possible description of Barry Lyndon’s actions so far.

Madam! I have borne as long as mortal could endure the ill-treatment of the insolent Irish upstart whom you’ve taken into your bed. It is not only the lowness of his birth and the general brutality of his manners which disgusts me, but the shameful nature of his conduct toward Your Ladyship, his brutal and ungentle man-like behavior, his open infidelity, his shameless robberies and swindling of my property, and yours. And as I cannot personally chastise this low-bred ruffian, and as I cannot bear to witness his treatment of you and loathe his horrible society as if it were the plague, I have decided to leave my home and never return. At least, during his detested life, or during my own. (02:14:38)

It is also over dinner that Barry Lyndon’s own son, Bryan, confronts his father about a horse he wants as a birthday present. “But one of the boys in the stable told Nelly that you’d already bought it, and it was at Doolan’s farm”, the little boy says. Here Bryan also promises his parents that he will not ride that horse without his father’s presence (02:24:45). The following day, the child disobeys their orders, and has now

become ill from falling down the horse. Bryan dies, two days later. Once more, a scene with food that foreshadows conflict: this time, however, not in the shape of a duel, but as the death of his son. This is, quite literally, Barry's son's last supper.

The two last moments of the film connected to the act of digestion are in fact poisoning and nausea. Full of debts contracted by her husband and grieving over her son's loss, Lady Lyndon attempts suicide (02:37:25). However, the ingestion of the poison does not kill her, but makes her severely ill. Of course, this will serve as the trigger for her son's rage to build up and for the final conflict of the film to take place. Lord Bullingdon finds Barry drained, visibly drunk near a table with a group of five men and challenges him for a duel (02:41:07).

Just as in *A Clockwork Orange*, the theme of nausea is also present in *Barry Lyndon*. Near the end of the film, the viewer witnesses the last of Barry's duels, facing his own stepson, a scene that does not take place in the novel, being created for the film. According to IMDb trivia, "Vitali ... was given a mixed lunch of the heaviest ingredients ... in the hope that it would nauseate him enough. When it didn't, he swallowed a raw egg whole, which he instantly regurgitated." Surprisingly enough, Kubrick enjoyed the take so much that he did not ask to repeat the scene, as was his regular practice.

Naturally this scene serves as a way to show the fragility of Barry's stepson, and how nervous the character feels (02:47:39). This serves to remind us that Bullingdon is just a teenager, full of insecurities, spoiled by his mother, and afraid of the consequences (in this case, the consequence of being killed). Understanding this, Barry shoots the floor, revealing no intentions of harming the young man. However, Bullingdon shoots Barry, who is severely injured. He soon finds out his leg needs to be amputated. Bullingdon sends a man to warn Barry to stay away from him and his mother and to leave England. In exchange, he will receive the amount of five hundred guineas a year. If Barry does not respect these conditions, he will be put in jail, due to the innumerable debts he has incurred. The viewer is told that Barry never sees Lady Lyndon again.

The motif of food in this film is not presented as explicitly as in works like *Lolita* and *A Clockwork Orange*. Here, it serves as an excuse for the innumerable misfortunes in

Barry's life. At the end of the first part, it can be concluded that all the main scenes of the film are preceded by a food connection, whether they are toasts, characters interrupting their meals, food offerings (to Barry) and even the moment Barry rejects the beaker and lays eyes on his future wife.

However, the food consumption in the film before and after his marriage to a member of aristocracy is also an indication of his social climbing. Perhaps the most noticeable moment is in Part 1 during the scene of the marriage announcement. Barry's family is having what appears to be soup and bread, which is commonly connected to families with less money, due to the cheap ingredients needed. As a contrast in Part 2 it is possible to see Barry and his guests in his gigantic mansion enjoying a table full of food, with a lot of meat present. Claflin states that

[m]eat is a social marker, a product that signifies status. We can define a social hierarchy of meat eaters depending on the cuts, the frequency, and the amount of meat one is able to consume. In addition, the place where one buys and eats meat can indicate social status. (2004, p. 245)

Barry obtains the status he desired, but at the same it ends up destroying him. His scheme was fallible: he loses his son, his leg, his first love (to another man) and his wife. Barry is now a man like all the others, not more, not less. As the film ends, we are left with one last message that summarizes the rise and fall of Barry Lyndon: "It was in the Reign of George III that the aforesaid personages lived and quarreled; good or bad, handsome or ugly, rich or poor, they are all equal now."

4. Memorable food moments in Kubrick's filmography

Although *Lolita*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Barry Lyndon* are the three films that seem to highlight the placement of food in his films as plot devices, food also plays an important role in the remaining titles of Kubrick's filmography. In the films mentioned below, food continues to aid in the portraying of some characters, whether using innuendos, symbolism or the act of eating itself. While some films use food as a symbol of sexuality (*Spartacus*) or satire (*Dr. Strangelove*), others use it as a way to show the social contrasts of the different characters within the plot (*Paths of Glory*), and even as a tool for suspense and horror (*The Shining*). *2001: A Space Odyssey* tries to guess what the future would be like and reflects the dynamic of the prey and the predator. Additionally, the use of food in a particular scene in *Full Metal Jacket* has a direct influence on the ending of its first segment. As a contrast, *Eyes Wide Shut* contains almost null food presences when compared to the rest of Kubrick's filmography. Likewise, in *The Killing*, the appearance of food is mostly circumstantial.

***Paths of Glory* (1957)**

In the very beginning of Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*, the French General George Broulard (Adolphe Menjou), visits General Paul Mireau (George Macready) for a conversation regarding a specific strategy during the war. Mireau offers him a drink, to which Broulard responds, "No thank you. Not before dinner" (Kubrick, 1957, 00:04:53). This line helps to create a contrast between the "worries" these men have and the concerns of the men in the battlefield. A soldier fighting a war in person would never have such specific concerns about his nutrition, as his main concern would be to stay alive.

Paths of Glory features one of the most powerful of all passages involving food in Kubrick's creative output ... in which the two senior generals ... make plans; or rather,

one ... puts the screws on the other. The setting is a glorious chateau ... Unlike the men fighting and dying for them, the two generals are magnificently accommodated, drinking wine. (Nicholson, 2001, p. 283)

In one of the last scenes, drinks appear once again. This time, featuring Colonel Dax (Kirk Douglas) and General Mireau (01:06:37). Here drinking serves once more to emphasize the opposite status of these two characters and the men fighting for them. Nicholson stresses this idea by stating that that the wine the generals drink is metaphorically the blood of their soldiers.

***Spartacus* (1960)**

The snails and oyster scene in *Spartacus* (1960) featuring the Roman senator Marcus Licinius Crassus (Sir Laurence Olivier) and his slave, Antoninus (Tony Curtis) is a reference to the bisexuality of the first (Armstrong, 2004, p. 224). “Do you consider the eating of oysters to be moral and the eating of snails to be immoral? ... My taste includes both snails and oysters.”, says Crassus (Kubrick, 1960, 01:21:27). Their dialogue takes place while Antoninus gives him a bath, making the scene much more intimate. This meaning is highlighted by Ferreira (2020), who points out that “the senator’s dialogue with his slave reveals in a clear way the homosexual character of Crassus”. Maslin (1991) also points out that Crassus “frames his thoughts about sexual preference in terms of sea creatures”. As mentioned before, oysters have been used in film as a connection to vulvas due to its resemblance. The connection of snails to male sexuality also has to do with its physiognomy — the raising of the snail outside the shell as a parallel to an erected penis.

The symbolism of food here was an attempt to hide from the censorship on the theme of homosexuality. Nevertheless, according to the IMDb trivia, the scene was indeed censored and “snails and oysters” was replaced by “truffles and artichokes”. It was only in 1991 that the scene was put back, with Anthony Hopkins providing the voice of Sir Laurence (the actor died in 1989), since the initial version had been lost.

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)

Besides the Coca Cola Machine scene described in the chapter regarding *Lolita* (1962), a deleted scene of the film shows an epic food fight. Kubrick stated that:

After a screening of *Dr. Strangelove* I cut out a final scene in which the Russians and Americans in the War Room engage in a free-for-all fight with custard pies. I decided it was farce and not consistent with the satiric tone of the rest of the film. (Phillips, 2016, p. 331)

Ken Adam (the movie's production designer) told Michel Ciment that "the sequence ended with the president of the United States and the Soviet ambassador sitting on what was left of the pies and building 'pie castles' like children on a beach". However, a particular line would have caused a stir, with one of the generals saying, "Our beloved president has been struck down in his prime" — JFK died in 1963 and the film was released the following year (Ciment, 2016, p. 338).

Moreover, right before the central meeting of the film, the one with all the leaders, it is possible to see a gigantic table filled with the most staggering delicacies, where General Turgidson (George C. Scott) and the Russian Ambassador (Peter Bull) have a fight, almost ruining the dishes (Kubrick, 1964, 00:37:40). It is at this moment that the President Merking Muffley (Peter Sellers) utters his memorable line "Gentlemen, you can't fight here! This is the War Room!".

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

Even in films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), Nicholson defends that the role of food and its importance and indispensability are the starting point of the film: "our primate ancestors are facing extinction because of food shortage. They are also threatened by predators ... who prey on them for food. They are caught between not having food and being food themselves" (2001, p. 280). In the course of the film, the processed food the astronauts have as meals shows the paradox of going so far in technology — a future where food has simply become fuel for the body, where its

presentation is purely superficial, unnecessary. In space, and most importantly in the future, Kubrick presents us with the idea of food as an item only necessary for living, regardless of its taste. A specific scene in the film helps to justify this idea. During their passage over the moon surface, Dr. Floyd (William Sylvester) is choosing a sandwich from the cooler and utters “What’s that? Chicken?” to which Dr. Michaels (Sean Sullivan) replies “Something like that. Tastes the same anyway.” (Kubrick, 1968, 00:47:15). This is as if humans have become machines, mechanical, similar to the film’s antagonist, the artificial intelligence, Hal-9000.

In addition, also regarding food, *2001* features a take of a glass being shattered in one of its final scenes. The meaning (and mystification) of the scene is mentioned in the chapter on *Barry Lyndon* (1975).

The Shining (1980)

In *The Shining* (1980), Halloran (Scatman Crothers), the hotel’s cook, gives Wendy (Shelley Duvall) and her son Danny (Danny Lloyd) a tour through the kitchen, freezer and pantry. He states, as a symbol of the Hotel’s prestige, food quality and wealth: “You don’t have to worry about food. Because you folks could eat up here a whole year and never have the same menu twice.” And then he proceeds to enumerate the meat in the freezer, “Now this is where we keep all of our meat. You got fifteen rib roasts, thirty ten-pound bags of hamburger. We got twelve turkeys, about forty chickens, fifty sirloin steaks ...” (Kubrick, 1980, 00:26:12).

At the storeroom, Halloran repeats this procedure. It is important to take into account that this is the first moment in the film where Danny shows the capability to “shine”. A few moments later Halloran tells Danny about his “ability”, when using as a persuader a sugar food such as chocolate ice cream — something that a child rarely says no to. It is also in the pantry that Wendy would eventually trap Jack (Jack Nicholson). Here the viewer is finally fully aware of Torrance’s complete madness. Here, a can of “calumet” baking powder is visible (01:55:55), with the illustration of an indigenous — in the beginning of the film, the family is informed that the hotel has been constructed

of the top of a former “Indian burial ground”. It seems that Kubrick was sending a message about the bloodshed the Natives went through, and that Jack was now suffering with some of their ghost’s consequences.

However, the most crucial scene in the film regarding food starts the moment Jack enters the hotel’s ballroom and orders bourbon at the bar (01:22:42). This moment would unveil significant elements not only about Jack, but also about the mystery around the narrative, more particularly concerning the murders committed years earlier.

There are several other interesting uses of the eating/drinking motif in *The Shining*, but none has the importance or the resonance of the scene unfolding out of the spilled drink, beginning in the bar and ending in the washroom. In *The Shining* ... the food motif is associated with crisis, with power relations, with entering a world of intensifying bizarreness and alienation, away from the norms of ordinary existence. (Nicholson, 2001, p. 286)

The importance of the scene is undeniable: it is here that the viewer finds out about Torrance’s alcoholism. Also, the continuation of the scene in the bathroom is the moment Jack realizes the waiter is the previous caretaker of the hotel, who has killed his entire family, just as Jack himself desires to do.

Full Metal Jacket (1987)

The only explicit reference to food (and the most important one) in *Full Metal Jacket* takes part in its first segment. Private Pyle and his fellow soldiers are constantly humiliated by Sergeant Hartman — “with an endless torrent of obscenities and relentless humiliations, he demolishes their personalities, erases their identities, and transforms them into fighting machines with no will of their own” (Müller, 2018, p. 481). To Private Pyle, an out-of-shape young man, food signifies shame and embarrassment. Such is clear when his motives for descent into madness happens due to a doughnut, found in his footlocker by the Sergeant (Kubrick, 1987, 00:24:47).

The eating of the forbidden good is probably the oldest way of conveying the violation of taboo ... it also portrays the defying of authority, which is traditionally what constitutes evil, especially in an organization as hierarchical as the military. Disobeying commanding officers can result in a death sentence. (Nicholson, 2001, p. 282)

Pyle is humiliated, and his mates are forced to do pushups due to his indiscipline. He is later beaten by the other soldiers in retaliation. The doughnut is Pyle's own apple from the garden of Eden, the ultimate sin to his being. He ultimately kills his Sergeant right before using a full metal jacket bullet to commit suicide, but first, he mimics the iconic Kubrick stare towards the camera.

Conclusion

Stanley Kubrick is undoubtedly one of the most influential directors in history, not only due to the legacy of his work, but also to the thoroughness he carried during his filmmaking career. Kubrick was well-known for demanding multiple takes of almost every scene, for his distinguished symmetric shots and the famous Kubrick stare, representing the frequent “descent to madness” in his main characters. A motif such as food, although sometimes only implicitly, has also shown to be very significant in his way of telling stories. Bower has stated that

[a]fter all, as Gaye Poole, the author of one of the few works to look at this subject makes clear: “It is possible to ‘say’ things with food – resentment, love, compensation, anger, rebellion, withdrawal. This makes it a perfect conveyor or subtext; messages which are often implicit, but surprisingly varied, strong, and sometimes violent or subversive.” And it’s not as though this kind of symbolic imagery is something we haven’t seen in other visual art forms. (2004, p. 3)

Kubrick was able to use food for the most varied purposes. Although it would be unwise not to give credit to Nabokov, Burgess and Thackeray for the creation of the main three source materials analyzed, film has the advantage of being a visual medium, which helps to use food in more evident ways than in novels. If in some aspects Kubrick was forced to do script changes (for instance, *Lolita*, *Alex Delarge* and *Barry Lyndon* are all younger in the novels), he also added significant elements regarding food, to show character development, narrative pacing, and above all, to bring meaning to these characters’ behaviors and intentions.

In *Lolita*, it is due to its poster that the young girl has become impossible to disassociate from the lollipop. Even with all the changes needed to dribble the censorship, Kubrick was capable of maintaining most of the sexual charge presented in the novel. When it comes to relationships, food preparation was definitely a way to understand the power dynamic between Lolita’s mother and Humbert, for instance, showing her submissive role and attempts in conquering the professor’s attention and devotion. Food was also the first hint the viewer had (although implicitly) about

Humbert and Quilty's intentions with Lolita, as well as their perception about the young girl, shown through the dialogue concerning cherry pies and the presence of the Coca-Cola bottles. The secrecy of the relationship between the young girl and Humbert also includes food symbols, and even the social status of characters such as Quilty and Lolita's husband is explored through the use of drinks in the *mise en scène*.

The main symbol related to food in *A Clockwork Orange* is the glass of milk, and it is indeed the element with the most influence in the narrative, helping to understand the nature of Alex's actions and relationship with his friends. It also works as the object that framed him. However, the purpose of the milk in the film does not end here — it is able to portray the misogynistic issues in the narrative due to the way it is served. The elements found in the film are mainly connected to violence, sexuality and a troubling coming of age. Kubrick substituted the "ice-sticks" in the novel by lollipops, in the scene where Alex meets the two young women, perhaps as a way to honor his Lolita. This scene also says much about the way Alex perceives women. Likewise, the meal the lodger is having with Alex's parents helps to understand the deterioration that their relationship suffered after his imprisonment. Lastly, the act of feeding in *A Clockwork Orange* can signify the power of the State (in the shape of the Minister) and, arguably, a hidden sense of guilt (but not regret) for the outcome and failure of the Ludovico Treatment.

The conclusion is somewhat different, however, when it comes to *Barry Lyndon*. The use of food in the film does not explore the themes of sexuality unlike the other two — here it works more as a foreshadowing of conflict. Almost every conflict scene is preceded by a meal or the offering of one, or simply occurs after a toast. Francis Ford Coppola used a more evident element of foreshadowing featuring oranges in scenes where a character dies in his 1972 film *The Godfather*. Either way, it is possible to state that food has an important role in *Barry Lyndon*. The toast following the marriage announcement as well as other meal scenes help to understand the relationships between characters. The amount and quality of food presented in Barry's last meal with his family versus the amount of food presented on his table after marrying Lady Lyndon mirrors his social climbing. The "greasy beaker" scene also presents this motivation, but

it also says a lot about the toxic masculinity presented in the soldier that drinks from it. Additionally, some scenes reminisce of The Last Supper (where Barry can be perceived as both Jesus and Judas) — both Jesus Christ's last meal with his apostles and Da Vinci's portrait of this same event, thanks to the image of some of the meals that Kubrick presents us with. To show the character's despair and fear, the film also features a scene with poisoning and vomiting, respectively. The large room in Chevalier de Balibari's mansion where he is having a meal prior to his meeting with Barry, clearly emphasizes his solitude and alienation from society.

Food is used in Kubrick's filmography to show violence, sexuality, social status, loss of innocence and the passage from teenager to adulthood, power dynamics in relationships, jealousy, foreshadowing, alienation, masculinity, among other aspects. Whether or not the films can be categorized as "food film" is, however, a more complicated question. As Nicholson states, Kubrick was able to use food in films with completely different narratives, as an important complement:

The mid-1960s, when Kubrick made *2001*, were indeed another world: apocalyptic, visionary, rebellious, and, no doubt, somewhat naïve. We are more comfortable with the bricolage of Kubrick's satiric visions — few movies have the contemporary resonance, for example, that *A Clockwork Orange* now has, with its chilling images of urban decay, its home invasions, random violence, disintegration of all state school system, and wholesome public cynicism in what appears to be a profascist state. Nevertheless, Kubrick's ironic vision cannot be understood without its complement, which sets the standard for it: the heroic and visionary possibilities that *2001* insists upon. Ironically, the motif of food, which would seem to be a small affair at first, has a significant role in leading us into the heart of both visions. (2001, p. 289)

Kubrick's filmography would, therefore, not be the same without this motif. The most simple and common human act such as eating is able to become a less tedious aspect in filmmaking, by being introduced in the right scenes with the right context. It can help to interpret scenes, it can disrupt them, and it conveys meanings and symbology to the whole picture with its simple presence or mention.

Food is consequently, one more aspect of Kubrick's filmography that shows the critics and fans of his work the dedication that the director showed to the art of making

motion pictures. It is one more reason why the North American director is still one of the most admired among his peers, and how his influence has helped to shape what nowadays is known as quality filmmaking. Kubrick's work should, therefore, be regarded as a vital input to the field of food studies, particularly as regards the study of food in film.

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