The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS have passed since Luigi Salerno challenged the commonly held conviction that there could be no connection between "the concrete and realistic painting of Caravaggio and the type of literature labeled 'Marinismo.'"[1] Salerno's arguments in favor of the importance of Marino's poetry for an understanding of Caravaggio's work have found little resonance in more recent scholarship, and even as Caravaggio's reputation as a revolutionary realist has grown, so has Giovan Battista Marino's reputation as an overly sophisticated poet whose work epitomizes the decadence of Italian letters in the seventeenth century continued to decline.[2] Yet, as Salerno suggested, Caravaggio and Marino had much in common, no matter how different their historical roles, or the views of tradition that they each expressed through the medium of style. A reconsideration of the relationship between these two remarkable men will, I hope, serve to show how a close reading of Marino's poetry may change the way we view a particular group of paintings by Caravaggio. Near-contemporaries working within the same aristocratic culture in Rome, Marino and Caravaggio shared, and pioneered, a certain aesthetic view of the power of art and especially of the relationship of painting to the beholder.

The briefest summary suggests how closely interwoven the lives of the two artists were, and how similar their stories. Marino was born in Naples in 1569, and we now know that Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio was born, far to the north of him, two years later.[3] Both men set out to make their fortunes in Rome where, in the first lustrum of the new century, they became friends and admirers of each other's work.[4] Giovanni Pietro Bellori's report that it was Marino who introduced Caravaggio to Virgilio Crescenzi, persuading him to divide the commission to decorate the Contarelli Chapel in San Luigi dei Francesi between the poet's two friends, the Cavaliere d'Arpino and Michelangelo da Caravaggio, is incorrect.[5] But it is true that painter and poet came to know each other in the household of the Crescenzi, Caravaggio's important early patrons. Crescenzio Crescenzi, son of Ottavio, owned two portraits by Caravaggio, one of himself and the other of Marino. When he died in 1641, he left them as a pair "in signum amoris" to his nephew Francesco (who had himself painted a portrait of Marino for the poet's funeral celebrations at the Accademia degli Umoristi in Rome in 1625).[6] Marino had dedicated the first volume of his *Rime* to Crescenzio's brother Monsignore Melchiorre Crescenzi in 1602, the same year in which he probably wrote his famous poem celebrating Caravaggio's *Medusa*.[7] He also composed a poem in praise of Caravaggio's portrait of Melchiorre; lamentably, this, like the portraits of Crescenzio and Marino, is lost.[8] Marino eventually willed his own collection of pictures to Crescenzio Crescenzi, excluding only his eleven portraits of famous men.[9] These latter, together with his collection of drawings, he left to Francesco Crescenzi, the same aristocratic artist-dilettante who was later to fall heir to the Caravaggio and Marino portraits.[10]

Fortune broke up this remarkable Roman society as surely as she had created it. Marino left Rome for Ravenna with Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini in 1605 upon the death of Clement VIII and the subsequent election of Leo XI.[11] Two years later he traveled with his patron to the court of Maurizio of Savoia in Turin. After using all his powers of flattery, he succeeded in 1610 in attaching himself permanently to Maurizio's court. There, the famous composer Sigismondo d'India set to music for two sopranos and basso continuo eight stanzas from Marino's then unfinished epic of love, *L'Adone* (conceived already in

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the first decade of the seventeenth century, although not published until 1623), and he included them in his *Musiche a due voci*, published in 1615.[12] That year, leaving behind many controversies, Marino went to the court of Queen Marie de' Medici in Paris. When he returned to Italy as a pensioned noble in 1623, he held his own court in Palazzo Crescenzi before returning in triumph to Naples. Marino died almost upon his arrival, never realizing the permanent setting for his talents and his collection that he had always craved. His briefly ennobled friend Caravaggio had died thirteen years before, his life and possessions similarly scattered. Charged with the murder of Ranuccio Tomassoni in a fight over a game of racquets on May 31, 1606, Caravaggio had fled Rome, moving first to Naples and then to Malta. After being made a "cavaliere di grazia" of the Order of Knights of Malta by the Grand Master, Alof de Wignacourt, whose portrait he painted, Caravaggio was imprisoned on the island. He escaped to Sicily, and was immediately stripped of the knighthood. In 1610, having made his way back to Naples, where he was wounded in a brutal attack, Caravaggio was set to return to Rome with a papal pardon. Unlike Marino, however, he was never to see the city again; on July 18, 1610, Caravaggio died alone on the pestiferous beach of Porto Ercole.[13]

In retrospect it seems that many of the similarities between painter and poet that must have been obvious to contemporaries in Rome became even more apparent as their lives diverged. When Marino settled in Rome, he was on the run from his second prison sentence. He had served the first two years earlier, reputedly as a consequence of a young woman's death from an abortion; the second was for forgery on behalf of a friend condemned to death.[14] In Turin Marino was shot at in the street by his rival Gaspare Murtola, only to end up in prison yet again (probably in retribution for his satires against the duke), risking once more the loss of all his literary property. Caravaggio's criminal behavior, which included charges not only of murder but also of slander and disturbing the peace, was of a more aggressively violent sort; but his fights, imprisonments, and flights brought him notoriety as an artist similar to that enjoyed by Marino. Not surprisingly, both poet and painter, as we have seen, sought out ranks of honor that might transform this notoriety into fame and protect them from retribution.[15]

With regard to their own art, both men are noteworthy for polemicizing their originality. Caravaggio, for his part, flaunted his rejection of antiquity and Raphael as models for imitation, determining never to be imitated himself.[16] It was fear that this might happen that led him to threaten to beat up Guido Reni for attempting to steal his style in his altarpiece of the *Martyrdom of St. Peter*.[17] Marino, on his side, conducted a duel on paper over his own inimitable originality against anyone who would be foolish enough to steal from him, a Neapolitan.[18] His challenge was more ironic than Caravaggio's, perhaps, in that he also flaunted his own reliance on highly recondite sources (claiming to locate his originality not in external nature but in his own fantasy and intellect), but the two artists are distinguished by their claims for the absolute originality of their work. That neither, it now appears, was reluctant to explore an original concept more than once should not seem paradoxical. Repetition and variation testify to originality, serving to reinforce the novelty of the original, to reinforce the notion of authorial possession, and to confirm each artist's mastery of artifice.

Anti-social behavior and self-advertisement may not have seemed so remarkable in Rome at a time when independent, urban, artistic personalities found themselves increasingly in conflict with the courtly society upon which the majority of poets and painters still relied for patronage. But Marino and Caravaggio are outstanding for their aggressive public assertion of their own value; it has often been suggested that Marino took special interest in the freedom that Caravaggio claimed as his. And both men produced works that were sexually ambivalent.

When Marino befriended him, Caravaggio had already completed the lateral canvases for the Contarelli Chapel and had probably signed the contract with Tiberio Cerasi for the decoration of his family chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo, and so his public career as a painter was launched.[19] But Caravaggio was still best known among aristocratic collectors for his half-length figures of secular subjects in the Venetian manner and especially for his musical pictures. Among these the Metropolitan Museum's *Musicians*, painted for Cardinal Del Monte, is a prime example (Figure 1).[20] Marino was not the only poet in the Crescenzi circle to celebrate Caravaggio, but he contributed more than any other contemporary poet, in Rome or elsewhere, to the musical and visual culture of the seventeenth century. It was in the exciting, rapidly changing musical culture of the early years of the century in Rome that the strongest connections between the two artists were forged.[21]

Marino's importance for the new music coming to

Figure 1. Caravaggio (1571–1610), *The Musicians*, ca. 1595. Oil on canvas, 34⅝ × 45⅝ in. (87.9 × 115.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1952, 52.81

prominence at the turn of the century, beginning at the very moment when Caravaggio was working for Cardinal del Monte and Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani and culminating with the musical settings of his poetry by Monteverdi, cannot be overestimated.[22] No collection of poetry was more frequently set to music than the *Rime*, first published in Venice in 1602, in the very same year as Giulio Caccini's *Le nuove musiche*. Indeed, several of his *poesie per musica* were published with musical settings even before this.[23] *L'Adone*, Marino's epic of love, also provided the material for numerous libretti, beginning with *La catena d'Adone*, published in 1626.[24] Sigismondo d'India's early settings of *ottave rime* from *L'Adone* have already been mentioned; these include the famous description of the monstrous, marvelous song of the nightingale—an exercise in onomatopoeia that, when performed, would have become an impersonation. In the three books of *L'Adone* devoted to the Garden of Pleasure, Marino celebrates every aesthetic delight. One part of the garden is dedicated to sound and taste, and it is here that Marino recounts the deeply pathetic story of the competition between the trilling nightingale and the unhappy lover who sings to his own accompaniment on the lute. Each matches the other with increasingly complex and virtuoso inventions; as a result the poor bird dies from exhaustion. The remorseful musician, victorious because taught by Love, buries the nightingale in his lute and records the story with a quill taken from the little corpse of his unwitting competitor.[25] Marino also provides a

poetic report in this part of the poem on the most up-to-date discussion of the functioning of the ear, and he celebrates two of the greatest female singers of his day—Virginia Ramponi Andreini and Adriana Basile—before going on to hymn the praises of the taste of the fruits, plants, and herbs to which Adonis is introduced in turn.[26]

Marino's direct appeal to the senses, without recourse to dramatic action, in the synesthetic poetry of *L'Adone* provides the closest point of comparison for the sensuality and suppression of significant action that seventeenth-century Roman critics identified in Caravaggio's early work.[27] Furthermore, the emphasis of Marino's sparkling madrigals, which are filled with references to Amphion and Orpheus, on the power of music suggests the closest relation to the specific imagery of the paintings Caravaggio produced for Del Monte and Vincenzo Giustiniani. Again, modern criticism has generally preferred to oppose the two, treating Marino's sensuality as a symptom of his seicentismo, of the lack of substance in his poetry.[28] By contrast, the sensuality of Caravaggio's manner has been associated with realism and with the painter's radical rejection of tradition, and it has even been identified as an aspect of his modernity.

Marino's work, especially his lyrical poetry, was in wide circulation long before it was published. Nonetheless, there is no reason to believe that particular poems provided Caravaggio with texts for paintings in the way that they provided the musicians he painted with songs. Quite apart from the problem of establishing the historical record, to suggest that Caravaggio could have borrowed inventions from texts in this way goes against the evidence of the early works themselves, which were criticized by contemporaries who were more attuned to the invention of *istorie*, for failing to display precisely that power of invention that bound painting and poetry together. And it is, of course, the absence of dramatic action that also characterizes even the epic poetry of Marino. What rendered his ornamental, starkly chiastic verses so attractive to musicians was their affective sentiment; and it is in this that we find the connection between Marino and Caravaggio.

The Lute Player from the collection of Vincenzo Giustiniani (Figure 2) is probably the most mature example of Caravaggio's musical paintings and is certainly the best preserved.[29] It has never seemed reasonable to me that the extraordinary still life it contains should be interpreted in terms of an older, Northern European tradition of allegory, especially given Caravaggio's and Giustiniani's own statements on the importance of still-life painting as painting in its own right.[30] Franca Camiz's recent reclassification of the image as a kind of informal portrait of a contemporary singer now renders emblematic or allegorical constructions even less justifiable.[31] The identification of all the music in *The Lute Player*, furthermore, as well as the particular form of the performance alluded to (in which the musician plays the bass part of a madrigal in accompaniment to his own voice), reinforces the implication of the musician's gaze: that whether a portrait or not, the image belongs primarily within a lyrical, not an allegorical, tradition.[32]

From within that tradition, a madrigal by Marino suggests an alternative way of accounting for the prominence of the still life in *The Lute Player*. The poem, addressed to a Bella Cantatrice and published in the *Lira* in 1614, reads as follows:

Abbi, musica bella,
anzi musa novella, abbiti il vanto
dele due chiare cetre
che le piante movean, movean le pietre.
Che val però col canto
vivificar le cose inanimate,
se nel tuo vivo cor morta è pietate?
O chiari, o degni onori,
porger l'anima ai tronchi e torla ai cori!
O belle, o ricche palme,
dando la vita ai sassi, uccider l'alme![33]

(You have, beautiful music, new muse rather, you have the power of the two famous lyres [Orpheus and Amphion] that moved the plants, moved the stones. What avails it, however, to bring alive inanimate things with song if in your living heart compassion is dead? O shining, o worthy honors, to give spirit to trees and take it from hearts! O beautiful, o rich palms, giving life to stones you kill souls!)

Caravaggio's juxtaposition of the intensely appealing singer and the exquisitely natural, objectively rendered *natura in posa* posits the same questions as Marino's madrigal. What is the value of this musician's power to bring *cose inanimate* alive if he cannot be moved himself? if he becomes in turn the still life? if in bringing stones alive he is all stone in his heart—cold marble like the table Caravaggio placed (significantly) before him?

Marino's relatively simple poem involves a further paradox, for it is itself a song addressed to a singer in an attempt to move her heart. In the process, as

Figure 2. Caravaggio, *The Lute Player*, ca. 1595–96. Oil on canvas, 37 × 46⅞ in. (94 × 119 cm). Leningrad, State Hermitage Museum

Alessandro Martini has said, it slips trickily from being an encomium of the singer into an encomium of the poet's own power.[34] Caravaggio's lute player appeals to us so directly that we return his gaze, forcing the question of just what it is that seduces our eyes.[35] Was not the artist who claimed that it was as difficult to paint a still life as to paint human features here representing that very argument through his juxtaposition of *cose inanimate* so natural they decay with an impassive singer of affective melodies who seems barely to touch his instrument? All the senses of the Garden of Pleasure are present here—smell, taste, hearing, the *toccata*, or touch of the strings, and, of course, sight; but, as the madrigal insists, they are without love. The implicit presence of the power of music in *The Lute Player*, both in the form of written scores and as the performance of lyrical song, leads the beholder inescapably to ask these questions.[36] And in the end, we are led to query the ultimate value of painting's power, like that of lyric poetry, to make inanimate things seem alive if it cannot move to pity. Within this question, of course, as in Marino's, is enfolded an encomium of art.

Among the most original of Marino's lyric poems is a group devoted to games, specifically to *pallone*, or football; rackets; dice; and the popular cardgame known as *primiera*. Each in turn is a play upon the game of love. These were entirely new themes for Italian lyric poetry, and the parallel with Caravaggio's equally original introduction of the themes of cardplaying and dice in the painting known as *The*

Figure 3. Caravaggio, *The Cardsharps*, ca. 1595. Oil on canvas, 36 × 50½ in. (91.5 × 128.2 cm). Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum (photo: Kimbell Art Museum)

Cardsharps (Figure 3) has not gone unnoticed. But after Alessandro Martini's original observation of the relationship between the two, no further implications seem to have been drawn for the interpretation of Caravaggio's painting.[37] The invention has again been associated with a Northern allegorical tradition rather than with the sophisticated culture of artifice and the rarefied celebration of sensual pleasures in which Caravaggio actually worked.[38] The publication of Marino's poems postdates Caravaggio's painting, as did, undoubtedly, their composition; in this case Caravaggio may even have prompted Marino's invention. Like the "Bella Cantatrice," however, the sonnets on games suggest how Caravaggio's image is to be read, or, more properly, they help to define a certain relationship between the work and the spectator.

In the poem about dice, the "Giuoco di dadi," the poet is the beholder. Accompanied by Love he watches as his beloved tirelessly shakes and tosses the ivory dice in both hands. In the concluding tercet, abandoning any interest in the outcome of the game, he is moved to ask why his bones cannot be buried in that same shining alabaster urn—which is to say in his lover's ivory hands.[39] The "Gioco di dadi" closes in this way with the macabre musing of a detached spectator who never truly enters the scene of the poem. In the "Gioco di primiera," the poem about the game of cards, on the other hand, the poet-spectator enters the picture aggressively:

> Con venti e venti effigiate carte
> (armi del'Ozio) il sol de' miei pensieri
> esercitando gìa fra tre guerrieri
> in domestico agon scherzi di Marte.

L'accogliean, le spendean confuse e sparte,
fatti di cieca dea campioni alteri,
e con assalti or simulati or veri,
or schernian l'arte, or si schermian con l'arte.

Quando ver me volgendo il guardo pio
(e gliele diè di propria mano Amore)
quattro ne prese il bell'idolo mio.

V'era col quadro e con la picca il fiore,
il cor non v'era gìa; ma gli died'io
(per farlo apien vittorioso) il core.[40]

(With twenty and twenty pictured cards [the weapons of Idleness] the sun of my thoughts was training with three other warriors on a domestic battlefield at games of Mars. They collect them up, they deal them out shuffled and scattered, made proud champions of the blind goddess [Fortune]; and with attacks now feigned now true, now they mock art, now with art they fence with one another. When turning toward me his pious look [and Love gave the cards to him with his own hand] my beautiful idol picked up four of them. There he was with the diamond, and with the club, the spade, the heart not yet there; but I gave him [to make victory complete] the heart.)

Marino's game of four players, with the cheater outside the scene, may have been inspired by Caravaggio's famous picture, as Martini suggested; but the sexual excitement of the concluding amorous trick played by one man to win another finds no resonance in this particular Caravaggio.[41] The poem helps us to see, however, how Caravaggio also succeeded in painting the essence of a trick by involving us in it. Like Marino, he reveals to the spectator everything that is supposed to be concealed if the trick is to turn.

Marino's virtuoso poem exploits the power of lyric poetry, his medium, by calling attention to its artifice. The heart, or *cor*, signifies both the card that will give victory to his *bell'idolo*, and the heart, or *cuore*, of the speaker, who also claims a victory with the connivance of Love, dealer of the packs.[42] Marino's trick plays upon the fit between the numbers four and three—the numbers of the players (three plus the sol, or the one and only of his thoughts) and of the cards (the three suits to which the heart must be added)—and the quatrains and tercets of the poem. In the end his trick gives him the victory over chance, war, and his beloved, for he remains a spectator. In Caravaggio's represention of a trick, the invisible had to be expressed through purely pictorial means in a single space and time.[43] The young dupe has seen the ace (of spades?) and four of diamonds on the table, but not the six of clubs and eight of hearts hidden behind the cheat's back, nor the two fingers and thumb held up by his sidekick. In representing this whole trick for the benefit of the beholder, the fundamental trickery of painting to deceive through trompe l'oeil is also exposed, and with it our complicity.

My last example of how a reading of Marino's poetry may sharpen understanding of Caravaggio's innovations concerns the *Sleeping Cupid*, painted in Malta in 1608 and now in the Palazzo Pitti (Figure 4).[44] This work, too, has been interpreted allegorically, as an image of the conquest of carnal passion. Its darkness and lack of flesh tone have been taken to signify the death of love.[45] Associations between Caravaggio's image and ancient sculpture have been noted, but the specific popularity of the Hellenistic image of a sleeping Cupid in the early seventeenth century has not been taken into account (Figure 5).[46] In Marino's *Galeria*, his anthology of poems devoted to works of art, ancient and modern, real and imaginary, appear five poems devoted to such sleeping Cupids, who have taken their ease in fountains.[47] In the most ambitious of the five Marino warns that this Cupid can wound, even though he is of marble and is asleep:

Guàrdati Peregrino,
non gli andar sì vicino,
nol destar, prega, ch'egli
dorma in eterno pur, né mai si svegli.
Se tu 'l sonno tenace
rompi al fanciul sagace,
desto il vedrai più forte
trattar quell'armi, ond'è
e peggior che Morte.[48]

(Look out, Pilgrim, don't get so close, don't rouse him, pray that he sleeps forever and never wakes up. If you break the clever boy's sleep, right away you'll see him take up more strongly those weapons that make him worse than Death.)

In his sleep this cruel child dreams not of love but of deceptions, massacres, robberies, and sufferings ("Sogna dormendo inganni, / stragi, rapine, affanni"): only when Love sleeps may lovers rest ("sol quanto posa Amor, gli amanti han posa").[49] Marino urges the pilgrim not to gaze upon Cupid as his mother, Venus, calls to him and the rosy dawn appears. But then he asks, in conclusion:

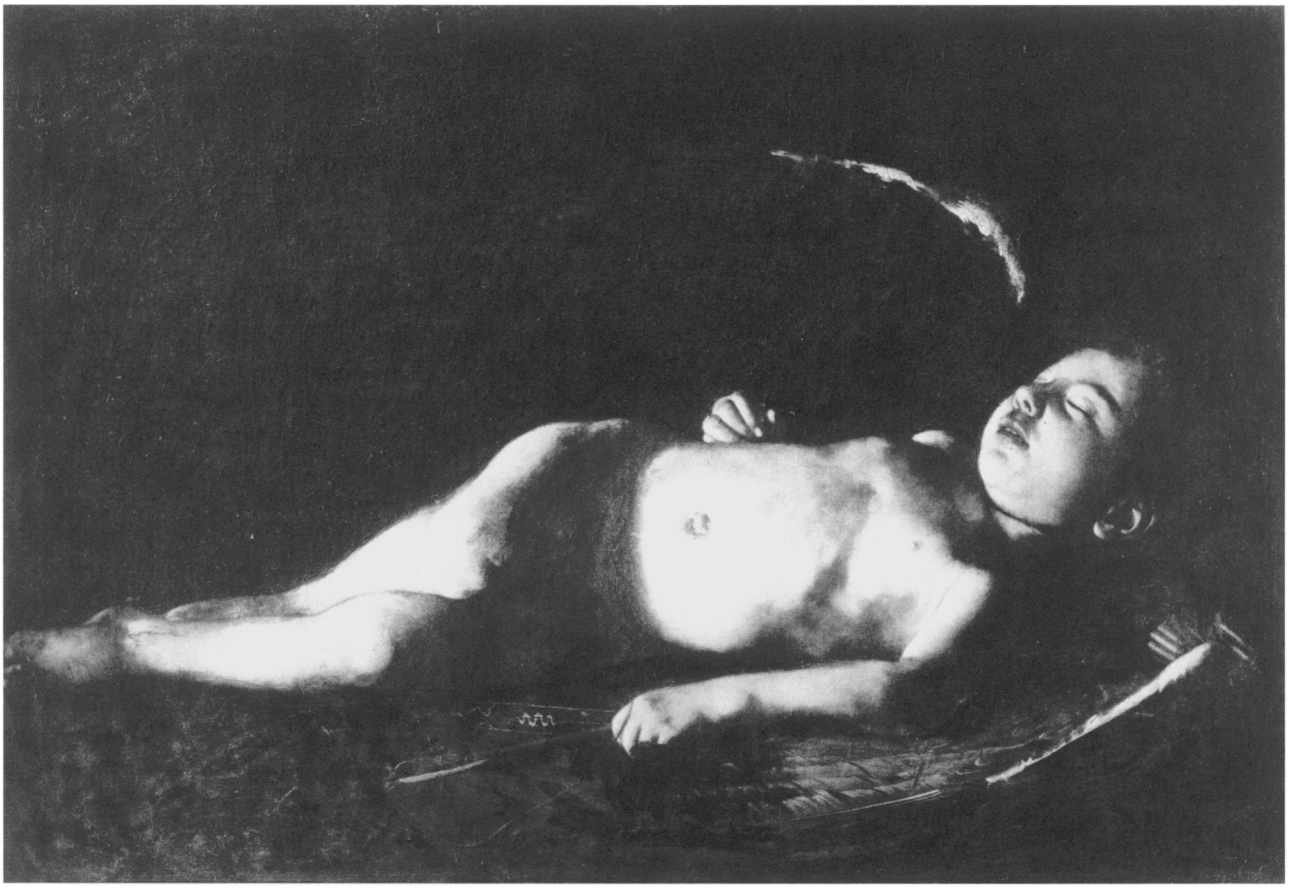

Figure 4. Caravaggio, *Sleeping Cupid*, 1608. Oil on canvas, 28⅜ × 41⅜ in. (72 × 105 cm). Florence, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti (photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

Figure 5. *Sleeping Eros*, Greek, 3rd to 2nd century B.C. Bronze, L. 33⅜₁₆ in. (85.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1943, 43.11.4

Qual tu ti sia, che 'l miri,
temi non viva e spiri?
Stendi securo il passo:
toccal pur, scherzai teco, egli è di sasso.[50]

(Whoever you are, who gaze on him; do you fear lest he live and breathe? Lengthen your pace safely: touch him even—I was teasing you—he is of stone.)

Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* has been described both as dead and as a sculpture, but he is truly neither. This figurative ambiguity was perhaps the most popular of all artistic paradoxes in the Seicento, and Marino's poem relies upon it. The relationship between the painting and the poem is much closer, however. Marino's sculpture is of a cruel god of love, tired by his work of attacking enemies and causing all kinds of suffering. With none of the thoroughly sweet charm of, for example, the similarly *concettoso* sculpture then in the collection of Vincenzo Giustiniani of a little statue of a sleeping

Cupid discovered by a bigger Cupid (Figure 6), or of Guido's lost *Sleeping Cupid* (Figure 7), Caravaggio's *Amor* is also a cruel child, dark and tormented, not cherubic.[51] The livid quality of his flesh suggests the very incarnation of malign envy. As, like Marino's Roman pilgrim, we gaze upon him in wonder (Marino's verb is always *mirare*), we sense both fear at the presence of danger and death, and amazement at the artist's power, like that of love itself, to deceive us.

Poems about works of art were as common as poems about love in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and more than one poet wrote about works by Caravaggio: Marino's arch-rival Gaspare Murtola even dedicated his to Melchiorre Crescenzi.[52] But Marino's *Galeria*, which included the five poems on the Cupid sleeping in a fountain, must be assigned special importance in the reconstruction of Caravaggio's Roman world. The anthology was first conceived in the years in which Caravaggio and he knew each other.[53] In emulation of Bernardo Castello's illustrations to the *Gerusalemme liberata*, Marino planned to publish a collection of drawings of mythological subjects accompanied by appropriate verses. Gradually this was transformed instead into a sort of *musée imaginaire* of poems about works of art. The collection was published in 1619 and 1620, but many of the poems were already widely known.

It was said by a contemporary that Marino's great epic, *L'Adone*, which was longer than Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, was composed entirely of fifty words arranged in different ways.[54] The conspicuous, formal conventions of Marino's poetry that enable such dazzling displays of ingenious variety also make the identification of characteristic themes or emotions difficult. Perhaps the most important, however, is the power of art itself, the almost alchemical capacity of poetry, music, painting, and sculpture to transform matter into spirit and back again. As in the poems on games, however, this power is always shown to be dependent on Marino's own creative power to enchant and confound. In the *Galeria* the theme is present almost everywhere, but it is especially prominent in the group of poems devoted to sculptures. It is often treated in a straightforwardly witty way, with none of the darkness of the "Sleeping Cupid" (and indeed Marino sometimes betrays poverty of invention). Amphion, for example, who once brought stones alive, is now stone himself; but he seems to breathe, to sing, to live, and so his song celebrates the superiority of the chisel over the

Figure 6. Giovanni Valesio (ca. 1583–1633), *Love Discovers a Sleeping Infant Love*. Engraving, plate 25 from *Galleria Giustiniani* (Rome, ca. 1631–35) I, pl. 25

Figure 7. Robert Strange (1721–12), *Sleeping Cupid*. Engraving after Guido Reni. Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Muriel and Philip Berman Gift (photo: Philadelphia Museum of Art)

lyre.[55] A statue of Helen laments that she had not been made of stone when Paris seized her; but even as a sculpture, she insists that she is worth carrying off.[56] Pasquino, the famous talking statue, tells passersby not to marvel that a lifeless stone without hands and tongue can speak; there was a time when not only did he talk, but as he spoke he exploded, smashing the head and arm of the man who made him speak but wanted him to keep silent.[57] In one of his least imaginative puns, Marino praises Giovanni da Nola's statue of St. Stephen, an image of the saint who was stoned to death: "once cruelly killed/now nobly carved/you died by stones, and from stone you gained immortal life."[58] Other occasional poems under the heading of Capricci celebrate a nest of bees in a statue of Cicero that returns both sweetness and barbs to his lips; a statue of Silenus is falling—but does he fall from wine or weariness?; a statue of Nero actually falls and kills a child, showing how cruel Nero is even as a statue; Laocoön, who has been tied up to prevent him also from falling down, complains that struggling with snakes is enough; a statue of Mucius Scaevola has lost to time the hand that fire could not remove; a cooler head has been restored to a statue of a beheaded traitor who laments that it had not always been his.[59]

These poems about antiquities must have been inspired in part by the intense repopulation of Roman sculpture gardens that Marino observed around the turn of the century. Equally topical are madrigals and sonnets about famous modern sculpture, statues of both living people and mythological characters, as well as ephemeral figures made of snow, sugar, and wax. Two poems are dedicated to a statue of a beautiful woman, and one of these is outstanding for its length, complexity, and originality.[60] Out of the conventional Petrarchan *paragoni*, in which the artist's image and the living woman are compared and the impossibility of representing the perfect beauty of the beloved is then invoked, Marino weaves a complex comparison in which the true subject is the effect of the sculpture, not the natural woman:

La figura ritratta
Medusa mi rassembra.
La scultura è sì fatta
ch'altrui cangia le membra.
Già già sento cangiarmi a poco a poco
di fuor tutto in macigno, e dentro in foco.
Con la vivace imago
disfogo il mio tormento.
Con occhio ingordo e vago
v'affiso il guardo intento.
E sì di senso lo stupor mi priva,
ch'io son quasi la statua, ella par viva.
Spira l'imagin bella,
quasi animata forma.
Spira, ma non favella,
o che pensi, o che dorma.
Forse il rigor che le circonda il petto,
passando al volto, irrigidì l'aspetto.
Mentr' io contemplo eguale
or questo ed or quel volto,
né so discerner quale
sia 'l proprio, e qual lo scólto,
dico con pensier dubbio è mal distinto:
"Ambo son veri, o l'un e l'altro è finto."
(lines 13–36)

(The figure portrayed seems like Medusa to me. The sculpture is made in such a way that it changes the limbs of others. Already, already, I feel myself changing little by little, outside all stone, and inside in flames. With the lively image I let loose my torment. With a covetous and desiring eye I fix my intent gaze upon it. And stupor so deprives me of sense that I am almost the statue, and she seems alive. The beautiful image breathes, almost an animated form; it breathes, but does not speak, neither what it thinks, nor what it dreams. Perhaps the hardness that encircles its breast, passing to the face, has stiffened its aspect. While I contemplate equally now this and now that face, I know not how to discern which is the true, which the sculptured, and I say with thought that is doubtful and badly defined: "Both are true, or both are feigned.")

So real indeed is the statue that only the soul and the vermilion of the cheeks are lacking. But, Marino continues, if Prometheus could give life to stone with his fire and if wounded Venus could tint her flower, *his* heart could endow this statue with the color of its blood and with its ardor:

Vinta, vinta è da l'Arte
la maestra Natura.
L'una in ogni sua parte
fredda l'ha fatta e dura.
aspra, sorda qual è, piena d'orgoglio:
l'altra la fe' di carne, ed è di scoglio.
In questo anco emendata
da la falsa è la vera,
che quella l'ha formata
volubile e leggiera:
questa ha pur dato almeno a la sembianza
la fermezza marmorea, e la costanza.
(lines 49–60)

(Conquered, conquered by Art is mistress Nature. The one in every part has made her cold and hard, bitter, unheeding as she is, and full of pride: the other made her of flesh and yet she is of rock. In this, too, improved upon by the false one is the true, in that the former [Nature] made her voluble and gay: the latter [Art], however, made her at least resemble the hardness of marble, and its constancy.)

The marble and the real woman are then crossed in this *canzonetta*, which is the longest poem dedicated to a sculpture. Though the *simulacro bello* must have been made by Love, he could not wound her, for, though she seems to be of marble, she is in fact *diamante*, or diamond; but Love cannot wound the real woman, "l'Idol ch'adoro," either. If there is no lute, no sung melody, that can move this stone, and if even Amphion, who moved mountains with his plectrum, could not move her, then, sings the poet to Love:

tu mirabile e novo
Pygmalïon divino,
poi che pietà non trovo
in un porfido alpino,
muta a la bella effigie il magistero,
e trasformala omai ne l'esser vero.
(lines 97–102)

(You marvelous and new, divine Pygmalion [Love]; given that I find no compassion in an alpine porphyry, change the magistery of the beautiful effigy, and transform it into a true being.)

Entwining the two figures ever more completely, Marino addresses Love-as-Pygmalion with a final substitution:

E s'informar non vuoi
di vivo spirto il sasso,
spoglia de' membri suoi
questo spirito lasso,
pur che dopo la morte almeno sia
in questo sasso sol la tomba mia.
(lines 103–108)

(And if you do not wish to inform the stone with living spirit, take away from its limbs this wretched spirit, if after my death at least in this stone may be my tomb alone.)

And entombed in the stone he will be if this woman is indeed Medusa.

The antithesis of Medusa and Pygmalion, the one turning flesh to stone, the other stone to flesh, was obviously not Marino's invention; as a conceit it was especially favored by poets and artists in the seventeenth century. It is the theme upon which turns Angelo Caroselli's invention, for example, in the painting he made for Vincenzo Giustiniani in commemoration of the publication of the *Galleria Giustiniana* (Figure 8).[61] Over a marble altar embellished with a Medusa head, Pygmalion holds up a volume of prints, comparing these to the living figure of a woman beside him. In contrast to more straightforward representations of the Ovidian story of Pygmalion, Caroselli's allegory involves a complex series of displacements. Beside the altar with its offering to Venus, an already living beauty endowed with the features of a classical original is compared not to nature or to antique statuary, but to the engravings of the *Galleria*. These swelling lines, as lovely as Medusan marbles, provide the standard of comparison for the lover of both nature and art.

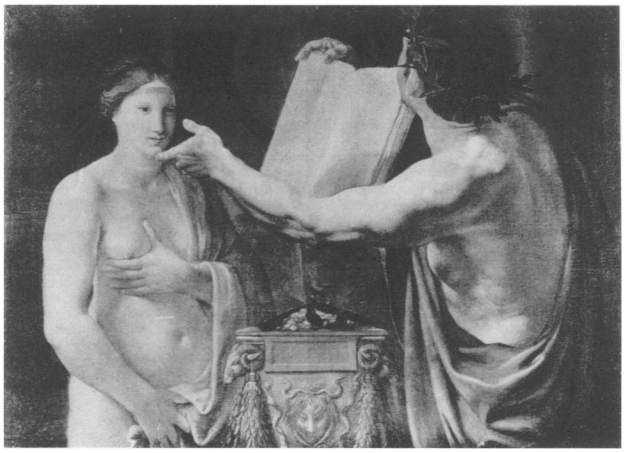

Figure 8. Angelo Caroselli (1585–1652), *Allegory of Sculpture*. Destroyed

The effect of Caroselli's *concetto* (presumably from the early 1630s) in which all forms of art, including, of course, painting, are subtly substituted for each other, and all for nature, is indebted to Marino's complex manoeuvres to render all beauty artificial, to create in his poetry a substitute reality.[62] Marino not only invokes the topos of the antithetical powers of Medusa and Pygmalion in witty, playful poems but also in serious contexts. These concern life—conceived as sensation, movement, or transformation, but never as action or events—and death, again conceived as a change in material state, but not as leading to spiritual salvation. Predictably, his

Figure 9. Caravaggio, *Medusa*. Oil on canvas, mounted on poplar shield, with gold leaf-on-black border, Diam. 21⅝ in. (55 cm). Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi (photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

admiration for Caravaggio, a painter of sensory perceptions who was criticized for not painting figures in action and a painter who denied the existence of an ideal beyond painting and sense, focused on the artist's powers to bring figures alive or turn them to stone. Marino's famous sonnet addressed to the Grand Duke of Tuscany in praise of the parade shield bearing the image of Medusa given to him by Cardinal del Monte and painted by Caravaggio can be excluded from discussion no longer (Figure 9):

> Or quai nemici fian, che freddi marmi
> non divengan repente
> in mirando, Signor, nel vostro scudo
> quel fier Gorgone, e crudo,
> cui fanno orribilmente
> volumi viperini
> squallida pompa e spaventosa ai crini?
> Ma che! Poco fra l'armi
> a voi fia d'uopo il formidabil mostro:
> ché la vera Medusa è il valor vostro.[63]

(Now what enemies will there be who will not become cold marble in gazing upon, my Lord, in your shield, that Gorgon proud and cruel, in whose hair horribly voluminous vipers make foul and terrifying adornment? But yet! You will have little need for the formidable monster among your arms: for the true Medusa is your valor.)

"La vera Medusa è il valor vostro." Whatever the compliment to the Grand Duke, Marino celebrates, as he does in the equally famous poem in honor of Guido Reni's *Massacre of the Innocents* (see Figure 10), the power of the artist to kill and to bring alive again, to *méduser*, and to enchant.

In a few brilliant pages Louis Marin has analyzed Caravaggio's *Medusa* as the image in which the artist's shocking destruction of painting as the art of representation was perfected.[64] Perseus's trick to catch the eye of the Medusa in the mirrored shield gives him the power literally to turn figures into images that exist eternally in a *coup d'oeil,* in the moment of sculptural fixity that divides even the present into instants. We see the Medusa at the very moment that she sees herself, but already her blood is congealing in lines that do not follow the illusory concavity of the convex surface. Caravaggio transfixes us with the fascination of simultaneity, of doubleness—and not only in this painting. Destroying the distance between the model and its copy that representation respects, he creates a simulacrum comparable to Marino's beautiful statue.[65]

Marino's epitaph for Caravaggio, however conventional, expresses this shocking power. Death and Nature, he writes, conspired to kill Caravaggio, the one because he brought the dead alive with his brushes, the other because she was conquered in every image that Caravaggio created rather than painted ("da te creata, e non dipinta)."[66] Caravaggio's figures, even in action, are creations, not imitations; they are statues, models, simulacra. He may have dismissed the canon of antiquity, pointing to people around him as his models; but when Caravaggio set figures up in the studio, lighting them from above, painting them only in that moment, Caravaggio was not only denying reality, as Louis Marin has suggested, but he was also striving to find and occupy the momentary gap between the effects of Pygmalion and Medusa, between bringing images alive and turning them to stone.[67] In the process he also places the spectator in the gap between the two, and in this is to be discovered that marvelous quality that caused spectators to be amazed, to be enchanted, to be transfixed.[68]

Caravaggio's painting of petrification is quite different from that *maniera statuina* practiced by Vasari, against which Caravaggio, like the Carracci, reacted. In that hard manner, flesh and blood and figures in movement were painted in such an unnatural way, from memory and without reference to the model or to the effects of natural light, that they resembled statues tinted with pale hues.[69] Caravaggio's figures begin in the flesh and indeed continue to appear to exist in it rather than seeming to derive from memory or art; but they harden before us, and we before them. As Marino wrote of the statue of the beautiful woman: "stupor so deprives me of sense / That I am almost the statue, and she seems alive."

The association that I have outlined between Caravaggio's and Marino's conceptions of the power of the image and their denial of representation does not diminish the revolutionary quality of Caravaggio's work as painting in any way. Nor does their fascination with the Pygmalion/Medusa conceit lead to any further associations with magical automata, children's games, or with involuntary sexual responses crudely defined. It is, in fact, of the utmost importance to recognize that this conceit operates entirely within the expectations of metaphor and representation, not reality, in both Marino's and Caravaggio's work. Instead, by seeking to establish how Caravaggio and Marino shared an aesthetic viewpoint, I want to arrive at a reading of the early works that extends beyond the frame, and beyond the decipherment of individual images as allegories within it, a reading that takes into account Caravaggio's powerful demands upon our senses and our feelings. The demands of Caravaggio's paintings upon the spectator, or more accurately upon the *amatore*, or lover of painting, that a reading of Marino's poetry helps to make visible belong to a lyrical tradition. These kinds of demands are therefore most conspicuous in the early works of Caravaggio, but I believe them to be deeply important also for the later "histories" in which narrative expectations are subverted by lyrical address and stasis.

The example of Marino's subversion of poetic genre, by which he rendered both religious and historical epics as lyrical poetry, argues (if arguments are still needed) in favor of accepting Caravaggio's contemporary and equally radical reinterpretation of familiar inventions as deliberate and deeply meditated also.[70] Marino's undeniable thematization of his own virtuosity, furthermore, lends support to the view, often expressed but never fully explicated, that Caravaggio also made the expression of the power of his own art into a conscious theme of his painting. Marino's *Massacre of the Innocents*, a poem full of beautiful images of gruesome events, provides the best point of departure here. In this long poem, the space and time of dramatic action are constantly repressed, as they are so often in Caravaggio's work, in order to force the eyes of the reader to admire and to react to the horror of each framed action. For example, in the midst of the slaughter, Marino describes the murder of a single child, born to a beautiful mother, as follows:

Figure 10. Guido Reni (1575–1642), *The Massacre of the Innocents*, 1611. Oil on canvas, 105½ × 66⅞ in. (268 × 170 cm). Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale (photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

Figure 11. Caravaggio, *Martyrdom of St. Matthew,* 1599, detail. Oil on canvas, 10 ft. 7¼ in. × 11 ft 3 in. (323 × 343 cm). Rome, Contarelli Chapel, S. Luigi dei Francesi (photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

Tacque la bella donna e non disciolse
Voce, pianto o sospir: tacque e sofferse,
Ma sí pietosa in atto il figlio tolse
E voluntaria al mascalzon l'offerse,
Che, se non ch'egli altrove i lumi volse.
Se non ch'ella d'un velo i suoi converse,
Vincealo il dolce sguardo, e 'l ferro acuto
Fora di mano al feritor caduto.[71]

(Silent was the beautiful woman and let out no voice, cry, or sigh: she suffered in silence, but so pitifully in gesture did she take her son and freely offer him to the scoundrel, that, had he not turned his lights elsewhere, had she not covered hers with a veil, her sweet glance would have conquered him, and the sharp blade have fallen from the hand of the striker.)

In response the poet exclaims, "Contro furor che val bellezza?" or "Against fury what does beauty avail?" The effect that failed because two gazes never met was that of perfect beauty to soften the heart, to disarm without words or force, which is to say, the very effect of silent painting to conquer without discourse in a single glance. The beautiful Medusa would have succeeded.

In the opening verses of book 3 of the *Massacre of the Innocents* (in which the massacre actually takes place), Marino laments that he can neither kill nor move to pity with words written in ink, and he seeks to borrow the colors of the painter.[72] But as the poem unfolds, we see that despite the frequent appeals of the colors of metaphor and of images of

works of art, beauty fails to stop events; and that it is, in fact, the poet's pen that succeeds in conquering both the affects of horror and beauty and the effects of assassins' swords and mothers' love.[73] Marino thematizes his pen now as sword, now as brush, throughout, but nowhere more shockingly than in the description of the death of one infant at his lessons. As the child studies Hebrew, reading the lines scattered on his little tablet, his severed head falls on the "innocent pages"; upon them is written his last deed "in living letters with vermilion characters."[74]

Guido Reni, who, like Caravaggio, was criticized for not being able to compose figures in action, was both the most perfect epigone of Caravaggio and the greatest expositor of Marino's theme.[75] In Marino's sonnet written in praise of Guido's own *Massacre of the Innocents* (Figure 10) it is not the writer's own ink but the painter's brush that offers life and death:

> Che fai GUIDO? che fai?
> La man, che forme angeliche dipigne,
> tratta or opre sanguine?
> Non vedi tu, che mentre il sanguinoso
> stuol de' fanciulli ravivando vai
> nova morte gli dài?
> O ne la crudeltate anco pietoso
> Fabro gentil, ben sai
> ch'ancor Tragico caso è caro oggetto,
> e che spesso l'orror va col diletto.[76]

(What are you doing, Guido, what are you doing? The hand that paints angelic forms now treats of bloody deeds? Do you not see that while you are revivifying the bloody throng of infants you are giving them new death? O compassionate even in cruelty, gentle artificer, well you know that a tragic event is also a precious object, and that often horror goes with delight.)

First (like Pygmalion) Guido's brush brings the infants alive and then (like Medusa) it kills them. Its work is bloody indeed, enlivening forms with a vermilion hue, which then flows out of the little marble bodies in daubs upon the ground. But in Guido's assemblage of living, dying, and dead forms, no child is actually being murdered. The true psychological center of this painting of transformation, close to the true, empty center of the canvas, is the short dagger dipped in blood that is held up by the bearded executioner, who so thoughtfully goes about his terrible work, even as the startled little boy he is about to kill cries out silently at the sight of it and as his mother seeks to stay the blow.

That blow is stayed forever not by the deflection of a sword but by the determination of the brush. Guido's brush is more powerful than the sword in the *Massacre*, as he represents its power both to bring alive and to kill through carmine tints. In so doing he provided a different answer to the question of what beauty could accomplish in the face of horror. Unlike the executioners who are not moved by what they see, we gaze upon the work and are arrested by its beauty. As we do so, we turn what Marino called the "tragico caso" into a "caro oggetto" and back again. We are placed in that same reflexive moment mastered by Caravaggio, which Marino's poetry represents in the form of paradoxical questions vividly reinforced by chiasmus, alliteration, and near anagrams. Once recognized, this moment appears as a central theme in Caravaggio's work as well as in Guido's, and Marino's poetic questions help us to identify it. The problematic of representation in Caravaggio's early musical paintings, as I suggested above, can be rephrased in the form of the question "Che val bellezza senza pietà?" I would now propose, and for the same reasons, that the pained expression on the face of the self-portrait of Caravaggio in *The Martyrdom of St. Matthew* in the Contarelli Chapel (Figure 11) either sets up or poses the question that so dominates painting and poetry in the early Seicento, which Marino poses so succinctly in this poem: "Contro furor che val bellezza?" Caravaggio's inscription of his own name in the blood of St. John in the late *Death of the Baptist* (almost inconceivable without Marino's example) demands an answer to the same question.[77]

Marino's reputation among literary critics is not the only factor that makes it difficult to argue for a Marinesque reading of early Seicento painting and of Caravaggio in particular. The relationship between painting and literature in the Renaissance has been considered from the viewpoint of narrative subject matter and of allegory but not of the special relationships set up between the spectator and the image in lyric poetry. However, I would suggest that Caravaggio's *Lute Player* bears a closer relationship to works such as Titian's *Flora* (Figure 12) than to narrative or allegorical pictures, such as de la Hire's *Allegory of Music*.[78] Insofar as *The Lute Player* may be a portrait, it resembles other portraits only to the extent that they, like Leonardo's *Ginevra de' Benci*, or even the *Mona Lisa*, demand, like the *Flora*, that we love and admire them.[79] Such works belong ultimately to the same Petrarchan tradition that inspired Marino's poem addressed to the statue of a

Figure 12. Titian, (1488/90–1576), *Flora*, ca. 1520–22. Oil on canvas, 31⅛ × 24¾ in. (79 × 63 cm). Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi (photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

beautiful woman. This tradition of painting derives its power from the tension Petrarch voiced between the absent beloved and the present representation. Whether portraits or not, such pictures address the spectator as lover.

Marino's own poem about Guido's *Massacre*, "Che fai Guido che fai," was itself surely written in conscious relation to Petrarch's sonnet "Che fai? che pensi che pur dietro guardi," addressed by the poet not to a painter of angelic forms, but to his own soul.[80] What is dead for Petrarch are not the images the painter depicts, but the very things that the soul once described and painted—the sweet words and looks of his beloved. Where Marino praises Guido for killing and bringing alive again in his images, Petrarch begs the painter (his soul) not to make new that which kills it ("Deh non rinovellar quel che n'ancide") but to look heavenward for beauty.

The poem about Caravaggio's *Medusa* also has a significant Petrarchan subtext. In the final poem of the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch celebrates the Virgin as his "saldo scudo"—the firm shield not of his artistic virtuosity, nor even of princely valor, but of the afflicted against Death and Fortune ("o saldo scudo de le afflitte genti / contr' a' colpi di Morte et di Fortuna").[81] The poet begs her to intercede on his behalf:

> no 'l mio valor, ma l'alta sua sembianza
> ch'è in me, ti mova a curar d'uom sì basso.
> Medusa et l'error mio m'àn fatto un sasso
> d'umor vano stillante.[82]

The sensuous beauty of Medusa and error have made him a stone, and it is not his own *valor* but Christ's humanity that will move the Virgin to pity him.

Petrarch claimed that he had come to see the seductive mortal beauty he had loved, together with earthly deeds and words, as encumbrances on his soul.[83] Marino's choice of subtext in this case serves to announce his own rejection of Petrarch's strategic denial of artistry; his poetry never ceases to celebrate the delights of sensual pleasure and his own virtuoso transformation of reality into art.[84] In the course of his working life, Caravaggio's view of his own art, his attribution of worth to illusion and representation, did not necessarily duplicate that of Marino (and certainly not that of Petrarch). But such early works as *The Lute Player*, *The Cardsharps*, and the *Medusa* succeed in representing the embrace of sensual pleasure and the delight in translating the real into art and back again; this genre of representation also distinguishes Marino's poetry.[85] Caravaggio's early lyrical painting, petrified and petrifying, addressed to the spectator as lover or coconspirator, belongs to the largely uncharted tradition of representation as an affective relationship in the Renaissance.

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NOTES

1. Luigi Salerno, Duncan T. Kinkead, and William H. Wilson, "Poesia e simboli nel Caravaggio," *Palatino* 10 (1966) pp. 106–117; see p. 107.

2. New editions and studies of Marino's work have begun to offer an alternative to the tradition of Crocean criticism. See, for example, Giambattista Marino, *Lettere*, Marziano Guglielminetti, ed. (Turin, 1966); Giovan Battista Marino, *L'Adone*, Giovanni Pozzi, ed., 2 vols. (Milan, 1976); idem, *La galeria*, Marzio Pieri, ed. 2 vols. (Padua, 1979); idem, *Rime amorose*, Ottavio Besomi and Alessandro Martini, eds. (Ferrara, 1987); idem, *Rime marittime*, Ottavio Besomi, Costanzo Marche, and Alessandro Martini, eds. (Ferrara, 1988). See also Ottavio Besomi, *Ricerche intorno alla "Lira" di G. B. Marino* (Padua, 1969); Carmela Colombo, *Cultura e tradizione nell'Adone di G. B. Marino* (Padua, 1967).

3. For information on Caravaggio's life and work, see Mia Cinotti, "Michelangelo Merisi detto il Caravaggio," in *I pittori bergamaschi dal XII al XIX secolo: Il Seicento* (Bergamo, 1983) I, pp. 205–641. For the likely date of Caravaggio's birth in October 1571, based on the date of his parents' marriage and the birth of his younger brother, see ibid., p. 234.

4. Marino first visited Rome in the train of the prince of Conca for the Jubilee of Clement VIII in 1600. He returned the following year. For Marino's biography, see, in addition to the introductions of the editions cited above, James Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous: Giambattista Marino* (New York, 1963). Still indispensable are Angelo Borzelli, *Il cavalier Giovan Battista Marino* (Naples, 1898), and Mario Menghini, *La vita e le opere di Giovan Battista Marino* (Rome, 1888). Caravaggio probably arrived in Rome late in 1592 or in 1593 after selling his property in Lombardy, although the precise date cannot be documented; he may have visited Venice and Emilia on the way. See Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," pp. 209–216, 238–239.

5. Giovan Pietro Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni* (1672) Evelina Borea, ed. with introduction by Giovanni Previtali (Turin, 1976) pp. 218–219. In a note Borea points out that the contract of July 23, 1599, between the congregation of San Luigi dei Francesi and Caravaggio for the lateral paintings in the chapel, which also referred back to Virgilio Crescenzi's earlier agreements with d'Arpino, predates Marino's arrival in Rome. Furthermore, Virgilio Crescenzi had died in 1592, leaving his son Giacomo to execute Matteo Contarelli's will; see Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," p. 238.

6. Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," p. 571, nos. 110, 111.

7. On the Crescenzi, see, in addition to Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," Anna Grelle, "I Crescenzi e l'Accademia di via S. Eustachio," *Commentari* 12 (1961) pp. 120–38; see further note 10 below. Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," p. 427, cites Giorgio Fulco's observation that Marino's collection of poetry for the *Galeria* had begun already in 1602. Detlef Heikamp, "La Medusa del Caravaggio e l'armatura dello Scià Abbas di Persia," *Paragone* n.s. 17, 199 (1966) pp. 62–76, previously dated the poem roughly between the Lira of 1614 and the publication of the *Galeria* in 1619/20. Heikamp rejects the conventional date of 1608 for the arrival of the parade shield in Florence (in connection with the marriage of the future Cosimo II) suggesting instead that Marino could have seen it in 1601 on a visit to Florence, which means that there is no factual obstacle to redating the poem earlier.

8. Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," p. 575, no. 134.

9. Marino's collection had been preserved in Palazzo Crescenzi since his departure from Rome in 1605. For inventories of Marino's possessions and his disposition of them, see Giorgio Fulco, "Il sogno di una 'Galeria': Nuovi documenti sul Marino collezionista," *Nuova antologia* 10 (1979) pp. 84–99.

10. For a brief biography, see Luigi Spezzaferro, s.v. "Crescenzi, Francesco," and "Crescenzi, Giovanni Battista," in *Dizionario biografio degli italiani* (Rome, 1984) XXX, pp. 634, 636–641.

11. For a general treatment of Marino's biography, see Mirollo, *Poet of the Marvelous*, pp. 5–111.

12. Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, David Bryant, trans. (Cambridge, 1988) pp. 14–15. See pp. 7–20, for a useful analysis of why composers found Marino's poetry so attractive.

13. See Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," pp. 233–248, for a register of the documented events in Caravaggio's life.

14. See Mirollo, *Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 12, for reference to the suggestion that the charge was sodomy. Neither charge has been documented.

15. Caravaggio was knighted in Malta in 1608, Marino in Turin the following year.

16. Bellori, *Vite*, pp. 214, 230.

17. See the account in Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, Giampietro Zanotti, ed., 2 vols. (Bologna, 1841) II, p. 13.

18. For a discussion of Marino's polemic in the context of critical debates on painting, see Elizabeth Cropper, *The Ideal of Painting: Pietro Testa's Düsseldorf Notebook* (Princeton, 1984) pp. 120–128. For the text of Marino's letter to Claudio Achillini, which contains his most important points of argument, see his *Lettere*, pp. 238–256; see especially p. 249 for his statement, "onde si possono ben vantare d'aver rubato a' napolitani, che sono avezzi a saper farlo con sottilità e con grazia."

19. Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," p. 240. The contract for the Cerasi commission was signed on September 24, 1600.

20. Ibid, pp. 476–479.

21. See Salerno, Kinkead, and Wilson, "Poesia e simboli nel Caravaggio."

22. See again Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*. On the new music, or *seconda pratica*, see Claude Palisca, *Baroque Music* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968) pp. 8–28. For the importance of Marino's poetry for the music of Monteverdi, see the extensive and significant discussion by Gary Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1987) esp. pp. 151–213. See also Alessandro Martini's introduction to his edition of a selection of Marino's lyric poetry, *Amori* (Milan, 1982) esp. pp. 18–25.

23. Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 8, cites two five-part settings of Marino's texts by the young Neapolitan composer Giovan Domenico Montella, published in 1594 and 1596, and lists many other published settings from the first decade of the century in support of his claim for Marino's overwhelming influence. See also Roger Simon and D. Gidrol, "G. B. Marino e la musica del '600," *Studi secenteschi* 14 (1973) pp. 81–187.

24. Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeeenth Century*, p. 13. Bianconi refers to the "remarkable intellectual courage and 'modernity' of content" of *L'Adone*. The historical role of Marino's poetry has been recognized among musicologists, even if the latter often tend to draw their critical conclusions from the older tradition of literary scholarship.

25. Marino, *L'Adone*, I, pp. 367–373 (canto 7, ll. 32–57). In his commentary, II, pp. 363–370, Pozzi notes the well-known derivation of the story of the competition from Famiano Strada's *Prolusiones academicae* (1617).

26. *L'Adone*, I, p. 381 (canto 7, l. 88), and p. 363 (canto 7, l. 16); II, pp. 374, 357. See also Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 14.

27. For Bellori's observation that Caravaggio's work in the Contarelli Chapel lacked composition and movement, see the *Vite*, p. 220; on p. 222 appears his description of the *Conversion of St. Paul* in the Cerasi Chapel, "la quale istoria è affato senza attione."

28. Even Gary Tomlinson, so receptive to the power of Marino's poetry, refers (*Monteverdi*, p. 169) to Marino's "virtuosic spangles" as exemplifying his lack of concern for content. Such polarization of substance and ornament, especially common in discussions of the art of Mannerism and the Baroque, will always work against Marino's reputation.

29. Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," pp. 447–450. For the identification of this picture with the original in Giustiniani's collection, see Denis Mahon, "The Singing 'Lute-player' by Caravaggio from the Barberini Collection, Painted for Cardinal Del Monte," *Burlington Magazine* 132 (1990) pp. 5–20.

30. Vincenzo Giustiniani in his letter to Teodoro Amideni reported that Caravaggio had said that it was as difficult to paint a good picture of flowers as it was one of people. In Vincenzo's system of modes of painting "saper ritrarre fiori, e altre cose minute," constituted the fifth mode. For the text of the letter, see Giovanni Bottari and Stefano Ticozzi, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura, ed architettura . . .* , 8 vols. (Milan, 1822–25) VI, pp. 121–129; see esp. pp. 124–125.

31. Franca Trinchieri Camiz, "The Castrato Singer: From Informal to Formal Portraiture," *Artibus et Historiae* 18 (1988) pp. 171–186; and "La 'Musica' nei quadri del Caravaggio," *Quaderni di Palazzo Venezia* 6 (1989) pp. 198–221. Camiz herself, in "The Castrato Singer," pp. 174–175, refers the still-life elements in both the Leningrad picture and the Del Monte version of it to "Northern art traditions."

32. The history of the identification of the music has become rather complex. Thomas Bridges, in his Ph.D. dissertation, "The Publishing of Arcadelt's First Book of Madrigals," 2 vols. (Harvard University, 1982) I, p. 55, n. 131, provides a useful summary of the identification of "Chi potra dir," "Se la dura durezza," and "Voi sapete," in the Hermitage picture: "Germain Bazin reproduced the painting in *Musée de l'Ermitage; les grands maîtres de la peinture* (Paris: Éditions Cercle d'Art, 1958), p. 61, pl. 42, and identified 'Voi sapete ch'io v'amo' (pp. 67–70), with the help of Nanie Bridgman of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Susan Guess Welcker, with the help of Professor Herbert Kellman, identified the remaining two pieces. . . . See her 'Aspects of Music in the Early Paintings of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio,' Thesis Univ. of Illinois, Urbana, 1967. The pieces were also identified independently by Franca Camiz and Agostino Zino (communication, 1981)." See further H. Colin Slim, "Musical Inscriptions in Paintings by Caravaggio and His Followers," in *Music in Context: Essays for John M. Ward*, Anne Dhu Shapiro and Phyllis Benjamin, eds. (Cambridge, Mass., 1985) pp. 241–263, esp. 243–244, for the Leningrad painting; pp. 241–242, for the Metropolitan *Concert*; and pp. 246–247 for the version of *The Lute Player* owned by Wildenstein; see also Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," p. 449, and Camiz's publications cited in "The Castrato Singer." The texts, with translations, are now available in Keith Christiansen, *A Caravaggio Rediscovered: The Lute Player*, exh. cat., MMA (New York, 1990).

33. Marino, *Amori*, p. 99, no. 39.

34. Martini, in *Amori*, pp. 26–39.

35. The appeal of the actual singer has been associated with both homosexual and now, through the identification of him as a castrato, even heterosexual responses. I am not concerned here with identifying the "proper" sexual reaction to the sitter but rather with identifying what kind of representation this painting is.

36. Bert Meijer has drawn attention to what he calls an "audiovisual" relationship between image and beholder that would have, in his view, been much stronger in the 16th century than we perceive it to be now. Such a relationship could only reinforce the demands made upon the beholder that I seek to recover here. See his "Harmony and Satire in the Work of Niccolo Frangipane: Problems in the Depiction of Music," *Simiolus* 6 (1972–73) pp. 94–112.

37. Martini, in *Amori*, pp. 50–51, 167–169. In his comment on p. 167, Martini explains that Berni's poem on the game was "un capitolo giocoso," and Alessandro Striggio's composition "Gioco di primiera" "un divertimento musicale," neither of them providing a real precedent for Marino's lyric. See also his brief comment in "I capricci del Marino tra pittura e musica," in *Letteratura italiana e arti figurative*, Atti del XII convegno dell'Associazione internazionale per gli studi di lingua e letteratura italiana, Toronto, 1985, 2 vols. (Florence, 1988) I, pp. 655–664. Howard Hibbard, *Caravaggio* (New York, 1983) p. 274, also cites Striggio's composition in connection with *The Cardsharps*. For Striggio, and for earlier examples of cardplaying themes set to music, see Albert Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal*, 3 vols. (Princeton, 1949) II, p. 768.

38. For various interpretations see Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," pp. 554–556. Barry Wind, in his recent article, "A Note on Card Symbolism in Caravaggio and his Followers," *Paragone* n.s. 40, 475 (1989) pp. 15–18, identifies the club suit with success, the eight of hearts with good news; about the suit of the four of diamonds he has no comment, suggesting only that the number four "could be given connotations of forboding." The ace of spades would stand for unhappiness. It remains to be determined, however, if the protagonists are engaged in playing a specific game and not just posing conveniently with cards chosen for symbolic reasons. If the addition of the concealed club card to the cards already on the table will allow the cheat to win the game, then success may indeed provoke violence and trump happiness. Wind's interpretation relies on his belief that Caravaggio's genre paintings are

"redolent with overt and covert symbolism," and that the symbolism of the cards represents another "layer of meaning" in this work in which Caravaggio's "commitment to nature . . . is actually conflated with theatrical content." My alternative reading begins by challenging the status of these works as "genre" paintings: Marino was not writing "genre" poetry, but adapting the lyric to new subjects. On the painting itself, see Denis Mahon, "Fresh Light on Caravaggio's Earliest Period: His *'Cardsharps'* Recovered," *Burlington Magazine* 130 (1988) pp. 10–25.

39. Martini, in *Amori*, p. 93, no. 33; see also the commentary on pp. 166–167, in which Martini, pointing to the evocation of Petrarch in the incipit ("Stiamo, Amor, a veder la gloria nostra"), contrasts Petrarch's vision of Laura as a vivifying light with Marino's poetic stance in this poem as "un cantore che vuol davvero *stare a vedere*, non ad ammirare, disincantato e cupo osservatore."

40. Ibid, p. 94, no. 34.

41. On the sex of the lover, see Martini, in *Amori*, pp. 168–172, who again points to the ultimate detachment of the poetic self as spectator. The sex of the "bell'idolo" is not determined definitively by the gender of the word here, it should be noted. I have followed Martini's interpretation in my translation because I agree that the lover is male in the context of the game of cards. Part of Marino's strategy, of course, is to call into question any straightforward sexual identification. However, in entitling the two poems that follow the "Giuoco di pallone. Per una donna," and "Giuoco di racchetta. Per la medesima," writes Martini, Marino protests too much.

42. Ibid., pp. 168–169.

43. Martini, in *Amori*, p. 169, also emphasizes the analogy between the two undertakings: where Caravaggio set out to tell a story through the difficult medium of a single pictorial space, Marino adopted the limitations of the sonnet.

44. Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," pp. 433–434, no. 14.

45. See the summary of interpretations in ibid. The date and provenance were established by Silvia Meloni Trkulja, "Per 'l'Amore dormiente' del Caravaggio," *Paragone* n.s. 28, 331 (1977) pp. 46–50.

46. Luigi Salerno, "Caravaggio e i caravaggeschi," *Storia dell'arte* 7/8 (1970) pp. 234–248, see p. 241, mentions the importance of the ancient figure of sleeping Cupid in connection with Caravaggio and Guido Reni only in passing. He also cites Murtola's poem, "Se dipingere Amore," but this cannot refer to the *Sleeping Cupid* in Florence and may not even refer to an actual painting at all. For the bronze *Sleeping Eros* in the Metropolitan Museum, see Margarete Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age* (New York, 1955) p. 145, and figs. 616–618.

47. Marino, *La galeria*, I, pp. 273–277.

48. Ibid., p. 275, ll. 21–28.

49. Ibid., p. 276, ll. 33–34, 60.

50. Ibid., p. 277, ll. 96–100.

51. The engraving, *Galleria Giustiniani* (Rome, circa 1631–35) I, pl. 25, is by Valesio. See further Elizabeth Cropper, "Vincenzo Giustiniani's Galleria: The Pygmalion Effect," *Quaderni Olivetti*, forthcoming. Guido's famous *Sleeping Cupid* is lost: see D. Stephen Pepper, *Guido Reni* (Oxford, 1984) pp. 299–300.

52. See, for example, the poems cited by Giorgio Fulco, "Ammirate l'altissimo pittore: Caravaggio nelle rime inedite di Marzio Milesi," *Ricerche di storia dell'arte* 10, "Roma nell'anno 1600" (1980) pp. 65–89.

53. On the history of the collection, see Pieri's introduction, "Capriccio ma non troppo," in *La galeria*, I, pp. xxv – xlv.

54. Marino's enemy Stigliani tried to attribute this comment to Lope de Vega.

55. Marino, *La galeria*, I, p. 279.

56. Ibid, p. 280.

57. Ibid., p. 285.

58. Ibid., p. 290.

59. Ibid., pp. 309–310.

60. Ibid., pp. 293–296.

61. The painting was presumably destroyed in Berlin during the war. For further discussion, see Cropper, "Vincenzo Giustiniani's *Galleria*," forthcoming.

62. Marino develops the conceit of the engraved line's capacity to bring stones alive in more light-hearted examples, such as the capriccio devoted to Villamena's print of the map of Rome, *La galeria*, I, p. 261, no. 6. The poem concludes, "Now there is no need for the foot of the pilgrim from the far borders to wander around the heart of Rome looking in vain for Rome: here you see it clearly, and hence you see how by virtue of an ingenious hand the hardness of marble gives way to leaves [of paper]."

63. Marino, *La galeria*, I, pp. 31–32. See Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," pp. 427–429, no. 11.

64. Louis Marin, *Détruire la peinture* (Paris, 1977) esp. pp. 119–144, 191–194.

65. Ibid., pp. 171–176.

66. Marino, *La galeria*, I, p. 191; "Fecer crudel congiura, / MICHELE, a danni tuoi Morte e Natura. / Questa restar temea / da la tua mano in ogni imagin vinta, / ch'era da te creata, e non dipinta. / Quella di sdegno ardea, / perche con larga usura / quante la falce sua genti struggea, / tante il pennello tuo ne rifacea."

67. On Caravaggio's studio practice of setting up figures *in posa*, as if for a still life, see Keith Christiansen, "Caravaggio and 'l'Esempio davanti del naturale,'" *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986) pp. 421–445.

68. Bellori, *Vite*, p. 217, for example, writes of how young artists were drawn to gaze upon the miraculous power of Caravaggio's work and then to imitate him. Caravaggio's power over those who were taken by the novelty of his work appears to be almost a magical, irresistible enchantment according to Bellori's biography.

69. For a general discussion of the reform of the *maniera statuina*, see Charles Dempsey, "The Carracci Reform of Painting," in *The Age of Correggio and the Carracci: Emilian Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1986) pp. 237–254, esp. p. 240. On the term *maniera statuina*, see Giovanna Perini, "Il lessico tecnico del Malvasia," in *Accademia della Crusca, Convegno nazionale sui lessici tecnici del sei e settecento* (Pisa, 1980) pp. 221–253, esp. pp. 227–232.

70. That is to say, such reinterpretation did not result from what, for example, Bellori saw as his deficiencies; see *Vite*, p. 230, "non erano in lui ne invenzione ne decoro ne disegno ne scienza alcuna della pittura mentre tolto da gli occhi suoi il modello restavano vacui la mano e l'ingegno."

71. Giovanbattista Marino, *Dicerie sacre e La strage de gl'innocenti*, Giovanni Pozzo, ed. (Turin, 1960) p. 551 (bk. 3, stanza 50).

72. Ibid., pp. 535–536, bk. 3, stanzas 1–2. He seeks to rival the painting of his friend the Cavaliere d'Arpino specifically.

73. In one extended metaphor, for example, Marino summons up an image of a Charity painted by the Cavalier d'Arpino and then transforms it into an image of Niobe with her children, which he compares in turn to a white marble sculpture stained with blood; ibid., pp. 554–558.

74. Ibid., p. 555, bk. 3, stanza 61.

75. For an important critical discussion of Guido Reni, Caravaggio, and Marino, see Charles Dempsey, "Guido Reni in the Eyes of His Contemporaries," in *Guido Reni*, 1575–1642, exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, 1988) pp. 101–118.

76. Marino, *La galeria*, I, p. 56.

77. Cinotti, "Il Caravaggio," pp. 445–447, no. 23.

78. For which, see Christiansen, *A Caravaggio Rediscovered*, pp. 82–84. For Titian's *Flora*, see Harold Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, 3 vols. (London, 1969) III, *The Mythological and Historical Paintings*, pp. 154–155, no. 17.

79. Elizabeth Cropper, "The Beauty of Woman: Problems in the Rhetoric of Renaissance Portraiture," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy Vickers, eds. (Chicago, 1986) pp. 175–190.

80. *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The "Rime sparse" and Other Lyrics*, Robert Durling, trans. and ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1976) pp. 452–453, canto 273: "Ché fai? ché pensi che pur dietro guardi / nel tempo che tornar non pote ormai? / Anima sconsolata, ché pur vai / giugnendo legno al foco ove tu ardi? / Le soavi parole e i dolci sguardi / ch'ad un ad un descritti et depinti ài, / son levati de terra; et è, ben sai, / qui ricercarli intempestivo et tardi. / Deh, non rinovellar quel che n'ancide, / non seguir più penser vago fallace, / ma saldo et certo, ch'a buon fin ne guide; / cerchiamo 'l Ciel, se qui nulla ne piace: / ché mal per noi quella beltà si vide, / se viva et morta ne devea tor pace."

81. Ibid., pp. 575–583, canto 366; see p. 576, ll. 17–18.

82. Ibid., pp. 582–583, ll. 109–112: "let not my worth but His high likeness that is in me move you to help one so low. Medusa and my error have made me a stone dripping in vain moisture."

83. Ibid., pp. 580–581, ll. 85–86: "mortal bellezza, atti, et parole m'ànno / tutta ingombrata l'alma." On the relationship between Petrarch's poetic autonomy and his idolatry, see John Freccero, "The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics," in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, Patricia Parker and David Quint, eds. (Baltimore/London, 1986) pp. 20–32 (first published in *Diacritics* 5 (1975) pp. 34–40. See also his "Medusa: The Letter and the Spirit," *Yearbook of Italian Studies* (1972) pp. 1–18.

84. See Mirollo, *Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 20, on Marino's elimination of such themes as the *donna angelicata* and the *cor gentile* from his Petrarchan poetry. See further, Benedetto Croce, *Nuovi saggi sulla letteratura italiana del seicento* (Bari, 1931) pp. 380–443.

85. Such transformation and representation relied on traditional means of expression bent to new purposes. It is between *The Cardsharps* and, for example, Chardin's *The Card Castle* that we witness a final, destructive step in the tradition of lyrical viewing and painting. In this later development, as Michael Fried has analyzed so brilliantly, the beholder—no longer (I would argue) lover or coconspirator, petrified and petrifying—is fully absorbed within or without the picture. For Fried's arguments see *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1980) esp. pp. 7–70.