

**SCTMG 2023**  
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of**  
**Modern Globalism»**

**STYLE PROBLEM IN CULTURE AND ART OF XVII–XVIII**  
**CENTURIES**

Olga Yurievna Zhukovets (a)\*, Natalia Alexandrovna Ermolenko (b)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Admiral Ushakov Maritime State University, 93, Lenin Ave., Novorossiysk, 353918, Russian Federation,  
magistr20222@yandex.ru

(b) Admiral Ushakov Maritime State University, 93, Lenin Ave., Novorossiysk, 353918, Russian Federation

**Abstract**

The article raises a problem of style in culture and art of the XVII–XVIII centuries by the example of "Baroque" and "Classicism". Authors trace a historical line of these trends, try to find directly opposite features and historical influence of one style on the other. A theme of style retention in works of young masters is touched upon. The artistic conception of the world in classicism was rationalistic and extra-historical: the problems of its time were solved based on the material of antiquity, Rome or were so abstract that neither a place nor an epoch was essential. There are epochs when art powerfully invades everyday life, aestheticising the everyday course of life, and it is to such arts that Baroque and Classicism belong. This invasion has many consequences. Consequences associated with it are the explosions of artistic talent that occur in these epochs. Of course, literature alone had a moral influence on the penetration of art into the life of the epochs we are interested in: architecture, sculpture and painting played no less role. In the article the authors considered the contradiction of the two styles: "Baroque" and "Classicism" by the examples of famous sculptors and then traced the retention of the style in modern art..

2357-1330 © 2024 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Artistic style, Baroque, Classicism, Gothic, internal harmonisation, Renaissance

## 1. Introduction

The historical Baroque replaces the Italian Renaissance. A problem of style is one of the most important in art and culture. Maintaining style is equally important both for great masters and for beginners, young students.

It rarely happens that works, bearing traits of eclecticism, are significant and characterised by impeccable aesthetic qualities; rare masters have succeeded in doing so. Naturally, when working with students, we do not talk about style problems. We talk about a manner in which their work will be executed in a realistic or decorative way. At what level will volumetric-spatial relations be solved? How will it all be coordinated with a plasticity of a chosen material? What aesthetic message will this style direction carry? In the end, it all comes down to a problem of style or lack thereof.

It is quite difficult to talk to students about artistic style using examples of young artists, because a diversity is the most common shortcoming of beginners. It is much easier to talk about style by the examples of mature masters and the collision of two different quality styles. At the same time, when talking about style, one should not confuse style with epoch (Giza, 2024; Sheveleva, 2024).

With a certain degree of certainty, we can say that in the history of art, style directions that succeed one another are characterised by opposite orientations; i.e. in the history of art and aesthetics the law of antithesis is observed.

Therefore, if the art of antiquity was oriented to reason, the art and aesthetics of the Middle Ages were focused on the emotional, mystical sphere. If the art of the Renaissance largely resurrected traditions of antiquity and was guided by a rational search for beauty, the Baroque that replaced it was largely opposite to norms of the Renaissance (Losev, 1978). Classicism and the Enlightenment, in turn, were an opposite of the Baroque and focused on reason. Romanticism relied entirely on senses. Hence, we can say that time is experiencing deep upheavals, involved in rapidly changing dramatic events (Polevoy, 1991).

Considering style trends of the XII century (Baroque and Classicism), one can be convinced in their deep connection with the Renaissance and with the opposite of this era. The style does not belong to the time period. Names of even the most famous architectural styles arose in history by chance, they are "not speaking" (Vlasov, 1996).

In view of this, the Rhodesian school of sculpture and the art of the Diadochi were manifestations of the "baroque" for ancient Greece. A construction of the Caesars of the 3rd and 4th centuries, which were grandiose and luxurious, can also be characterised as Baroque. Gothic, too. It is a flamboyant style, i.e., each historical period has its peak and its decline. Here it may seem that "baroque" acts as a kind of a measure in different cultural and historical epochs. So it is any style, any direction in art or culture, which reaches its peak and goes to the end. Many culturologists and art historians call it "baroque".

Baroque is not just a style; for culture, it is a new way of life; it is a new aesthetic, bursting with bright colours (Radugin, 2020).

But is it not possible to note in Renaissance culture features that blossomed in the Baroque? If Leonardo, Raphael, Titian were balanced, harmonised, then Michelangelo with his expression is often called the "father" of the Baroque.

"A sickness of the Catholic Church," which was expressed first in speeches of Savonarola, then Luther, largely influenced currents of artistic life. All this delivered a tremendous blow to the Church and drove northern nations away from it. This spiritual storm in a special way manifested itself in works of Michelangelo, a follower of Savonarola (Kondrashov & Chichina, 1998).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The tasks set in culture and art by two directions - "Baroque" and "Classicism" have a huge impact on the development of man not only as a creator of artistic masterpieces, but also the creation of a new paradigm in culture. The artist creates a new understanding of nature, new images that begin to excite not only the eye, but also the mind. The principle of baroque atemporality, as an expression of internal crisis and inspired materialization of human perception of natural and supernatural phenomena, rests on the idea of the exact opposite principle - strict and disciplined classicism, in which the desire for harmony presupposes the subordination of the world to forms generated by structural thinking. The hypertrophy of one cultural and stylistic direction is contrasted with the statics and linearity of another. The reality of this archetypal image is undeniable, but due to its excessively generalized nature, it becomes too crude a tool for analyzing a half-century period in cultural history. In addition, the features of Baroque are distinguishable from other stylistic movements only in their extreme direction, since there are many transformations based on the two directions of Baroque and Classicism (Mascareno & Chavez, 2024).

Thanks to the mutual influence of these two directions, a whole era of synonymy between these two directions, Baroque and Classicist, appears. For example, the France of Louis14 can be called both baroque and classicist. This baroque and at the same time classicist era is thereby clearly separated from the Renaissance and the coming industrial era.

Therefore, the task is to be able to clearly distinguish between concepts and eras related to a particular cultural movement.

## **3. Research Questions**

Today, as many centuries ago, the issues of research into two cultural and stylistic trends "Baroque" and "classicism" remain relevant. Their inconsistency and interpenetration into each other Manifested themselves in all areas of culture: music, architecture, painting, theater, literature, thought and way of life. The article reveals the main issues: 1) problems in the aesthetics of young masters; 2) Baroque as a new thought about the world and man. 3) Baroque and classicism as two opposing directions; 4) Comparative characteristics.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this work is to study the two cultural movements "Baroque" and "Classicism", as well as their influence on each other, to clearly distinguish between these two cultural concepts. Tracing their development throughout the entire historical and cultural space.

## 5. Research Methods

Baroque is the spirit of tragedy, contradictions, a desire to distance oneself from the earth, an art of doubt and unsatisfied aspirations, a struggle of asceticism with sensuality, ecstasy, even hysteria.

Baroque is an art that has got not a logical beginning, but an emotional one. It (as well as its theory, not formalised, by the way, into a coherent system) (Kondrashov & Chichina, 1998) was most widespread in Italy, especially in Rome (Prus, 1971), as well as in Europe and Latin America.

The Classicism style is an opposite of Baroque. The term originated in antiquity. Our predecessors replaced it with a synonym for "elite". The sixth Roman king Servius Tullius was a reformer king. He reigned in Rome and divided all citizens into classes. The first class was called *classis*, and the rest was *intra classem* (Kondrashov & Chichina, 1998). That is, the first layer was elitist, hence there is a metaphorical meaning of the term "classicism". Classicism, classic mean from then on "sample", "exemplary" (Kondrashov & Chichina, 1998).

On the other hand, the designation of an entire era by the term "baroque" leads to the fact that opposite concepts of baroque and classicist become almost synonymous (Dassa, 2022).

The Renaissance borrowed the term as a reference point to ancient culture. The images on the canvases of beautiful antique heroes became a model and classic for European culture. From that moment, Classical culture and art are considered as a model, as a beginning, as a norm.

The term baroque means not a norm or a pattern, something unusual, such as a pearl of strange shape. This style realised new ideas about the world, about its versatility and boundless possibilities. That is why, in painting, sculpture and especially in architecture, the Baroque is characterised by grandiosity, magnificence and dynamics, pathetic elevation, intensity of feelings, fondness for spectacularity, combining illusory realities, strong contrasts of scales and rhythms, materials and textures, light and shadow (Collet-Sabé, 2023; Manakbayeva, 2023).

The Baroque era started in the late 16th century and continued until the middle of the 18th century, and the epoch of classicism is usually called the 17th century. In France, it was represented by F. Bonnel, N. Poussin, in Hungary by M. Pollock, in Russia by Lomonosov, Derzhavin, but this was already the XVIII century. These artists are united by a common aesthetic pattern, i.e. classicism.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, conditions that caused the flowering of French classicism in literature and in the fine arts had developed, which enriched French, the court life with the king at the centre, the rationalist movement expressed in Cartesianism.

The opposite of Baroque and Classicism was in everything.

Baroque art pays special attention to the imagination, the idea, which should be witty, striking novelty. Baroque allows ugly, grotesque, fantastic in its sphere. In Baroque art, the principle of combining opposites replaces the Renaissance principle of measure (for example, Bernini's heavy stone turns into the finest drapery of fabric; sculpture essentially gives a painterly effect; architecture becomes like frozen music; the word merges with music; the fantastic is presented as real; fun turns tragic).

The combination of plans beyond the real (unreal), mystical and naturalistic is first present in Baroque aesthetics and then in Romanticism.

The Baroque emphasised the fact that art is profoundly different from the logic of science. In turn, the classicists relied on the rationalist ideas of René Descartes, who put reason above all else. In order to cognise the world, it is necessary to organise human thinking, to put it on the firm foundations of logic (Lvova et al., 2006, p. 250). Reason is in the centre of attention of classicism. The classicist can refer to reality and to fantasy, but never remains attached to reality, which is always adjusted to the framework of idealisation. The classicists sought the harmony of the social and the personal. In general, classicism praised the man, able to restrain his egoism, to subordinate the personal to the public. Duty, order, moral law above feeling, passion of attraction (great artists were able to show all the collisions of this opposition).

The works of classicism contrasts the harmony of antiquity with the works of baroque. According to the concept of classicism, beauty is in the harmony and regularity of the universe. Its origin is spiritual power. Nature can be the subject of imitation, but it must be purified "from the original crudeness". One of the constant themes of the Baroque is that of the deified sovereign. Jupiter and Mars are endowed with the traits of the state. Antique myths are turned into the life story of a royal dynasty. But on the other hand, classicism gradually penetrates into the cult architecture of the Baroque (Cathedral of the House of Invalides in Paris, Arduen Mansard) (Ilyina, 2022).

The barometer in the change of tastes, the change of the great style, has always been the change of the idea of the ideal of man. For example, in the Baroque there is a lot of emphasised opulence, decorativeness, a lot of external and ostentatious. There is no one higher than the monarch neither in idea nor in practice. In the person of the absolute monarch, the deity himself marches. Hence, there is splendour, glittering opulence with gold.

An ideal woman is a sensual beauty with mature contrasting forms, which are very earthy, corporeal.

A man is an active person, not so much thinking as acting, and activity and determination are honoured without much regard to the moral aspect. He is a warrior, a hero, a lover; and the more enemies killed and women conquered, the better, by the way. And the ideal of women in this sense is similar. The Baroque beauty rides beautifully, dances at balls, is noisily merry and drinks wine on a par with men. And at the same time, the Baroque man is a man chained in the armour of etiquette, living a secular life to the detriment of personal and spiritual (Zhukovets, 2008b).

A Baroque costume is very revealing: it is lush wigs, rigid conventional forms of corsages and overlays, schematising the figure, completely modifying the living natural types of the body. Preference is given to heavy fabrics (velvet, brocade), rich colours, plus an abundance of rigid gold sewing, jewelled overlays, precious stones covering the costume. The Baroque costume is abstract and ornamental in nature.

## 6. Findings

Between two periods of a clear gap - the Renaissance and neoclassicism - architects of the 17th and 18th centuries. give preference to searches in the sphere of form. In their experiments they go so far as to overthrow the basic principles of the previous era, but at the same time they never openly encroach on its authority. But Baroque artists demonstrate a pronounced tendency to use the possibilities of light

and space. Such importance is attached to visual effects that it leads to the concentration of all resources and a strikingly daring fusion of architecture with its pictorial or sculptural elements.

## 7. Conclusion

Unlike the Baroque, the ideal of classicism is strictly organised, logical, clear and harmonious images. Court life (lavish ceremonial, etc.) and ancient writers took a centre stage, as did the spread of Protestant ideals, a rapid development of natural science and growing interest in scientific and philosophical knowledge outside offices and laboratories of scientists. These are just some of the most significant signs of the time.

Like nature in general, a garden or park becomes a place of a philosophical (Zhukovets, 2008a) conversation and reflection, cultivating faith and the power of reason, the cultivation of sublime feelings. The park was created for the sublime and noble purpose of creating a perfect environment for a perfect man. These parks were not identical to natural surroundings. They were selected by the planners and composed. At the same time, one of the main tasks was to preserve the "impression of naturalness", the feeling of "wild nature". The composition of parks and gardens included libraries, art galleries, museums, theatres, temples, dedicated not only to gods, but also to human feelings: love, friendship, melancholy.

The hero of classicism is not free in his actions, but is subject to the strict norms of social duty. The individual and his freedom are sacrificed to society and its institutions. A subjective perception and formation of an attitude to what is happening through the prism of time are based on the dualistic distinction between nature and spiritual freedom of man, in his individual being, election and development of self-consciousness" (Serdyuk, 2023, p. 11).

During this period, unexpected similarities arise between completely different people.

Not only the costumes are similar, but also the manner of behaviour and mental attitude are similar.

The artistic conception of the world in classicism was rationalistic and extra-historical: the problems of its time were solved based on the material of antiquity, Rome or were so abstract that neither a place nor an epoch was essential. There are epochs when art powerfully invades everyday life, aestheticising the everyday course of life, and it is to such arts that Baroque and Classicism belong. This invasion has many consequences. Consequences associated with it are the explosions of artistic talent that occur in these epochs. Of course, literature alone had a moral influence on the penetration of art into the life of the epochs we are interested in: architecture, sculpture and painting played no less role.

We considered the contradiction of the two styles: "Baroque" and "Classicism" by the examples of famous sculptors and then traced the retention of the style in modern art.

The most famous and significant Baroque artist was Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini. He was a man of enormous creative energy, who impressed with the diversity of his talents: architect, sculptor, painter, decorator, draftsman. On the one hand, his work is a reflection of the requirements of the Church; on the other hand, it expanded the possibilities of spatial (plastic) art forms. On the one hand, he created the glory of Catholic art; on the other hand, he "corrupted" the church plasticity, created a scandalous, fidgety, indecently flirtatious type of religious statues, which became a canon for a whole century.

Action and dynamics are the core of Bernini's compositional solutions ("The Abduction of Proserpina", "Apollo and Daphne"). This marvellous artist was one of the first (after the ancient sculptors) to approach the problem of transferring movement to spatial art forms. Bernini's work is also distinguished by the fact that he seeks to enhance the expressiveness of new techniques, turns to the synthesis of arts (sculpture and architecture), for example, the canopy and pulpit in St Peter's Cathedral. Bernini extracts unprecedented plastic effects from traditional materials (the famous Triton fountain, the fountain of "Four Rivers" – the union of sculpture and water) (Kondrashov & Chichina, 1998). Bernini abounds with all kinds of protrusions that could only fit on the façade (Wermann, 2021).

Bernini has also remained in history as a famous architect. His fountain on the Piazza Navona falls plumb water planes, breaking at the fall into water dust (Muratov, 2022). In Baroque architecture, the harmony of forms disappears instead of the balance of parts: their struggle, contrasts, dynamic interaction. Complicated relief of the wall, the forms are more plastic, as if mobile; they "generate" and continue each other. Baroque architecture seems to draw a person into its space.

If in Baroque the play of fluid curvilinear forms is the sculptural plasticity of all elements, the order system in the design of Classicist facades emphasises the logic of bearing parts and sets an ordered rhythm. If in Baroque, sculptural design is one of the ways to break the plane of the wall, in classicism, sculpture is as rhythmic unit as columns, for example, the gates of Saint-Denis in Paris by famous classicist F. Blondel.

If in the Baroque, we see movement and complexity of rhythm, colour saturation, freedom of stroke and the consequence of this – the variety and richness of texture, then in the painting of classicism the main elements of modelling form were lines and light shading. Local colour clearly reveals the plasticity of figures and objects, separates the spatial plans of the picture (for example, "Fruit Wreath" by P.P. Rubens and "Bacchanalia" by N. Poussin). Hence, a brief comparative scheme follows (Figure 01).

1. baroque	1. Classicism
2. aristocracy	2. Bourgeoisie
3. lack of theory	3. Clear theoretical concept
4. emotionality	4. Logic
5. sculpture	5. Sculpture
6. expression, feeling, impetuous movement	6. Statics, internal motion
7. architecture	7. Architecture
8. dynamics, sculptural design of the facade	8. Order, clear rhythm
9. painting	9. Painting
10. characteristic type, colour saturation, freedom of stroke	10. Template, type, ideal image

**Figure 1.** Brief comparative scheme

**References**

Collet-Sabé, J. (2023). Pre-modern epistemes inspiring a new Global Sociology of Education Imagination. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 44(8), 1249-1266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2023.2195089>  
Dassa, F. (2022). *Baroque. Architecture between 1600 and 1750 years*. Astrel.

- Giza, A. (2024). Sociology and the Alienation of Knowledge. *Rethinking the Social*, 15-36. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004708549\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004708549_003)
- Ilyina, T. V. (2022). *History of Art. Western European Art*. Textbook. 3rd ed. revision and additions. Vysh. Shk.
- Kondrashov, V. A., & Chichina, E. A. (1998). *Ethics. Aesthetics*. Phoenix.
- Losev, A. F. (1978). *Aesthetics of Renaissance*. Mysl.
- Lvova, E. P., Kabakova, E. P., Nekrasova, L. M., Stukalova, O. V., & Olesina, E. P. (2006). *World Art Culture. The Age of Enlightenment*. Znaniye.
- Manakbayeva, A. B. (2023). Formation of Personal Moral Values in Complex Social Systems. *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems*, 887-899. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-23856-7\\_76](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-23856-7_76)
- Mascareno, A., & Chavez, J. M. (2024). Quasi-Sovereignty: Hobbes, Luhmann, and World Society, 50, 19–36.
- Muratov, P. (2022). *Images of Italy*. Publ. AST.
- Polevoy, V. M. (1991). *Small History of Art. Art of the xx century 1901–1945*. Art.
- Prus, I. E. (1971). *West European art of the XVII century*. Mysl.
- Radugin, A. A. (2020). *Aesthetics*. Publ. Centre.
- Serdyuk, E. G. (2023). Magical thinking as a socio-psychological phenomenon of spiritual life in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 164, 00070. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202316400070>
- Sheveleva, D. A. (2024). Problems of intercultural dialogue in modern society: finding solutions. *Chelovek*, 35(2), 69-86. <https://doi.org/10.31857/s0236200724020043>
- Vlasov, V. G. (1996). *Architecture of the Petrovsky Baroque*. Znaniye.
- Wermann, K. (2021). *History of Art of All Times and Peoples. Art XVI–XIX centuries*. AST.
- Zhukovets, O. Y. (2008a). Baroque as a style and as a type of culture. *Cult. Life of the South of Russ.*, 2(27), 28-36.
- Zhukovets, O. Y. (2008b). Baroque as a type of culture and thinking: style features. *Vest. VSU Philos. Sociol. and social technol.*, 2(8), 71-77.