

Painterly Struggle: Conflict and Resolution within Raphaelle Peale's Still Life Paintings

By

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by

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For my wife Nicole, my muse.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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PAINTERLY STRUGGLE: CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION WITHIN RAPHAELLE
PEALE'S STILL LIFE PAINTINGS

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The still life paintings of Raphaelle Peale play an important role in understanding more about his personal life. This thesis concentrates upon the fields of Psychoanalysis and Narratology, which serve as important roles in helping to define Raphaelle's rebellious nature. By focusing on how these theories are demonstrated throughout his still life paintings, answers regarding his problematic personal life and repetitive subject matter will be revealed.

This study is organized into five chapters, including an introduction and a brief conclusion. Chapters 2 through 4 each deal with specific concerns surrounding Raphaelle's life. My analysis in Chapter 2 centers upon Raphaelle's rebellious nature with regards toward his father and choice of subject matter. In Chapter 3, I engaged with psychoanalytic theory as it pertained toward his ever-increasing problematic situation in relation to intemperate and over-indulgent behavior. Chapter 4 conveys an understanding of narratological theory as it pertains to his still life paintings, revealing a narrative or

story about his personal life with references toward self-control, realization, and regulation

Still life paintings have been discredited as a low genre of art throughout the history of painting. This assumption requires attention and must be approached from an academic standpoint. I hope to present an alternative and commendable view of his still life works by addressing contradictory issues of restraint and self-discipline throughout Raphaelle's childhood, personal life, family relationships, and still life paintings.

CHAPTER 1 INSIGHT

Raphaelle Peale's (1774–1825) artwork was a representation of himself as an artist and individual. Peale was regarded as the first professionally committed still life painter in the history of the United States. William Dunlap, the great eighteenth-century chronicler of American art wrote, "Raphaelle was a painter of portraits in oil and miniature, but excelled more in compositions of still life. He may perhaps be considered the first in point of time who adopted this branch of painting in America, and many of his pictures are in collections of men of taste and highly esteemed"¹. His illustrious career, largely comprised of still life painting, flourished and dissipated within the confinements of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Peale steered away from floral arrangements, a popular subject among the Dutch still life painters, and overwhelmingly focused on food with a concentration upon fruit, desserts, wine, and liquor.

Raphaelle's paintings are associated with neoclassical traits, which were especially seen throughout the decorative arts of the nineteenth-century, and are characterized by order, symmetry, simplicity of style, and spatial clarity. One of the main themes of my work focused on how Raphaelle's works portrayed a delicate balancing act between temperance, necessity, restraint, over-indulgence, and lack of self-control. Raphaelle's still life paintings, which include solid forms, present viewers with an illusion and

¹ William H. Gerds & Russell Burke, American Still Life Painting (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971): 138.

indicate a taste and talent for deception² The observer is led to believe the works contain physically accessible objects, but to the viewer's frustration, these desires and objects are inaccessible

Even though these characteristics of organization and clarity are present throughout the works, Raphaelle's "dining-room pictures" demonstrated an incapability to elude certain subject matter³ Still life painting was encouraged in the Peale household, but more as a Peale family painting practice in preparation for superior genres of art such as miniatures, landscapes and portraits⁴ According to *Charles Willson Peale* (1822; Fig1-1), Raphaelle's father, the genre of still life was geared toward beginners or amateurs He stated, "The art of painting portraits cannot be attained without a vast deal of practice, the artist must love the art, or he will not succeed to perfection It is not like the painting of still life; the painting of objects that have no motion, which any person of tolerable genius, with some application may acquire"⁵ Charles Willson considered still life as mechanical, possessing little inspirational value, inventiveness or imagination

Charles Willson believed, as he wrote, "that great art was a product of the mind and could influence moral behavior and promote the political and social values of a community through the strength of its imagery"⁶ Others shared his view Jonathan Richardson, an English Baroque portrait painter wrote of still life paintings, "they cannot

² Lillian B. Miller, *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy 1770-1870* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996): 135.

³ William H. Gerds, *Painters of the Humble Truth: Masterpieces of American Still Life 1801-1939* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1981): 56.

⁴ Miller 1996, 138.

⁵ Miller 1996, 138.

⁶ Miller 1996, 47.

Improve the Mind, they excite no Noble Sentiments”⁷ Even though still life painting has a decorative appeal, much like landscape and portrait paintings, Charles Willson thought still life was an unsuitable career for Raphaelle, his talented eldest son⁸ His concerns were not limited to matters of painting Charles Willson referred to “neglecting yourself” and “a governing of passion,” which revealed that he was aware of Raphaelle’s continuing problematic situation regarding temperance and over-indulgence

Although a small number of letters written by Raphaelle exist today, we can gain insight into his life through the remarks and letters written by family members and friends For example, Charles Willson sturdily recommended Raphaelle put an end to still life and make use of his valuable time as seen in a letter written on November 15, 1817, which stated

I well know your talents, and am fully confident that if you applied [yourself] as you ought to do, you would be the first painter in America...your pictures of still-life are acknowledged to be, even by painters here, far exceeding all other works of that kind and you have often heard me say that I thought with such talents of exact imitation your portraits ought also be more excellent-My dear Raphaelle Then why will you neglect yourself? Why not govern every unruly passion? Why not act the man, and with a firm determination act accordingly to your best judgment? Wealth, honor, and happiness would then be your lot!⁹

In other words, Charles Willson was offering encouragement, hoping Raphaelle would put a stop to his personal problems of over-indulgence and pursue a career in portraiture

Raphaelle’s “kitchen pictures” masterfully display a visual balance pertaining to subject matter, which presents traits of restraint and self-discipline, virtues undetected in

⁷ Miller 1996, 135.

⁸ Miller 1996, 138.

⁹ Cikovsky, 104-105.

his excessive personal life¹⁰ These assets captured in his works contain both conscious and unconscious elements. An ulterior motive, whether conscious or unconscious, was to display a struggle with the physical and emotional effects of temperance and over-indulgence, which contributed toward alcoholism and the gout. Raphaelle's artwork was an emotional outlet and representation of an incessant troubling personal life. The tabletop arrangements were a form of expression and self-recognition, which focused on a delicate balance between temperance, over-indulgence, necessity, restraint, and lack of self-control. Although the still life contained complicated features, Raphaelle cleverly formulated calm, serene, fresh, and balanced works of art.

¹⁰ Gerdt's 1981, 56.

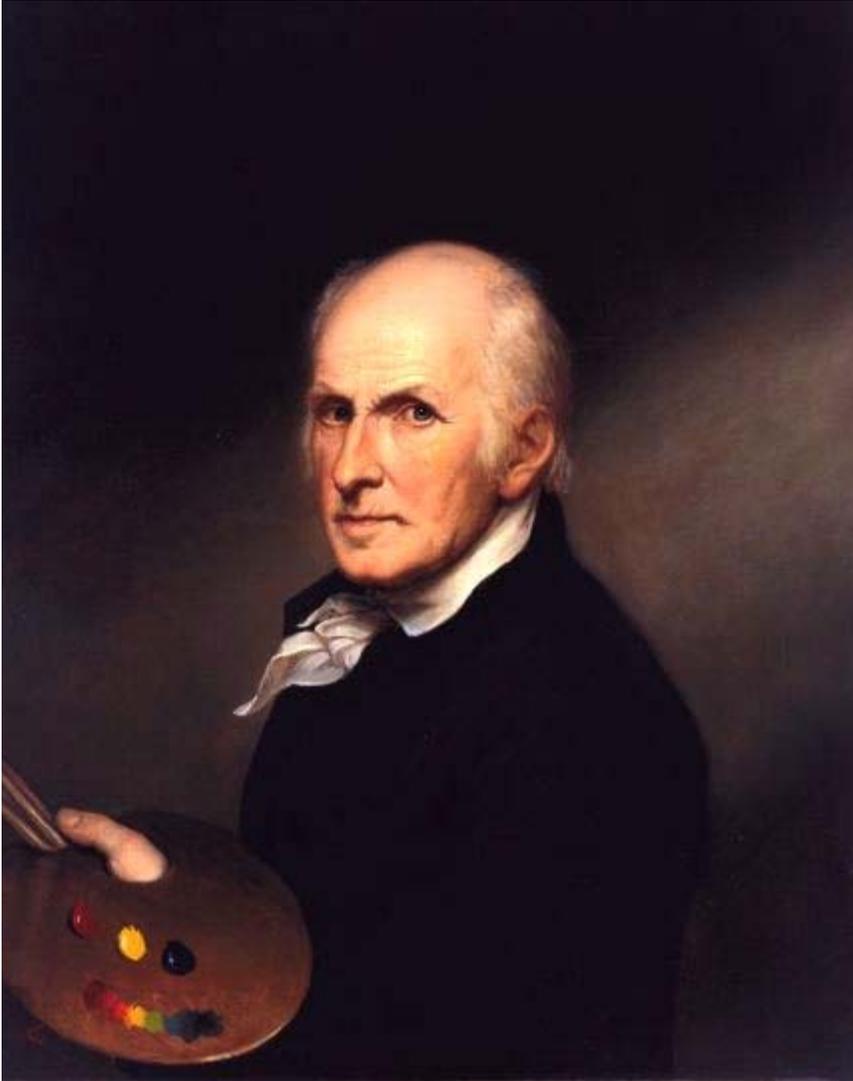


Figure 1-1. Portrait of Charles Willson Peale 1822

CHAPTER 2 REBELLIOUS SINCE BIRTH

The still life paintings executed by Raphaelle Peale present the viewer with rebellious subject matter, which continuously depict a troublesome relationship between father and son. Despite Charles Willson's repeated pleas steering Raphaelle away from still life and encouraging the profitable, reputable, and respected genre of portraiture, Raphaelle rebelled. This act of resistance toward authority can not only be seen throughout Raphaelle's choice of genre and subject matter, but also through the way he approached his personal life. The influence of Raphaelle's politics within his immediate family, contribute to this rebellious nature. Raphaelle's still life paintings exercise an oppositional approach, while presenting a relentless confrontation between himself and his father.

As mentioned earlier, not only did Charles Willson worry about Raphaelle's lack of income and patronage, but also about his precarious and rebellious health and self-governance. Raphaelle's life does not mirror the symmetrical and structured depictions of his still life paintings, but rather these works represent an ongoing confrontation between order and disorder throughout his personal life. In contrast to Raphaelle, Charles Willson was a man who focused on regimen and health. He practiced strict dietary control, exercise, temperance, and abstinence from alcohol. By 1804, Charles Willson stopped drinking wine altogether and became a strong advocate of diet, which centered upon simple foods and water. For example, Charles Willson enjoyed soups, boiled or steamed fish and meat, vegetables, and "perfectly ripe" fruits, which needed to be enjoyed with

cautious flavoring or spices¹ Charles Willson tried instilling proper habits into Raphaele's daily routine, which was diverted by intemperance and over-indulgence, leading to a rebellious and unhealthy life style²

Charles Willson Peale owned a farm in Belfield (1816; Fig2-1), an area outside of Philadelphia Although he planted corn, wheat, hay, potatoes, and turnips, he lacked an abundant cash crop In 1812, although refusing to drink alcohol, he decided to plant currants and hoped these vineyards would supply an abundant cash crop The currants were known as "the most widely consumed fruits in Pennsylvania" and made a tremendous wine, "producing more profit for one acre well tended, than by any other culture"³ As the years passed, Charles Willson's friends enjoyed the wine and he decided to enlarge the garden for wine production even though he gave up drinking alcohol as noted in a third person autobiography stating, " he therefore drank none of his excellent wine he visited a friend in the City who politely invited him to drink a glass of Wine He thanked his friend, but said that he never drank wine Water was his only drink"⁴

Although Charles Willson had the ability to produce successful and bountiful vineyards, he was able to refrain from drinking the wine, a difficult feat for his son Raphaele Once again, Raphaele directly disobeyed his father, as an over consumption of wine and alcohol became a large part of his life Despite Raphaele's over-indulgence in alcohol, Charles Willson continued to grow this sweet wine The wine at Belfield

¹ Miller 1996, 139 & 143.

² David C. Ward, Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): 123-131.

³ Sellers, 364 & Weaver, 156.

⁴ Sellers, 362.

became famous among wine enthusiasts, the people of Philadelphia, and was the most profitable and successful product of his farm

The Pennsylvania Dutch produced some of the most prevalent vineyards in southeastern Pennsylvania and this is portrayed throughout Raphaelle's still life paintings. In Berks County alone, some vineyards surpassed over five hundred acres. The main goal, besides financial gain, was to produce a wine similar to those vineyards in Germany. One of the first documentations of these thriving vineyards is seen in *Blackberries* (1813; Fig2-2), a typical scene found within the confinements of southeastern Pennsylvania, which included his father's farm at Belfield. This painting represents a successful peak of growth as the ripened red and blackberries appear in a succulent and mature state. Another example of these prosperous vineyards is seen in *Still Life with Grapes in Dish* (1814; Fig2-3). Once again, Raphaelle was able to depict perfection as the grapes appear recently plucked from their previous resting place upon a vine and placed into a bowl. Raphaelle maintains fluidity with these works as he displays the profusion of the vineyards.

Though Charles Willson supported the temperance movement as seen throughout his lifestyle and in his *Essay to Promote Domestic Happiness*, he still grew, produced, and sold some of the most outstanding wine in the region⁵. The vineyards flourished until "an economic depression, competition from Ohio and California, and the temperance movement rooted up all but the smallest plots"⁶. Raphaelle's still life paintings entitled *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816; Fig2-4) and *Still Life with Cake* (1822; Fig2-5)

⁵ Miller 1991, 129-145.

⁶ Weaver, 160.

depict the decline of Charles Willson's and other Pennsylvania farmers' vineyards. Unlike the ripe, seasoned, and full-grown grapes and berries seen in his previous works, Raphaelle shows the effects on the vineyards of a depression, out-of-state competition, and the temperance movement. Raphaelle is able to attain this goal by depicting the transformation of the grapes into dry, withered, and shrunken raisins. As time changes the vineyards from thriving and booming areas of production toward arid and desiccated diminutive plots, Raphaelle documented this change.

Even though Charles Willson practiced a healthy life full of self-control, temperance, longevity, and regimen, an oppositional approach is emulated within Raphaelle's paintings and personal life. The cakes and wine, items seen at weddings and special events, depicted throughout some of his works were also seen at funerals⁷. Therefore, Raphaelle was indicating that an over consumption of cakes and wine would contribute to the gout and eventually his death. This matter concerning death is seen in a letter written by Charles Willson to Raphaelle on June 26, 1818 stating, "But I fear, Raphaelle that you are not right. I am led to think so by seeing the word suicide in your letter [to Patty]. He is a miserable poor wretch who has not sense enough to know the folly of such rash actions. who thinks he can justify himself in the opinion that he can dispose of himself fearless of consequences"⁸. The ultimate rebellious act performed by Raphaelle would be an early death, a direct insubordination of Charles Willson's wishes and desires. Raphaelle's gout was not only a constant reminder of misery and lack of self-control, but a rebellious sign toward his father. Raphaelle's self-destructive actions

⁷ Weaver, 114-115.

⁸ Cikovsky, 107.

against regimen and health are a standing metaphor, resembling a constant battle between father and son

Raphaelle continues a non-cooperative attitude toward Charles Willson with illustrations of melons, berries, apples, grapes, and peaches as seen in his works entitled, *Still Life with Strawberries and Ostrich Egg Cup* (1814; Fig2-6), *Bowl of Peaches* (1818; Fig2-7), and *Still Life with Peaches* (1821; Fig2-8) In early nineteenth-century, these items grew in abundance throughout the Middle Atlantic States and flourished all over the region of eastern Pennsylvania The fruits were used as the foundation for alcoholic drinks, which included wine, cider, brandies, and oftentimes peaches were used to clear the palate of a wine connoisseur⁹ Many of Raphaelle's works contained carafes and glasses of wine or liquor and fruit, which contributed toward intemperate acts of over consumption As noted earlier, Raphaelle depicted a life of temperance and organization upon the canvas as he painted a single glass of wine or fruit displayed neatly within or around a basket, but this trait remained absent throughout his personal life An existing conflict between Charles Willson and Raphaelle had an immense impact upon Raphaelle's still life paintings The tension between father and son concentrated on the powers of self-regulation and dissolute behavior, leading to physical illness Raphaelle's paintings pleased Charles Willson as metaphors of temperance and self-regulation, yet Charles Willson ultimately disapproved of Raphaelle's rebellious life style

At a young age, Raphaelle worked closely with his father in the Philadelphia Museum, always running errands and performing certain tasks as he took care of animals, engaged in taxidermy, and arranged exhibits for the museum After the American

⁹ Miler 1996, 147.

Revolution, many young women and men “stayed at home and replicated their parents world as closely as they could”¹⁰ A majority still found their lives controlled by the authority of the man of the house with power over his dependents and “young adults had depended upon their family’s support in an economy that offered them few avenues to independence”¹¹ An increasing problematic situation regarding Raphaelle’s finances can be seen in a letter written by Charles Willson to Raphaelle on March 1 1818:

Dear Raphaelle, yesterday Patty sent for me and when I see [sic] her she told me that she wanted me to prevail on her children to consent to be separated...[sic] she that you ought to come home and help her along in their experiences, & advices that you should sell your house, pay your debts, and do what you can to gain support for the family¹²

Raphaelle was dependant upon Charles Willson from a young age Around 1793, Raphaelle was nineteen and traveled on expeditions to Cayenne, French Guiana, and South America, before ending up in Mexico¹³ He collected New World Species for his father’s museum, representing different types of animals from around the world The Spanish were known as the most expert agriculturalists in Europe and carried their tradition to Mexico¹⁴ In the eighteenth-century, Mexico became a flourishing environment for Spanish Baroque still life painting This acted as an inspirational journey for Raphaelle as he had submitted a plethora of still life works similar to the Spanish still life style

¹⁰ Joyce Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000): 8.

¹¹ Appleby, 8 and 19.

¹² Cikovsky, 105-06.

¹³ Charles Coleman Sellers, Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1980): 63.

¹⁴ Lloyd, 158 & 167.

Raphaelle witnessed beautiful grapes, ripe lemons, and matured oranges within the flourishing Mexican gardens. An example of Spanish fruit, a noticeable trait within the still life paintings of Raphaelle was, *Still Life with Fruit and Glassware* (1629; Fig2-9) by Juan van der Hamen¹⁵. This painting displays grapes, oranges, peaches, pears, and pickles within the confinements of the canvas. The depiction of fruit became one of the dominant features throughout Raphaelle's works as seen in his *Still Life with Oranges* (1818; Fig2-10) and *Lemons and Grapes* (1818; Fig2-11). Raphaelle displays several different items including lemons, oranges, and grapes, which were found in Spanish gardens and throughout the Spanish still life paintings. Raphaelle used these Spanish still life paintings as a form of rebellion and inspiration against his father's works of American landscapes and portraiture.

Two other still life works, which influenced Raphaelle, were *Still Life with Cardoon and Francolin* (1628; Fig2-12) by Felipe Ramirez and *Still Life with Onions, Garlic, and Chestnuts* (date unknown; Fig2-13) by Juan Sanchez Cotan¹⁶. Along with traveling to Mexico and witnessing Spanish gardens, the Spanish still life works by Cotan were available to Raphaelle at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia¹⁷. Unlike Charles Willson's works, these paintings served as an inspiration to Raphaelle and his chosen profession. Both paintings have similar attributes to Raphaelle's works such as grapes, apples, and lemons. The fruits are displayed in quiet grandeur, revealing seasoned grapes, berries, and apples, while illustrating slightly flawed and dry lemons. These

¹⁵ William B. Jordan, Spanish Still Life 1600-1650. (Japan: Nissha Printing Company, 1985): 140-141.

¹⁶ Jordan, 49.

¹⁷Gerds 1981, 56. Miller 1996, 285.

attributes are both seen with Raphaelle's still life paintings. The celery is the most important physical element within the Spanish still life, revealing itself in Raphaelle's work entitled, *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816)¹⁸. The celery is not captured in magnificent splendor, rather roughly exposed with arid, rotten cut stalks, which have begun browning in color. Raphaelle also used the contrast of light and shade seen between the fore and background of the works. Metaphorically speaking, this variation between light and shade represents the conflict between Charles Willson and Raphaelle.

Luis Melendez, considered "one of the greatest still life specialist of eighteenth-century Spain," painted works entitled *Still Life with Oranges and Walnuts* (1772; Fig2-14), *Still Life with Lemons and Oranges* (1760's; Fig2-15), and *Still Life with Watermelons and Apples in a Landscape* (1771; Fig2-16), and also influenced Raphaelle's production of still life works¹⁹. Many of Raphaelle's paintings display similar subject matter to *Still Life with Oranges and Walnuts* (1772), such as chestnuts, oranges, and a container for alcoholic liquor. The aspect concentrated upon in this work is the melon in the back left side behind the ripe oranges. The depiction of this melon is strikingly similar to the one found within the foreground of Raphaelle's *Melons and Morning Glories* (1813; Fig2-17). Even though smaller in size, the untouched melon in the foreground space has resembling stripes to those found upon Melendez's canvas.

The other work by Melendez, which contained similar subjects of Raphaelle's later work, is *Still Life with Lemons and Oranges* (1760's). Once again, similar subject matter radiates from the canvas as seen with the illustrious lemons and oranges, an earthenware

¹⁸ Miller 1996, 138.

¹⁹ Peter Cherry and William B. Jordan, Spanish Still Life from Velazquez to Goya. (London: National Gallery Publications, 1995): 153, 160-61.

jug used for alcoholic liquors, and a basket for containing these items. One of the items of concern is located in the rear left hand side between the jug and basket. Though slightly different from the melon found in *Still Life with Oranges and Walnuts* (1772) and *Melons and Morning Glories* (1813), the rind of the melon matches those found within Raphaelle's *Still Life with Watermelon* (1822; Fig2-18). Along with the melon, the circular and rectangular boxes attract attention. The circular boxes would have contained cheese, a similar subject seen in Raphaelle's *Cheese with Three Crackers* (1813; Fig2-19) and the rectangular boxes held sweets, such as "dulce de Membrilla" or a thick quince jelly eaten in slices. The sweet jelly was to be cut into slices, a similar trait seen with Raphaelle's cakes in *Still Life with Raisin Cake* (1813; Fig2-20), *Still Life with Wine, Cake, and Nuts* (1819; Fig2-21), and *Still Life with Cake* (1818; Fig2-22). These similarities are apparent throughout both of these artist's works.

Still Life with Watermelons and Apples in a Landscape (1771) presents striking similarities to Raphaelle's *Still Life with Watermelon* (1822)²⁰. The watermelons in these works are exposed, leaving their juicy, red insides open to the outside air. They are not neatly sliced open; it appears as if they were ripped open or dropped to the ground. Finally, a similarity exists between the rinds regarding smooth, bumpy, and circular texture and shape. As the paintings illustrate, the Spanish Still Life works of Melendez undeniably and remarkably influenced Raphaelle's still life paintings. Once again, Raphaelle revolts against his father's artistic training and utilizes instead the Spanish still life as an inspiration and driving force in pursuit of his artistic dream.

²⁰ Cherry and Jordan, 161.

A particular instance leading toward Raphaelle's rebellious nature occurred in October of 1795, when George Washington visited Philadelphia and consented sitting for a portrait painted by members of the Peale family²¹ Charles Willson, James, Raphaelle's uncle, Rembrandt, Raphaelle's brother, and Raphaelle were the artists permitted into the room in hope of capturing the portrait of George Washington²² Instead of Charles Willson enabling Raphaelle, the older and most gifted son, the privilege and opportunity was presented to the younger seventeen-year-old Rembrandt²³ Further, James and Raphaelle were not allowed in the room until the second day At this time, Raphaelle produced a profile drawing as he was placed behind the general in the corner of the room

Perhaps Charles Willson made this decision hoping that Raphaelle would take painting more seriously and let no one out perform his artistic ability This occurrence between father and son influenced Raphaelle's disobedience towards Charles Willson's controlling nature at a young age Instead of painting a portrait of George Washington in proper heroic manner, Raphaelle decided to execute a profile, a direct defiance of his father's requests This incident helped develop a patterned relationship of denial and rebellion between Charles Willson and Raphaelle

In 1797, at the age of twenty-three, Raphaelle married against Charles Willson's wishes The bride was Martha (Patty) McGlathery, an Irish woman who came from a long line of master builders and carpenters Even though Patty's father, Matthew was a

²¹ Carol Eaton Hevner, Rembrandt Peale 1778-1860: A Life in the Arts. (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1985): 13 & 32.

²² Charles Willson Peale, Charles Willson Peale and His World (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1983): 190. This source mentions that Titian Ramsay I was also permitted into the room on the second day along with James and Raphaelle.

²³ Lloyd, 157.

member of Philadelphia's Carpenters' Company, Charles Willson, who came from generations of Anglican English, rejected this family, hailing from Dublin, Ireland²⁴ Along with rejecting Charles Willson's wishes regarding marriage, Raphaelle continued to defy his father's desires with the battle between temperance and over-indulgence Once again, Raphaelle had blatantly dismissed Charles Willson's wishes and desires as seen with the marriage and over consumption of alcohol, a recurring theme throughout his life

Another instance occurring in the summer of 1801 contributed toward Raphaelle's rebellious nature Charles Willson headed a scientific expedition, which unearthed and excavated fragmentary remains of three mastodons This expedition was funded by the American Philosophical Society and President Thomas Jefferson²⁵ Once again, Rembrandt was invited to assist his father, but Raphaelle was excluded from this historical event Charles Willson commemorated this experience with his painting entitled, *The Exhumation of the Mastodon* (1806-08; Fig2-23)²⁶ Even though Raphaelle was not invited to participate in the actual excavation process along with other family members, he was included in the painting Rembrandt stands in the center of the work and gestures down toward the mammoth bones in imitation of his father On the other hand, Charles Willson and Raphaelle are holding opposite ends of a scroll and yet they are connected The laborers and members of his family are separated, which is similar to the scroll separating Charles Willson and Raphaelle

²⁴ Lloyd, 167.

²⁵Laura Rigal, *The American Manufactory: Art, Labor, and the World of Things in the Early Republic*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998): 91. Charles Willson was a member of the Philosophical Society and painted portraits of President Jefferson.

²⁶ Rigal, 91-92.

Even though Raphaelle was considered an alcoholic, Charles Willson considered him a genius. Raphaelle was noted as having a “wayward nature and propensity for alcohol”²⁷. Raphaelle would laugh away the failure, as he would awake in pain. Raphaelle was “all laughter” and considered a stupendous tavern companion and comedian²⁸. In 1817, Charles Willson challenged the professional genre and artistic credibility of the forty-three year old Raphaelle, which further fueled Raphaelle’s rebellious lifestyle. In a letter dated February 17, 1817, Charles Willson invited Raphaelle to Belfield, Pennsylvania to sit for a portrait requested years earlier. Why would Charles Willson decide to execute this painting after all of these years? In a letter to Rubens Peale, Raphaelle’s brother, Charles wrote, “it might be a lesson to help him with his colouring”²⁹. Raphaelle, a man of forty-three, did not need assistance with coloring. This useful advice would have benefited Raphaelle at a much younger age. Within the portrait of Raphaelle, Charles Willson executed a still life in the upper right hand corner of the painting. This specific depiction of a still life was lacking quiet dignity, presenting itself as awkwardly clumped together, quite unlike Raphaelle’s still life. Charles Willson implemented Raphaelle’s portrait with utmost perfection, but haphazardly painted the still life rendition. This work entitled, *Portrait of Raphaelle Peale*, (1822; [Fig2-24](#)) is seen as a sarcastic comment upon the still life genre³⁰.

In response to Charles Willson’s criticism as seen with the *Portrait of Raphaelle Peale* (1822), Raphaelle continued his rebellious attitude toward Charles Willson with the

²⁷ Peale, 196.

²⁸ Sellers, 169.

²⁹ Lloyd, 164.

³⁰ Lloyd, 164. The dates of 1817 and 1822 are both applied to this work.

work entitled, *Venus Rising from the Sea-A Deception (After the Bath)*, (1823; Fig2-25)³¹ Perhaps Raphaelle misled his father's intentions as Charles Willson thought Raphaelle might paint a portrait, but instead, Raphaelle has depicted a sheet, covering the woman's body and face. The partial anatomy seen with the woman's right foot, left arm, and hair protruding from behind the sheet serves as an act of rebellion alluding away from portraiture. The deceptive traits found within Raphaelle's works, which ironically were inherited from his father, seem so real. Three-dimensionality exists, as the objects are almost interchangeable with real objects, especially seen with his still life paintings. This allusion conveys a deeper meaning seen with the work as Raphaelle learned about the value of visual deception from an early age. He learned the art of deceit from his father's work entitled, *The Staircase Group: Raphaelle and Titan Ramsey Peale*, (1795; Fig2-26)³² According to Phoebe Lloyd, "such a deception represented the highest criterion of artistic excellence"³³ Charles Willson was deceived, believing an actual woman existed upon the other side of the sheet and Raphaelle was painting a portrait.

Charles Willson, James, and Rembrandt were known for painting landscapes and portraits. Rather than following in his family's footsteps, Raphaelle rebelled against the wishes and desires of his father to pursue a career in still life painting. Even though Charles Coleman Sellers, an early American historian, considered Peale's Museum as "The House of God! Here is nothing but truth spoken," Charles Willson changed and modified his canvases. Charles Willson thought it was necessary to manipulate nature

³¹ Miller 1996, 90.

³² Miller 1996, 50.

³³ Lloyd, 156.

and create aesthetically pleasing works for artistic purposes, he thought the most important life lessons were found within the grand design and totality of nature, though he controlled naturalistic scenes³⁴

Inside the Philadelphia Museum, the senior Peale and his sons were supposed to “represent appropriate scenery”³⁵ The values expressed above can be seen in his works entitled, *Landscape Looking Toward Sellers Hall from Mill Bank*, (1818; [Fig2-27](#)) and *Millbank* (1818; [Fig2-28](#))³⁶ Certain natural environmental flaws such, as a gray cloud, a broken tree limb or brown leaves would be excluded from the painting. An enhanced color scheme was often added, visually improving the work. Sometimes a mountain, stream or tree would be placed into the painting as an expansion of aesthetic quality. Charles Willson learned reshaping, arranging, discarding, and recomposing natural elements of a scene, a manipulation of nature. These depicted scenes were untouchable or non-existent as a whole in the world. When executing landscape paintings, efforts to locate “views that will look well in paintings” suggest Charles Willson was in search of certain requirements to fulfill the canvas³⁷. A manipulation of nature for aesthetic purposes and “cull from various scenes such parts as best create one perfect whole” were goals Charles Willson strived to achieve in order to execute picturesque landscapes³⁸. James Peale also contributed toward the manipulation of nature within landscape paintings. In regards to Sawrey Gilpin, an English Romantic animal and landscape

³⁴ Miller 1996, 69,

³⁵Rigal, 97.

³⁶ Miller 1996, 76.

³⁷ Miller 1996, 76.

³⁸ Miller 1996, 77.

painter, James followed Gilpin's advice to use formal sketchbooks during his travels in order for documentation. *Pleasure Party by A Mill* (1790; [Fig2-29](#)) and *View on the Wissahickon* (1830; [Fig2-30](#)) reveal Gilpin's advice, as James Peale followed instructions upon which elements should remain or be discarded in a natural scene³⁹. Rembrandt was also accountable for this technique of manipulation as seen with the *Falls of Niagara, Viewed from the American Side* (1831; [Fig2-31](#)) and *The Canadian Side of Niagara Falls, Platform Rock* (1831; [Fig2-32](#))⁴⁰. Rembrandt altered the treatment of light, which created lavish purples and yellows upon the canvas. He mimicked natural scenes by including foreign elements normally absent from landscape paintings. Charles Willson, James, and Rembrandt, "shaped nature into art and then created art from manipulated nature" which, exercised control over the scenes depicted and forbid the scene to determine the painting⁴¹. Unlike Raphaelle, Charles Willson, James, and Rembrandt acquired control over their canvases and personal lives.

Together with landscape painting, Charles Willson executed manipulative portraiture. In 1785, Charles Willson opened an exhibition referred to as "my perspective views with changeable effects," dealing with landscapes and historical subjects⁴². "In 1797, Peale wrote, "Truth is most preferable tho' dressed in a course garb"⁴³. His portraits continued along with a modified approach; shaping eyes, heads, and expressions to meet academic specifications. The portraits express character as Charles Willson

³⁹ Miller 1996, 79 & 208.

⁴⁰ Miller 1996, 84-85.

⁴¹ Miller 1996, 83.

⁴² Bringham, 1.

⁴³ Miller 1996, 77.

interpreted, which was based upon scientific literature of the day. Even though Peale always conveyed a “good eye” for detail, he progressed beyond observation, hypothesizing about eyes, head features, and expressions infused within the works. Charles Willson would remove certain physical flaws, which would take quality away from the highly individualized sitter.

Examples can be seen with Charles Willson’s, *General Joseph Bloomfield* (1777; Fig2-33) and *Thomas Jefferson* (1791; Fig2-34)⁴⁴. Peale removed all signs of exhaustion and age, as these portraits appear as timeless representations of political figures. Wrinkles and gray hair are conveniently brushed away and facial features are highlighted by the rosy, pink skin tone. The examples mentioned above in regards toward landscape and portrait painting display Charles Willson, James, and Rembrandt’s repeated alteration of works. Perhaps the modification throughout their works led toward a continued patronage by consumers and sitters.

Charles Willson encouraged Raphaelle towards a career as a painter in portraiture, a course flourishing with proceeds, which would support a family and enhance an artistic reputation. Raphaelle decided to travel upon a different path, the realm of still life painting. Though producing portraiture during his younger years, by 1811, Raphaelle ignored his father’s advice and focused his artistic energy upon still life⁴⁵. Portraiture was not Raphaelle’s genre of choice. Speculations arose surrounding Raphaelle’s choice of still life over landscape and portrait paintings. The desire to fulfill requirements of his patrons influenced Raphaelle’s decision because the demands for perfection were

⁴⁴ Miller 1996, 66-67.

⁴⁵ Lloyd, 164.

extreme. Many scholars will argue that Raphaelle implemented still life in a manner similar to his father's landscapes and portraiture. Raphaelle organized still life with precision by assembling tabletop arrangements in order to fulfill a personal desire, a comparable characteristic of Charles Willson's works. On the other hand, Raphaelle decided painting more than the beautiful and sublime, a repetitive topic found throughout the works of Charles Willson. Raphaelle presented so-called "flaws" within his works, painting an actual aspect of nature unlike his father's search for the most picturesque scenes. This accomplishment placed nature into the realm of art without manipulation.

Raphaelle's still life works represent a form of rebellion with regards to subject matter. An example of rebellion is seen with *Cheese with Three Crackers* (1813)⁴⁶. Instead of displaying an untouched block of cheese in entirety, Raphaelle depicted this subject partially eaten. An act of rebellion is presented as he drifted away from creating a perfect whole derived from separate parts of a work. As an alternative, Raphaelle does not follow in his father's footsteps of exhibiting a perfect work. He simply leaves the elements presented in a natural state without altering the subject in order to show beauty, a highly uncharacteristic trait of Charles Willson.

Raphaelle was rebellious from a young age as noted in an autobiography of Peggy Durgan, the Peale's "nourse"⁴⁷. Charles Willson ordered the bread of the family to be from a neighborhood baker and not homemade. Raphaelle did not enjoy the baker's bread and continually refused any liking of the kind. Peggy was known for spoiling the children and "constantly supplied the pettish Boy with cakes she secretly baked". This simple

⁴⁶ Miller 1996, 33.

⁴⁷ Charles Coleman Sellers, Charles Willson Peale (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969): 224.

example with bread displays Raphaelle's rebellious nature from an early age and a beginning of his enjoyments with cakes, which plagued him throughout his life⁴⁸ Other works of Raphaelle, as seen with *Still Life with Apples, Sherry, and Tea Cake* (1822; Fig2-35), depict fruit in an utmost state of ripe perfection and beauty⁴⁹ The apple and orange appear to have been recently removed from their trees as the bright red and yellow colors project from the canvas The grapes become slightly visible, hiding behind a lush green vine, recently detached from the vineyard In response to his father's manipulations of landscape and portraiture, Raphaelle represents rebellion in *Fruit and Silver Bowl* (1814; Fig2-36)⁵⁰ A new step was developed in the work of Raphaelle as he illustrated fruit outside of a perfectly ripe content, such as an over ripe melon or browning green peppers In contrast to his father's style, Raphaelle focused upon inserting certain realistic elements, which enhanced the work Raphaelle was not afraid to display the side of art his father never took the time to show

Continuing further with rebellion, Raphaelle executed, *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816) Once again, Raphaelle displayed fruit outside of its ripe, perfected context Spotted, brown apples, a brown, cut lemon, slightly wilted, thin, colorless celery, and overripe grapes fill the canvas In contrast to the previous work, Raphaelle decided to place the fruit and vegetables inside and around the wicker basket Even though beauty is absent as seen with the brown fruit, according to Charles Willson, Raphaelle placed these objects in and around beautiful, expensive containers By positioning the fruit, Raphaelle

⁴⁸ Sellers, 224.

⁴⁹ Cikovsky, 12.

⁵⁰ Cikovsky, 23.

continued displaying, regardless of physical appearance, these true works presented in nature. Raphaelle is considered rebellious because he painted the truth.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the politics surrounding the family contributed to Raphaelle's rebellious qualities. Leaving Annapolis in December of 1775, Charles Willson decided to move to Philadelphia and take full advantage of the city's culture and trade.⁵¹ The residents were preparing for war when Peale arrived, so he decided to participate, both militarily and politically, in the American Revolution. Charles Willson's involvement stretched from painting replicas of flags, broadcasting revolutionary ideology, and serving as a "common soldier."⁵² He fought for George Washington's army and was promoted to captain before joining "The Furious Whigs" in 1776, a radical political group.⁵³ For some time after, he served as an agent, collecting estates from British sympathizers. In the same year, Charles Willson also spent one term as a representative in the Pennsylvania legislature and was elected into the American Philosophical Society.⁵⁴ The military and political involvement of Charles Willson fueled the artistic projects of landscape and portrait painting, which Raphaelle avoided, as seen with Charles Willson's portraits of General Joseph Bloomfield, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington. Predominantly after 1811, Raphaelle "seems to have preferred still life."⁵⁵ Once again, Raphaelle rebelled against his father in regards to composition and

⁵¹ Miller 1996, 21.

⁵² Miller 1996, 21.

⁵³ Miller 1996, 21.

⁵⁴ Miller 1996, 21 & Sellers, 24.

⁵⁵ Miller 1996, 139.

genre as he abstained from using the politics and patronage of the American Revolution to support his still life paintings

Charles Willson used political influence as a means for patronage, seen with his mezzotint, *His Excellency George Washington Esquire, Commander in Chief of the Federal Army* (1780; Fig2-37)⁵⁶ George Washington was a favorite object of portraiture with Charles Willson as seen with two other oil portraits entitled, *Washington at Princeton* (1779; Fig2-38) and *Washington and His Generals at Yorktown* (1784; Fig2-39)⁵⁷ Once more, Raphaelle rebelled against Charles Willson and the American Revolution, as Raphaelle did not use military or political actions for subject matter or patronage Raphaelle rebelled against this “fake” perception of a national identity Charles Willson altered the paintings by placing non-existent, historical battle scenes or landscapes behind portrait paintings contributing to a false sense of reality An example can be seen with *Washington at Princeton* (1779) and *Washington and his Generals at Yorktown* (1784), as these works present a scenario of Washington leaning on a canon or casually conversing with his generals during the middle of battle History must show “the true image of a nation” but Charles Willson fashioned and projected “a national identity for domestic and foreign consumption”⁵⁸ These highly unlikely scenes further evidence a continued separation between Charles Willson and Raphaelle on professional and personal levels Raphaelle was rebelling against his father in regards to the selected patronage and politics surrounding landscape and portrait paintings, which derived from

⁵⁶ Miller 1996, 23.

⁵⁷ Miller 1996, 68.

⁵⁸ Eve Kornfeld, *Creating an American Culture 1175-1800: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2001): 39.

the American Revolution For these reasons, Raphaelle wanted to reveal truthful, genuine, and authentic scenes of national identity, defining a new type of history painting, the still life



Figure 2-1. View of Garden at Belfield



Figure 2-2. Blackberries 1813



Figure 2-3. Still Life with Grapes in Dish 1814



Figure 2-4. Still Life with Celery and Wine 1816



Figure 2-5. Still Life with Wine and Cake 1822



Figure 2-6. Still Life with Strawberries and Ostrich Egg Cup 1814



Figure 2-7. Bowl of Peaches 1818



Figure 2-8. Still Life with Peaches 1821



Figure 2-9. Still Life with Fruit and Glassware 1629



Figure 2-10. Still Life with Oranges 1818



Figure 2-11. Lemons and Grapes 1818



Figure 2-12. Still Life with Cardoon and Francolin 1628



Figure 2-13. Still Life with Onions, Garlic, and Chestnuts Date Unknown



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Figure 2-14. Still Life with Oranges and Walnuts 1772



Photo © The National Gallery, London.

Figure 2-15. Still Life with Lemons and Oranges 1760s

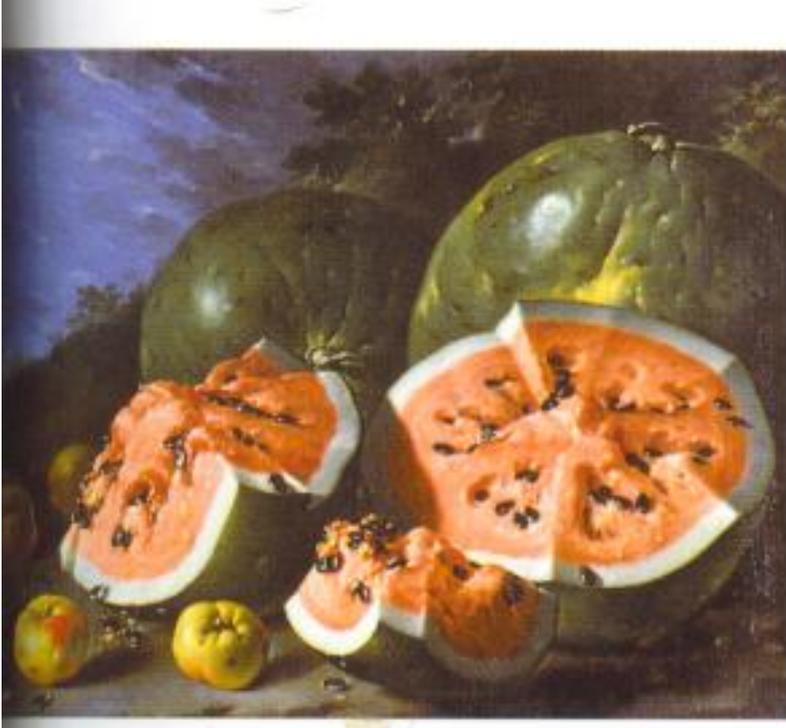


Figure 2-16. Still Life with Watermelons and Apples in a Landscape 1771

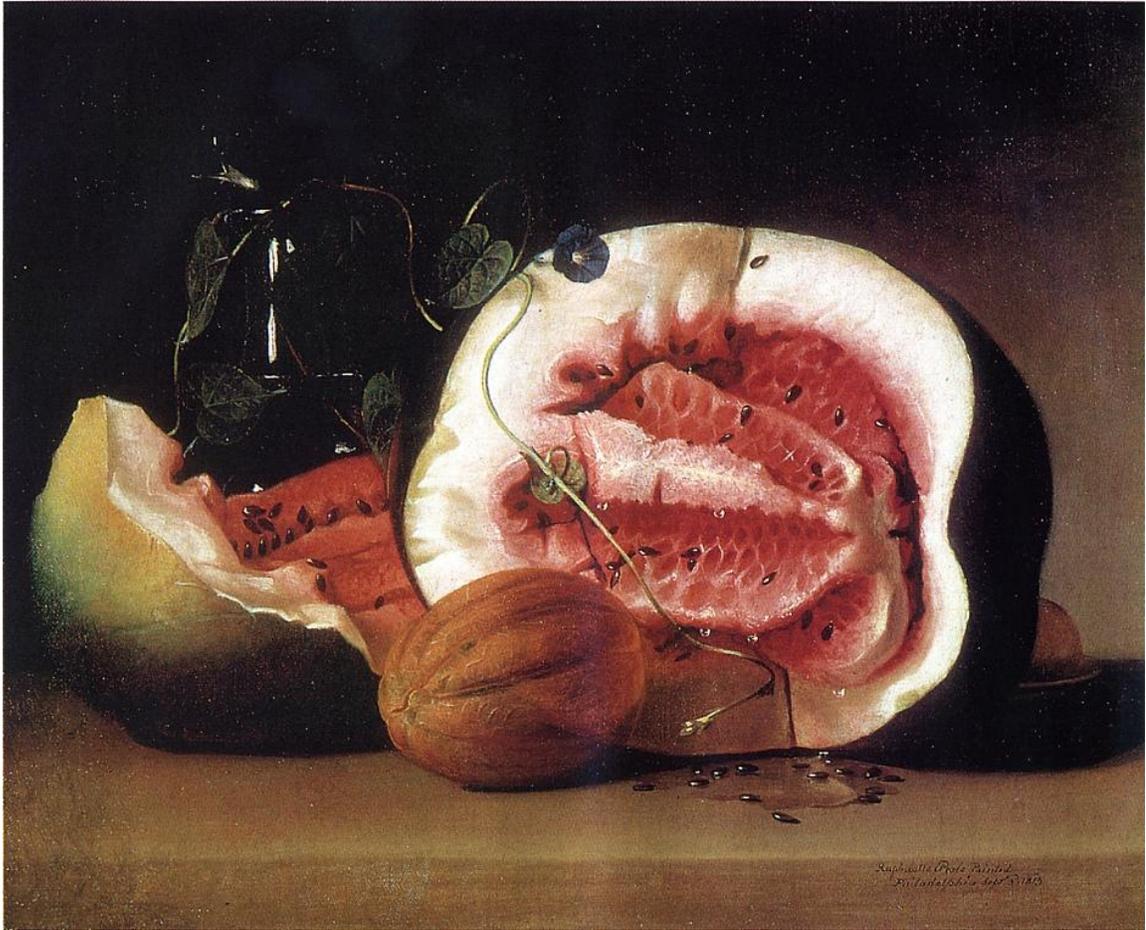


Figure 2-17. Melons and Morning Glories 1813

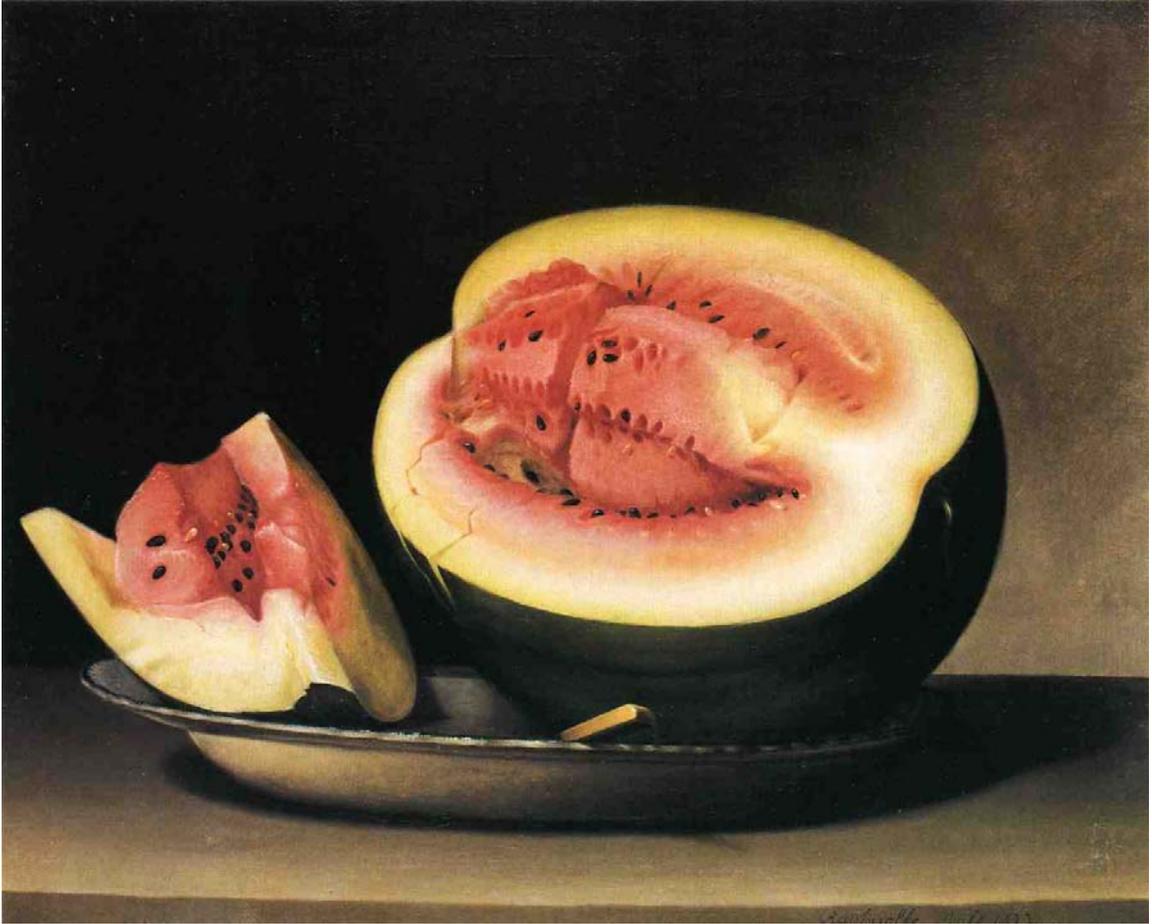


Figure 2-18. Still Life with Watermelon 1822



Figure 2-19. Cheese and Three Crackers 1813



Figure 2-20. Still Life with Raisin Cake 1813



Figure 2-21. Still Life with Wine, Cake, and Nuts 1819



Figure 2-22. Still Life with Cake 1818



Figure 2-23. The Exhumation of the Mastodon 1806-08



Figure 2-24. Portrait of Raphaëlle Peale 1817



Figure 2-25. Venus Rising from the Sea-A Deception (After the Bath) 1823



Figure 2-26. The Staircase Group: Raphaelle and Titian Ramsey Peale 1795



Figure 2-27. Landscape Looking Toward Sellers Hall from Mill Bank 1818



Figure 2-28. Millbank 1818



Figure 2-29. Pleasure Party by A Mill 1790



Figure 2-30. View on the Wissahickon 1830



Figure 2-31. Falls of Niagara, Viewed from the American Side 1891

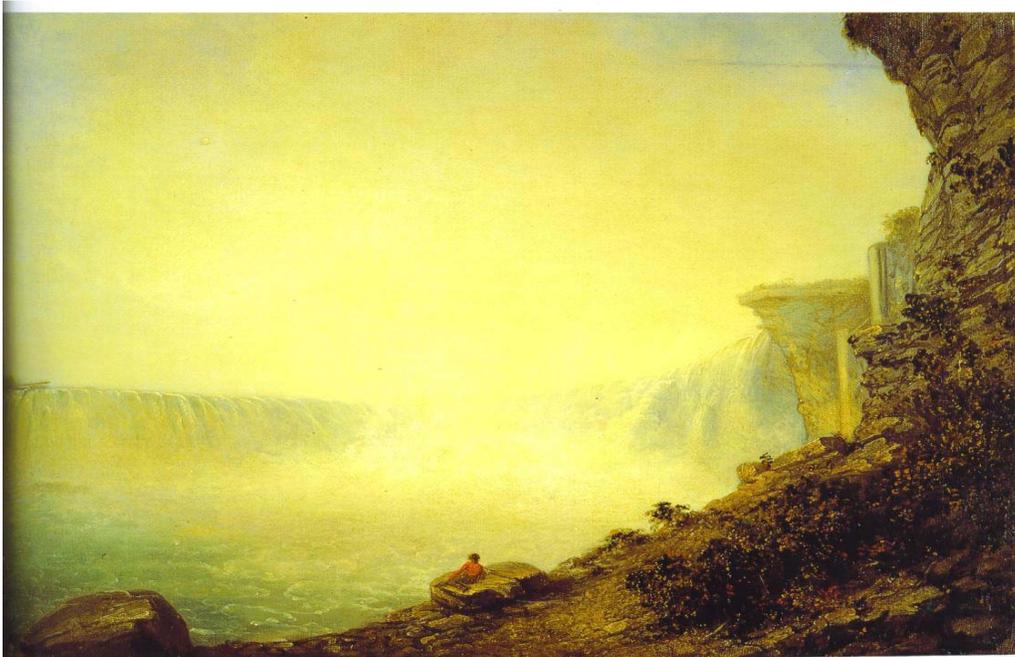


Figure 2-32. The Canadian Side Of Niagara Falls, Platform Rock 1831



Figure 2-33. General Joseph Bloomfield 1777

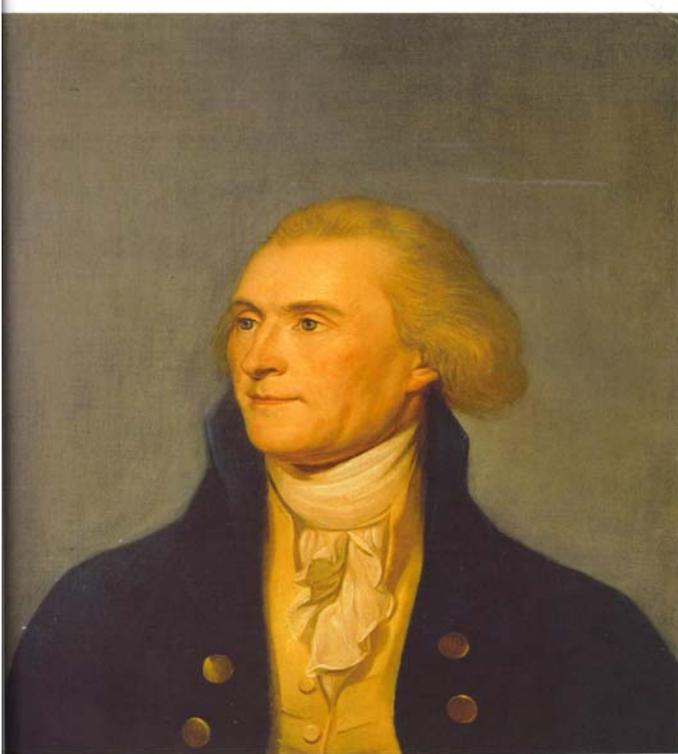


Figure 2-34. Thomas Jefferson 1791



Figure 2-35. Still Life with Apples, Sherry, and Tea Cake 1822



Figure 2-36. Fruit and Silver Bowl 1814

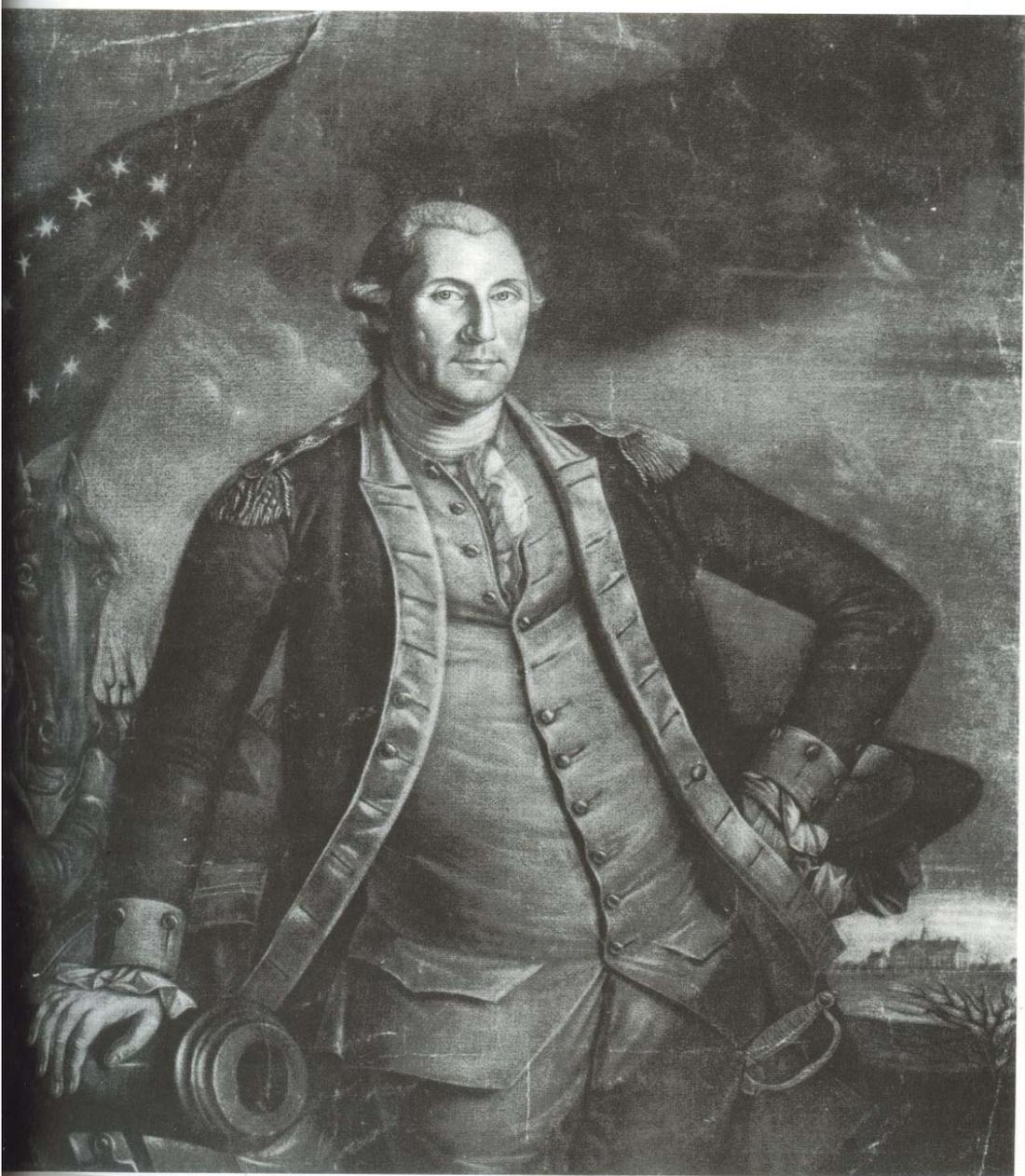


Figure 2-37. His Excellency George Washington Esquire, Commander in Chief of the Federal Army, 1780



Figure 2-38. Washington at Princeton 1779



Figure 2-39. Washington and his Generals at Yorktown 1784

CHAPTER 3 A DEEPER LOOK INSIDE

A further understanding of Raphaelle Peale's still life paintings and personal life are attained through psychoanalysis, a method of studying the mind and treating mental and emotional disorders based on revealing and investigating roles of the unconscious mind. All art has a transitional quality as it occupies or connects the space between illusion and reality¹. Psychoanalysis offers insight into the realms of illusion and reality, which deals with the art and science of mental and emotional transformation².

Sigmund Freud's "The Unpleasure or Pleasure Principle" provides a psychoanalytical model for understanding why Raphaelle continued painting still life. For example, Raphaelle was confronted with unpleasure as seen with his personal problems surrounding intemperance and over-indulgence. In a letter written to his patron Charles Graff on September 6, 1816, Raphaelle confirmed his problematic situation with this disease stating, "My old and inveterate enemy, the Gout, has Commenced a most violent attack on me, two months previous to its regular time-and most unfortunately on the day that I was to Commence still life, in the most beautiful productions of Fruit, I therefore fear that the Season will pass without producing a single Picture, I meant to have devoted all my time, Principally, to Painting of fine Peaches."³

¹ Laurie Schneider Adams, Art and Psychoanalysis (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993): 42.

² Schneider, 53.

³ Phoebe Lloyd, "Philadelphia Story," Art in America (November 1988): 200.

According to Freud, a goal of the conscious or unconscious mind is to formulate a “perceptual or imaginary identity” and thus gain gratification or satisfaction. Freud stated in his *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, “We humans with the high standards for our civilization and under the pressure of our internal repressions, find reality unsatisfying quite generally, and for that reason entertain a life of phantasy in which we like to make up for the insufficiencies of reality by the production of wish-fulfillment”⁴. Kaja Silverman, an American film critic, has described Freud’s theory as meaning; the unconscious exhibits inflexibility or sternness in its means for change. When the unconscious discovers a clarification regarding unpleasure, repetitive attempts toward a positive solution occur in order to begin to formulate a solution⁵. “For Freud, pleasure represents the absence of unpleasure; it is a state of relaxation much more intimately connected with death than with life”⁶. Raphaëlle’s pleasure and over-indulgence with food and alcohol were associated with death, rather than life, and this theory aids in explaining Raphaëlle’s repeated subject matter, as he painted forty-four still life paintings between 1813 and 1817⁷.

A continuation with Raphaëlle’s still life can be seen with Freud’s “Reality Principle”. While the pleasure principle relates to people acting upon good feelings, the reality principle relates to individuals subordinating or subduing pleasure as a process of sublimation. The process of sublimation represses or stores unattainable desires in the unconscious, a process that can take place in the realm of art. Through his still life

⁴ Levine, 197.

⁵ Kaja Silverman, *The Subjects of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983): 56.

⁶ Silverman, 57.

⁷ Cikovsky, 28.

paintings, Raphaelle transformed a reality of dissatisfaction into a fantasy of satisfaction. In his personal life, Raphaelle struggled with the pleasures of intemperance and over-indulgence, but found a release with his still life paintings⁸

According to Freud, dreams are symbolic fulfillments of unattainable wishes that have been repressed. Though an unconscious dream or sleep-like state is absent in the art of painting, dream-like mechanisms are apparent. *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Freud sets forth the theories as condensation and displacement, which can be applied to a continued analysis of Raphaelle's still life paintings. Condensation, considered as a metaphor, occurs when sets of complex psychic images are packed into one simple image. Raphaelle's art can be approached as a dense metaphor, embodying contradictions around his personal problems with over-indulgence and intemperance. Displacement, a shift in a desire from the original object to a more acceptable or immediate substitute, is a concept that parallels condensation. For example, in terms of Raphaelle's paintings, a single cake or glass of wine represents condensation because Raphaelle metaphorically places his emotional problems of temperance and self-control into a depiction of this single image. Displacement parallels condensation because Raphaelle shifts his feelings regarding over-indulgence and intemperance toward an immediate substitute, a single glass of wine, cake or piece of fruit, symbolizing moderation and control. Raphaelle's feelings and problems are displaced from primary causes of temperance and over-indulgence to something else, his artwork⁹

⁸ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 74-105.

⁹ Freud 1999, 74-105.

Another psychoanalytic theory applying to Raphaelle's work is a representation of a "drive" for wish fulfillment. An unsatisfying reality and a subsequent or succeeding production of wish fulfillments, lead to a fantasy life, while in turn escaping from reality¹⁰. This "drive" or expression transforms into a wish, which was the motivating force behind Raphaelle's psychic activity. The still life paintings resemble a release of the pleasure principle, which was an adjustment of unpleasure. Raphaelle attempted to attain temperance with his works contrasting with his over-indulgence in alcohol, desserts, and fruit. Despite repeated pleas from his father, trying to steer him away from still life, Raphaelle continued painting and expressing through still life.

Raphaelle's paintings portrayed a life of fantasy and reality. Further insight into Raphaelle Peale can be attained through analysis of the following section found in

Formulations of the Two Principles of Mental Functioning (1911) by Freud:

An artist is originally a man who turns away from reality because he cannot come to terms with the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction which it first demands, and who allows his erotic and ambitious wishes full play in the life of fantasy. He finds the way back to reality, however, from this world of fantasy by making use of special gifts to mould his fantasies into truths of a new kind, which are valued by men as precious reflections of reality. Thus in a certain fashion he actually becomes the hero, the king, the creator, or the favorite he desired to be, without following the long roundabout path of making real alterations in the external world. But he can only achieve this because other men feel the same dissatisfaction as he does with the renunciation demanded by reality and because the dissatisfaction, which results from the replacement of the pleasure principle by the reality principle, is itself part of reality¹¹.

In other words, Raphaelle turned away from reality and ventured toward fantasy because he was unable to find satisfaction within his life. Still life was Raphaelle's special gift, which returned him back from a fantasy world and enabled him to truthfully

¹⁰ Levine, 198.

¹¹ Levine, 198-199.

depict reflections of reality Raphaëlle used still life, as a means of displaying his personal desires moderation in contrast to his difficulty with the reality of his intemperance and lack of self-control

Peale's father was not only concerned by Raphaëlle's still life subject matter, but also with his son's precarious lifestyle and approach to health and self-governance Raphaëlle displayed battles with intemperance in still-life paintings, which eventually affected his physical well-being In contrast to Raphaëlle, Charles Willson focused upon regimen and health Charles practiced strict dietary control with exercise, temperance and abstinence from alcohol, and focused on a diet centered on simple foods and water¹² Charles repeatedly attempted to instill these habits into Raphaëlle's daily routine because intemperance, over-indulgence and an unhealthy life style dominated his life As noted earlier with "The Pleasure or Unpleasure Principle," Raphaëlle not only tried to find answers for unpleasure by repeatedly painting still life, but he also repeatedly overindulged in alcohol and rich foods while battling intemperance, which contributed to a development of the gout Charles wrote a letter on February 2, 1818,

My dear Raphaëlle, It gives me great pain to think how wretchedly you govern yourself I am not uniformed of your associations you are possessed of superior talents to most men, and yet you will associate with beings that disgrace you-you have promised time after time to refrain from intemperance and you have nearly destroyed, or thrown away your life; you have been on the brink of the Grave, and you must certainly know the cause of all your suffering! Then why not act the man and respect yourself¹³

These letters were not only written to Raphaëlle, but to other family members and friends too Letters concerning Raphaëlle's health found their way to Raphaëlle's

¹² Miller 1996, 142.

¹³ Cikovsky, 105.

brothers Rembrandt, Rubens and Linnaeus, his sister Angelica, and Benjamin West, a friend and eighteenth-century artist. A letter to Angelica on November 24, 1818, states

You ask me where Raphaelle is, the other day I received a letter from him which informs me that he has been almost at death's door, reduced to a skeleton by a fit of the Gout [which] confined him 8 weeks-I have wrote to advise him to get from the country as soon as possible as I have always considered the neighborhood of Norfolk an unhealthy country¹⁴

The still-life paintings of Raphaelle “appear to be complex images that express a moral tension between necessity and indulgence, reason and passion,” which concerned Raphaelle’s family members and friends¹⁵

In Freud’s study of *Wit and the Comic*, he argues that the primary focus of art is to seek pleasure and avoid pain, therefore obeying “the pain and pleasure,” which dominated artists’ lives and works¹⁶. This diagnosis is especially seen in *Fruit Piece with Peaches Covered by Handkerchief* (1819; [Fig3-1](#)). The pictorial goal illustrates a struggle between temperance and over-indulgence. Raphaelle eschewed pain as a handkerchief, which covers a majority of the peaches, serves as a warning and addresses pain by visually informing the viewer to enjoy the peaches in moderation. Painful affects of the gout may appear if these ripe, rich, and succulent peaches are not enjoyed with self-discipline and moderation. Raphaelle successfully combined pleasure and temperance by leaving two of the peaches unveiled, which enabled an act of self-control and restraint with balance and symmetry.

¹⁴ Cikovsky, 107.

¹⁵ Miller 1996, 136.

¹⁶ Daniel E. Schneider, *The Psychoanalyst and The Artist* (New York: The Alexa Press Inc., 1950), 61.

In 1909, Freud declared, “If a person who is at logger heads with reality possesses an artistic gift, he can transform his fantasies into artistic creations instead of symptoms”¹⁷ The reality of dissatisfaction is transformed by the artwork turning into a fantasy of satisfaction “The artist’s fantasy is materially embodied in a public medium: In this manner, he can escape the doom of neurosis and by this round about path regain his contact with reality”¹⁸ Raphaelle transformed an emotional battle with temperance and over-indulgence onto the canvas

An inducement to renounce pleasure is placed upon the patient in psychoanalytic work Exposure of determinable consequences is encouraged because complications arise in asking a total revilement of pleasure¹⁹ In an exchange from reality towards the pleasure principle, Raphaelle displayed in his paintings items sumptuous in nature, which if enjoyed in excess may perhaps lead to ill health In Freud’s the *Claims of Psychoanalysis to Scientific Interest* (1913), an artist “represents his most personal wishful fantasies as fulfilled” and “they only become a work of art when they have undergone a transformation, which softens what is offensive in them, conceals their personal origin, and by obeying the laws of beauty, bribes other people with the bonus of pleasure”²⁰ Art is also “an activity intended to allay ungratified wishes-in the first place in the creative artist himself and subsequently in his audience or spectators”²¹ Art becomes an “accepted reality, thanks to artistic illusion, symbols and substitutes are able

¹⁷ Levine, 197.

¹⁸ Levine, 198.

¹⁹ Freud 1999, 158-159.

²⁰ Levine, 74-81.

²¹ Levine, 74-81.

to provoke real emotions art develops into a region halfway between a reality which frustrates wishes and the wish-fulfilling world of the imagination”²² Raphaelle’s works represent personal ungratified wishes, which have been softened by the subject matter, leaving the offensive nature behind and revealing images of beauty Raphaelle portrayed problems amid pleasure, intemperance, and over-indulgence upon the canvas

Freud’s paper, *Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through* (1914), states, “If the artist is able to achieve admiration and gratitude from people who have purchased his works then he has made an unconscious connection with their pleasures and desires in returning honor, power, and love”²³ Even though obtaining patronage was a difficult task, Raphaelle accomplished acceptance by selling his still life paintings If Raphaelle was fortunate, the artworks sold for fifteen dollars²⁴ In Freud’s, *The Future of Illusion* (1927), he proceeded to say, “The creations of art heighten his feelings of identification by providing an occasion for sharing highly valued emotional experiences”²⁵ Raphaelle’s paintings may have been meant to invoke similar wishes of conscious or unconscious matter from the general community For example, perhaps patrons with similar problems regarding intemperance and over-indulgence purchased these works, therefore leading to a personal connection between Raphaelle and the patron

According to Freud’s *Autobiographical Study* (1925), an artist was not seen as neurotic, where he had the ability to revert back towards reality without remaining in a

²² Levine, 199.

²³ Levine, 201.

²⁴ Cikovsky, 28.

²⁵ Levine, 203-204.

dream-like state or world of imagination²⁶ The works of Raphaelle were imaginary gratifications seen with unconscious wishes, similar to dreams The tension between temperance and intemperance in Raphaelle's life and artwork are captured within the images of his paintings *Lemons and Sugars* (1822; Fig3-2) displays a subtle example of Raphaelle's unconscious wishes, while encapsulating the "dessert" aspect following a meal²⁷ These desserts Raphaelle depicted demonstrate an exploitation of unnecessary and additional pleasure seen throughout his personal life and canvas *Lemons and Sugars* (1822), dissimilar to Raphaelle's personal life, is extremely organized Attention focuses upon the arrangement of three orderly placed lemons within a basket, a decorative urn containing sugar, and a carafe encapsulating wine A leather bound book of poems, a knife, and a spoon offsets the main features The presentation of orderly fashion throughout the work reflects attributes otherwise lacking in Raphaelle's life and is an example of how Raphaelle found an enabling balance through consumption with such subjects

Another example, which displayed Raphaelle's personal equanimity, is *Still Life with Apples, Sherry and Tea Cake* (1822; Fig2-35) The desert pieces illustrated typify moderation Raphaelle masterly displayed a single glass of liquor, a small, solitary decorative cake, and two dissimilar sized plump apples accompanied by luscious, ripe grapes The ordered and controlled nature presented with these culinary images belies the unbalanced and immoderate lifestyle of Raphaelle Freud's position indicates, "A man who is a true artist has more at his disposal In the first place, he understands how to work

²⁶ Levine, 202.

²⁷ Cikovsky, 52.

over his daydreams in such a way as to make them lose what is too personal about them and repels strangers, and to make it possible for others to share in the enjoyment of them”²⁸ Raphaelle was able to intertwine personal fantasy and public display

The severity of Raphaelle’s appalling habits were exemplified in a letter that his father wrote to him after a meeting with Raphaelle’s wife on July 1, 1807: “She said we are very happy when he don’t drink, and yet she said you could not do with out it for you passed one day a tremor came on and you was miserable until you had it and she was compelled to advise you to take a little”²⁹ The still life paintings presented self-control, moderation, and temperance, which belie his personal life According to letters, the gout plagued Raphaelle after 1812 and the production and exhibition of Raphaelle’s still life was affected by his gout as only a pair of pictures were exhibited between 1819–1820 In a letter written on November 30, 1823 by Charles to Rembrandt, Raphaelle’s brother: “I gave my best advice saying you may yet by temperance restore your powers of body and mind, but otherwise you will soon die in misery”³⁰ These physical symptoms experienced from the gout compromised Raphaelle’s physical and mental health and his ability to paint

In dealing with a conscious and unconscious mental state, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan offers further insight into Raphaelle’s still life paintings Lacan saw his work as a return to and extension of Freud The first theory focuses upon “social recognition” as a goal of the artist The social recognition introduces a private fantasy into public areas of

²⁸ Levine, 201-202.

²⁹ Cikovsky, 97.

³⁰ Cikovsky, 113-115.

history and culture³¹ In other words, Raphaëlle was placing personal and private problems upon a canvas for public display Secondly, Lacan introduced the relation of art to his concept of “the Thing,” which he explained as: “All art is characterized by a certain mode of organization around this emptiness A work of art always involves encircling the Thing The object is established in a certain relationship to the Thing and is intended to encircle and render both present and absent I am trying to show you how Freudian aesthetics reveals that the Thing is inaccessible You don’t paint in the same way; but you always paint the same thing or, rather, the absence of the same thing”³²

These two theories can be used to analyze Raphaëlle’s works *Still Life with Raisin Cake* (1813, Fig 2-20), *Still Life with Liquer and Fruit* (1814; Fig3-3), and *Still Life with Cake* (1818; Fig2-22)³³ *Still Life with Raisin Cake* (1813) and *Still Life with Cake* (1818) signify important explanatory roles, which draw a link between desert foodstuffs and Raphaëlle’s affects from the gout Each painting presents small decorative cakes, which were produced with eggs and decorated with hard, colored refined sugars or icing, and single glasses of wine These cakes are sliced equally into pieces of four or six Green leaves and portly grapes generously provide balance and stability within the canvas Raphaëlle depicted equally sliced cakes and single glasses of wine in order to display moderate portions and self-control as proper tactics of consumption An over consumption of these items contributed to Raphaëlle’s gout, as noted in a letter written by his father to Rembrandt, Raphaëlle’s brother, on October 9, 1815:

³¹ Levine, 203-204.

³² Levine, 204.

³³ Cikovsky, 54, 63, & 66.

Your brother is in great danger from an attack of the gout in his stomach He had been too closely employed for some time in painting miniatures and took no exercise Perhaps indulging too much his appetite at the same time with pickles and which every prudent man ought to banish from his table as being neither good for the old or the young-stimulus condiments are ever ruinous to the stomach-simple foods makes good blood, good spirits, good health...Raphaelle is still in the same dangerous state the physicians have very little hope for his life³⁴

While repeating themes of temperance and self-control throughout his works and displaying a presence and absence of a “Thing,” Raphaelle searches for social recognition amongst peers, patrons, and above all, his father

An example of desire for social recognition, presence and absence of the “Thing,” and perfect symmetry is seen with *Still Life with Liqueur and Fruit* (1814) Depicted within this work are a glass and carafe of wine, overly mature grapes, flourishing lemons and oranges, and seasoned nuts Containment, balance, and display of proper consumption are displayed as some of the fruit rests within a bowl in the center of the canvas The nuts and wine on either side of the bowl of fruit render a balancing quality absent in Raphaelle’s life Moderation is depicted without overcrowding the canvas Through paintings such as this, Raphaelle strived to portray temperance as an important characteristic Self-discipline is expressed as Raphaelle displayed a few pieces of fruit and a single glass of wine for consumption and takes self-control one-step further placing a top on the carafe According to Levine, both Freud and Lacan believed that, “art neither succeeds in representing the presence of the object of desire...nor does it simply fail to represent it and thereby yield only its absence”³⁵ The “Thing,” whether present or

³⁴ Cikovsky, 102.

³⁵ Levine, 204.

absent, conscious or subconscious, presents itself as the struggling characteristic seen throughout Raphaelle's life

Lacan notes the development of the "mirror stage" as a type of dialect between artist and viewer. The "mirror stage" is seen as a drama or serious narrative work, in which one manufactures a subject, but deteriorates from fantasy that extends the body image³⁶. Although the "mirror stage" initially occurs when a child has noticed itself in a mirror and expresses incoherent and coherent feelings, these concepts can be applied to Raphaelle's works. Raphaelle was having difficulty with self-control as seen in a letter from his brother Rubens to his sister Angelica on November 6, 1813: "Raphaelle has had a severe attack of the gout in both legs, which has confined him to his bed for a week past but is up and about the house now with crutches"³⁷. As noted earlier, Raphaelle's works are seen as an image of himself.

The incoherent and coherent aspects associated with the "mirror stage" or "double role," commonly revealed throughout portrait paintings, are seen within Raphaelle's still life. Freud often used the term "splitting of the ego," denoting a psychological phenomenon where two psychical attitudes co-exist unconsciously in the ego. One functions in relation toward reality and the second as a wish³⁸. For example, Pablo Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror* (1931; [Fig3-4](#)) offers a different reflection than one, which is normally noticed through physical observation³⁹. The girl's reflection in the mirror is different from the actual physical depiction in reality. This reflection of the girl

³⁶ Sheridan, 4 & 5.

³⁷ Cikovsky, 101.

³⁸ Adams, 48.

³⁹ Adams, 49.

presents a “double” or inner self, similarly seen in Raphaelle’s works *The still life* by Raphaelle reflects this “double” or inner self without actual representation of a physical mirror or portrait; the work is a reflection or metaphor of his body and desire. In contrast, Charles Willson depicted the “double role” of his son through his work, *Portrait of Raphaelle Peale* (1817; Fig2-24)⁴⁰. This portrait presents a “double” or inner side of Raphaelle. The viewer is presented with a physical rendition of a healthy Raphaelle and the inner side of intemperance, lingers with the still life in the background.

Raphaelle’s still life paintings entitled, *Fruit and Silver Bowl* (1814; Fig2-36) and *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816; Fig2-4) present images of order and restraint, which serve as a coherent external image upon the canvas. In other words, Raphaelle addresses and responds to the issues of incoherence, an inability to compose thoughts in a clear or orderly manner, in his personal life, which include a lack of restraint and self-discipline throughout his paintings. Raphaelle’s still life acts as a coherent mirror. By painting overly ripe or slightly rotten fruit, which mirrors the affects of the gout and over-indulgence upon his physical body, Raphaelle displays a lack of restraint with intemperance. Further, poised and arranged within *Fruit and Silver Bowl* (1814) are apples, grapes, peppers, and honey melon, symbolizing the organization absent throughout his life. Although this work radiates symmetry, spoiling apples, over ripe and dark grapes, browning apples, and dried honey melon aesthetically dominate the canvas. The fruit, items of over-indulgence, symbolize the suffering and rapid influence of the gout. Raphaelle was allegorically painting and coherently recognizing these external images.

⁴⁰ The *Portrait of Raphaelle* is also given the date 1822.

In *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816), all the fruit and vegetables contain shades of brown, which indicate decomposition. A half empty carafe of wine is strategically located in the background and suggests consumption of alcohol in line with moderation seen in earlier works with a single glass of wine. *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816) is a progression of *Fruit and Silver Bowl* (1814) as the fruit has become browner and slightly rotten. This coherent depiction and realization provides a connection between Raphaelle's personal life and paintings.

Lacan continues one step further than Freud with the "mirror stage" and has recognized that "the appearance of beauty intimidates and stops desire"⁴¹. Raphaelle's presentation of subject matter changes from luscious, ripe, plump, and decorative items toward slightly rotting, brown, and spoiled fruits and vegetables. Raphaelle has stopped portraying beauty, as it has intimidated him, and therefore the desire to achieve temperance and self-control has come to an end. Raphaelle has come to terms with his ever-increasing problematic situation in regards to the gout and begins to depict this realization on canvas.

⁴¹ Levine, 205.



Figure 3-1. Fruit Piece with Peaches Covered by Handkerchief 1819



Figure 3-2. Lemons and Sugars 1822



Figure 3-3. Still Life with Liqueur and Fruit



Figure 3-4. Girl Before A Mirror 1932

CHAPTER 4 OPENING UP A NEW DOOR

In dealing with visual art, narrative is considered a foreign mode of communication, a story added to the image¹ In traditional narrative theory, the source of information – the narrator - has favored a unified voice In other words, one narrator determines the outcome a reader receives² In addition, a narrative is rarely developed as a one-sided structure in traditional narrative theory; several different angles and points of view need equal attention in order for a complete understanding of the subject A narrator is seen as “the person who carries out or submits to the action, but also the person (the same one or another) who reports it, and, if need be, all those people who participate, even though passively, in this narrating activity”³ In the case of Raphaelle Peale, a focus is placed upon his still-life paintings in this study, showing that the works possess more than one unified voice or utterer of speech found in traditional narrative theory⁴ To explore this concept I shall concentrate directly upon subject matter, which acts as the narrative and sheds new light on Peale’s life

Following the readings of theorists such as Mieke Bal, Norman Bryson, Susana Onega, and Jose Angel Garcia Landa, the works of Peale can be placed into three

¹ Mieke Bal & Norman Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History: A Discussion of Context and Senders” in The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 202.

² Bal & Bryson, 203.

³ Onega & Landa, 173.

⁴ Bal & Bryson, 188.

different types of narrative categories. As noted earlier, a narrative is not one-sided, a concept stressed throughout Peale's paintings. The first narrative begins with the acknowledgement of the work by a viewer or observer. The second narrative is from the side of the writer, sender, producer or artist of the work. The third narrative, upon which this chapter focuses, appears from the subject matter of the works, in this case, the contents of Peale's still life paintings in regards to fruit, vegetables, cakes, and wine⁵. His works follow along with Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of polyphony, usually seen with the intertwining of different melodies or voices within novels or voices. The paintings of Peale can be viewed as polyphony, a pluralistic view or an intertwining of three different narratives including the viewer, painter, and subject matter⁶.

Several attempts have been made at constructing a more practical and useful definition with the informational sources of the narrative. One attempt in particular involves three narrative agents, which include the *narrator* or speaker, the *focalizer* or source of the vision (work of art), and the *actor* or subject acting out the fabula or events presented in sequence⁷. All three of these narrative agents are presented as subjects throughout Peale's works. For example, the *narrator(s)* are the collective still life paintings because they visually inform the viewer of Peale's struggles between self-control and over-indulgence. They further describe the deterioration of his mental and physical well-being throughout his life. The works act as chapters of a book, which explain his current state. The *focalizer* is a specific element or subject within the work or

⁵ Bal & Bryson, 204.

⁶ Bal & Bryson, 203.

⁷ Bal & Bryson, 204.

narrator(s), which attracts the viewer and becomes the center of attention. For example, *Fruits and Nuts in a Dish* (1818; Fig4-1) displays a brightly colored orange, maturing apple, nuts, and raisins. The raisins become the *focalizer* because they are different than the seasoned orange, apple, and nuts. These withered and dry raisins were once succulent and luscious grapes, which draw focus away from the other subjects of the painting.

Finally, the *actor* or representative who acts out the fabula is the subject, which includes fruits, vegetables, desert cakes, and liquors. Narrative qualities are given to subjects who have the story told by one of its “characters”⁸. This subject matter engages in a mutual interaction. The placement and orientation of the subject matter establishes a communal relationship between the *actors* and the episode of the paintings. The subjects take on the role of the *undramatized narrator*. The author or producer of the works, in this case Peale, explicitly places a narrator into the story, even if personal characteristics are absent in the works. An implied “second self” or narrator is created throughout his paintings⁹. An example is seen with, *Fruit Piece with Peaches Covered by a Handkerchief* (1819, Fig3-1). The metaphorical focus of this specific painting was an avoidance of pain as the handkerchief or *undramatized narrator* covers a majority of the peaches, symbolizing moderation, as only two peaches are available for consumption. The fly unmistakably draws the viewer’s attention toward the uncovered peaches, validating self-control and restraint, as only a couple of the peaches should be consumed at one time¹⁰. The subjects are explaining a story as the handkerchief metaphorically

⁸ Onega & Landa, 184.

⁹ Onega & Landa, 147.

¹⁰ Miller 1996, 140. The insect is also referred to as a wasp.

represents a shield of temperance, concealing over-consumption, which is represented by the plentiful amount of peaches

Found throughout certain paintings, the narrator is different from the works produced by the author or painter, which leads to the role of the *dramatized narrator*. As seen with Peale's still life paintings, many *dramatized narrators* are never labeled as narrators. Peale's works, referred as filtering devices, contain disguised narrators who reveal helpful information in order to understand the works¹¹. The paintings develop and present themselves as several episodes of his life story. The episodes are linked together with one another, forming a narrative. The actions carried out by these paintings represent the episodes and relay messages to the viewer as scenes from a story.

Roland Barthes wrote, "There are countless forms of narrative in the world. Narrative is present in history, tragedy, drama, comedy, pantomime, paintings, stained-glass windows, and conversation. In this infinite variety of forms, it is present at all times."¹² Roland Barthes's analysis of narrative presents five codes: *proairetic*, *hermeneutic*, *semic*, *symbolic*, and *referential*. Among these, the *proairetic* and *symbolic* codes are the most useful for an analysis of narrative within Peale's still life paintings. According to Barthes, the *proairetic* code is a "series of models of action that help readers place details into plot sequences. We can tentatively place and organize the details we encounter as we read."¹³ In other words, Peale's still life, which include fruit, vegetables, and alcohol, follow along in a sequence resembling a story of his personal life. Integration of the

¹¹ Onega & Landa, 148.

¹² Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1982): 1.

¹³ Bal & Bryson, 202-203.

symbolic code, though executed by the viewer, is another aspect of a narrative that needs to be addressed because Peale's still life works display a metaphorical self-portrait. Interpretations of the still life paintings are another important aspect revealed by the subject matter through semiosis. The paintings of Peale can be considered a *representamen* or sign and *object* or *referent*, the thing for which the sign stands¹⁴ "A sign, or *representamen*, something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It creates in the mind an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*"¹⁵ The paintings represent something other than what is depicted on the canvas.

Examples of his works, which support and display the *proairetic* code, begin in 1813 and stretch until 1822. Since failed attempts at depicting motion through paintings exist, Peale's works as a whole are seen as an aggressive form of fragmentation. Peale painted certain works in order to capture specific aspects as a whole. As such, the works are best understood when the individual paintings are viewed jointly without fragmentation.

The first group of works supporting the *proairetic* code includes *Still Life with Raisin Cake* (1813; Fig2-20), *Still Life with Cake* (1818; Fig2-22), and *Still Life with Wine, Cakes, and Nuts* (1819; Fig2-21), which depict an earlier stage of Raphaelle's life. At this period in time, Peale has begun depicting signs of difficulty with temperance. In *Still Life with Raisin Cake* (1813), Raphaelle painted a single cake neatly divided into six

¹⁴ Bal & Bryson, 188.

¹⁵ Bal & Bryson, 188.

pieces, accompanied by a glass of wine¹⁶ In Raphaelle's time, cakes were time-consuming to make and extremely expensive, so they only appeared at weddings, religious holidays, and funerals. It was not unusual for some of these special occasions to have over one thousand people in attendance¹⁷ In response to an overwhelming amount of guests, cakes were often sliced into equal, small pieces in order to accommodate large audiences. The act of evenly slicing these cakes into small pieces induced moderation, which enabled everyone at these events the chance to enjoy these desserts. A similar approach is seen with the single glass of wine, which displays self-control as large amounts of guests attend these functions. Raphaelle is telling the viewer to enjoy alcohol and rich desserts with moderation as he painted the cake divided into six slices and a single glass of wine.

Still Life with Cake (1818) continues Peale's theme of juxtaposing temperance and over-indulgence. A full glass of wine, ripe, green grapes, and a single cake decorate the canvas. Peale displays a decline in self-control and restraint by painting a single cake divided into four, rather than six pieces. At a conscious level, four larger slices of cake as opposed to six signifies Peale's lack of temperance and restraint. *Still Life with Wine, Cakes, and Nuts* (1819) epitomizes Peale's troublesome behavior regarding his physical lifestyle and issues regarding over-indulgence, which contributed toward the gout. A full glass of wine, matured grapes, and seasoned nuts successfully balance the canvas. The areas of concentration are placed upon two cakes, one neatly sliced into four pieces and the second left as whole. Raphaelle is visually explaining his increasing problem with

¹⁶ Cikovsky, 105.

¹⁷ William Woys Weaver, *Sauerkraut Yankess: Pennsylvania Dutch Foods and Foodways* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2002): 114-115.

moderation and self-control with the numerical transformation. This troublesome shift occurs as the cakes change from six and four slices, toward entire, whole desserts. By eating the cakes in individual slices, Raphaëlle's stomach would have become full and he would not have been able to consume the entire cake. By leaving the cakes as whole, Raphaëlle would have had time to eat the entire cake before realizing his stomach was filled. According to Charles Willson, these are examples of "improper indulgence," which contrast the importance of moderation¹⁸. The lack of temperance has reached an ultimate high as Raphaëlle continues displaying signs of difficulty, which eventually fuels ongoing tribulations with the gout.

The second group of works offering a continuation and alteration of the *proairetic* code is *Still Life with Liqueur and Fruit* (1814; Fig3-3), *Lemons and Oranges* (1814; Fig4-2), and *Still Life with Wine Glass* (1818; Fig4-3), which combine to create a thematic contribution, signifying Raphaëlle's continued difficulty with over-indulgence. These works compare in importance with the previous because of a continued concentration upon the dessert aspect of a meal in regards to cakes and wine. Each of the previous works displayed a glass of wine and *Still Life with Liqueur and Fruit* (1814), *Lemons and Oranges* (1814), and *Still Life with Wine glass* (1818) display similar subject matter. These canvases become more crowded as time progresses. *Still Life with Liqueur and Fruit* (1814) and *Lemons and Oranges* (1814) display a balancing effect with lemons, oranges, nuts, raisins, and a full glass of wine accompanied by an entire carafe. The evolution from glass to carafe and plump ripe grapes to dried, shriveled raisins insinuate a metamorphosis of intemperance as more wine is offered for consumption, and

¹⁸ Miller 1996, 142.

succulent grapes dissipate from the canvas. The multitude of items indicates more choices, which contribute to Raphaelle's problematic situations.

Still Life with Wine Glass (1818) presents a visual summary of Raphaelle's continued battle with intemperance. This work displays three grain items, which are depicted as a cake, biscuit, and bagel, and balancing these items are grapes, berries, and wine. Although a carafe is absent, a full glass of wine decorates the scene. The succulent grapes and berries replace the carafe as a metaphor of intemperance and an abundant supply of wine. Once again, the grain items are left whole as Raphaelle insinuated a more rapid rate of consumption, signifying a lack of balance between restraint and over-indulgence.

Still Life with Apples, Sherry, and Tea Cake (1822; Fig2-35), *Still Life with Cake* (1822; Fig2-5), and, *Still Life with Raisins, Apple, and Basket* (1820-22; Fig4-4) carry on the theme of the *proairetic* code. *Still Life with Apples, Sherry, and Tea Cake* (1822) visually displays two large pieces of fruit, a full glass of wine or liquor, and a whole dessert cake. Even though Raphaelle displays temperance with a single glass of wine, leaving the cake whole signifies a lack of self-control. Another example of intemperance is seen with *Still Life with Cake* (1822) as Raphaelle poised an untouched, large apple, a transformation from grapes and raisins, and a whole decorated cake. Raphaelle continually changed and repeatedly placed these items throughout works. The ordered nature throughout all of the images belies the unbalanced and immoderate lifestyle of Raphaelle, and through these works he attempts to reveal and resemble a story, a narrative.

If a viewer does not have access to Raphaelle's complete set of works or views his still life out of sequential order, an unfolding pictorial narrative is still possible. "Notice, too, that the narrative experience as a whole would not be greatly compromised," if a viewer were to begin with "later" or "middle" dated works rather than the "earlier" years¹⁹. Despite the arrangement, the fabula or sequence of events can be reconstructed. Even with a viewer's varying experience upon point of entry, the impact at the end can be similar²⁰. Each work plays an important role with another painting. They depend upon or "work with" all the other images. Erwin Panofsky referred to this as "iconography," a continuous state of history displaying repetition or revision²¹. As noted earlier, Peale obviously followed a mode of repetition as similar subjects with little or slight variation reappear throughout the still life works.

Two works entitled, *Fruit and Silver Bowl* (1814; Fig2-36) and *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816; Fig2-4) make the *proairetic* connection complete. Both of these paintings visually depict over-ripe or rotten fruits and vegetables. In *Fruit and Silver Bowl* (1814), the fruit mirrors Peale's body dealing with the gout and over-indulgence as seen with browning apples and peppers, over-ripe, dark grapes, and dried honey melon. The fruits are organized on the canvas, an organization absent in his personal life. *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816) offers a similar approach with the wilted, brown celery, transformation of grapes into raisins, and spotted, over ripe apples. If certain items are excluded from the narrative, then the meaning changes its course of action. For example,

¹⁹ Whitney Davis, *Replications: Archeology, Art History, and Psychoanalysis* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996): 213.

²⁰ Davis, 213.

²¹ Davis, 210-211.

missing from *Fruit and Silver Bowl* (1814), but seen in *Still Life with Celery and Wine* (1816) is the addition of a half empty carafe of wine or liquor. All details of pictorial text are related to one another in the narrative²². The absence of liquor in the carafe indicates Peale's battle with alcoholism and emotional struggle with intemperance. Once again, Peale's works indicate a continuous struggle, which resemble a narrative.

Another aspect of the *proairetic* view suggests a dynamic process or active operation while treating the works with motion²³. In other words, together, Peale's works metaphorically resemble a series of motion or a continuous deterioration of his physical state. The viewer spends time on each item while moving about the surface of the paintings. An understanding of the narrative can only be reached by viewing Peale's other works, which guides the viewer towards constant unfolding of the narrative or uncovering of a story. The physical action of movement obviously does not come from the paintings, but from the viewer. Peale's paintings are presented as chapters in a book. Once the still life paintings are viewed in sequential order, a knowledge and clarity of Peale's life can begin to be understood.

Letters written by Charles Willson coincide with Raphaelle's paintings, which exemplify and contribute toward the narrative qualities of his works. A letter written on July 4, 1820 stated

Sometime past I have had my fears that you would be affected with Gout so as to stop your progress with you paintings. I have heard that our friend Mr Brewer has wrote to inform us of your being now in a severe fit of the Gout, that letter I have not yet seen. When we reflect that in order to enjoy health we ought to eat and drink only such things as our best judgment on experience have proved as most conducive to that end, also, in only such proportion as shall be in exact proportion

²² Davis, 212.

²³ Bal & Bryson, 205.

as to quantity as will nourish the body, for a single particle more becomes a clog and a burden to the digestive powers, therefore produces disease more or less in due proportion to the excess. When we set down at the Table (perhaps loaded with a variety of unnecessary articles, for two or three things is really all that is needful) then think on the end! & resolve that taste shall not be superior to reason. The government of all other passions as essential to promote health, is certainly of vast import. The mind has a vast influence on the health of the body...Dear Raphaele you must not think that what I have wrote is a charge on you of a breach of such rules, though like myself you may not always possess intire command of the appetite, and one motive I have for writing such, is a means of confirming my habits to like restrictions, they are rules which I daily endeavor to put into practice²⁴

Charles Willson wrote another letter, on January 19, 1821, which provided evidentiary proof of Raphaele's ills with the gout and intemperance: "As health is the most important of all considerations, I have therefore desired to write to you. Now more to the purpose, you have a gouty habit-And you know the cause of the Gout, therefore after taking what care you can to keep clear of it, be avoiding everything that you know tends to produce it, and in addition as far as you can follow my practice, and I flatter myself that you will find the good affects of it"²⁵ Once again, Charles Willson has expressed his concerns toward Raphaele's ever increasing detrimental situation regarding his health.

The psychological impact of imagery also contributed as a characteristic of narration with Raphaele's subjects. This process reverts back towards childhood development, when children were able to understand pictures before words. In this stage of development, images precede the written word. Peale applied "regression," a going back in time or space, enabling an ability of communication with the unconscious child.

²⁴ Lillian B. Miller, The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family: Volume 3, The Belfield Years, 1810-1820 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991): 832-833.

²⁵ Lillian B. Miller, The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family: Volume 4, Charles Willson Peale: His Last Years, 1821-1827 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996): 11-13.

of the adult²⁶ The paintings depict a struggle between over-indulgence and temperance with imagery, rather than with words Through regression of the unconscious mind, certain adults can relate to the still life As a result, the images become the narrative element by resembling a story with pictures, as opposed to words

Peale's works can be viewed as characters or agents of an action However, these subjects additionally act as the narrator or "voice" of the paintings²⁷ The "voice" constructed by Raphaelle presents discourse or expression, while actively upholding a conversation or visual dialogue throughout his paintings²⁸ The works serve as a conversation piece between two or more people, the paintings and viewer occupying those roles, with images resembling a language Still life is a part of language, a communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals, such as a voice, sound, gestures or written symbol Peale's works serve as a signal and system of signs used in the rules of communication Therefore, we learn and read that Peale's still life paintings resemble a narrative, a story told with a visual language of communication, which enable the viewer to understand more about Peale's life Raphaelle's still life images offer insight to his struggles with intemperance As mentioned earlier, narrative theory lends a hand in reading objects upon Raphaelle's canvases as characters, which participate and contribute toward emotional conflicts and visual dramatizations Additionally, examining the still life works in a chronological order offers an evolving and original experience into Raphaelle's personal life

²⁶ Laurie Schneider Adams, *Art and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993): 41-42.

²⁷ Onega & Landa, 172.

²⁸ Bal & Bryson, 202.



Figure 4-1. Fruits and Nuts in Dish



Figure 4-2. Still Life with Lemons and Oranges 1814



Figure 4-3. Still Life with Wine Glass 1818



Figure 4-4. Still Life with Raisins, Apple, and Basket 1820-22

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Even though Raphaelle was unable to achieve the goal of self-control, he displayed personal problems of intemperance and desires of moderation on canvas. Raphaelle's symmetrical and well-balanced tabletop arrangements were examples of the desired life his father, Charles Willson, wished him to acquire. Interpretations and theories based on art and psychoanalysis have offered aid in understanding the hidden underlying intentions within his works. As Raphaelle began to realize his problematic situation based on excess, which derived from an over abundance of rich foods and alcohol, his still life paintings depicted a story of an increasing battle with the gout and alcoholism.

The chronological narrative has led to a further understanding about the struggles observed during his life. The theme of rebellion toward health, genre, and subject matter, offer evidence and highlight the conflictive relationship between Raphaelle and his father. As a result, Psychoanalysis, Narratology, and a rebellious relationship between father and son enhance the understanding of Raphaelle's still life paintings. Raphaelle was a man known, not only for his still life paintings, but his consistent battle with overindulgence, intemperance, and self-control. These issues projected a shadow upon his personal life and perfectly rendered still life. As a result, the harmonizing and balanced "tabletop still

life” arrangements became examples of the desired life he wished to acquire, but was unable to contain¹

¹ Gerds 1981, 56.

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