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RU

Барокко (середина XVI – середина XVIII столетия). Коллизии контрастов. Эссе I

Демченко А. И.

Аннотация. В эссе рассматривается искусство и культура эпохи Барокко, сменившей Ренессанс. Данная эпоха охватывает XVII столетие и частично XVI и XVIII века. Ее появление ознаменовалось кризисом ренессансного гуманизма, разочарованием в идеалах Возрождения, особенно в идее совершенного человека, его гармоничного существования и господства над миром. В первую очередь внимание автора обращено к свойственному Барокко спиритуализму, возникшему в противовес индивидуализму Ренессанса: дух возвышается над материей, это проявляется в стремлении к покаянию, отказе от плотских удовольствий и обращении к Богу. В эссе раскрываются ключевые контрасты, антитезы, характерные для рассматриваемой эпохи. Так, спиритуализму было противопоставлено «плотское», земное, чувственное начало, причем оба они могли быть представлены в работах одного и того же творца. Еще одна ключевая антитеза эпохи – сопоставление утончённо-аристократического и фольклорно-низового. Одним из сильнейших контрастов, характерных для эпохи Барокко, выступает антитеза «трагизм – жизнелюбие». Кроме того, автор обращается к рассмотрению стилей рококо и барокко. Особое внимание уделяется русскому искусству исследуемого периода. Раскрытие данной темы будет продолжено в следующей части эссе.

EN

Baroque (the mid-16th to mid-18th centuries): Collisions of contrasts. Essay 1

A. I. Demchenko

Abstract. The essay examines the art and culture of the Baroque era, which followed the Renaissance. This era spans the 17th century and parts of the 16th and 18th centuries. Its emergence was marked by a crisis in Renaissance humanism, a disillusionment with the ideals of the era, particularly the idea of a perfect human being, their harmonious existence, and their dominion over the world. First of all, the author focuses on the spiritualism inherent in the Baroque, which arose in opposition to the individualism of the Renaissance: the spirit is elevated above matter, which is reflected in the desire for repentance, the rejection of bodily pleasures, and a turning towards God. This part of the essay pays particular attention to key contrasts, antitheses characteristic of the era. For example, spiritualism was contrasted with the "bodily", earthly, sensual element, both of which could be represented in the works of the same artist. Another key antithesis of the era is the juxtaposition of refined-aristocratic and folkloric, lowly elements. One of the strongest contrasts characteristic of the Baroque period is the antithesis of tragedy and zest for life. Furthermore, the author addresses the styles of Rococo and Baroque. Particular attention is paid to Russian art of the period under study. The exploration of this topic will be continued in the next part of the essay.

The Baroque era succeeded the Renaissance. Its chronological boundaries are best understood as follows: we will consider the 17th century as the central one to this period. If we add approximately half a century to this period both from the earlier times (the second half of the 16th century) and from the later period (the first half of the 18th century), we will precisely encompass roughly two centuries, forming the historical duration of the Baroque era.

What was happening in the public consciousness from the mid-16th century? At the stage of transition to the Baroque era, the most important factor was the acute crisis of Renaissance humanism, which constituted the essence and the core of the Renaissance worldview.

Skeptical sentiments were increasing, and there was a growing disillusionment with the ideas and ideals that had fueled the art of the recent past. This included the rapid dissipation of the notions of the perfect, beautiful human and their harmonious existence and dominance over the surrounding world.

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For example, through the words of the main character in the tragedy **"Hamlet"**, the English playwright and poet *William* ***Shakespeare*** (1564-1616) reproduces the typical lexicon of Renaissance humanists: the earth is the garden of creation, man is the miracle of nature, his possibilities are boundless, and so on. Sarcastically listing all this, Hamlet annuls the spiritual legacy of the previous era with a phrase permeated with boundless disgust for what man lived for and for man himself: *"this quintessence of dust"* (i.e., the essence of human existence is void, ridiculous and pitiful nothingness).

It may have seemed that a backward movement began, a return to the Middle Ages, of course, after passing through the rich spiritual experience of the Renaissance. And in many ways, it was indeed a reaction to this experience, a reaction to the free thinking of the previous era with its orientation towards humans, as the influence of the mindset of the Renaissance pushed to the background the notions of the higher powers of creation (including God) and the superhuman-spiritual element linked with them.

This is why *spiritualism* (from the Latin *spiritus*, *spiritualis* – *spirit*, *spiritual*) made such a statement about itself, especially in the early stages of the Baroque era – a worldview that considers the spirit as the first principle of all existence and gives preference to the spiritual, the "celestial", in contrast to the material, the "earthly".

At the end of the Renaissance, Europe was seized by a thirst for repentance. The belief in the transience of the flesh became established, and from the "darkness" of it, the human soul sought God. In painting, this idea was perhaps first embodied by the Italian artist ***Titian*** (Tiziano Vecellio, about 1477 or 1490 – 1576). This refers to his most famous painting **"The Penitent Magdalene"** (1565), where the Gospel representation of the repentant harlot extends to a whole concept.

This painting possesses almost everything important for Baroque spiritualism. The most paramount aspect reflected here is the strongest conflict between flesh and spirit. As for the Renaissance, the work contains the sensual allure of a young, full-bodied female form, as if, in contradiction, the restless soul passionately reaches for the heavens.

Notable are the symbolic attributes introduced into the image: in the lower right corner, there is a book (a symbol of spiritual knowledge) and a skull (embodying the transience of earthly life). It is characteristic that the longing for holiness is expressed here through a state of *ecstasy*, which became an almost obligatory companion of spiritual aspirations in the Baroque era.

This state represents the essence of the sculptural scene **"The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa"** (1645-1652), created by the compatriot of Titian, the most significant architect and sculptor of the Baroque style, *Lorenzo* ***Bernini*** (1598-1680). This composition is installed in the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, for the creation of which Bernini did a lot as an architect.

The plot of the sculptural scene is the following: an angel pierces the golden arrow into the heart of the saint. This symbolic sign of communion with the divine causes Teresa both agonizing and blissful ecstasy: her hand hangs limply, her head is thrown back, a cry of desired torment breaks from her lips, and the folds of her monastic robe writhe in spasmodic trembling.

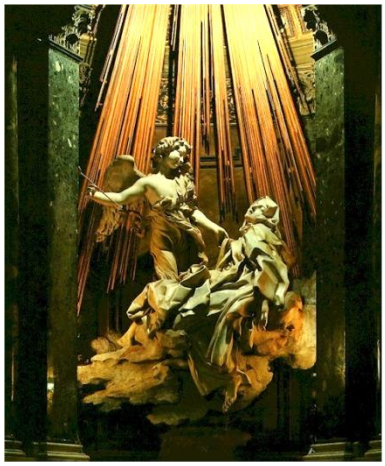

Illustration 01. *Lorenzo Bernini – The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*

Spiritualism saw its highest goal in breaking free from the shadows of the earthly shell and touching the heavenly wonder. Its immediate expression became a turn to deep religiosity. This was particularly tangible in Spain, which was perhaps the main bastion of Catholicism. That is why we find so many corresponding images in Spanish art. One of them, very characteristic, **"The Childhood of the Virgin"** (circa 1660), belongs to the brush of *Francisco* ***de Zurbarán*** (1598-1664). In the moving image of the child, a particularly enclosed purity is revealed, through which – sincerity and truthfulness of religious feeling: the pose and gesture emphasize meekness, piety, and an angelic face of the girl. All this uniquely and impressively reveals *the sacred* – purified from the mundane, turned into the "highest heights".

Like in the days of the Middle Ages, the figure of *a holy man* – a recluse, an ascetic, leading a hermetic life, detached from worldly temptations – is again at the forefront of art. Spanish artist *José* ***de Ribera*** (1591-1652) outlines the typical contour of such a figure in the painting **"Saint Onuphrius"** (1637). The spirit of humility, fervor of prayer, a body worn by fasting, and the attributes of a religious ascetic (a skull, a rosary) convey complete devotion to serving God.

More expressively and sharply than any other painter, ***El Greco*** (1541-1614, the real surname is Theotocópuli) expressed the idea of spiritualism. This pseudonym indicates his origins *(from Greece)*, but he found his true home

in Spain, where religious-mystical sentiments were particularly strong. It was precisely through mystical leanings, or rather, through the striving to convey that which is beyond reason and inexplicable, that he most often embodied spiritualistic motifs. One of his works in this vein – **"The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)"** (c. 1608) – reveals a mass ecstasy scenario. The hyper-elongated, contorted bodies, ecstatic gestures and faces distorted by intense spiritual tension respond to a ritual performed by a large group of people. The atmosphere of this mysterious rite demonstrates the complete irrationality of what unfolds.

At its loftiest and universal expression, spiritualism aimed to embody intensified, concentrated spirituality. This implied that moral essence was valued above all else in a person. Let us turn to ***El Greco*** once more. The protagonists of his painting **"Saint Peter and Saint Paul"** (c. 1587-1592) are saints, but essentially, they are two extraordinary human personalities, whose spiritual nature, moral beauty, and purity are extensively highlighted. The nobility of their countenance, the special expressiveness of their eyes, shining with extraordinary intelligence, depict people whose thoughts are concentrated on the high and noble.

Illustration 02. *El Greco – Saint Peter and Saint Paul*

In its own way, Baroque *musical art* very broadly embodied the ideas of spiritualism of the era. This embodiment primarily occurred through a religious lens:

- on one hand, by serving church ritual and creating an appropriate mood for the congregation;
- on the other hand, by using the possibilities of purely artistic impact, music sought to immerse the listener in their inner world, in the sacred, in a prayerful conversation with themselves, or to elevate the listener to transcendent heights, where a soul thirsting for God dwelled, symbolizing categories of the eternal and the infinite.

Invariably, it was a mystery, a sacred act. Starting from the Late Renaissance, musical art sharply turned in this direction. This shift is evident in the works of two of the most significant composers of the 16th century: *Giovanni Pierluigi* ***da Palestrina*** (c. 1525 – 1594), the head of the Roman polyphonic school, and one of the culminators of the evolution of the Netherlandish composer school, *Orlando* ***di Lasso*** (c. 1532 – 1594).

However, cult music offered another path for expressing religious sentiment (which was characteristic of the Protestant church): not through detachment from the real human experience and human elements, but through participation in them, by being on earth and addressing the praying with preaching, conversation, or reflection, while maintaining a high spiritual mood.

The most notable figure in the exploration of this kind was *Heinrich* ***Schütz***, the founder of German classical music, born exactly a century before Bach (1585-1672). In his works, we find a corresponding genre, **"Symphoniae sacrae"**, written for a multi-voice choir. In them, we can hear the preaching of Christian empathy, behind which lies something greater: the affirmation of the ideal of a pure, virtuous life, detached from the trivial and mundane.

Literature of the Baroque era also contributed to the development of the concept of spiritualism. From the perspective of the ongoing ideological processes, it is very indicative that an entire, large, and branching stream emerged, called *religious poetry*. Poets confessed their sinfulness, recording acute internal discord, one example being *S.* ***Goulart*** (1548-1628) in **"I run..."**. At the limit of soulful anguish, individuals fell into the ecstasy of self-flagellation, such as in *J. Ch.* ***Günther***'s (1695-1723) **"Your unworthiest creature..."**.

As proof of the transience of all earthly things and the immortality of heavenly elements, a fierce battle between the flesh and the spirit unfolded (as exemplified by the poem **"Earthly Life"** by the German poet *Christian Hofmann* ***von Hofmannswaldau*** (1617-1679)). This theme was endlessly varied in Baroque art, driven by disillusionment with life and profound skepticism. A psalm by the prominent Danish poet of the 17th century, *Thomas* ***Kingo*** (1634-1703), with the representative title **"Weary of the world, and with heaven most dear"** and the recurring phrase *"'Tis vanity all, // 'Tis vanity all"* from the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, attributed to King Solomon, stands as an example. Interestingly, the author turns to a purely religious genre and relies on a quotation borrowed from the Bible.

Ultimately, religious poets were most concerned with the question of the true and imaginary values of existence, unequivocally resolving it in favor of the spiritually lofty, striving to rise above the trials and ephemeral goods of life. This theme was particularly persistently interpreted by the pride of Mexico, the poetess *Juana* ***Inés de la Cruz*** (1651-1695).

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When considering spiritualism, it is easy to see that much of the art of that time was based on oppositions that we call *antitheses*. This is the key to understanding the Baroque era.

Let's start with what opposed spiritualism. And what opposed it was precisely what it rejected, namely *the "bodily", earthly, sensual element*.

As intense as the attraction to the spiritual was, so strong was the attraction to the directly opposite. And both could be equally represented in the works of the same poet, artist, or composer.

For example, the great German composer *Johann Sebastian* ***Bach*** (1685-1750) provided examples of spiritual inspiration (for instance, in chorale preludes for the organ), but one could also hear not only sensitive but distinctly sensual accents in his works, sometimes presented in a way that would later become characteristic of urban romance and even its special variety – the so-called "cruel romance". An example of this can be found in his **Sonata No. 4 for Violin and Harpsichord**.

The most vivid and tangible results in the revelation of the "fleshly" element were achieved in *painting*. This could be expressed in quite restrained forms. Such an artistic solution can be found, for example, in the painting **"Danaë"** (1636), where the great Dutch painter ***Rembrandt*** *Harmenszoon van Rijn* (1606-1669) followed the Greek myth: the king, who was predicted to die at the hands of his grandson, imprisoned his daughter Danaë in a tower where no one could enter; from Zeus, who entered Danaë in the form of a golden shower, she bore a son, who accidentally killed his grandfather with a disc during a game.

The canvas shows the moment when Danaë, lying on a bed, rises to meet the golden glow that heralds the appearance of Zeus. The artist admires the plasticity of forms, the softness, and smoothness of the lines of the naked female body. But at the same time, he fills the image with chastity and spirituality, conveying a psychologically complex state of a yearning for the unknown, the desired, combined with inner apprehension.

In addition to these restrained forms, we also find an open, almost demonstrative embodiment of the sensual element in Baroque painting. Its true apotheosis was the work of the Flemish artist *Peter Paul* ***Rubens*** (1577-1640).

A brief explanation is needed here. At the end of the 16th century, the Netherlands found itself divided – this is why the state that existed up to that point is referred to as *the Low Countries, historically also known as the Netherlands*. Its northern part gained independence during the first bourgeois revolution in history, giving rise to the so-called *modern Netherlands* (often informally referred to as Holland – after the name of the leading region). The southern regions remained under the dominion of Spain, and this territory, named after the most important and wealthiest province, was called Flanders (its main part later became a part of modern Belgium).

Two artistic schools developed on the foundation of the former Dutch art, which are accordingly called Dutch (led by Rembrandt) and Flemish (led by Rubens).

The work of the great Flemish artist is a true celebration of the flesh (Karl Bryullov compared his art to a sumptuous feast). To see this, it is enough to compare Rubens's **"The Three Graces"** (1638-1640) with the group of the three graces in Sandro Botticelli's painting "Primavera", which was discussed at the end of the review of the previous era. In the work by Botticelli, a master of High Renaissance painting, there is a restrained-contemplative beauty, delicate to the point of weightlessness.

Rubens's depiction of the eponymous female figures has nothing to do with the ideals of the Renaissance. For him, the main thing is to convey the warm pulsation of life, the lively and full-bodied human flesh. Therefore, he is not afraid to indulge in "sensuality", painting blooming, exuberantly colored bodies with their lushness, bumpy masses, and folds.

Through all this, Rubens extolled the exceptional fullness of life forces, the joy of existence, which often translated into motifs of earthly abundance. His allegorical painting **"The Union of Earth and Water"** (between 1612 and 1615) is perceived as a symbol of these motifs.

The goddess of fertility, Ceres, and the god of the seas, Neptune, are presented in the typical "repertoire" of the great Flemish artist: frank sensuality, overflowing luxury of human and natural forms, conveyed with rich colors, and energetic contrasts of color, figures, and poses, creating a sense of theatrical elevation.

One cannot help but notice the sea deity, a triton, who blows a horn in a conch shell with his elemental power, deriving it from the complete unity with the natural world. Everything exudes a happy state of mind, which so starkly opposed the conflicts and dissonances of the tragic era that the Baroque would become a little later.

Motifs of life abundance and the ability of humans to enjoy the blessings of existence were widely conveyed in completely realistic depictions. One of the joys of the Baroque era was the enjoyment of music, which became widespread across different social classes. This is why corresponding themes emerged frequently in the painting of that time. One such example can be found in the canvas of the Italian artist *Michelangelo Merisi da* ***Caravaggio*** (1573-1610) titled **"The Lute Player"** (1595), which the author considered his best creation.

The vibrant feeling of life is expressed wonderfully here as nowhere else. Noticeable first and foremost is the lush and sultry charm of the Southern figure's face (the rounded fullness of this face possesses girlish features, which is why it is sometimes referred to as the "Girl with a Lute"). The main focus of the painting is the blooming youth, supplemented by a rich bouquet of flowers and a scatter of fruits. The sensuousness of the representation harmonizes with the spirituality of the image: the elegance of the musical instrument's craftsmanship, the sophistication of the graphic signs in the unfolded notes, the delicate fingers of the musician in a state of creative inspiration.

The sensual completeness in perceiving the world, the theme of the abundance of life's goods (often transitioning into excess) led to the emergence and flourishing of the *still life* genre, associated with the depiction of utensils, fruits, flower bouquets, game, and so on. A particular interest in still life was naturally to be expected from representatives of the Flemish school.

One of them, a contemporary of Rubens and closely collaborating with him, was *Frans **Snyders*** (1579-1657). As a true son of bourgeois Flanders, he, in a decorative and colorful manner, revealed the sense of wealth of the natural gifts and created an extensive series of still lifes called "Market Scenes". Among them is **"Fish Market"** (1620s-1630s), where a huge table overflows with abundance of food. Noteworthy is the purely Baroque contrast between this almost fantastical heap of wildlife and the entirely real figure of the owner, busily engaged in everyday concerns.

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Another antithesis can be presented as the juxtaposition of refined-aristocratic and folkloric, lowly elements.

The *refined-aristocratic art* of the Baroque era originated from *Mannerism*. At the early stages of the epoch, this was the most notable direction, and it stood out due to its increased attention to artistic technique, individual style, *manner* – hence the name. Mannerism gravitated towards the aesthetics of mystery, the unusual, the intricately whimsical (by the way, the term *Baroque* itself in literal translation means *whimsical, strange*).

From Mannerism, the entire Baroque era retained the inclination towards elitism, which was connected to perceptions of refinement, elegance, and even sophistication in manifestations of human nature. Notable for the self-consciousness of artists of this time was the fact that they often saw themselves as aristocrats of the spirit. Therefore, artists often found in themselves a worthy model for reproducing these qualities.

This is evident in the case of Rubens's pupil, the Flemish painter *Anthony **van Dyck*** (1599-1641) in his **"Self-Portrait"**. This artist predominantly created brilliant ceremonial portraits of the nobility. In his self-portrait, he presents himself in a similar manner, while additionally highlighting in his appearance the features of a vibrant artistic personality – free and inspired. Both aspects are emphasized through details such as the luxurious fabric of the costume and the delicate, nervous fingers of the artist.

Illustration 03. *Anthony van Dyck – Self-Portrait*

The desire to embody the aristocratic tendencies inherent to the era prompted the artists to neglect, seemingly, the most essential artistic conventions.

The Italian artist *Carlo **Dolci*** (1616-1686), portraying one of the religious figures of church history in the painting "St. Cecilia" (circa 1670), excluded any historical realities of the early Christian era. He dressed his young heroine in "elegant" attire fashionable in the second half of the 17th century and depicted her making music on a baroque home organ. The only "disruption" in perceiving this remarkably attractive high-society individual with her delicate yet precise features is the halo above her head, which could, at a careless glance, be mistaken for a type of headgear.

The same line of open modernization of the legendary figure is evident in **"The Virgin and Child with a Spindle"** (1570s) by the Spanish painter *Luis **de Morales*** (circa 1510 – 1586). It is immediately apparent that the heroine of this painting cannot be placed among the Madonnas of the Renaissance.

The work *differs* in the accentuated aristocratism of the appearance: there are the nearly unnatural elongation of all proportions, the "abyss-like" drooping eyelids, the allure of a certain facial asymmetry – a completely extraordinary beauty, the sophistication of which is accentuated by the cool color palette and the "enamel" painting technique.

Also, the work *differs* in that there is a sense of mystery in the figure. Of course, based on the inertia of the stereotypical interpretation of the image of the Virgin Mary, one might assume a foreboding anticipation of the fate of the Child, who is presently full of carefree alertness, curiously examining a cross-like object (the spindle transformed). Nevertheless, *this* Madonna, with the signs of inner suffering on her face, mournfully contemplating something of her own, is a mystery, as mysteriously beautiful as her entire demeanor.

In poetry, Mannerism asserted itself with a complex form of expression, the use of whimsical metaphors and unexpected comparisons, refined skill in versification, and a penchant for experimentation.

One of the leaders of this movement, the Italian writer *Giambattista **Marino*** (1569-1625), defined his creed as follows: *"The poet's goal is to surprise, to astonish. Those who cannot do this should clean horses."* According to another famous Mannerist, the Spanish poet ***Góngora*** (Luis de Góngora y Argote, 1561-1627), *"Only the exceptional, the whimsically complex, can be beautiful."*

Despite all their refinement, Mannerists could also draw upon folkloric elements; yet, in this case, they remained true to their *manner*. Take, for example, ***Góngora***'s **"Black Romance"**. Adhering to the rhythm and intonation of the romance, a genre of Spanish popular poetry, the author sets himself the challenging task of making the word *"black"* resonate in every line (in one of them, this occurs even twice – *"Growing blacker than a black cloud"*).

Brilliantly unraveling such a perplexing charade, he manages to fully provide the thematic content and unwavering logic of the plot. The initial premise of the scene enacted here presupposes that the characters involved (he and she) are of African descent. The suitor's fervent and expressive outpourings, filled with the same "blackness" (*"black day... black ingratitude... black angel... black cat"*, etc.), are counteracted by his paramour in an equally "black" manner.

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How did music respond to the aristocratization of art? By the end of the 16th century, the *madrigal* became the leading secular genre– a vocal poem distinguished by its subtlety of expression, flexible presentation of poetic text nuances, and a strive for psychological depth. It was during this time that the exploration of chromaticism and dissonance, processes that ran through madrigal culture with the greatest intensity, began. With the introduction of chromaticism (dividing the tone into its half steps), the capacity to convey more nuanced gradations of feelings and sensations sharply increased. Dissonance (as a consonance opposed to consonance) enabled the expression of complex, conflicting emotions and psychological states.

Throughout the early Baroque period, all of this was rigorously realized in the madrigals of ***Gesualdo*** (Prince Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa, circa 1560 – 1613). Introducing the most delicate bends in the melodic line, sudden transitions from tonality to tonality, and a continuous flickering of harmonic light and shade, he achieved deep psychological insights, conveying the nervous vibrations of the most intense soul states – something entirely unprecedented for his time. As one of the most demonstrative examples of this style, we can mention the spiritual composition **"O vos omnes"** (Latin for "O, all of you..."), which was performed by the Russian ensemble "Madrigal" with particular subtlety and poignancy.

In stark contrast to everything just discussed were the art forms associated with the *folkloric, lower class sphere*. Up until the Baroque era, professional art rarely engaged with such material. The very fact that even adherents of aristocratic art took an interest in this material speaks to the inevitability of its emergence in prominent positions in artistic creation.

*Anthony **van Dyck*** was mentioned above as the author of brilliant ceremonial portraits of nobility. He was also capable of painting **"St. Peter"** (circa 1617), depicting the saint in the guise of a commoner, with rugged facial features and disheveled hair. It is worth noting that this depiction also presents another example of Baroque spiritualism – passionate sentiment, sincerity, and fervor of religious impulse.

And one more juxtaposition. When speaking of van Dyck's "Self-Portrait", it was mentioned that painters often found in themselves a model of an outstanding individual of "blue blood". However, the opposite also took place when an artist demonstratively lowered their "image", descending to the "depths" of life. In the self-portrait entitled **"Revelers"** (circa 1660), the Dutch artist *Jan **Steen*** (circa 1626 – 1679) humorously depicted himself and his wife in the most ordinary domestic setting and significantly inebriated.

Among the first to reveal the lower-class element in art was the Dutch artist *Pieter **Bruegel*** (between 1525 and 1530 – 1569), who represented early Dutch art, that is, before the division into Dutch and Flemish schools that would come later. He was one of the earliest artists to transition to depicting the common man in the atmosphere of real life and to portraying the world of everyday people's lives – often peasant life, which earned him the nickname *"peasant Bruegel"*. He recreated this world in all its rough nakedness, in accordance with the forms of reality itself. One can judge all that from such a painting as **"The Peasant Wedding"**.

Many of his compatriots in both the Netherlands and Flanders followed in Bruegel's footsteps. One of them, the Flemish painter *Adriaen **Brouwer*** (1605 or 1606 – 1638), is a master of vivid, sharp grotesque in depicting various "grimaces of life", which he captured through physiognomic sketches of characters from the common people. Among the striking examples is the sketch **"The Bitter Potion"**.

The folkloric, lower class element also found its reflection in the musical art. This primarily pertained to instrumental genres, which were gaining autonomy then, since until the Baroque era, music with genuine artistic significance had been predominantly that relying on lyrics. The development of instrumental genres claiming autonomy is believed to have originated with the work of the *English virginalists* (the virginal is an English variety of harpsichord). This was a large group of musicians who primarily worked around the turn of the 17th century.

The virginalists were characterized by a direct connection with folk music. In their works, they willingly used folk melodies. Their compositions often bore a rough, openly plebeian character and were distinguished by extreme vividness, pungency, and vibrant zest for life. All of this is represented in the piece by the leader of the virginalists, *William **Byrd*** (circa 1543 – 1623, a senior contemporary of William Shakespeare), titled "**The Flute and Droome"**: an overtly folkloric-genre "primitive", based on the imitation of military musical instruments (the thunder of the "drum" and the piercing sound of the "flute").

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Continuing to explore the strongest contrasts characteristic of the Baroque era, let us turn to the antithesis of *tragedy* and *zest for life*. Indeed, side by side existed the sharply conflicting, agonizing, openly tragic sensation of life and its joyful, carefree, even light-hearted perception. Let us start by examining the tragic aspects.

From the mid-16th century, there was a shift from the harmonious, balanced Renaissance worldview more towards contemplations of the imperfection and disharmony of existence. Shakespeare's Hamlet, mentioned at the very beginning, says: *"The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, // That ever I was born to set it right!"* This disjointedness naturally engenders a sense of fragility and unreliability of existence. One feels like a splinter in the maelstrom of life.

One of the most common themes in Baroque literature is the caprices of fate, which ruthlessly strike anyone. The Spanish poet *Antonio* ***Mira de Amescua*** (between 1574 and 1578 – 1640) in his poem **"Song"** presents a whole series of plots on this matter: a carefree finch sweetly chirps but is shot by a hunter; a beauty captures hearts, but illnesses disfigure her, and so forth. This series also depicts the fate of a rich man.

It becomes entirely evident that the exceptional and the accidental begin to be perceived as the norm and law of existence. Largely due to such subjective predisposition, human life becomes filled with anxiety, unease, and emotional turmoil. Much is painted in pessimistic tones, emphasizing motifs of futility and transience of existence, as noted with complete despair in the sonnet **"All Is Vanity"** by the German poet *Andreas* ***Gryphius*** (1616-1664).

In Baroque art, the theme of suffering and martyrdom gained widespread traction. Often, these were caused by malice emanating from people themselves. The English dramaturgy particularly addressed this issue – Shakespeare's immediate predecessors and successors.

William ***Shakespeare*** himself paid tribute to this. However, his thoughts delved deeper. He sought to understand the origins of evil in man, how it infiltrates the souls of individuals, what drives them to distort others' and their own destinies, to sow death and destruction. He exposed the underlying motives of crimes against humanity: selfishness, envy, ambition, thirst for power, and so on.

Shakespeare succeeded in showcasing the "mechanics" of villainy in meticulous detail. The figure of Iago immediately comes to mind. The tragedy **"Othello"** (1604) could justifiably be called by the name of this cunning plotter, who becomes the spring of action. He weaves his webs, playing on people's weaknesses. His strong mind is undeniable, his machinations usually full of cynicism.

To perpetrate such deeds, a special breed of people had to surface – *"stone souls"*, as Alexander Blok referred to the characters in Shakespeare's tragedy **"King Lear"** (1605). The playwright himself gave him a hint. Broken by trials, Lear seeks judgment for his daughters who betrayed him and regarding one of them says, *"Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that make these hard hearts?"*

As a result of all the above-mentioned, the *tragedy of life perception* becomes apparent, with the greatest depths in this regard found once again in Shakespeare. Before him, as he said, *"a sea of troubles"* opened up. Although in his plays, in the struggle of darkness and light, in the battle of evil and righteous forces, good and justice often prevail, the cost of this victory cannot fail to frighten – through mountains of corpses, through twisted lives!

Shakespeare's contemplations on the tragedy of existence can be considered as a culmination of thoughts in **Sonnet 66**, where we find the strongest outburst of bitterness and disillusionment. The amplification of unbearable life dissonances is achieved here through the enumeration of its ugliness. And in the final couplet, an explanation is given as to why one cannot leave this world: the brotherhood of like-minded people is the only support in this life, and one must do everything possible to uphold the fragile thread of emotional responsiveness, compassion, humanity. This was one of the foundations of Baroque humanism, which will be discussed at the very end of this review.

Speaking of the Baroque as a tragic era, one can cite the music of Shakespeare's compatriot, *Henry* ***Purcell*** (circa 1659 – 1695), as evidence. This imprint is very tangible in his overture to the play **"The Gordian Knot Untied"**, the title of which is emblematic in its own way, becoming a symbol of complexity, entangled in the contradictions of time. Relying solely on strings and litanies, the composer manages to convey colossal internal tension and a poignant sense of the catastrophic nature of existence in this music while maintaining external restraint. The pathos of grand emotions and thoughts is revealed here through a slow and grandiose pace of a funeral procession (in the rhythms of an ancient passacaglia).

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The intensification of life's contradictions from the mid-16th century, during the transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque, brought about fundamental changes in the panorama of visual arts. Alongside the sense of disharmony of existence, artists began to sketch out the flaws and sores of the surrounding world, and moreover – its deformities.

This line of development was particularly active in Dutch painting (later Dutch and Flemish), starting with *Pieter* ***Bruegel***. Among his latter canvases is **"The Beggars"** (1568), depicting legless beggars resembling stumps. The artist accentuates the grotesque and repulsive aspects here, caring least about arousing pity or sympathy in the viewer for these unfortunate individuals. For him, this "subject" is more of a metaphor through which he exposes the ugly sides of life.

In the same year of 1568, Bruegel created the painting **"The Blind Leading the Blind"**. Crossing the plane of the canvas is a chain of blind beggars. Their faces are ugly, portraying dullness and animal voracity. The procession moves towards a cliff, and with each step, the figures become more unstable, gestures more uncertain – the blind fall one by one into the water-filled ravine. Once again, before us is a significant metaphor affirming the dismal truth: the ordinary life path of people is the path of the blind.

Illustration 04. *Pieter Bruegel – The Blind Leading the Blind*

The theme of villainy and the associated martyrdom became widespread in painting. Human cruelty was revealed with heightened expressiveness and sometimes even with physiological nakedness.

In the painting **"The Massacre of the Innocents"**, the French artist *Nicolas* **Poussin** (1594-1665) illustrates a biblical account in which the king of Judea, Herod (the late 1st century BCE), ordered the slaughter of all newborns upon hearing about the birth of Christ, out of fear for his throne against the one prophesied as the "King of the Jews", and in ignorance of the whereabouts of the Infant Jesus. The subject is depicted with ruthless candor and the most powerful means: a desperate plea to spare the child (the woman in the center), the despair of a mother carrying the slain infant (the figure on the right), a soldier stepping on the throat of a lying baby – all these are blatant facts of the savagery of the executioners, their open cruelty.

The sense of the painfulness of existence was accentuated in every way. Similar motifs were often embodied through scenes from the last days of Christ's earthly life. And again, all of this was being laid down, starting from the Late Renaissance.

For the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, ***Michelangelo*** (1475-1564, who was one of the architects of this basilica) created one of his most outstanding late works, the sculptural group **"Pietà"**. This Italian word (*Pity* or *Mercy*) in visual arts denotes a scene of the lamentation of Christ by the Virgin Mary. To a certain extent, the sense of enlightened sublimity is still preserved in the portrayal of the tragic figure: as Madonna cradles the body of her deceased Son on her knees, she is frozen in mournful resignation before the event.

As for ***Titian***, a younger contemporary of Michelangelo who outlived him by only 12 years, he openly expressed the theme of martyrdom. It is enough to remember his canvas **"Saint Sebastian"**, depicting a man suffering from arrows piercing him.

This artist, who started his creative journey at the end of the Renaissance, to a large extent and in varying ways, opened up the horizons of Baroque aesthetics. This is well evident in the painting **"Christ Carrying the Cross"** (circa 1566). Like in "Saint Sebastian" with its stormy atmosphere, here we see the same darkened color scheme, but with a sharper focus on the psychological state of the central character. Internally, the painting is permeated with the thought: Christ's "carrying of the Cross" is a symbol of the heavy, cruciform path of man in this vale of tears.

An example of a thoroughly Baroque treatment of the theme under consideration can be seen in the painting **"The Crucifixion"** by the Italian artist *Alessandro* ***Magnasco*** (1667-1749). The pathos of martyrdom and suffering is taken to the extreme here. The turbulent and even tumultuous nature of the entire composition resonates with the depiction of a raging element. Against the backdrop of a vast stormy sky (which becomes almost a mandatory attribute of such imagery), the crucified body with the flowing folds of clothing is depicted. The situation is presented almost naturalistically, enhanced by the emotions of witnesses to the execution, in a state of immense confusion, boundless despair, and deep stress.

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Alongside the exceptional contradiction, disharmony, and tragedy in Baroque art, there was the direct opposite – *vibrant zest for life*, joy, and lightness of mood. In other words, there was a splitting of the flow of life into sharply contrasted poles, which coexisted not only among different authors creating at the same time but also within the work of the same author.

We have just talked about ***Poussin***'s work "The Massacre of the Innocents", which was presented as evidence of nightmares of cruelty. That same Poussin could magnificently convey the brilliance of the colors of the world, the harmony of human community, the enjoyment of life's blessings, as we find, for instance, in the painting **"The Empire of Flora"** (1631). In the center of the busy composition is Flora, bestowing joy all around, as any goddess of flowers and spring blossoms would. The canvas is bathed in sunlight – Helios himself (the sun god) moves across the sky in his chariot.

Another example of combining seemingly entirely unthinkable contrasts can be found in the poetry of *Pierre* ***de Ronsard*** (1524-1585), a compatriot of Poussin. **"All I Have Now Is Bones..."** are truly chilling lines, in which the harsh reality of life's end is spoken of. And alongside this, the poem **"To the Hawthorn-Tree..."** written around the same time is filled with the light joy of life, where the sense of spring freshness grows into a true hymn of youth. This is conveyed in part through dynamic shifts in rhythm (in the meter, continuous alternation of seven- or eight-foot with three-foot lines).

Such direct expression of the joy of life among artists, perhaps more vividly and fully than anyone else, was embodied by the Dutch painter *Frans **Hals*** (between 1581-1585 – 1666). This feeling he often revealed in vivid and lively sketches of characters, drawn from the common people, emphasizing the mental health of individuals from the lower classes (one remarkable example being his **"Mulatto"**). Like no one else, Hals possessed the secret of capturing a natural, lively smile. Some of his children's portraits emit an astonishingly infectious joy – the quintessence of this could be considered **"Laughing Boy"**.

Illustration 05. *Frans Hals – Laughing Boy*

Continuing with the comparisons, in the sphere of *performing arts*, we find the following situation: the Baroque era was a time of flourishing theatrical tragedy, but at the same time, it was also a time of flourishing comedy.

The beginning of the rise of *comedy*, just like the beginning of the European professional theater of the Modern era in general, was laid by the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. It originated in Venice in the 1560s, precisely at the dawn of the Baroque era. Subsequently, in other countries, their own schools of comedy writing quickly evolved, featuring outstanding names such as ***Shakespeare*** in England, ***Lope de Vega*** in Spain (born Félix Lope de Vega Carpio, 1562-1635), and ***Molière*** in France (born Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, 1622-1673).

In the realm of music, something similar made an early and vibrant appearance in the genre of *madrigal comedy*. It mainly developed in Italy, stemming from the madrigal and directly preceding the emergence of opera. The theatricalization of the madrigal in such compositions involved introducing a plot, stage action, character dialogues, and a theatrical element. Naturally, this demanded acting, including overtly buffoonish techniques involving comedy and parody.

An exemplary specimen of madrigal comedy can be represented by **"Entertainment for the Eve of Carnival Thursday before Dinner"** by *Adriano **Banchieri*** (1567-1634), where in one scene in particular, there is an inventive and witty parody of a liturgy ("Counterpoint of the Animals").

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It is clear from the above-stated that people of that time were characterized by an admirable sense of humor, an amazing ability to enjoy life, and an extraordinary vivacity of character.

This liveliness was one manifestation of a more general property inherent in the Baroque era. Let us denote it with the word *dynamism*, which naturally implies energy, action, and movement.

The last of the mentioned features (movement) received a unique embodiment in architecture. Building facades began to stand out with exceptional complexity: flexible and mobile flowing forms, sharply projected relief of cornices, columns, and porticos, curvilinear outlines (architectural planes became curved or broken, employing concave and convex surfaces, twisted columns, and so on).

One of the examples of all the aforementioned can be seen in the **Church of San Carlo** in Rome (full name: San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, 1634-1667). This is the fruit of the imagination of the Italian architect *Francesco **Borromini*** (1599-1667), who is considered one of the most brilliant masters of the whimsically picturesque Baroque style. The distinctive features of such a style are fully inherent in the internal appearance of Borromini's buildings, complemented in this case by the luxury of sculpture, paintings, stucco work, and a variety of materials. A highly illustrative example is the interior of the church **Sant'Agnese in Agone** in Rome.

In Russia, the idea of pronounced dynamism was excellently conveyed in architectural forms by *Francesco Bartolomeo **Rastrelli*** (1700-1771, his father, the sculptor Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli, will be mentioned later).

When we enter the main vestibule of his celebrated creation – the **Winter Palace** (St. Petersburg), which now houses the famous Hermitage, and begin to ascend the **Jordan Staircase**, instead of clear, straight staircases, we find smoothly curved outlines both in the railing lines and the shapes of the steps – thus, the characteristic Baroque curvature is presented here as if "squared". The Baroque style announces itself here through sharply contrasting color schemes: the snowy white marble of the staircase and the dark columns (this resembles the characteristic contrast of "white" and "black" in Baroque painting, which will be discussed later), and nearby, there is dense gilding with extremely complex patterns in the stucco work. And overall – there is a special luxury in the lush palace interior.

A unique example of Rastrelli's dynamism is the **Catherine Palace** in Tsarskoye Selo (now the town of Pushkin), built in 1752-1757. Its sumptuous and extremely elongated, three-hundred-meter facade facing the park stands out for its incredible richness and variety of forms.

The complexity of the architectural composition lies in its multi-component structure: the park facade consists of a series of smaller facades, each maintained in its own style. What unites them is sophisticated complexity and continuous renewal of articulations and forms (surface treatment, rhythm of projections, sculptural decoration, various types of windows, trims, columns, and so on). This diversity culminates in the soaring golden domes of the palace church, combining a Russian motif with the Baroque style's pan-European flair, particularly evident in the distinctive interpretation of the onion-shaped domes.

The art of the Baroque era developed its formulas of kinetic dynamics, which were aptly termed as *motorics*. Indeed, in many cases, this was a true "engine", operating ceaselessly, pulsating rhythmically, and splendidly embodying the focused rhythm of creative processes.

This kind of energy was excellently conveyed in the fast movements of his instrumental concertos by the Italian composer *Antonio* ***Vivaldi*** (1678-1741). The pronounced expression of powerful kinetic drive was also frequently found in the music of *Johann Sebastian* ***Bach***, somewhat reminiscent of a continuously operating mechanism. This can be seen in his works, even in miniatures designed for novice musicians – for example, in one of his **Little Preludes** for keyboard (Little Prelude in C minor, found under the number 999 in the Bach catalog).

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Special facets of zest for life were brought about by the *Rococo* style, which emerged in France during the concluding stages of the era. If Baroque art "started off" (the second half of the 16th century) with Mannerism, then "on the way out" (the first half of the 18th century), it largely transformed into Rococo.

This style was characterized by a light, carefree, "sybaritic" disposition, translating nearly everything into a realm of pleasure, ease, idle existence, and playful nonchalance. Often, it was superficial art, sometimes even frivolous, but one cannot deny its charming, alluring, graceful elegance and sophistication. This is why another term for this manner was the *gallant style*, which is quite appropriate since it was associated with the atmosphere of high society life, and the meaning of the French word *galant* (*polite, courteous, refined*) perfectly reflects the essence of this artistic direction.

The Rococo style influenced all forms of art, but it produced the most significant results in painting, architectural interiors, and music.

Rococo *painting* is characterized by elegance and decorative richness. Almost always, its scenes possess an intriguing quality: the paintings resemble carefully staged theatrical vignettes. The color palette also takes on a special tonality – while vibrant, it becomes soft, refined, and slightly faded.

The roots of Rococo in painting can be traced back to the works of the French artist *Jean-Antoine* ***Watteau*** (1684-1721), known for his delicate drawing style and exquisite tenderness of pastel tones.

One of his characteristic works is **"The Feast of Love"** (between 1717 and 1719), where in a park near the statue of the goddess of love, Aphrodite, accompanied by Cupid, ladies and gentlemen enact gallant scenes.

Illustration 06. *Jean-Antoine Watteau – The Feast of Love*

Rococo expressed itself most fully in *architectural interiors*. In the 17th century, architects focused on grand monumental palace-park complexes, while in the first half of the 18th century, attention shifted to small palace buildings and urban mansions. The main efforts of architects were directed towards the interior of these structures. The demands of respectable aristocratic life brought qualities such as comfort, intimacy, and essential originality to the forefront. Rococo catered to these needs with its exquisite luxury, elaborately intricate contours, and often deliberate asymmetry in the overall composition and its individual details.

These aspirations were linked to the flourishing of *decorative arts*. Rococo decorativeness was defined by various painterly effects, overall ornate finishes, fancifully curved lines, intricate sculpted and carved patterns, swirls, vegetal vines, flowers, and garlands. A central motif of ornamental compositions often became the stylized depiction of a shell – the so-called *rocaille* (from which the term *Rococo* is derived). Interior decoration widely employed numerous mirrors of elaborate shapes, colorful carpets, and painted panels with allegorical, mythological scenes, gallant festivities, fantastical narratives, and motifs of Eastern exoticism.

Over time, these influences reached Russia. Exemplifying lavish decorative, luxurious Russian Rococo are the interiors of the **Chinese Palace** in Oranienbaum (now Lomonosov, near St. Petersburg), including the **Porcelain Cabinet** and the **Spangle-Work Cabinet**. The latter features an incredibly notable panel covering an entire wall, filled with various exotic elements from the animal and plant kingdoms.

In music, the delicate elegance and gracefulness typical of Rococo led to miniaturism:

- in terms of scale, this typically involved small pieces or suites composed of a series of such pieces;
- the texture was transparent, and the sound was chamber-like – featuring a few instruments, often a *solo* harpsichord.

The quiet, delicately cool tone of the harpsichord perfectly matched the "good tone" (French *bon ton*) of the chosen society, its refined tastes, exquisite manners, and aristocratic etiquette. This is why *French harpsichord music* became synonymous with the Rococo style.

The central figure of this school was *François* ***Couperin*** (1668-1733). His style is characterized by the gracefulness of melodic lines, intricate rhythm, detailed strokes, rich ornamentation (abundance of melismas, i.e., embellishments). The jeweled texture can evoke associations with beads or pearl embroidery. In some pieces, the delicacy of the musical fabric is taken to such an extent that the music begins to resemble a porcelain statuette (a favorite genre of Rococo applied sculpture) or some precious trinket. Among Couperin's compositions written for the harpsichord, **Suite No. 23** is particularly noteworthy in this regard.

Ultimately, Rococo art was aimed at a bright smile, rainbow light, and "light-winged" joy. As expressed by the leading German composers working in this style like *Georg Philipp* ***Telemann*** (1681-1767), *"music should flow on like champagne."* This sentiment is excellently captured in one of the hits of the early 18th century – the popular **La Badinerie** (French for *jest*) from Johann Sebastian Bach's **Orchestral Suite No. 2**. The solo flute in this piece literally sparkles with the lively joy of life, playing like "sunbeams".

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As we recall, the Baroque era derived its name from the style of the same name (Baroque) that dominated European art from the mid-16th to the mid-18th century. Concluding our examination of the Baroque style, let us delve into its properties such as contrast, fantasy, and baroque temperament.

Regarding the sharply pronounced *contrast* characteristic of the Baroque, we have been discussing contrasts brought to the level of antitheses, which is key to understanding the Baroque era.

The principle of contrast was widely used in music during that time. Hence, the practice of dynamic juxtaposition such as *piano – forte* (soft – loud) was first introduced. A specific variation of this was the *"echo"*, a popular auditory effect of the time: a brief phrase played *forte* is immediately repeated deep *piano*. The overall inclination of Baroque art towards this quality was so significant that composers sometimes sought to combine contrasts not only horizontally (alternating episodes) but also vertically, simultaneously.

An original development of this idea, technically challenging in music, can be found in the **Magnificat** by the Italian composer *Claudio* ***Monteverdi*** (1567-1643, a pioneer in the world of opera). The Magnificat, a piece based on the Gospel narrative of the Annunciation, bears resemblance to a cantata or even an oratorio in form and scale.

In the first part of this work, two contrasting sound layers are vividly juxtaposed:

- the lower layer, presented in prolonged durations, is dark and oppressive in its character;
- the upper layer, conveyed in lively motion, is entirely different in nature – bright and playfully engaging (the main line, in turn, is built on continuous echoing effects).

This bold and vivid dramaturgical montage symbolically embodies the Baroque dualism of two contrasting elements – the monastic-ascetic, "tomb-like" versus the vital, youthful aspects.

In painting, the principle of contrast was particularly evident and stable in the extremely distinctive technique of starkly contrasting light and shadow. One of the earliest breakthroughs in Baroque stylistics, among others, should be credited to the artwork **"The Nativity"** (circa 1530) by the Italian artist *Antonio* ***Correggio*** (circa 1489 – 1534).

At the center of the canvas is Mary with the newborn Christ. The color scheme of the night lighting takes on a specific figurative and symbolic direction: the radiance emanating from the Infant imparts a miraculous character to the event. In the continuous flow of light, the face of the young Madonna, bent over the newborn, is filled with joy, tenderness, and love.

All the rest appears in the reflection of this radiance. The rest is filled with the characteristic heightened dynamism of Baroque art, which manifests itself in the energetic poses of the foreground figures and in the complex diagonal composition of the canvas. Noteworthy is the additional contrast: juxtaposed with the reality of the main characters (including Joseph, who, in the darkness, is busy with a mule – a touch of everyday life) are the hovering figures of demigods in the clouds, sanctifying what is happening in this corner of the earth (a mystical accent).

A beam of bright light piercing the darkness, extracting a figure or object from the background or surroundings and illuminating them as if with a projector beam – this is the effect that Baroque artists often sought to achieve. One of the first to consistently employ this powerful technique was ***Titian***.

In his painting **"Salvator Mundi"** (1560s), the image of the all-seeing and all-knowing God-Man emerges from the darkness of the world as a beacon of wisdom and higher spirituality. The face radiates from an oval of coal-black hair, bordered by sharp light rays of a halo. The hands are also illuminated: one in the gesture of the cross, the other (seemingly glowing from within) holding a dark sphere with rare patches of illumination. The symbolic meaning of such a coloristic solution is entirely clear: how little light and goodness there is in this gloomy world!

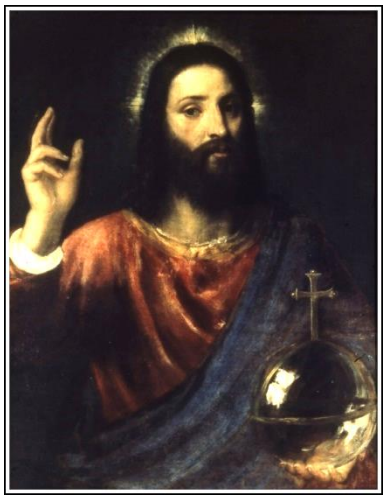

Illustration 07. *Titian – Salvator Mundi*

A similar path of emphasized contrast between "light" and "darkness" was often followed by those painters who are usually classified as realists. One of them was *Diego* ***Velazquez*** (full name: Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, 1599-1660). In the **"Portrait of a Knight of the Order of Santiago"**, he presents a brightly illuminated face against an impenetrable black background of the wall and clothing. This contrast of "white" and "black", combined with the alert gaze and a golden chain snaking through the costume, emphasizes the great inner tension of the dignified character, his readiness for the vicissitudes of fate – the very vicissitudes that were so accentuated in the consciousness of the Baroque man.

Another essential quality of the Baroque style received a distinct genre designation in the music of that era, *fantasy*. Let us clarify right away: in the character of fantasy in those times, musical pieces like preludes, toccatas, capriccios, etc., were often created. A characteristic example in this regard can be considered the keyboard piece **"The Call of the Birds"** by the French composer *Jean-Philippe* ***Rameau*** (1683-1764).

A strong inclination towards fantasy and imaginative thinking as a method of artistic creativity was also evident in other forms of art, including painting. This was expressed in the fondness for the unusual, whimsical, and in the manipulation of materials that astonished with their rarity and exoticism.

The greatest master of the Dutch landscape, *Jacob* ***van Ruisdael*** (1628 or 1629 – 1682), paints **"The Marsh in a Forest"** as a corner of pristine, wild nature. Perhaps it existed in reality, but even in this case, it is noteworthy the artist's desire to find and capture such scenes in colors. Everything here appears in an unusual perspective, including the attention-grabbing twisted trunks and branches. In juxtaposition with living creatures (a hunter in the distance and a startled duck up close), the trees seem immense, even cyclopean. This creates not only a mysteriously dim but almost fantastical landscape.

However, if in Ruisdael's landscape one might speculate on its existence, whether it could be true or not, in ***El Greco***'s painting **"View of Toledo"** (1604-1614), a realistically existing Spanish city is depicted. The artist worked on it for over ten years, and in this case, we understand the "agonies of creation". Reality was only an impulse for the outstanding master, and he actively transformed and recreated it in accordance with the subjective play of his imagination. The result was a distorted and jagged urban skyline, squeezed between the masses of earth and sky, portrayed in a dark and stormy color scheme.

In such works, unrestrained imagination bordered on fantasy and could easily transition into it. We are already familiar with the Flemish master of still life, *Frans* ***Snyders*** (let us recall his "Fish Market"). He also has a "living" still life titled **"Concert of Birds"**. It is a living still life, yet entirely fictional. Starting from the situation depicted in the title of the painting and ending with an unimaginable detail: an owl in the center of the canvas holds out open notes in front, acting as a conductor. Hyperbole is evident in everything here, including the depiction of a gathering of various feathered creatures and the strong emphasis on exotic beings, the portrayal of which is dominated by deliberately refined invention.

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In connection with the consideration of the Baroque style quality of fantasy and phantasmagoria, it is worth discussing the *Russian art* of that time. It vividly and uniquely echoed the general currents of the era.

By the 17th century, *Russian wooden architecture* reached its zenith: izbas, windmills, chapels, churches, and more – all built without nails and with remarkable artistic imagination. A masterpiece of wooden architecture is the **Church of the Transfiguration** in Kizhi (an island on Lake Onega, now home to a museum-preserve of Russian

wooden architecture). The abundance of domes, a key feature of Russian church architecture, is taken to the extreme here – the church has twenty-two domes. It stands out for its remarkably intricate design, yet the generous variety of forms is brought together into a single bundle, soaring 37 meters high and uniquely realizing the pyramid principle. The delicate, masterful work reveals itself in every detail: in how harmoniously everything is put together, forming an intricately whimsical silhouette, and in the skillful embroidery of the ornamental pattern, creating a delicate vibration on the scaly surface.

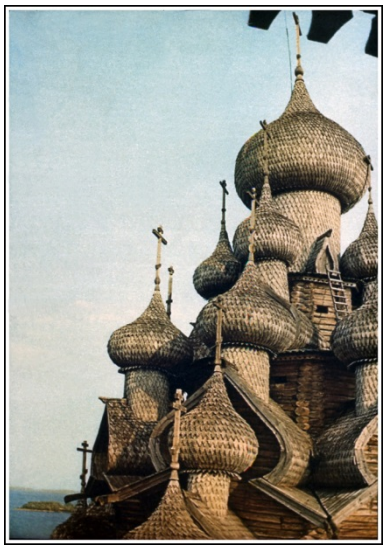

Illustration 08. *The Church of the Transfiguration in Kizhi*

In the stone architecture of Russia, the most famous example of distinctly national parallels to Baroque fantasies can be considered the **Saint Basil's Cathedral** in Red Square in Moscow (officially known as the Cathedral of the Intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos on the Moat). The exceptional complexity of the composition is complemented by an excess abundance of its components and elements – the creators of the cathedral (believed to be the masters ***Postnik*** and ***Barma***) seemingly aimed to present in one structure the full diversity of the national tradition. As a result, there arises an impression of intricacy and grandeur, bordering on a riot of colors, reminiscent of the vividness of fairgrounds. The cathedral has been transformed into a kind of box of wonders, a fairy-tale painted terem.

The mention of the terem is all the more appropriate because nearby, on the territory of the Moscow Kremlin, somewhat later, the **Terem Palace** was built (1635-1639, by the masters *Bazhen* ***Ogurtsov*** and *Trefil* ***Sharutin***). Its general appearance and especially the frescoes in the interior vividly reflect the features of *Russian patternwork*. Patternwork, in this case, is a sort of merry-go-round of picturesque, ornate patterns, it is an extremely bright, festive coloring, and it is a highly elaborate invention (often of folklore origin).

Having reached the peak of original national exoticism in the 17th century, by the end of the century, Russian art leaned more towards assimilating European forms of artistic thinking. In their synthesis with Russian patternwork emerged the so-called *Moscow Baroque*, or alternatively, the Naryshkin style, as much of the construction in this style was initiated by the Naryshkin noble family, related to the royal family.

Later, in connection with the reforms of Peter the Great, in the new capital, St. Petersburg, a purely European-style Russian art emerged. Illustrative of the outlines of this style is the enormous carved **iconostasis of the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral** (1722-1727, the cathedral is located in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg). The composition of this iconostasis is far from the typical Orthodox standards: not a series of icons arranged in a hierarchical order of rows (ranks), but a free architectural ensemble. It is noteworthy that it was created not by painters, but by carvers according to the project of the architect *Ivan* ***Zarudny***.

The sculptural figures included in this iconostasis fully adhere to the European tradition. But there is also a significant amount of national uniqueness here – in the character of the virtuoso wood processing, in the original invention. What further connects this masterpiece with the aesthetics of the Baroque style is its unrestrained luxury and emphasized pictorial quality: the wealth and variety of decorative motifs, the dazzling splendor of the golden adornment.

The Russian art of the Peter and post-Peter era absorbed from Western Baroque a penchant for optical effects that lead into the realm of illusionism. This was especially evident in the frescoes of the ceilings (known as "plafonds", the surface of the ceiling decorated with some image). Masters of fresco painting achieved a remarkable "optical illusion", drawing skies, clouds, distant expanses, and figures flying within them, creating the illusion of a breakthrough into a vast open space.

One such ceiling can be seen in the aforementioned **Chinese Palace** in Oranienbaum, where the fantastical poetics of free flight is recreated: people and birds soar among clouds, mists, and billowing draperies. Beautiful beings float in the skies with joyful serenity – depicting an unparalleled fairyland of absolute soaring above the earthly, mundane, a complete flight from reality into a world of dreams.

A special kind of Baroque fantasy is the *utopian novel*. Its source was *Thomas **More***'s **"Utopia"** (1478-1535), written back in 1516. Subsequently, firmly belonging to the Baroque era, works like "The City of the Sun" (1602) by *Tommaso **Campanella*** (1568-1639), "New Atlantis" (1627) by *Francis **Bacon*** (1561-1626), and "The Other World: Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon" (published 1657) and "The States and Empires of the Sun" (published 1662) by *Cyrano **de Bergerac*** (1619-1655) appeared.

These books through imaginative descriptions, as a contrast to existing dissonance, proclaimed the dream of an ideal social structure. Similar motifs found their way into numerous other literary works, such as *Jonathan **Swift***'s (1667-1745) novel **"Gulliver's Travels"** (1726). Everything that intrigued the famous protagonist in the fictional land of the Houyhnhnms (intelligent horses) is condensed into a few sentences, unveiling the image of the desired life. This is the quintessence of what the authors of Baroque utopias aspired to.

In a chain of reasoning (by a method of proof by contradiction – *"there was no..."*), Swift summarized the development of utopian thought. However, "Gulliver's Travels" is primarily an engaging, whimsical, endlessly inventive fantasy, the hyperbole of which is directed either towards the smallest (Lilliputians) or towards the largest (Giants). And it is always aimed at a distinctly recognized goal. One of such objectives is debunking pseudoscience. The writer achieves this with unparalleled humor, such as in the tale of a certain pseudo-scientist who discovered the method of plowing the land with pigs and thereby eliminate expenses on plows, cattle, and laborers.

(To be continued)

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