

Spanish and flemish baroque

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Spanish and Flemish Baroque The Baroque art and literature, d for the series of painting, presented emotive vitality and excessive beauty and attraction. Spanish Baroque is a part of the great Baroque architecture. Analyzing the history of Spain, one can find sixteenth and seventeenth century infect the golden age of Spanish art and architecture. Spanish painters like, El Greco, Murillo, Ribera Velazquez, Sanchez-Cotan, Zurbaran and Valdes Leal give more emphasis on religious themes on their paintings. The web article entitled: Spanish art: passion in life, passion in death by Gail Turner shows author's willingness to share his views about the religious features of Spanish Baroque paintings. The author says; " The Catholic Church in Spain spearheaded the Counter-Reformation after the Council of Trent, and it became almost obsessively passionate in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century about how religious subjects were treated in art, even appointing official ' watch-dogs to advise artists and encourage them to conform to Church orthodoxy"(Turner, 2009). The image of Christ's crucifixion provides enormous source and inspiration for painters and architectures. The influence of Roman Catholic religion promotes a culture based on strict religious principles and it is a contributing factor. The image of crucified Christ became major source of Spanish religious paintings. People from Spain strongly influenced the crucifixion of Christ and they think that the death is the symbol of extreme solitude.

Many regard Diego Velazquez monumental " Las Meninas" as one of the greatest paintings of the world that it puzzles its viewers. Though one is capable of interpreting the painting in his own way, one can attribute different imaginative coloring to it. It is because of this feature it attracted

the attention of many and the words of the art historian Enriqueta Harris makes clear when he says, "superb color values and draftsmanship, showing unique skill in merging color, light, space, rhythm and mass in such a way that all have equal value." (Atlee, 2003). A critical analysis of the painting raises the questions of reality and illusion. The scene depicted in the picture is a momentary incident in the palace of Philip IV of Spain that one may feel it as a snapshot. It is the blending of aesthetic mastery, fusion of form and content. Critics like Michel Foucault have commented that one can find a paradoxical relationship between reality and representation in Velazquez painting. Foucault attributes a triangular relationship between the painter, the mirror image, and the shadowy man in the background. One is thunderstruck regarding the relationship between these three elements. Velazquez has successfully portrayed the painter and his canvas, with Infanta surrounded by her maids. The mirror on the background reflects the image of king and the queen, though some scholars argue that it is the reflection of the portrait on the left side of the picture.

Analyzing the theme of the painting, one can see that the painter has selected a theme contrastive to the representations of his age when it preferred religious themes. It is an episode from a royal family's life which becomes extraordinary when the painter becomes a focal point, addressing the viewer. The painting can be regarded as a genre scene as it is involved with the patterns of royal life. Princess, king and queen (though not so visible), maids and dwarfs in the picture are capable of bringing to one's mind a momentary action from a royal life. In such a way it makes uniformity, though different from the portrayal of the middle class families in

the pictures of that time. The presentation of the portrait within the painting brings one to the world of illusion and the reflection in the mirror substantiates it. So, the significant role of the canvas in the picture remains unquestioning. After evaluating the picture one is understood of the craftsmanship of Velazquez as he blends reality and illusion effectively and one feels that both the representation of reality and illusion are convincing.

Works cited:

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