

# Essay on supper at emmaus by michaelangelo merisi caravaggio

[Art & Culture](#), [Painting](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **Artistic Analysis and Discussion**

Paintings representing themes about Jesus and several important accounts in his life have become a distinct source of inspiration during the baroque era especially for European painters. One of such works includes that of Caravaggio's *The Supper at Emmaus* now placed at the National Gallery of London. Paid by Ciriaco Mattei, this art work was specifically noted to have a great impact in the presentation of one of the most remarkable accounts on Jesus' life on earth and his dealings after he has been resurrected from death. Recognized for its presentation of the deeper meaning on how such account in the Bible is understood and interpreted by Caravaggio himself. In the discussion that follows, a distinct analysis of the overall form and presentation of the said painting shall be given attention to. Basing from particular aspects of painting analysis, this discussion shall decipher the different elements that make Caravaggio's work different from the others. Among these elements include the following:

### - Composition

Based on how the account of Jesus' life was noted in Luke 24: 30-31, Caravaggio tries to manifest a distinct interpretation on how the people involved in the account specifically related towards each other. Hoping to show the connection and intensity of emotions that the characters mentioned to have been in the event felt about Jesus and his resurrection from death, Caravaggio made sure that he would be able to put important details including vivid facial expressions; something unique considering all the other works following the same account.

### - Scale

<https://assignbuster.com/essay-on-supper-at-emmaus-by-michaelangelo-merisi-caravaggio/>

The background used in the work is relatively dark. The condition of utilizing such dark hue intends to manifest a distinct indication of how Jesus' state at the time. Such background specifies the distinction of secrecy. Jesus, as mentioned in the scriptures, specifically showed himself to chosen people only. He was unrecognizable, he appeared differently compared to how he looked before his death. Perhaps to conceal him from those who see him differently, Jesus' appearance was specifically different from that of his ordinary look. The need to conceal him was necessary and this was given attention to through the dim background that Caravaggio used in the painting.

- Creation of pictorial space and depth

The dark background also adds depth to the depiction of the painting's space. The focus of the image was on Jesus and that of the reaction of his disciples. There were two specific copies of this work created by the same painter. Nevertheless, when it comes to space and depth, a relative similarity could be seen especially in the utilization of dark background that allows the human elements of the painting to come out accordingly from the surface.

- Modeling and creation of form/treatment of figure

Jesus was a indeed an important figure in history, especially in places where Christianity is considered a central belief. Italy and Rome are among the countries that recognize his existence practically vital to their history and that of the history of the most prominent region known in the world.

Relatively, Caravaggio recognizes the responsibility that is placed upon his shoulder in interpreting this particular part of Christ's life on earth as it

bridges his time on earth and the time that he was already going back to his place in heaven. The four individuals surrounding Jesus in the painting, namely Cleofas, Luke and the servers, were treated in a different status compared to how Jesus' figure was presented. Utilizing specifically subtle colors, Christ's figure stood out especially that he was presented with a robe in scarlet red. Placed at the center of the entire presentation of the event, Jesus' figure was the focal point in the painting.

#### - Setting

The painting was said to have occurred in Emmaus. Presenting the individuals surrounding a dining table, the supper was considered to have a great impact on how Jesus wanted to specifically deal with his disciples. It could be observed that suppers played a great role in most of the points of dealings that Christ had encountered. Before his death, he also had a supper with his 12 apostles including that of the one who has betrayed him, Judas. This supper marked a very important phase of his life on earth. Relatively, this theme as also attracted the attention of several painters from all around Italy and France. Similarly, the supper of Christ in Emmaus presents a distinct part of his life as he leaves his disciples and takes on his position in heaven. This is the reason why such painting expectedly played a great role on how the church identifies with this particular situation in Christ's historical account that is highly important for the development of the Christian church.

#### - Colour

Subtle colors were used for the clothing of the other characters apart from Christ. This made it easier to locate Christ immediately in the picture as he

was represented to have been clothed in red. The meal that was in the table were presented in subtle colors as well, avoiding to get the attention away from the focal point of the event, Jesus. Shadows could be recognized from the background to suggest that he and his companions were situated in a rather dim room apart from the others who may be dining along with him.

- Use of Line and shape

The embossing of the human features of the characters in the picture specifically made it easier for the audience to recognize the reactions and the emotional bearing that each character have especially in relation to the event that was being represented in the painting. It specifically featured how Jesus was aiming to explain his position and the situation he has gone through along with the awe and surprising reaction that he got from those surrounding him during such conversation.

- Texture

The painting's texture is smooth, specifically distinct with that of the classic theme that the work represents. This texture adds up with the overall quality of the work. Undeniably, it could be understood that this characteristic of the work made it more plausible especially among those who appreciated classic works that defined the overall value dedicated to Christian faith and belief. Overall, it could be realized how strongly the painter Caravaggio distinctly wanted to make sure that Jesus' worth of living could actually be passed on as an interpreted art to the incoming generations that are likely to appreciate the work itself. Caravaggio wanted to more than just create something for the sake of his name being known to the world; he wanted to send a message, to provide a distinct indication on how he appreciates his

being Christian and how he hopes to pass on such appreciation to other generations who likely would have a chance of appreciating Christ's history on earth as he did. Caravaggio's works are relatively well-celebrated, however this particular painting on Christ's supper at Emmaus provided a greater value and distinction to the kind of painter and expressionist as he is.

## **References:**

Harris, Ann Sutherland. (2004). *Seventeenth-century Art & Architecture*, Laurence King Publishing.

Michael Kitson, *The Complete Paintings of Caravaggio* London, Abrams, (1967). New edition: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1969 and 1986.

Ostrow, Steven F., review of Giovanni Baglione: Artistic Reputation in Baroque Rome by Maryvelma Smith O'Neil, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 85, No. 3 (Sep., 2003), pp. 608-611,

Rosa Giorgi, *Caravaggio: Master of light and dark - his life in paintings*, Dorling Kindersley (1999)