

# Giorgio barbarellis "the adoration of the shepherds" essay sample

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## **Giorgio Barbarellis “ The Adoration of the Shepherds” Essay Sample**

The landscape religious painting titled *The Adoration of the Shepherds* was painted on oil on panel that is attributed to an Italian artist, Giorgio Barbarelli, or popularly known as Giorgione (b. 1477-d. 1510). This painting can be found in the National Gallery of Art in Washington as a gift from the collection of Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1939. It is of size 90. 8 x110. 5 cm and was reportedly made around 1505-1510. The principal figures of the painting are the two shepherds at the left, the nude baby Jesus at the center, and Joseph and Mary at the right. The scene is in a manger at a cave integrated in a broad surrounding landscape, presumably of Bethlehem, where Christ was reported to be born. The painting was made at a time of High Renaissance in Venice in the 14<sup>th</sup> century where there was much emphasis on biblical subjects (“ The Adoration”, 2008; Perry 331).

The subject of the painting is obviously the artist’s interpretation of the nativity, taken from a biblical narration of the birth of Jesus Christ as it was narrated in the gospel of Luke. The shepherds visited the Holy Family after an angel announced to them that Christ was born (Thompson, 1046). The surrounding landscape added beauty to the scene and one cannot help but see the artist’s emphasis to it and using it to create a mood of calmness.

### Size and Spatial Depth

The size of the painting is large as compared to most work of arts. This of course makes the painting more visible and attracts attention. With regards

to size proportion of the content of the painting itself, the size of the figures becomes smaller as they are depicted farther in the scene creating a spatial depth to the art. This strategy in painting is popularly known as atmospheric perspective. For example, the building, mountains and homes which are normally larger than human beings are portrayed of much smaller sizes than the principal human figures which suggest that the latter are much nearer to the viewer. And also in atmospheric perspective the farther the object is, the less detailed it is drawn and the hazier is the color.

### Color

The author uses mostly brown and green for the landscape which contributed to overall calmness and coolness (for green) and earthy humility (for brown). On the other hand, the primary colors orange, red and blue dresses of the shepherds and Mary and Joseph serves to lighten up the scene and resulted to a striking color contrast against the surrounding landscape which dramatically brought the focus to them.

### Shape

There are many combinations of shape in this painting to create a realistic object and scenery. There is the rectangular building and square houses, circular heads and tree stumps, the triangular mountains and roofs and many freeform shapes of the landscapes. These shapes are not arranged symmetrically but scattered strategically all over the painting to form a complete balanced whole.

## Light

Giorgione also takes into consideration the effects of light and shadow in the painting. The cave was almost colored entirely in black in the interior which creates the impression of a dark, gloomy scene inside with the animals. To create a lighter exterior, he uses a variation of colors of brown and yellow and blue of the sky to suggest that event happens in daylight.

## Line/contour

In creating his art, Giorgione uses a variety of lines to make recognizable images and contour: vertical, diagonal, and curves. Building and trees and cave walls were mostly made of heavy vertical lines that lend stability to the work. Diagonal lines denotes action, like those used in the principal figures , making them look as if they are going to move at any moment. Curves lines like those on lands, mountains, shores and dress of the figures creates a sense of flowing peace, rest and softness.

## Style

The painting uses a naturalistic style, that is, the figures, objects and landscapes are drawn and colored the way they are seen in real life. It is also very naturalistic in the sense that nature takes an obvious central theme of the story, only integrating the scene of nativity into it. Such natural emphasis only shows the artist appreciation and admiration to nature.

Overall, the painting expresses personal interpretation of Giorgione regarding Nativity and displays his artistic tonal creativity and love for nature and truthful object representation.

#### Works Cited

Perry, Marvin. A History of the World. New York: Houghton Mifflin, Inc., 1988.

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Thompson, Frank Charles. The Thompson-Chain Reference Bible. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1983.