

As for the Rococo and its connection to literature; the period itself takes place at the end of the 18th Century and thus, European Literature is again, at the forefront with France and Russia making great contributions. Even though, according to many critics - the term *Rococo* is avoided when talking about literature⁵, it is easy to see that the art of the era clearly had an impact on the context of the novels. William Park argues that the era itself [in terms of literature] can be explained and depicted with this passage from *Don Quixote*:

"Here he sees a brook whose limpid waters, like liquid crystal, ripple over fine sands and white pebbles that look like sifted gold and purest pearls. There he perceives a cunningly wrought fountain of many-colored jasper and polished marble, and here another of rustic fashion where the little mussel-shells and the spiral white and yellow mansions of the snail disposed in studious disorder, mingled with fragments of glittering crystal and mock emeralds, make up a work, of varied aspect, where art, imitating nature, seems to have outdone it."

(*Don Quixote, Part I, Chapter 50*)⁶

The way in which this can be done is through the description. Most obviously, the book *Don Quixote* isn't really over-packed with extravagancy as most of it is an adventure story rather than a domestic type. Here, we have that more domestic-styled image reflected on to the outdoors, the extravagancy of nature coming through in an obvious oriental fashion. Something that is very much a Baroque or Rococo intention. Other texts Park argues for is *Tom Jones* and *The Princess of Cleves* that serve as the basis for our understandings of the Rococo having men like Voltaire and Goethe at its core in literature and Jacques-Louis David at its core for art. A style we commonly refer to as neoclassicism.

Apart from the French, the Russians were also interested in the aims and intentions of the Baroque and Rococo, projecting their own era between the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Russian Literature at this time was quite obsessed on the presentation of extravagant elegy [as were English poets, nicknamed the *graveyard poets*]. The metaphysical poetry being kept alive by poems such as *On the Death of the Prince*⁷ and thus, continued a tradition in Europe that had been a big part of the 17th and 18th Centuries. Therefore, the graveyard poets and Russian elegies created this Baroque style of extravagant/beautiful death - a fusion of death and sex in Russian poetry that slowly transformed and transmigrated into the German *Leibestod*.

In conclusion, the Rococo is pretty much undefinable as there are so many different portrayals of its delicacy, its extravagancy, its religion and its immorality. But, it will be remembered as bridging our gap between the Renaissance Baroque/Venetian cultures and the Age of Reason/European Enlightenment.

⁵ Park, W. *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (summer 1987), pp. 125-136

⁶ Cervantes, M. (2009). *Don Quixote*. 2nd Ed. UK: Vintage Publishing.

⁷ Segel, H.B. The Baroque and the Rococo in 18th Century Russian Literature. *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter, 1973), pp. 556-565