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Art

Freshman

Professor Doni Wilson

1168 words

Saint John The Baptist in t

Viewing in t

Anthony Van Dyck was one of the most important Flemish painters of the 17th century.

He was greatly influenced by his mentor, Peter Paul Rubens, and other established Italian artists.

presence is not permanent. Through biblical context, the audience knows that John will face hardships, be persecuted, and will ultimately die a gruesome death (Villarreal 4). Therefore, the youthful beauty of John reflected in this painting is ironic. This factor elicits an emotional response from the audience. John's depicted innocence almost makes the painting that much more depressing and horrifying because the viewers get to see what was destroyed (Counter Reformation 2). It was a handsome, joyful, and hopeful man that was lost. He will die a horrible death, and all the splendor he once had, will be gone. Van Dyck does an excellent job at creating a thought-provoking piece that digs into historical and biblical background (Andrews 3).

The symbolism in *John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness* creates a complex story and captures deep significance. In the painting, a handsome man is depicted. His partial nudity, as previously mentioned, represents his youthfulness. Also, the lamb symbolizes John's innocence (Wittkower 1). Lambs, from a biblical perspective, are often seen as pure creatures of sacrifice. In the same way, John will be like a lamb, innocent and blameless, when he faces his future death. In the background of the painting, there seems to be a dark storm approaching in the distance. This storm is an accurate symbol for the hardships and tragedies John will face later in his life (Villarreal 2). He will come across major persecution, loss, and death. The bible and the cross symbolize that Christ is the center of John's life. He will live for Christ, spreading the gospel, and will make large sacrifices for the sake of his faith. The rich biblical symbolism Van Dyck uses deepens the significance of the painting as a whole (Andrews 2).

John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness is an ample symbolism, historical and religious background, and stirs emotional responses within the audiences who view it. The painting is deeper than a physical piece of art, its significance and

Works Cited

