

Delicious Bodies, Beautiful Food, Powerful Pleasure

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Abstract

I am an artist and a scholar. In my work, I adopt an interdisciplinary approach to drawing, feminism and ecology to explore the stereotype of the southern Italian woman, the terrona. In my research, I investigate how the terrona has been represented in media as attractive, buxom and sexualized. I use drawing to visualize and transform the stereotypical characteristics of the southern Italian woman and connect the terrona's traditional traits to the natural resources of the Mediterranean environment.

Keywords: gender stereotypes; drawing; ecology; Italian studies; media; feminism

I am an artist and a scholar. In my work, I adopt an interdisciplinary approach to drawing, feminism and ecology to explore the stereotype of the southern Italian woman, the *terrona*. In my research, I investigate how the *terrona* has been represented in media as attractive, buxom and sexualized. I use drawing to visualize and transform the stereotypical characteristics of the southern Italian woman and connect the *terrona*'s traditional traits to the natural resources of the Mediterranean environment. In doing so, I re-signify the *terrona* according to feminist and ecological perspectives. The *terrona*'s sexualized body that in traditional culture gives pleasure to heterosexual men becomes a superpower that she has in feeling exceptional sensorial pleasure by connecting to the resources of her environment. By discussing how the *terrona* has been traditionally represented in media as sexualized and objectified, I analyze the movie *Sedotta e Abbandonata* (**Seduced and Abandoned, 1964**) by Pietro Germi. In this film, Germi decides to use comedy to denounce the backwardness of the southern Italian society that in the sixties was still based on values such as honor, family reputation, and women's chastity. I also address novels where the objectification and sexualization of the *terrona* is associated with the physical pleasure of eating tasty meals, where the male's desire to consume the *terrona*'s body is connected to his desire to consume food. The novels that address this correlation are Tomasi di Lampedusa's *The Leopard* (**2018**) and Vitaliano Brancati's *Paolo il Caldo* (*Paolo the Hot*) (**2015**). I analyze this association between males' appetite for tasty food and women's bodies because it represents an extremization of women's objectification that sheds light on how the *terrona* has been dehumanized and degraded by the sexist mentality of her culture.

In my artistic work, I subvert the sexist connection between the enjoyment provided by a woman's body and the bodily pleasure provided by food. In my drawings, in fact, the male's pleasure is absent and is substituted by the one experienced by the *terrona*. To do this, I consider unconventional fictional representations of southern Italian women such as the ones described by Goliarda Sapienza in the novel *The Art of Joy* (**2014**). In this novel, the *terrona* is represented as an empowered and economically independent subject that succeeds in pursuing a joyful and satisfying existence. Because of the unconventional way the *terrona* is represented in this novel, it represents a source of inspiration for my reconfiguration of the *terrona*'s way to experience pleasure.

In my imaginative experiment about the *terrona*'s reconfiguration, I connect the *terrona* described in the discussed sources to the Mediterranean Sea and the Mediterranean diet, and I address the capability of this sea and this food to provide wellbeing and physical pleasure to the *terrona*'s body and mind. By considering the benefits of

the Mediterranean Sea and the Mediterranean diet for the terrona's life, in my drawings I represent the terrona while she is eating delicious food, swimming in the sea and connecting with the animals and plants of the Mediterranean environment.

To illustrate how the terrona has been represented in traditional Italian media as sexualized and objectified, I discuss the movie *Seduced and Abandoned* (1964), directed by Pietro Germi. The protagonist of the movie is Agnese, played by Stefania Sandrelli. During a torrid and sultry summer afternoon the fiancé of Agnese's sister Matilda, Peppino Califano, played by Aldo Puglisi, sexually assaults Agnese. This happens while Agnese is at home with her relatives, the Ascalone family. At the moment of sexual intercourse between Agnese and Peppino, everybody else is asleep because of the abundant meal that they have had for lunch. Despite her initial resistance, Agnese gives in to Peppino's advances, and as a result of their sexual intercourse, she gets pregnant.

Agnese belongs to a traditional Sicilian family ruled by her father: the authoritarian Vincenzo Ascalone. Vincenzo is a despotic and possessive man obsessed with preserving the honor and the good name of himself and of the members of his family for societal appearances. He is constantly concerned with the chastity and purity of his four daughters. He spends most of his time controlling them by telling them how to dress, speak, and think. In line with the conservative Sicilian mentality embodied by the character of Vincenzo in the movie, Agnese, her mother, and her sisters are represented according to the traditional post-war Sicilian fashions. They are dressed in a chaste manner, wearing black clothes that cover their knees, and they have thick black hair parted in the middle.

When Vincenzo finds out that his daughter has lost her virginity and is pregnant, he goes on a rampage. Because of his behavior, viewers understand Vincenzo to be uncaring—truly uninterested in Agnese's wellbeing and her desires. He does not consider his daughters to be individuals with mature feelings and emotional needs but as two-dimensional semiotic pictures that he can manipulate and present to society as idealized representations. Both Peppino and Vincenzo, the lustful seducer and the authoritative father, treat Agnese's body as a means to fulfil their personal needs. For Peppino, Agnese is the pretty, younger sister of his fiancée, whom he sexually assaulted during a hot summer afternoon because he was driven by a transient sexual desire. Peppino does not care about Agnese and about the consequences that the loss of her virginity can bring to her life. According to the mentality of Peppino's conservative society, in fact, by having sex with a man before being married, Agnese is a dishonored woman with no hope in the future of finding someone else willing to marry her.

Peppino regrets the fact that he has seduced Agnese only because he is worried about the consequences that his actions can bring to his personal life. Agnese's father, Vincenzo, in fact, after finding of Peppino's sexual intercourse with Agnese, drives Peppino to leave Agnese's sister Matilde, further demanding that Peppino marry Agnese. Peppino, however, hypocritically does not want to marry a devirginized woman, even if it is because of him that Agnese is not a virgin anymore. According to the Sicilian mentality presented in the movie, it was within a man's right to force a woman to have sex, while the woman receiving his solicitations must resist. Because Agnese yielded to the temptation of having sex with Peppino, he considers her to be a dishonest woman. Based on her loss of virginity, Peppino then refuses to marry her.

From the all-male points of view within the movie, women are objects to be traded and collected. Like Peppino with Agnese, Vincenzo considers his daughter to be property, with one damaged by Peppino's behavior. Vincenzo is furious with Peppino not because he hurt Agnese's feelings but rather because by having sex with Agnese, Peppino compromised the good reputation of Vincenzo's family. Agnese is surrounded by people that do not truly care about her feelings and her happiness. Even her sisters blame her for bringing dishonor to their family and for exposing them to the future risk of not being able to enter good marriages with respectable men because of the compromised reputation of the Ascalone's family.

Germi uses Agnese's fictional story to denounce the backwardness of the Italian Penal Code of that time. Peppino risks being accused of sexual abuse because when he had sex with Agnese, she was sixteen years old, and she was a minor. According to article 544, however, a man that committed a sexual transgression against a woman could avoid going to jail by marrying her (**Sarogni, 2018: 377**). The practice of avoiding jail by marrying the victim of rape was called *matrimonio riparatore* (wedding of repair). Italian society considered the 'wedding of repair' to be a legitimate way for the rapist to avoid jail because at that time, the Italian Penal Code defined rape as a crime against the public morality and not against the person that was raped (**Ibid: 301**). According to this way of understanding sexual abuse, a rapist goes free by preserving the good reputation of the victim's family by marrying the victim, thereby also extinguishing the crime against public morality. In *Seduced and Abandoned*, the wedding between Agnese and Peppino provides for both of their families a way to save their good names. From the perspective of Peppino's family, it would be a dishonor to have their son go to jail, while Agnese's family is dishonored by their daughter's loss of virginity and illegitimate pregnancy.

Through this scenario, it is evident that Agnese's father disregards her happiness, wellbeing, and needs while Vincenzo's and Peppino's families treat her body as an exchange of currency to establish their value in front of their community. In contradistinction, my reconfiguration of the terrona gives her agency and complete ownership of her body, which she honors and takes care of by exploring and investigating its capability of feeling physical pleasure and sensorial joy. With this film in mind, I redesigned the abused and oppressed Agnese of *Seduced and Abandoned* as the terrona figure of Agnese (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Agnese, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

In my drawing Agnese, the terrona is doubled over laughing with a stentorian voice. The terrona shows off her revealing dress that exposes her abundant breasts. In the drawing Agnese, I imagine the terrona as satirizing concepts such as family honor and female purity. She does not care about being judged as dishonorable or shameful by her community. On the contrary, she is proud about assigning importance to her body's ability to feel pleasure and sexual satisfaction. She considers the possibility of having a happy and satisfied body as an essential part of her feminist goals, and by connecting to the natural resources of her environment, she experiences happiness and wellbeing. I address this aspect of my creative reconfiguration of the terrona's stereotype by placing the drawing Agnese next to other drawings representing Mediterranean's plants and animals such as Rosemary, Hens, Chives and Pheasant (**Figures 2-5**).



Figure 2: Rosemary, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

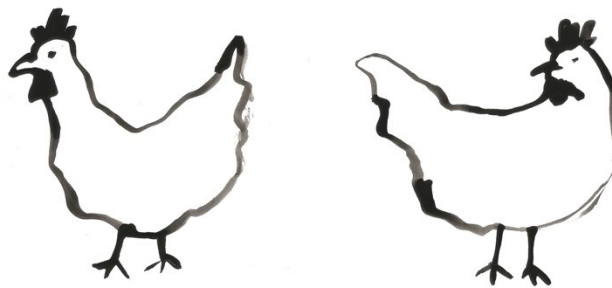


Figure 3: Hens, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

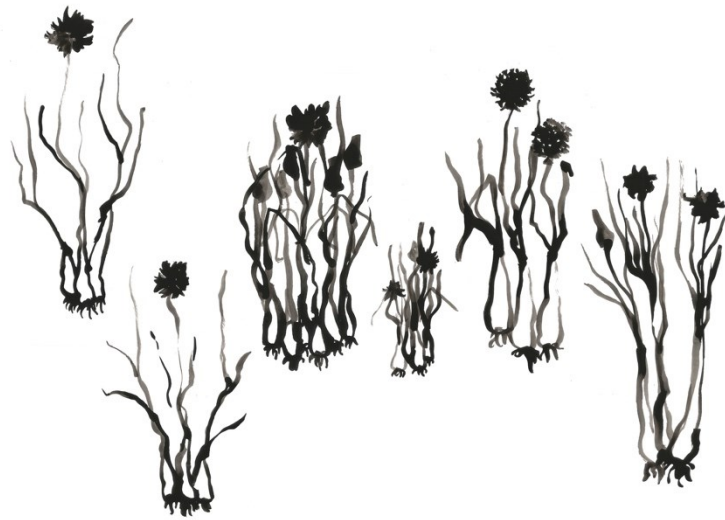


Figure 4: Chives, India Ink, 8x11, 2020



Figure 5: Pheasant, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

I also represent my reconfiguration of Agnese's character in the drawing T-Spot (**Figure 6**). The title T-Spot refers to the G-spot, also called Gräfenberg spot, from the German nineteenth-century gynaecologist Ernst Gräfenberg. As Terence Hines addresses in *The G-Spot: A Modern Gynecologic Myth* (2001), the G-spot is supposed to be an exceptionally sensitive area of the vagina that, when stimulated, can lead to strong orgasms and female ejaculation (*ibid*: 360). By recalling the G-spot, the drawing T-spot suggests the terrona's point of extreme arousal. The terrona's spot, differently from the G-spot, does not refer to an internal area of the female body; rather, it refers to the environment where she

lives. The T-spot, which represents the south of Italy, its food traditions, its smells, and its landscape, is a place capable of arousing the terrona's sensorial enjoyment. I placed T-spot next to other drawings referring to the south of Italy, such as Sheep (**Figure 7**), Ricotta (**Figure 8**), and Pastiera (**Figure 9**). These drawings show figures of a sheep, a cheese made with the sheep's milk (ricotta), and a cake made with ricotta cheese (pastiera). By situating the drawings in this way, I suggest a variety of enveloping haptic perceptions, from the landscape where the sheep lives, to the taste of the cheese made with its milk, to the smell of the fresh-baked cake made with ricotta cheese. By placing the orgasmic terrona represented in T-spot next to Sheep, Ricotta, and Pastiera, I imagine a connection between the terrona's ecological skills of breeding goats, making cheese, and preparing delicious cakes and the talent of activating her pleasure.



Figure 6: T-Spot, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

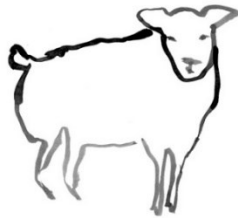


Figure 7: Sheep, India Ink, 8x11, 2020



Figure 8: Ricotta, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

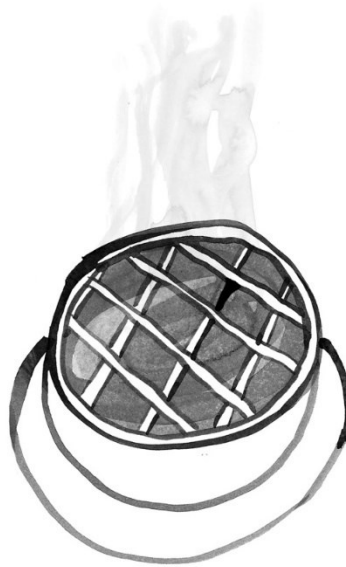


Figure 9: Pastiera, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

In my research, I also reflect on how southern Italian novelists connect the terrona's sexualization operated by man to man's desire for food. My intention is to destabilize this association, making it more about pleasure for the terrona—in her body activated by food. Author Tomasi di Lampedusa addresses the connection between the male appetite for food and a man's desire to possess the terrona's body in the novel *The Leopard*. The book is set in Sicily in the 19th century, and it describes a lunch organized by the protagonist of the novel, the prince of Salina. Among the lunch's guests, there is the beautiful Angelica, a rich young woman belonging to the bourgeoisie. By describing the banquet, Tomasi di Lampedusa parallels the attractiveness of Angelica's body to the deliciousness of the timballo di maccheroni (pasta casserole). During the banquet, both the prince of Salina and his nephew Tancredi fantasize about possessing Angelica's body, and they compare the consumption of Angelica's body with the pleasure they are experiencing about eating their maccheroni casserole (Tomasi di Lampedusa, 2018: 91-94).

Tomasi di Lampedusa describes Angelica as a tall and proportioned seventeen-year-old woman. The author compares her complexion to food by saying that her face evokes the taste of fresh whipped cream and her mouth has a childish expression evoking the flavor of strawberries (Ibid: 92). By describing the banquet, Tomasi di Lampedusa associates Angelica's beauty with the tastiness of the maccheroni. Just as Angelica did, the maccheroni provokes desire and admiration when it appears. Three servants dressed in green, gold, and beige enter the room, bringing a gigantic silver plate containing the casserole. The vision of the maccheroni

is welcomed by the prince's family and his guests with manifestations of joy and admiration. The crust of the casserole has a bronzed gold color, and it emanates a scent of sugar and cinnamon. This scent is the prelude to the casserole's filling deliciousness that gets disclosed by cutting its crust. By ripping the maccheroni's crust, aromas erupt from the stuffing that is made with chicken, ham, and truffles. This sauce forms an oily and warm mass having a suede color (**ibid: 93**). The diners devour the delicious meal with ecstatic joy. The priest makes the sign of the cross and he dives into the meal. The organist eats the pasta by absorbing the deliciousness of the maccheroni with his eyes closed. Angelica forgets the good manners that she learnt in the expensive college in Florence where she studied, and she devours the casserole with the appetite of a seventeen-year-old (**ibid: 93**). According to Tomasi di Lampedusa, the food tastes so delicious and everybody had such a great appetite because a sensual aura brought by Angelica entered into the prince's house (**ibid: 94**).

The person that was more attracted by Angelica's body was Tancredi, the prince's nephew, and while he eats the maccheroni he also fantasizes about the taste of Angelica's kisses (**ibid: 94**). At the same time, the prince, despite being a fifty-year-old married man, also desires Angelica's body, and he is jealous about Tancredi's possibility of possessing her. Later in the novel, when the prince finds out about a kiss between Tancredi and Angelica, he expresses his jealousy by comparing Tancredi's experience of kissing Angelica to the one of enjoying the taste of fresh strawberries. By doing this, the prince regrets the fact that he will never be able to experience such a taste (**ibid: 133**).

By considering Tomasi di Lampedusa's association between sexual attraction and appetite, I imagine the terrona while eating delicious meals prepared by her by using the best ingredients cultivated in the territory where she lives. The terrona's gustatory pleasure implements her sexual gratification as a consequence of the knowledge she has about her body and about her corporeal needs. However, differently from the prince of Salina and from Tancredi, the terrona does not feel the necessity of objectifying and sexualizing another human body to experience this combination of appetite and sexual drive. Rather, in my drawing Angelica, the terrona is represented as eating a giant plate of spaghetti and as enjoying herself while savoring with her closed eyes the flavor of its sauce (**Figure 10**).



Figure 10: Angelica, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

In my reconfiguration, I image the terrona as experiencing physical wellbeing while also practicing ecological activities. I imagine her while preparing her food by considering the biodiversity and the sustainability of its ingredients. The terrona is an expert regarding the gastronomic southern Italian popular culture, which is based on the use of simple ingredients and where during the cooking process, as little as possible of the food's nutrients are wasted. By considering this perspective, the terrona in the drawing *Pasta Ammuddicata* (**Figure 11**) (pasta with breadcrumbs) has prepared a traditional Sicilian recipe by using simple ingredients and leftovers, such as the stale bread. The pasta ammuddicata is made by reducing the stale bread into crumbs. The crumbs are toasted in a pan with some garlic and extra virgin olive oil. By doing this, the pasta acquires a crunchy texture. When the crumbs are ready, they are mixed with anchovies, capers, and hot pepper.



Figure 11: Pasta Ammuddicata, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

The connection between man's appetite and sexual drive is also addressed by Vitaliano Brancati, a southern Italian novelist. Brancati, in *Paolo il Caldo* (2015), tells the story of a Sicilian erotomaniac nobleman, Paolo Castorini. The story is set at the end of the nineteenth century. Paolo is presented as a negative portrait of the dissolute and impulsive southern Italian male, affected by an uncontrollable lustfulness. Paolo's family is composed of other lustful and aggressive men, such as Paolo's grandfather, Baron Paolo, and Paolo's uncle, Edmondo. They are portrayed as impulsive men, always trying to seduce women and possessing a tremendous craving for food. They are not interested in politics, and they enjoy their condition as wealthy noblemen, never questioning their privilege, spending their days pursuing physical pleasure by consuming food, alcohol, and women. In the novel, the gazes of the Castorini family's members are described as being so full of lust that it is not possible to look at more than the three of them and not be hit by an electric shock. Their beastly expressions are flabby and aggressive at the same time, and they communicate a mixture of numbness and sweet seduction where the sudden desire for their prey appears and disappears in a flash. Their eyes look like bullets that are about to explode. When they are seen all together in the family's portraits, they produce in the viewer intimidation and confusion.

Baron Paolo, Paolo's grandfather, is described at the beginning of the novel as a fifty-eight-year-old man. Brancati compares his eyes to those of beasts, and like them, it is never possible to tell where they are looking and what they are seeing. The collar of Baron Paolo's dress is always loose

to allow his neck's arteries to freely pulse. His mouth always has a lewd smile, even when he is distracted or while he is sleeping. This is the result of the baron's habit of sending kisses to every attractive woman that he sees. To send his kisses, the baron uses to protrude his lips that are damp with his saliva while his eyes are half-closed, like those of a dog lying in the sun. He is so used to sending kisses in this way that during every conversation with a good-looking woman, he uses to approve each of her sentences by assuming this expression (**Brancati, 2015: 107**).

Brancati addresses the relationship between food and sexual drive experienced by the members of the Castorini family by describing a lunch that the family has with two of their guests, a marquis and a knight. The lunch is also attended by Paolo's father, Michele. Unlike other men in the family, Michele is described as pale, small, reserved, and as having no appetite (157). While Michele arrives at the lunch with no desire for food, the other members of the Castorini family wait for Michele's arrival with their faces red because of their hunger. They are trying to contain their appetite by chewing little appetizers such as fried potatoes, olives, and sardines. The first course is a soup that is followed by a rice pie with a stuffing made of hard-boiled eggs, chicken's entrails, ricotta cheese, and pieces of sausages. Everybody except Michele take a big portion of the rice pie, followed by a second piece (**Ibid: 166**). After the rice pie, the diners have a turkey stuffed with veal and vegetables, a big mullet covered with mayonnaise, a lamb with a side of baked onions, and a mixture of fried goatfish and squid. The Castorini family consumes the lunch with voracity, and the baron's consumption of food and wine has the consequence of arousing his sexual drive. Because of this, he avoids looking at the women in the room such as his daughter-in-law (Michele's wife) and his waitresses. After eating and drinking, his sexual desire is so uncontrollable that any woman that is close to him runs the risk of being sexually assaulted (**Ibid: 172**).

In the novel, the character of the baron and his mixture of appetite and sexual desire is placed in opposition to that of his son, Michele, who, instead of enjoying lunch with his family, used an excuse to go back to his studio because he was annoyed by his father's behavior. Considered an outsider by his family members, Michele is presented as being passionate about philosophy, history, and politics. He observes the living conditions of the servants and farmers working for his family, and he embraces socialist ideas while reflecting on the moral implications of being a nobleman. The rest of the Castorini family, instead, take their privileges for granted. In addition to having a different vision of life, Michele is also physically dissimilar from his son, his father, and his brother. This difference is due to the fact that when he was born, his father was suffering from syphilis, which he transmitted to Michele's mother while

she was pregnant with Michele. The outcome was that Michele was always sick, suffering from low blood pressure, digestive problems, and a lack of sexual desire.

Despite Michele's poor health, his son Paolo was born healthy and vigorous, and his approach to life is dissolute and lustful as those of his grandfather and his uncle. Paolo, in fact, while speaking with one of his friends, states that the only joy he has in life is that of conquering women, and he considers art, science, work, and politics to be boring and useless (**Ibid: 431**). Paolo's indifference toward politics is exemplified by his encounter in Rome with an attractive southern Italian parliamentarian woman. While she is having a talk about the problems that have afflicted the southern Italian population, such as poverty, unemployment, and illnesses, the only thing Paolo could think about was imagining her without clothes (**Ibid: 418**). Brancati parallels Paolo's relationship with women to the one that cannibals have with the human flesh that causes them to experience appetite and salivation. Paolo is incapable of valuing women's personalities and appreciating their thoughts. Every time Paolo speaks with a woman, his obsession with sex entirely devours him while any rational and contemplative activity of his brain burns and disintegrates (**Ibid: 660**).

In my reconfiguration of the southern Italian woman, I consider Paolo's approach to sex and food as well as the one experienced by his father Michele and his grandfather, the baron. The terrona, in stark contrast to Paolo and his grandfather, does not live a decadent life uninformed about the problems related to her society. Rather, in the same way as Michele does, she has political and social concerns. However, unlike Michele, she loves life, and she is capable of feeling pleasure by enjoying sex and good food. The terrona's way of experiencing gustatory pleasure, however, is not wanton and inconsiderate like the way it is practiced by Paolo and the baron. It is rather connected to her intellectual interests involving ecology and social justice, and she consumes her food consciously by considering how it is cultivated, distributed, and prepared.

By considering this investigation, in my drawing pizza (**Figure 12**), I imagine the terrona as relating to her slice of pizza from a gustatory, ecological, and political perspective. Pizza is associated with fast food, where the underpaid staff serves food that has been prepared with low-quality ingredients. The food represented in the drawing pizza is consumed by the terrona as a product made with locally-sourced products, as it is prepared in the south of Italy. By relating to her food, the my re-designed terrona does not only enjoy its taste; she knows how the pizza is prepared and how its ingredients are cultivated by the farmers working in the agricultural sector. She administrates the processes that constitute the food supply

chain by making sure that the products are cultivated and prepared by respecting the environment and that the workers are fairly paid.



Figure 12: Pizza, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

The terrona's capability to feel physical pleasure that I have discussed by analyzing the drawings T-Spot, Agnese, Angelica, Pasta Ammuddicata and Pizza have also been inspired by the character of Modesta (Modesty), the protagonist of the novel *The Art of Joy* (1976) written by the Sicilian writer Goliarda Sapienza (2014). The protagonist of *The Art of Joy* is Modesta, a Sicilian woman who was born on the first of January 1900--the novel is about her long life that runs across the entire twentieth century. Her extremely poor family is composed of her mother and her disabled sister. The father, a sailor, has abandoned them, and he comes back into Modesta's life only to rape her when she is still underage. This miserable beginning to Modesta's life changes in adolescence, during which she understands that her intelligence and her beauty can be used to change her condition of misery and to achieve 'joy' (to which the title of the book refers). Modesta is described in the novel as being vital and ambitious and as ready to seduce men and women to pursue her objectives and to satisfy her physical pleasure.

She is a controversial character capable of killing in order to obtain her goals, while at the same time protecting and caring about her friends. She is always present as a caring partner, ready to help and sustain her loved ones. She is also attractive and smart, and she possesses an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge. However, Modesta does not use her charm and intelligence to achieve power and richness. Modesta's principal desire is to live a free life composed of knowledge, affection, health, and physical pleasure.

In the novel, Sapienza shows how Modesta is interested in exploring her body and understanding her sexuality from the beginning of her adolescence. In her teenage years, Modesta finds out that she can feel pleasure by touching her genitals. Similarly to other fictional characters that I have analyzed before, Modesta associates sex with food by describing masturbation as a stronger experience than the one she feels by eating freshly baked bread (**Ibid: 24**). At the same time, Modesta associates her desire of experiencing sex to the experience of seeing the sea for the first time. This association is exemplified by Modesta's relationship with Tuzzu, a young farmer that she likes. Tuzzu is described as having blue eyes that Modesta correlates with having the same color as the sea. Tuzzu knows how the sea looks, and Modesta always asks him to describe it to her. Modesta's desire to discover how the sea appears symbolizes her adventurous personality and her desire of pursuing pleasure, knowledge, freedom, and joy.

Modesta manages to change her condition from that of a poor farmer and to that of a joyful and satisfying existence by obtaining economic independence, surrounding herself with affection, experimenting in having sex with men and women, becoming a mother, and getting involved in the political antifascist activity against Mussolini's regime.



Figure 13: Modesta, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

In my drawing Modesta (**Figure 13**), I represent Modesta's first encounter with the Mediterranean Sea. In the novel, Modesta's experience of seeing the ocean for the first time is parallel to her conquest of independence and joy. The sea is described as a liquid-overlapped sky that quietly runs away in the direction of boundless freedom. Looking at the sea, Modesta has the impression of breathing for the first time. While thinking about the hard work she has done to change her circumstances and to move from being a poor and uneducated peasant into being a wealthy and independent woman, she cries for the first time (**Sapienza, 2014: 327**). In my drawing Modesta, I address Modesta's way of experiencing the sea as a metaphor of her accomplished freedom and fulfilment by representing the terrona while dipping her feet in the sea. Her eyes are closed while she smells the freshness of the salty wind, and she enjoys the marine breeze that moves her hair and caresses her skin.

Insomuch that the sea represents a central element of the terrona's environment and it determines her haptic life, in my research, I consider the effects that the sea has on the human body and its wellbeing. The scholar Deborah Cracknell in *By the Sea* (**2019**) addresses how spending time at the beach is an intensive experience that involves all the five senses and presupposes the sight of the sea, the listening of the waves, the taste of the salty water, and the skin contact with the water and the sand. These sensorial sensations are experienced by the body in a positive way that improve the person's wellbeing (**Ibid: 72**). The experience of swimming in the sea is an immersive practice, and it represents a way to relate to the

natural environment that is impracticable on the mainland. Scientific research has demonstrated that swimming in the sea contributes to reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. It also supports good sleep (74).

According to Cracknell, one of the main benefits acquired by spending time by the sea is being directly exposed to the sun and increasing the body's production of vitamin D. This has the consequence of regulating the quantities of calcium and phosphate in the body, which determines the health of the bones, teeth, and muscles. Vitamin D also has consequences for a person's immune system which defends the body from the attacks of external organisms, and it has the capability of distinguishing the person's cells from the ones that do not belong to them. If for some reason, the immune system does not recognize the person's tissues, it can attack them as if they were an external organism. This autoimmune response can cause a variety of pathologies such as diabetes, psoriasis, arthritis, and lupus. The lack of vitamin D is also connected to metabolic syndrome, which is associated with pathologies such as abdominal obesity, high blood pressure, abnormal levels of cholesterol, and high level of sugar in the blood. The coexistence of these problems can bring about cardiovascular pathologies and strokes (**Ibid: 60-61**).



Figure 14: Vitamin D, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

With this health-conscious, sea-related research in mind, in my drawing Vitamin D (**Figure 14**), the terrona is depicted as spending time at the beach and as setting aside her towel to take in the sun. Because she can access the benefits provided by living close to the sea, I imagine the terrona as a woman who is not concerned about aging and getting sick

because she expects to live a long and healthy life made of sensorial pleasure and physical and mental strength that assist her in her political and managerial activities. According to this, in the drawing *Immersive Experience* (**Figure 15**), the terrona is represented as swimming in the sea and providing to her body and to her mood all the benefits offered by her contact with the Mediterranean Sea.



Figure 15: Immersive Experience, India Ink, 8x11, 2020



Figure 16: Ionizing Walk, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

By considering the benefits provided by spending time at the beach, in my drawing *Ionizing Walk* (**Figure 16**), I show the terrona walking on the beach and breathing in the sea breeze. She breathes the air that is close to the sea which is rich in negative ions (**Bonsignori, 2011: 116**). After reaching the person's blood circulation, the negative ions produce biochemical reactions that improve the levels of the chemical serotonin in the person's body (**ibid: 118**). The negative ions facilitate the assumption of oxygen in the lungs; they favor the good performance of the body's functions; they improve the immunity defenses, and they have positive effects on the activities of the cardiovascular, endocrine, and nervous systems (**ibid: 119**). In this way, the terrona represented in *Ionizing Walk*, by frequently experiencing the positive effects of walking on the beach, strengthens her body and improves her mood.

In my reflection about the terrona's physical pleasure, in addition of considering the sensations that she experiences by connecting with her environment, I also consider the pleasure that she experiences by eating food. Because of this, in my research, I investigate the Mediterranean diet and the way it affects the person's body and mood. The concept of a Mediterranean diet was introduced by the scientist Ancel Keys after the Second World War in his work: *How to Eat Well and Stay Well: The Mediterranean Way* (**1975**). Ancel Keys was a professor at the University of Minnesota in the 1950s; he conducted research on the lifestyle of the population living in Cilento, an area close to Naples. Keys noticed that despite their difficult living conditions caused by the damage of the Second World War, the population living in this region had a life expectancy that was 15% higher than someone of the American high middle class. Keys also noticed that, differently from the American population, the deaths that were caused by heart attacks in Cilento were almost nonexistent. Keys decided to spend the rest of his life in this region because he was convinced that the diet of the poor southern Italian population based on fresh vegetables, fruits, extra virgin olive oil, legumes, bread, pasta, and wine was the secret of living a long and healthy life.

Given these observations, in my reconfiguration, I consider the terrona's agri-food skills as a talent that allows her to invest a ruling position in the government of her society. In the drawing *Decision Making Committee* (**Figure 17**), the terrona is represented while she gets ready to take part in a meeting about the management and the improvement of the southern Italian resources adopted in its agri-food chain. To address this narration, I placed *Decision Making Committee* next to the drawings *Octopus*, *Nettle*, *Strawberries*, *Garlic*, *Onion*, and *Celery* (**Figures 18-23**) to display the terrona next to some of the ingredients that compose the Mediterranean gastronomic tradition. By doing this, I intend to present imaginative and

possible ways to connect woman's subjectivity and ecology in a way that benefits both.



Figure 17: Decision Making Committee, India Ink, 8x11, 2020



Figure 18: Octopus, India Ink, 8x11, 2020



Figure 19: Nettle, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

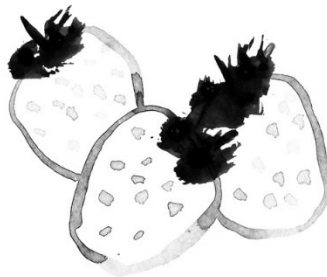


Figure 20: Strawberries, India Ink, 8x11, 2020



Figure 21: Garlic, India Ink, 8x11, 2020



Figure 22: Onion, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

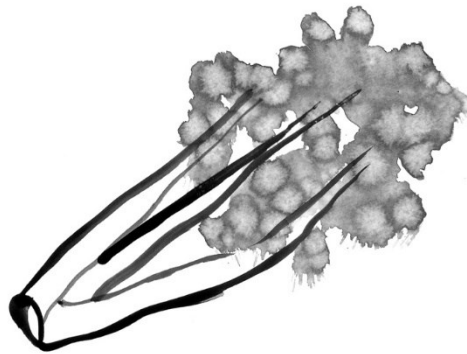
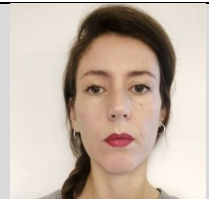


Figure 23: *Celery*, India Ink, 8x11, 2020

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Note: All illustrations included in this article are the author's own creations.

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