

Abstract for

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Abstract text up to 15 lines in English:

Introduction: The Renaissance period, often regarded as a pinnacle of artistic achievement, saw a confluence of humanism, intellectual curiosity, and artistic innovation. While the Renaissance did not have a concept of clinical depression as we understand it today, the art of this era provides a unique lens through which to examine the portrayal of melancholy, despair, and emotional suffering. This essay aims to delve into the depictions of depression in Renaissance paintings, analyzing the methods employed by artists, exploring the results in terms of emotional expression, and ultimately drawing a conclusion regarding the significance of these representations.

Methods: We started by conducting a thorough literature review to understand existing scholarship on the topic. Looking for art that explores the depiction of emotions and mental states in art.

We selected the artwork by identifying specific Renaissance paintings or artists known for conveying complex emotions in their works.



1. *"Melancholia I"* by Albrecht Dürer (1514): Albrecht Dürer's engraving "Melancholia I" embodies the essence of stagnation and despair. The central figure, an angel, exudes introspection as she gazes into the distance. The surrounding objects, notably the incomplete polyhedron and the melancholic dog, symbolize a sense of unfulfilled potential and creative stagnation. The result is a multifaceted representation of the human condition and the psychological torment often associated with depression.



2. *"Saint Jerome in Penitence"* by Albrecht Dürer (c. 1496): Dürer's "Saint Jerome in Penitence" showcases a more solitary portrayal of melancholy. Saint Jerome, engrossed in his Bible translation, appears isolated, immersed in introspection. The painting effectively captures the inner turmoil and deep contemplation that aligns with the emotional experience of depression.



3. *"The Descent from the Cross"* by Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1435): Rogier van der Weyden's "The Descent from the Cross" masterfully illustrates grief and sorrow. The mourners surrounding the lifeless body of Jesus Christ convey profound sadness and despair through their expressions and gestures. This painting resonates with the feeling of helplessness and sorrow that characterizes depression.



4. *"The Allegory of Melancholy"* by *Lucas Cranach the Elder (1532)*:

Lucas Cranach the Elder's *"The Allegory of Melancholy"* explicitly addresses the theme of melancholy. The central figure, a melancholic woman, is surrounded by symbolic objects, such as an owl symbolizing both wisdom and sorrow. Her disheveled hair and pensive expression serve as powerful representations of inner struggle and introspection.



5. *"Dolorosa"* by *Andrea Mantegna (c. 1480-1490)*: Andrea

Mantegna's *"Dolorosa"* depicts the Virgin Mary in deep mourning after the crucifixion of her son, Jesus. Her expression of profound sorrow and the isolation of her figure emphasize the emotional depth of grief and sorrow, which can relate to feelings associated with depression.



6. *"The Lamentation of Christ"* by *Sandro Botticelli (c. 1490)*: In this

painting by Sandro Botticelli, the figures surrounding the body of Christ express intense sorrow and anguish. Their facial expressions and gestures convey deep emotional pain, reflecting the human experience of suffering and sadness.



7. *"Saint Sebastian"* by Antonio del Pollaiuolo (c. 1475): The figure of Saint Sebastian, depicted as a martyr with arrows piercing his body, is often associated with themes of suffering and martyrdom. The painting captures the physical and emotional anguish of Saint Sebastian, reflecting the pain and torment that can be associated with depression.



8. *"Judith Beheading Holofernes"* by Artemisia Gentileschi (c. 1614-1620): While this painting is from the early Baroque period, it's worth mentioning due to its emotional intensity. Artemisia Gentileschi's work often explores themes of power and revenge. In *"Judith Beheading Holofernes,"* the act of beheading the Assyrian general is portrayed with raw emotion, reflecting a sense of determination and perhaps inner turmoil.

Conclusion: While the Renaissance lacked our modern understanding of depression as a clinical condition, the art of this era offered profound insights into the complexity of human emotions. Artists like Albrecht Dürer, Rogier van der Weyden, and Lucas Cranach the Elder adeptly explored themes of melancholy, introspection, and sorrow through their masterful works. Rich symbolism, emotive facial expressions, and allegorical representations collectively provide deep insight into the depiction of depression during the Renaissance. These portrayals continue to be of significant interest to art historians and those interested in the historical representation of mental states, highlighting the enduring resonance of the human emotional experience through the ages.