

Luxury Today vs. Rococo

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## Part A

Fashion had taken a turn after the death of Louis XIV in 1715 towards a simpler, and more hurried look. Going from Baroque to Rococo. The direction it took was characterized as a joyful transition with lighter colors such as pastel colors, frills, ruffles, bows and lace. From there on, France became the center for many European nations to copy from. (Hierro. M, 2016). It became a movement of elegance and class for many females during this era. The classes below the elites were not as well off as the higher-class citizens, leading to the idea that fashion was restricted for the un-wealthy while the socially prominent made it possible to display their wealth through fashionable, handcrafted, detailed garments. Members of the higher class displayed their earnings through conspicuous consumption. (Brannon. E & Divita. L, 2015, P. 62). The material used were linen for undergarments. As well including taffeta, brocade, wool, cotton, and silk. Fur had been used as lining for cloaks of the affluent and also to shield the hands from the winter cold. (Möller. N, 2019). Contrast within the style of Rococo differentiated its unique concept with other styles, giving the art of the garment more of an opportunity to be shown off rather than its geometrical style that was previously popular amongst the fashion scene. The garment has to evoke a sense of wealth and prosperity, as the brand is responsible for showcasing who they are.

Being that a way to reveal wealth amongst other individuals was through fashion, it became natural to associate the term opulence. Customers around Europe adopted the concept of having a sophisticated look while being casual. Christian LaCroix was known to be one of the opulence designers during his time in the late 1980s. His first collection was defined as opulent, radiant, and an homage roots in the couture scene in Lacroix's Autumn-Winter 1987 collection.

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(History: Christian Lacroix. (n.d.). What led LaCroix to popularity had to do with fashion being simple during that period, while Christian LaCroix chose to be different by opting for brighter colors such as fuchsia pink, yellow, and blood red. Bringing back elegance with a touch of history and sophistication. Materials used amongst the team were luxurious baroque looks that had risen amongst the many garments at the time (History: Christian LaCroix. (n.d.). Being that customers gravitate towards and create an emotional connection the lead them to a set product. Color being rated as the most important aesthetic in consumption preference (Eckman, Damhorst, & Kadolph, 1990). It was a leverage for the team of LaCroix.

The Characteristics LaCroix portrayed have the luxurious elements of the Rococo's period. Sharing the same structural message on freedom to display art, both periods gave a lighter approach rather than limiting designers and consumers. For instant, with Rococo's groundbreaking asymmetry structure to the garment and LaCroix choice in combining different materials within a garment has exemplified opulence. To have consumers adopt their concept in a timely matter, has proven that customers needed a modification to the typical style in their respective eras. Both have met their era's buyers but differentiating from one another. Rococo focused on minimal designs while LaCroix focused on making it maximum and fashion-forward (History: Christian Lacroix. (n.d.). "Lacroix has come out of the Paris couture, that rarified old world of made-to-order clothes for superrich women, but they are certain his ideas will be copied everywhere. They contend his influence will be evident soon in the stores, no later than this winter, when millions of women will begin to dress his way: in clothes that are unabashedly glamorous and theatrical" (Donovan. C, 1987). Both share a love for quality unlike today in fashion.

## **Part B**

Often individuals describe the maximum level of fashion as Couture. The definition refers to apparel made from the most luxurious fabrics, the details and finishing of which are customized to a specific client. (Keiser. S & Garner. M, 2012, Pg 44). Consumers and including co-founder of Yves Saint Laurent couture house, look at haute couture in a different light in this era. “Anyone who tells you it still matters is fantasizing. You can see it dropping dead all around you. Nobody buys it anymore. The prices are ridiculous. The rules for making it are nonsensical. It belongs to another age” (Yaseen, 2010). The usual consumer has slowly disappeared as the younger consumer rather opt for a ready-to-wear collection. Consumerism has slowly evolved as stated previously towards collections that are more of capsule collections due to the practicality and simplicity of the clothing. Global economic trends also created a shift towards ready-to-wear collections as many people did not see the true value of clothing and would rather be frugal in their spending. Meanwhile, Couture seems to be fading away into the shadows, waiting for a resurgence since the younger consumers seem to be more reasonable and conservative of their money. Even if a higher end collection indicates clothing of the utmost quality, the price is a limiting factor to anyone who isn't well off financially. Most people don't invest in an expensive article of clothing even if it's for an important event due to the practicality of it, and the upkeep of it might be a little confusing for the average consumer.

Contemporary designers are known to be brands or designers that offer garments for the younger consumer at a fixed price points compared to the Ready-to-Wear designers. Alaia, Murad, and Ford are the few out of the many contemporary designers in the industry. But with their own taste in style, these designers have differentiated from each other. Murad's garments and designs differ themselves to their other two competitors mentioned. His team does not just

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sole focus on one style but as well give options to their buyers with designs that can possibly be laid back or dramatically elegant. Looking into the construction work of most of Murad's garments, draping is exaggerated to emphasize the design but with a twist of balance. He centers his designs to focus on the key points of a female's silhouette. Not shying away from experiment with colors and patterns, Zuhair Murad customers are displayed clearly as the higher end of the social status.

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