Food as an Expression of Identity in *Big Night* (1996)

Olivia CHIROBOCEA
Ovidius University of Constanţa

Abstract: *Big Night* is an American film released in 1996 that deals with questions of identity and ethnicity expressed through food and art. It is the story of two brothers, Italian immigrants, living in 1950s America and trying to keep their restaurant in business by making and selling traditional Italian dishes, unknown to the average Americans who do not appreciate their exotic foods. The film records the clash between two cultures and the struggle of those caught in the middle. Food is central in the film as it is revealing of ethnicity, identity, it represents the language through which the protagonists express their feelings and thoughts, it is a manifestation of artistic talent and symbolic for the structure of the film and of the other characters. The protagonists are trying to adapt to the rigors of American capitalism while remaining true to their identity and heritage, two concepts that prove antagonistic and incompatible. This struggle will challenge their core beliefs and values.
Keywords: food, identity, immigrant, heritage, art, *Big Night*.

Introduction

Big Night, a film co-directed and co-produced by Stanley Tucci and Scott Campbell, and released in 1996 has a simple story that revolves around two brothers, Primo and Secondo Pilaggi, new immigrants, who left the old country, in an Europe that was recovering from the devastating Second World War, to America, the land of promise and opportunity, whose economy was booming in the 1950s and prosperity was but around the corner. Here, they are trying to keep their restaurant afloat while cooking great traditional Italian food that American customers do no appreciate. On the verge of bankruptcy, Secondo asks Pascal, their rival from across the street, for help. Pascal, the owner of a very successful Italian restaurant, refuses to loan them money but offers to help boost their popularity by using a good marketing idea: invite a celebrity to increase the visibility of the place and the word-of-mouth traffic. The brothers accept and they use their last financial resources and their best ability to prepare the most extraordinary meal they can in a special event created for the famous musician and bandleader Louis Prima, the *big night*.

Most of the characters are clear in their purpose. Primo is an artist above all. Whereas Italians, more that any other nationality, are defined by their cuisine and love of food, there is no doubt Primo would have been just the same genius in the

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kitchen regardless of ethnicity. So, he is firstly an artist, but secondly, through his ethnicity, a keeper of the cultural heritage. His identity is clear, to him and the viewers. He will not compromise, he will not lower his standards, he will not sacrifice his art and heritage for the sake of money. Pascal also has a clear identity. He renounced his heritage, in fact abused it in order to please the American tastes and thus gained financial success. He knows what he is, a businessman, and what that means, adapting yourself to the trends in order to make money. He is not ashamed of his choices, but he is not ignorant either, as he recognizes Primo's value and artistry. Secondo, however, is caught in between these two extremes. He vacillates between his heritage, the tradition and the high standards held by his brother whom he understands and respects, and the main reason they came to America, to make money. His identity is in crisis and he is always shown torn between two choices: make art or money, love Gabriella or Phyllis. While he also cooks and helps Primo in the kitchen, his main task is running the business and interacting with the customers, being a buffer between Primo's tempestuous temperament and the ignorance of the customers who do not understand his artistry.

Food and ethnicity – identity perspectives

The motion picture is defined by some critics as a "food film" [Stack, 1996; Rogers, 2016], which means food can be recognized as a protagonist. And in a film where each character, big or small, is deftly constructed, they are all layered like the quintessential Italian dish that dazzles the audience in *Big Night*, the *timpano*: the food, as protagonist, is the crust that holds the film together, the main characters are the pasta that is the basis of the *timpano* and the minor characters are the many ingredients that make up the colorful filling of the *timpano*, "the most important things in the world"[1], as Primo says. Throughout the film, food is discussed in terms akin to religious reverence ("To eat good food is to be close to God"), while visually, the film is an authentic feast for the eyes. Roger Ebert, the celebrated film critic, describes *Big Night* as a film about food "not as a subject but as a language – the language by which one can speak to gods, can create, can seduce, can aspire to perfection." [Ebert, 1996]. And indeed, food serves the protagonists as a means to communicate their feelings and thoughts, to embrace their identity.

Identity is in fact the main theme in *Big Night*, and it is expressed through culinary preferences, through ethnicity or through a choice between art or business, which are shown to be incompatible. Ethnicity constructs identity to a large extent but stops at some point where individuality takes over and *Big Night* speaks about both. The film analyzes identity from different perspectives and it is layered just like the *timpano*. Ethnicity is considerably marked by the culinary preferences of each nation, while individuality is marked by the personal choices we make in spite of our cultural background. While America has always been characterized by its mixture of ethnicities and races, ethnic food did not make it into the mainstream

[1] *Big Night*. Dir. Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci. Rysher Entertainment and Timpano Production, 1996. Film. All further citations are from this film.

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space until much later in its history, namely the second half of the 20th century. And that was largely because the state policy was to promote homogeneity and discourage ethnicity, which was also represented by food. In the 1910s and 1920s, the "school's agenda labeled the diversity of ethnic food habits as un-American" [Cinotto in Sciorra 2011:15]. The New York schools at the time had a population of over 50 percent southern and eastern European immigrant children and their goal was to make them loyal Americans which could only be done by erasing ethnicity, by teaching them English, having them salute the flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, or admire American heroes [Cinotto in Sciorra 2011:15]. Ethnic foods like Mexican or Italian or Chinese were discouraged, worse, derided, considered inferior, a mark of *otherness*, shameful, unpatriotic and subversive even, not part of the great American project. However, each ethnicity that contributed to the mosaic of American society maintained its spirit and food played a major role in this endeavor.

In discussing ethnicity and integration, Simone Cinotto offers a study of the integration of Italian immigrants into the American population at the beginning and along the entire 20th century, with its separate phases, each phase, in fact, each generation relinquishing more of the Italian identity and giving way to the American one. Thus, the patriarchal traditions of the Old Country had to be given up more and more as the children of the immigrants had contact with other realities outside the house, were educated at school with other principles, interacted with the majority population of Anglo-Saxon descent and their rules which they adopted to a large extent, becoming Americans. The school education second-generation Italian-American children received introduced tension in the home as the parents resisted these new principles and stuck by the old ones, while the children were torn between their openness to the new and the traditions of their parents [Cinotto in Sciorra 2011:15-16]. So their identity was in a constant state of crisis, torn between the Italian family and the American society they wanted to belong to. Food, as part of this struggle, was also caught in the fire. Culinary tastes also changed in light of other factors. Given the prosperity and higher living standards in America, immigrants had access to foods that in Italy were normally accessible only to the rich and, generally, it was Italian immigrants from the south of Italy that stuck to the principles of traditional Italian food [Cinotto in Sciorra 2011:16]. The *timpano* cooked in the film is a secret recipe of the Tucci family, brought to America from the southern region of Calabria by Stanley Tucci's great grandmother in 1904 [Bower, 2004:45], therefore, we can easily infer that the two protagonists in Tucci's screenplay, Primo and Secondo, are from the same part of Italy, which explains Primo's attachment to traditional cooking.

However, when most aspects of the immigrants' lives were assimilated, the only tradition that was kept without fault was the importance of family and the cooking of traditional Italian food that gathered the extended family around this last remaining bit of ethnic identity, which was also turned into a stereotypical view of the Italian-American [Bower, 2004:11], as Cinotto observes, and perpetuated by scholars and popular culture alike. James R. Keller also stresses the same idea:

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> Peculiar culinary indulgences are often the final remains of a culture that has been thoroughly integrated into a more powerful, more diverse, or more contemporary social system. The members of a particular ethnicity retain their taste for specific foods and spices long after they have discarded other manifestations of cultural difference such as dress or language. [Keller, 2006:132].

Being an immigrant is not an easy condition and food is a little piece of the home left behind, it is what still remains when every other aspect of life is integrated into the host country. Primo, being so personally involved in the preparation of food, resists this very temptation for assimilation and wants to maintain this aspect of his identity pure: Italian food is what he cooks, not the abused version simplified for the untrained American palate. Secondo, on the contrary, in order to save their business, he would like to make the compromise and give the customers what they want, but cannot find understanding in Primo.

Identity expressed through the opposition Italian cuisine / American tastes

Along the topic of ethnicity, the other perspective on identity offered by the film is the choice between American and Italian cuisine, in fact, the clash between the cultures behind these concepts. Ahead of their times, the two brothers want to educate tastes but instead have to go through the drama of being misunderstood which leads to bankruptcy. This is because the American public at that time was used to blander dishes, mostly Anglo-Saxon in origin (also a cuisine famous for its lack of taste) and Italian food was simplified to suit this requirement. Anne L. Bower remarks the following in this regard:

> American cooking in the 1950s largely remained English in nature, featuring plain and unseasoned preparations like roast, looking with suspicion on difference, change, and exotic spices. In a very real sense, the Italian-American 'food choice' of spaghetti with tomato sauce and meatballs is much more authentic for many Americans than is a *timpano* or *risotto.* [Bower, 2004:45]

It was later, in the 1960s and 1970s that Americans opened up to more exotic cuisines, as Julia Child published *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961) and "the average American began to taste and appreciate the delights of fine Italian cuisine" [Zimmerman, 2009:389].

While America in the 1950s was a largely conservative society with fixed gender roles and a heavy propaganda for the nuclear family, society was also moving at a fast pace from the economic point of view and this in turn triggered tensions that exploded in the 1960s in the form of the well-known sexual revolution and rise of the civil rights movements. This surge of traditionally repressed minorities opened the path to a celebration of all their modes of expression, food being one of them. However, the speed of social change meant

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America was not interested in learning but just in absorbing others' experience. Bower concludes: "Italy has long traditions and a firmly entrenched, self-regulating history. America seemingly cares little about this knowledge; it just wants the experience without the learning. Americans want to import the tradition without taking the time to form it for themselves." [Bower, 2004:48]. And this is symptomatic of every American walk of life.

An important difference between the culinary aspects of America and Italy, or in fact any other country is that history, geography and climate shaped their specific cuisine and imbued it with centuries of traditions and cultural particularities. Most traditional dishes, be they Italian or Mexican or Scottish or Romanian or otherwise, take time to prepare, the cooking is usually done in several stages, and are always made from scratch. And this is the consequence of history. A century or ten centuries ago there was no canned tomato juice or ready-made pasta or other mass produced ingredients. The food was elaborate, laborious, and time-consuming but it was enjoyed by all the members of the family that gathered for lunch or dinner every day.

Opposed to this, America mostly absorbed other cultures' gastronomical customs and adapted them to its taste. Bower notes in this regard:

> Although Americans appreciate the taste of foreign foods, they have often appropriated it into their own cuisine and changed it to suit their taste. The American palate is more likely to accept generalized versions of authentic cuisine, homogenized and simplified to suit a blander palate. [Bower, 2004:48]

When someone thinks American food, they probably think of apple pie, large beef steak, hamburgers, meatloaf, French fries with ketchup, boiled corn, coleslaw, and cranberry sauce, the foods normally popularized in movies and TV shows. More than anything else, however, America is the creator of fast-food, something that comes in direct opposition to the laborious dishes characteristic of other nations. And this concept too characterizes every American walk of life. It is one of the most established American exports. Some of the most famous fast-food chains were founded or turned into franchises in the 1950s: McDonald's (1940 as a barbeque restaurant, 1955 as corporation), KFC (1930 first restaurant, 1952 first franchise), Burger King (1953-54). And with this concept, America was entering the era of standardized food. All these chains mentioned above and others like them are based exactly on this principle, that regardless of location everything looks and tastes exactly the same. Efficiency and speed are again at the root of this fast-food concept. All these types of restaurants look like an assembly line, while the employees are like robots uttering a previously approved text with set-phrases. It is the company policy that eliminates dissent as none of the employees have any creative role, the food being pre-made, just meant to be assembled. *Big Night* is set exactly at that moment in time, the 1950s, the beginning of this trend that eroded irreversibly into American and Western society, the clash between the old and the new, between slow and fast, tradition and modernity.

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The treatment of food is symbolic for this clash of cultures and the film reflects this view, as Bower suggests: "to be Italian is to love the experience of food as a form unto itself, in the planning, the creating, and the eating; to be American is to lack the experience and knowledge of complexity yet to want 'it all' in its glory." [Bower, 2004:44]. In conclusion, the American way is the appropriation of results without the bother of the labor that exists behind them. Efficiency is paramount and anything too time-consuming is rejected and replaced with simpler methods that lead to similar results. In making the comparison between Italian cuisine and American expectations, Bower notes that while Italian food is all about variety, American food is all about standardization [Bower, 2004:45]. In this regard, and with direct reference to the film, she also gives the example of the spectacular *timpano*, which is a quintessential Italian dish, but "there are as many *timpano* recipes as there are regions in Italy" and "even cooks from the same region or town may have slightly different ways of preparing the dish" [Bower, 2004:44].

Primo does not accept compromise, does not want to lower his standards for the sake of customers' unrefined tastes, or for money or to save time. As James R. Keller puts it: "Primo's artistic integrity includes a repudiation of American pragmatism and commercialism. He is the immigrant who refuses to melt into the pot, who refuses to conform to the business axiom that 'the customer is always right'" [Keller, 2006:133]. He always cooks everything from scratch, which is why it takes time and effort. A customer at the beginning of the film reproaches this to Secondo as he brings her a plate of *risotto*: "It took so long, I thought you went all the way back to Italy to get it". Primo does not approve of Secondo's idea to cut the *risotto* from the menu because it is expensive and takes time to make, even though many customers do not understand this dish. Primo pours his heart and his artistry into making the seafood *risotto*. It is a family recipe, meaning it is loaded with emotional implication, with the history of the family and of the village where the family used to live. The American customers see only the disappointing plate of rice which is not what they *heard* this dish should be and demand enhancements, such as a side of pasta with meatballs, which outright insults Primo to the core. Pascal, on the other hand, understands the American taste, as well as the business requirements and caters to them both. In fact, this is one of the core principles in his businessman mentality: "A guy goes out to eat in the evening after a long day in the office. He don't want on his plate something that he has to look and think what the ---- is this? What he wants is… hey, steak, this is a steak. I like steak. You know? Mm, I'm happy!" He has no problem bastardizing Italian food to the caricature left, large portions of spaghetti with meatballs, the only thing Americans understand and know for sure to be Italian food. Anything else is foreign, suspicious and strange, in one word, un-American. Pascal also understands the importance of appearance, while Primo thinks "people should just come for the food" and not care about vanities such as the ornaments of the restaurant. Quality should matter, not quantity. But reality shows that is not the case, and the trickle of customers their restaurant has is not enough to save them from foreclosure.

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Artist or businessman – a challenge to identity

Another perspective on identity in the film is the choice between art and money. Primo is clearly the artist, not relinquishing his high standards and artistic vision, and Pascal is clearly the businessman, willing to do anything that may contribute to this financial prosperity, including bankrupting the two brothers in order to capitalize on their misery, namely to employ them, as his long-standing desire is to add Primo to his valuable assets ("He's a great investment, your brother"). Secondo, however, is torn between these two extremes. He came to America to make his fortune, he had to convince his brother Primo to come because he is in fact the kitchen artist and counted on the fact that Primo's talent would amaze America and make them rich. Like all immigrants, he believes America to be the land of opportunity ("In Italy there is nothing but history"), he believes in the American dream and he expresses this opinion to Pascal in one of their conversations: "In Italy, you work hard and there is nothing. But here, you work hard and… [*he gestures going up a ladder of success*]". This plan backfired as it is Primo's very mentality that hindered their success in a world that is more interested in stereotype, standardization and speed, in display at the expense of essence.

Secondo's identity is in crisis. On the one hand, he appreciates and respects Primo enough not to intervene in his vision of things, he takes over the more mundane aspects of their endeavor, the business aspects, the financial troubles, leaving Primo in his ivory tower of creation. He never bothers him with details about the lack of money and, unsuccessfully, just tries to steer his brother into making more commercial dishes, maybe give up the more expensive and time-consuming ones. He believes himself the adult in this relationship, the one that has to bear the brunt of their failing business. Sometimes he cooks alongside his brother, but he always bows to Primo's artistry. He defends him and his talent, and places him on a superior step above all others. In a final confrontation with Pascal at the end of the film, Secondo tells him: "You will never have my brother. He live in a world above you. What he has and what he is is rare. You are nothing." Of course, Pascal's response contains a question regarding Secondo's own identity: "I'm a businessman. I'm anything I need to be at any time. Tell me, what exactly are you?"

On the other hand, he wants to be successful here, in America. He is determined not to go back which he regards as an admission of failure. But his determination is not so strong, otherwise, he would have done anything to succeed, just like Pascal. His nature and background prevent him from being ruthless, from giving up on family. These principles are deeply-rooted inside him although he would prefer to ignore them. His relationships with the two women in his life are also telling of this inner-struggle. He secretly conducts an affair with Pascal's wife, Gabriella, while officially being in a chaste relationship with the American Phyllis. The two women, though representing two opposite cultural spaces, are more alike than one may think. While comparing each character to a particular ingredient in the complex *timpano*, Anne L. Bower assimilates Gabriella and Phyllis to the hard-boiled eggs [Bower, 2004:52-54]. They are representative for their time and cultural background, and more complex than meets the eye. Gabriella loves Secondo but

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does not betray her husband's plan to bankrupt her lover, meaning she chooses her material comfort over emotions. She is "fashionable, exotically beautiful and submissive" [Bower, 2004:52], while also being manipulative and knowledgeable of business issues but, like all women in the 1950s, in the end she defers to her husband. Phyllis is a virgin, but not an ingénue. She is straightforward, "more callow and less subtle than Gabriella, and this can be attributed to her youth and also her nationality" [Bower, 2004:53]. Gabriella and Phyllis, however, share similar realistic views on men and life in general, and neither Secondo nor Pascal fit their ideal image of a man. Significantly, the woman Primo is interested in, Ann, the florist, is very similar to him: an artist herself, introspective, and interested in history (she read a book about the American pioneers).

Secondo's attitude towards women is typical of a man of the 1950s with his cultural background. He keeps a mistress, while keeping his distance from a pure woman he will consider marrying. At a symbolical level, he is caught between these women just as he is caught between Primo and Pascal. Gabriella represents the Italian woman, the experience, the old world, the traditions. Phyllis is the American girlfriend, younger, the future he envisages for himself, an American life of comfort and prosperity, the new. Fate, however, makes the choice for him and, just like he is unable to keep his restaurant in business, he similarly cannot keep his American girlfriend and everything she represents.

Secondo's character and inner-struggle is also obvious in his conversation with Bob, the Cadillac salesman, who is representative of everything American – he promotes the never-ending crave for the next, the newest, the latest, in his case, always next year's Cadillac model, as Bower states:

> In the great 1950s tradition of keeping up with the neighbors, Bob advocates getting things because someone else has them. He lusts after the 1958 Caddie when this year's model should do him just fine. For Bob, a man is judged by what he has and how he looks, rather than by what is inside. [Bower, 2004:56]

Secondo tries to understand his thinking: "This year you buy next year's car and next year, next year's come out already again" and Bob's answer is significant for the era and for what has been happening since then: "I've got two kids. They see their friend with a new toy, they gotta have it". And while he is a family man, he hates his brother because he is cheap, in his opinion. Secondo's answer is illustrative of his character and background, where family matters most: "But he is your brother", implying they should love each other above any character flaws they might have. Secondo, thus, is lured by the material possessions promoted by Bob and the economic stability displayed by Pascal. Suggestively, he spends a few good seconds watching Bob leave at the end of the party in his Cadillac with two women, illustrative of the signs of American success: "Bob stands as indicative of the average guy values in America, with fast cars, opportunities galore, a smooth-talking manner, and the company of beautiful women. He enjoys a good time." [Bower, 2004:56].

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But art does not bend to the requirements of money-making, otherwise it is no longer art. And Primo will similarly not bend to Secondo's pleas for more commercial dishes to increase the number of customers. While Primo wants to educated the American palate and open cultural perspectives, Secondo wants to run a business. However, as Keller remarks, "The film suggests that the environment most conducive to the exchange and appreciation of genuine art is one in which money is not central. Money is corruptive of art." [Keller, 2006:133]. Primo appreciates the customers that only enjoy his food like the guests at the party or the artist who never pays but offers them paintings instead. Primo is an artist too, therefore allows him to eat for free as he understands his plight. He is most angered by Pascal's attitude towards Italian food: "Do you know what goes on in that man's restaurant every night? Rape! Rape! The rape of cuisine!". He also believes Pascal should be in prison for how he treats food. Keller remarks that "the rape analogue seems appropriate because Pascal does not kill cuisine; he merely pollutes and corrupts it." [Keller, 2006:134]. Secondo is sensitive to the idea of success expressed by fame, while Primo is not interested in celebrity. When Secondo enthusiastically announces that Louis Prima will come to their restaurant and they should rejoice because he is famous, Primo says: "Famous. Is he good?". He cares about skill, talent, quality and not flash, appearance and false celebrity.

The position of the film is clearly pro art and tradition and against commercialism and perversion of art for the sake of money. You cannot abide by the high standards of artistic gastronomy when paying customers demand standardized food. The symbolism that illustrates the two positions is clear. While Primo and Secondo struggle but stand on the side of art and heritage, Pascal prospers as the businessman, the villain of the film, the predator ("bite your teeth into the ass of life and drag it to you" is his motto), the one that gives the Pilaggi brothers the final push into bankruptcy, a decision made "out of respect". The imagery is very illustrative in this regard. Thus, the brothers' restaurant is called "Paradise", it is small, simply designed, with small tables covered with white linen tablecloths, with mismatched wooden chairs, with family photos and paintings (those offered by the artist as payment for food) on the walls, without live entertainment, but with a simple and professional service offered by Secondo who tends to the tables and serves the food while interacting with and educating the customers. The façade of the restaurant is not eye-catching in any way. It is a grey wall with a window and a door framed by two plant pots. It is very hard to guess that there is a restaurant inside. There is only an *Open/Closed* sign in the window and a small neon sign hanging above, perpendicularly to the sidewalk. Of course, there are no customers fighting to get in. Essence and not presentation is important to them. What is inside matters, the quality of the food is paramount.

In stark contrast to "Paradise", "Pascal's" is designed to emphasize appearance, it is a flamboyant place with a big flashy sign above, with a red carpet at the door and a bouncer (also used by Pascal as a bully). Opposed to the pure "Paradise" with its simplicity and wholesomeness, love for pure food, for what is good and right, at "Pascal's" the imagery is infernal: everything is red, from the

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carpet at the entrance to the tablecloths, red walls, red leather booths and chairs, red table lamps, the waiters' uniforms, the large portions of spaghetti with tomato sauce and meatballs, and the lighting which makes everybody look red. In fact, this place looks more like a night club, not a family restaurant. The audience see this place room by room, as Secondo makes his way through it, like a descent into hell, with Pascal at the end of this journey, in the last room, significantly just setting fire to a flambé dish, something that appears to be Cherries Jubilee, a distinctly not Italian dish, but an opportunity for show, which attracts customers. By his own admission, it is a circus ("I should be in the circus"), but he is more than willing to make a parody of his heritage in order to make money. His restaurant is also characterized by kitsch: there are paintings of Venice or Rome on the walls, his Cherries Jubilee table is adorned with a mock leaning Pisa Tower, and a singer "butchers 'O Sole Mio'" [Kempley, 1996]. In a culmination of religious symbolism, Pascal is indeed, as Keller describes, "the devil who has stolen into The Paradise to destroy the tiny enclave yet unpolluted by American commercialism and consumerism, a sanctum of culinary virtue and artistic integrity." [Keller, 2006:137].

The final confrontation between the two brothers is an open argument about what bothers either of them. Both Primo and Secondo believe that they are the adult in this relationship. Primo reproaches Secondo that he is playing with their heritage and allows this American culture to pollute their traditions for the sake of money, while Secondo rebukes Primo for never sacrificing himself one bit as he himself continuously bore the burden of the business problems. Primo's answer is definitive and ends the argument: "You want me to make a sacrifice. If I sacrifice my work, it dies. It's better that I die." After this, the choice seems clear. The long final scene, set in their kitchen, filmed in one shot and without a word uttered, sees the two brothers coming together over a simple breakfast made up of omelet and bread, and cooked by Secondo. They embrace in an acceptance gesture, illustrative for their basic selves, which put value, family and artistic talent before any mercantile desires. Although they are beaten, bankrupt and have failed in their American adventure, they still have each other. The scene ends abruptly and the viewer is left to speculate whether they will return to Italy to work in their uncle's Roman restaurant or they will remain in America. The options are limited and the choice is rather clear.

Conclusion

Coming to America was a test for the Pilaggi brothers, as it is for any immigrant. It was a test of their strength and their identity, and when the very thing that is most representative for their culture and dear to their hearts, namely traditional food and the affection for each other, were challenged and endangered, they reconsidered their goals. *Big Night* is about the clash between two cultures that leaves the two protagonists, Primo and Secondo, losers, but also winners. Winning and losing is here a matter of perspective as it depends on personal aspirations and mentality. They are losers in this new medium (America) they wanted to adapt to in order to gain economic stability, but are winners in the sense that they remain, at

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the end, true to their core identity, to themselves and to their values: family, tradition, love for each other, the simple things that represent their background (Italy) and who they truly are, indeed rare things.

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