

Professors Adam and Mica

TR

W.A.S.H. Lecture

April 22, 2019

Quiz two



Marcos Lopez

Asado en Mendiolanza

Inkjet print

Printed 2019

106 x 37.94 inches

Exhibited at the Houston Center for Photography

More often than not, photography is used to capture the moment. Capturing everyday life, special moments and anything else in front of the lens. Like any other form of art, photography can be used to tell a narrative. This piece by Marco Lopez has more to offer than what is seen at face value. The imagery in

the photo is used to illustrate deeper meanings that the viewer can interpret. Using parody to make its statement, this piece touches on topics such as religion, and body image. In this essay I will analyse the photograph by delving into the narrative that is present beyond just what is immediately seen in the frame.

The artwork above is an evident parody of the painting, *The Last Supper*. *The Last Supper* is a painting that envisioned Jesus' last meal with his disciples, where he broke bread and poured wine that represented his body and blood respectively. In the photograph *Asado en Mendiolanza*, the man that is in Jesus' place is cutting open a pig. This can represent quite a few things, but the first is that the pig is representing his body. The center of the table is where Jesus sat, he broke bread and shared it with his disciples. Jesus passed around bread that was meant to represent his body. In the picture, the man is cutting open and passing around the pork. Since he is in Jesus' place, the man is a representation of Jesus and his passing of food that represents his body. The bread was a symbol that represented Jesus' flesh. Before our time, bread was a food that was used for nutrition, so Jesus using bread as a symbol of him was also a way of indirectly saying that he can replenish you. When someone is called a pig, that means they are unpleasant, fat, or just overall unappealing, which is a huge contrast to what Jesus' represents to Christians. The man cutting and passing around the pig becomes ironic when you realize that this is what represents his body and how he wants to be remembered.

Alongside the idea of representing the body, the pig in the photograph also has another idea connected to it. In the first testament of the Bible, God declares certain animals as "unclean". Unclean meaning that they shouldn't be eaten because of what the animals themselves eat. Pigs are animals that routinely eat trash, flesh and other things that aren't suitable for humans to partake of. When you learn this information, the pig is no longer just a pig, but an unclean animal that we shouldn't be indulging in. Since whatever the pig eats indirectly goes inside of us, we are indirectly putting filth in our bodies. This idea of uncleanliness can also tie back to the point that was stated in the previous paragraph. Since the pig is representing his body, the man is incidentally calling his body filthy or unclean. However, in the New

testament the idea that pork is unclean is completely disregarded. Because of this, in modern times we can still eat pork without having to worry about it being unclean in a religious sense. Although it is ironic because while we are aware of the fact that pigs eat garbage, we are still willing to put it inside of our bodies.

This photograph has many formal elements contained in it. The first is the very familiar composition, the piece is parodying *The Last Supper* By Leonardo da Vinci. The composition is well thought out, as it is very busy, but not overwhelming. There is also a strong sense of unity amongst all of the people and the dinner table. While they all don't look exactly the same, they are similar and come together in a "messy" organized piece. Balance is another key point. There are equal amount of people on each side, and no side of the table has more of anything of the other. Although it may not be an exactly symmetrical balance, it is still very equal. There is also a great deal of implied motion amongst the people reaching for and eating the food. The piece uses all of these formal elements to perfect the composition so that the narrative could be represented properly.

By using parody to criticize and alter the meaning of the original piece, *The Last Supper*, Lopez was able to use humour to make several statements that could be interpreted in the artwork. The photographer makes use of many formal elements such as balance, unity to setup the composition while still staying faithful to what it imitated. Using religion, and body image as a hidden narrative, Lopez used his photography to capture what could be seen as a typical get together and made it into something more. The content that this photograph contains is not evident at first glance, but when analysed deeply, many ideas can be discovered.