



Aesthetic assessment of kitsch: A reading on bad taste in Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment"

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Abstract

Kitsch, devised as a term of modern aesthetics after the 19th century, indicates an aesthetic value judgment that is identified as 'bad taste'. It is acknowledged that the issues of aesthetic judgment and taste were systematically addressed for the first time by Immanuel Kant in his "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" in the 18th century. This study attempts to reevaluate the notion of kitsch as an aesthetic value judgment through a reading of Kant's arguments over the concepts of aesthetic judgment, taste, and bad taste as presented in his work "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment". Tracing the notion of kitsch as bad taste in the writings of Kant would demonstrate possible convergences or discrepancies there may be and would be significant for providing an understanding about the philosophical roots of the term.

With such an attempt, this study conducts a discursive analysis, and respectively examines the notion of kitsch as an aesthetic judgment of taste; the notions of aesthetic judgment and taste in Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment"; and the notion of 'bad taste' thereof in order to make a comparison with the notion of kitsch. The examination that looks for the definition of bad taste in the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" reveals that the conditions of 'bad taste', as portrayed by Kant through the role of charm and emotion in aesthetic judgment, overlap with the characteristics of kitsch on the basis of sentimentality and desire for attention. Consequently, as a result of the reading on bad taste in Kant's arguments, this study argues that over the traits of sentimentality or the pretentious use of charms and emotions, the philosophical roots of the term kitsch as an aesthetic value judgment existed long before its name has been coined.

Highlights

- The notion of kitsch indicates an aesthetic value judgment that is identified as 'bad taste'.
- The conditions of 'bad taste', as portrayed by Kant through the role of charm and emotion in aesthetic judgment, overlap with the characteristics of the notion of kitsch, which was devised a century later, on the basis of sentimentality and desire for attention.
- The reading on bad taste in Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" shows that the philosophical roots of the term kitsch as an aesthetic value judgment existed long before its name has been coined over the traits of sentimentality or the pretentious use of charms and emotions.

Keywords

Kitsch; Immanuel Kant; Aesthetic judgment; Taste; Bad taste

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Kitsch'in estetik değerlendirmesi: Kant'ın “Estetik Yargının Eleştirisi” adlı eseri üzerinden kötü beğeni hakkında bir okuma

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Öz

19. yüzyıldan sonra bir modern estetik terimi olarak ortaya çıkan kitsch kavramı, “kötü beğeni” olarak tanımlanan estetik bir değer yargısına işaret eder. Estetik yargı ve beğeni konularının sistematik olarak ilk kez 18. yüzyılda Immanuel Kant tarafından “Estetik Yargının Eleştirisi” adlı eserinde ele alındığı kabul edilmektedir. Bu çalışma, Kant'ın, “Estetik Yargının Eleştirisi” adlı eserinde sunduğu estetik yargı, beğeni ve kötü beğeni kavramlarına ilişkin argümanlarını okuyarak, bir estetik değer yargısı olan kitsch kavramını yeniden değerlendirmeye çalışmaktadır. Kitsch kavramının kötü beğeni olarak Kant'ın yazılarında izini sürmek, olabilecek kesişim veya çelişkileri ortaya koyacak ve terimin felsefi kökleri hakkında bir kavrayış sağlamak açısından önemli olacaktır.

Çalışma, bu amaç doğrultusunda söylemsel bir analiz gerçekleştirmekte ve sırasıyla, bir estetik beğeni yargısı olarak kitsch kavramını; Kant'ın “Estetik Yargının Eleştirisi” eserinde ortaya koyduğu şekliyle estetik yargı ve beğeni kavramlarını; ve kitsch kavramıyla bir karşılaştırma yapmak amacıyla aynı eserde ortaya koyulan şekliyle “kötü beğeni” kavramını incelemektedir. “Estetik Yargının Eleştirisi”nde kötü beğenin tanımını arayan inceleme, Kant'ın estetik yargıda albeni ve duygunun rolü üzerinden tasvir ettiği “kötü beğeni” koşullarının, duygusallık ve dikkat çekme arzusu temelinde kitsch'in özellikleriyle örtüştüğünü göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, Kant'ın “Estetik Yargının Eleştirisi” adlı eseri üzerinden kötü beğeni hakkında yapılan bu okuma, duygusallık vurgusu, veya albeni ve duyguların gösterişli kullanımı bakımından, estetik bir değer yargısı olan kitsch teriminin felsefi köklerinin, terimin ortaya çıkışından çok önce var olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Öne Çıkanlar

- Kitsch kavramı, “kötü beğeni” olarak tanımlanan estetik bir değer yargısını ifade eder.
- Kant'ın estetik yargıda albeni ve duygunun rolü üzerinden tasvir ettiği “kötü beğeni” koşulları, duygusallık ve dikkat çekme arzusu temelinde, bir yüzyıl sonra ortaya çıkmış olan kitsch kavramının özellikleriyle örtüşmektedir.
- Kant'ın “Estetik Yargının Eleştirisi” adlı eseri üzerinden kötü beğeni hakkında yapılan bu okuma, duygusallık vurgusu, veya albeni ve duyguların gösterişli kullanımı bakımından, estetik bir değer yargısı olan kitsch teriminin felsefi köklerinin, terimin ortaya çıkışından çok önce var olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

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INTRODUCTION

“Everybody knows what it is and how to detect and predicate it, but nobody knows how to define it.”
Umberto Eco. *“The Structure of Bad Taste”, p. 180.*

Subjects of aesthetic theory and the philosophy of art, such as beauty and taste, are comprised of elusive terms that do not easily come to grasp as the quotation above rightfully expresses. Aesthetics, or the aesthetic theory, is a department of philosophy that tries to understand the nature of beauty and taste (Shelley, 2022; Scruton and Munro, 2020). Defined as the collection of theories focused on the nature and judgment of beauty and the question of taste (“Aesthetics”, 2006), aesthetics mainly tries to decipher what goes on in our minds when we encounter with beauty. It tries to understand the perception of beauty that is accompanied by pleasure (Shelley, 2022; Scruton and Munro, 2020; Scruton, 2009). Comprising the philosophy of art as a branch, aesthetics is considered as a broader area of study, studying not just the appreciation of art objects but objects in general (Scruton and Munro, 2020).

Aesthetic theory examines the essence of aesthetic values, such as the notion of aesthetic judgment, which refers to the sensory reflection or appreciation of an object (Guyer, 2005, Shelley, 2022), and the sense of taste, which basically refers to the ability to judge beauty (Guyer, 2005). It studies the nature of aesthetic experience, which occurs in relation to an object whose qualities could be called as ‘aesthetic’, by a subject who perceives it and develops an aesthetic judgment towards it (Hofstadter, 2009).

In its etymological root, ‘aesthetic’ basically means ‘to sense’ in Greek (Kant, [1790]1987, 45). As a word, it derives from the Ancient Greek *aisthētikós*, which means perceptive or related to sensory perception (“Aesthetics”, 2006). In its original meaning therefore, aesthetic mainly carries the meaning of sensation or perception with senses. This meaning of aesthetics however was transformed later in the mid-18th century towards the meaning it has today as pertaining to beauty or the appreciation of beauty (“Aesthetics”, 2006).

This transformation was mainly caused by the writings of the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten (1706–1757), who is considered as one of the founders of modern aesthetics, next to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who was the first to study the subject systematically (Guyer, 2005). Both through his dissertation (1735) and his book *Aesthetica* (1750), Baumgarten altered the meaning of aesthetics from sensation to the sensation of beauty (Scruton and Munro, 2020). Defining taste as the ability of judging what is beautiful by means of senses, he described aesthetic experience as the sensory attainment of pleasure out of beauty. In this sense, he became the first scholar who defined the modern term of aesthetics (Scruton and Munro, 2020).

Influenced from Baumgarten, the German philosopher and Enlightenment thinker Immanuel Kant further developed the notions of aesthetics, aesthetic judgment and taste, and described

aesthetic experience not just as a sensory experience, as Baumgarten did, but as the synthesis of sensory and intellectual experiences (Scruton and Munro, 2020). According to Kant, aesthetic experience is commenced by senses and later occurs within the mind of the subject when he/she is contemplating over the aesthetic object (Kant, [1790]1987).

Kant's "Critique of Judgment" (1790), which is the third among his three Critiques (next to Critique of Pure Reason (1781/1787) and Critique of Practical Reason (1788)), becomes the first comprehensive work of modern aesthetics that systematically studies the notion of aesthetics, under its chapter "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment". In this book, Kant explains aesthetic experience as a distinct mental involvement and finds the aesthetic compartment in the mind, in the cognitive power of judgment (Kant, [1790]1987; Scruton and Munro, 2020). His thoughts presented in this book regarding the aesthetic judgment of taste, form the philosophical foundations of modern aesthetics and provide insight for any study that deals with the issue of taste.

Kitsch, devised as a term of modern aesthetics after the 19th century, indicates an aesthetic value judgment that depends on taste. Being directly related to aesthetic judgment and the notion of taste as such, kitsch is aesthetically judged and derogatively defined as the 'bad taste'. This study questions whether we can trace the concept of kitsch, as a product of the 19th century aesthetic theory, in the writings of Kant, whose views became the benchmark for the establishment of modern aesthetic theory and the judgment of aesthetic taste after the 18th century. Kant's theories about the judgment of taste can provide insight for the assessment of 'bad taste' with what is later called as kitsch.

On this basis, this study aims to reexamine the notion of kitsch as an aesthetic value judgment through a reading of Kant's arguments over the concepts of aesthetic judgment, taste, and bad taste as expressed in his work "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment". It is true that the definitions and approaches towards the beautiful, taste and bad taste of each period differ along with their ideas and approaches towards art. For this reason, it would not be viable to evaluate the contemporary on the basis of the opinions of 18th century. On that account, this study attempts to make a textual analysis to discursively compare Kant's definitions of bad taste with the definition and descriptions of kitsch in order to see and put forward any convergences or discrepancies that may be. This attempt of tracing the notion of kitsch as bad taste in the writings of Kant would be important for providing an understanding about the philosophical roots of the term kitsch as an aesthetic value judgment.

With this objective, this study conducts a discursive analysis, and respectively examines the notion of kitsch and the issue of bad taste; the notions of aesthetic judgment and taste in Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment"; the notion of 'bad taste' thereof in order to make a comparison with the notion of kitsch; and the conditions taste and 'bad taste' in Kant's arguments as related to art and architecture.

KITSCH: DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS IN RELATION TO AESTHETIC JUDGMENT OF TASTE

Kitsch emerges as a term of modern aesthetics after the 19th century (Scruton, 2014). As a word, 'kitsch' is traced back to the late 1860s Munich art market, where it was used as a derogatory term to describe cheap artistic paraphernalia (Calinescu, 1987). However, there are numerous claims about the etymological root of the word kitsch. One states that it comes from the Swabian dialect in southwestern Germany, where it denotes unrefined wooden objects, junk wood, etc. Likewise, another argues that kitsch comes from the German words '*kitschen*', which means 'to smear', and '*verkitschen*', which means 'to sentimentalize' or 'to make cheap' (Dutton, 2003). With such connotations still present, the word kitsch has become an international term of aesthetics since the late 1800s describing mainly cheap artistic productions (Dorfles, 1969).

In the Western literature of art and aesthetics, kitsch is generally represented as the 'bad taste' (Dorfles, 1969; Eco, 1989). It is seen as the anti-aesthetic or the anti-art, and it is used in relation to some adjectives such as 'tasteless', 'banal', 'arbitrary' or 'arabesque' (Dorfles, 1969; Eco, 1989). In the dictionary, the word kitsch is defined as "something that appeals to popular or lowbrow taste and is often of poor quality" ("Kitsch", n.d.) as in tacky commercial items, such as the car mirror dice, dashboard hula dancers, etc. It is generally utilized for the situations or objects, which satisfy ordinary people but perturb artists, art theorists and the elite culture (Dorfles, 1969; Kilickiran, 1996). Commonly, it is seen as a deceptive attitude that is in allegiance with the material conditions of consumer culture (Eco, 1989; Poggioli, 1968; Kilickiran, 1996). However, in the literature about kitsch, it can be observed that a single, all-encompassing definition is still not possible, and the term is explained through a list of characteristics that identify it as an example of bad taste.

Kitsch has been seen from different perspectives throughout history. It appeared in 19th century as the art form of the masses, confronting the highbrow art with its mass appeal after Industrial revolution (Ryynänen, 2018). In early 20th century it was seen as a form of pretentious pseudo-art, and between 1918 and 1939, it was attacked fiercely by modernist art critics such as Clement Greenberg, on the basis of being the uncultivated taste of the majority, representing what was contrary to avant-garde art (Greenberg, 1939; Ryynänen, 2018; Scruton, 1999). In late 20th century, it was remembered once again and analytically studied by scholars such as Eco, Calinescu or Kulka, who outlined its most important characteristics (Ryynänen, 2018). After 1980s and in 2000s, it was approached with a much positive tone, and as correlated to the change in the concept of art, it was seen as a satirical tool, as in the works of Claes Oldenburg or Jeff Koons (Ryynänen, 2018; Scruton, 1999).

The literature that identifies kitsch as an example of bad taste lists a set of characteristics that describe it in a comprehensive way. One of these characteristics is standardization. As Poggioli (1968) suggests, kitsch appears as the product of a ceaseless process of standardization, and it is created to perpetuate clichéd and standardized forms and themes. This feature is portrayed as one of the reasons that cause the banality and mediocrity of the products that are identified as kitsch (Poggioli, 1968).

Another significant characteristic of kitsch that is in close relation with standardization is its familiarity. As Gadamer (1986) explains, kitsch is relished not because of its creative artistic qualities but because of its familiarity that delivers us what we already know. Kitsch tries to reassure and comfort us by providing a “confirmation of the familiar”, which detains us from questioning and challenging the status quo (Gadamer, 1986). In this sense, kitsch does not search for a creative expression of reality as we see in true works of art, but it makes use of our familiarity to the themes and methods it uses, in order to realize its hidden agenda of effortlessly catching our attention (Gadamer, 1986):

“...there is the case when we enjoy something for the sake of some quality or other that is familiar to us. I think that this is the origin of kitsch and all bad art. Here we see what we already know, not wishing to see anything else. We enjoy the encounter insofar as it simply provides a feeble confirmation of the familiar, instead of changing us... We notice that such art has designs upon us. All kitsch has something of this forced quality about it. It is often well-meant and sincere in intention, but it means the destruction of art.” (Gadamer, 1986)

These discussions about familiarity and standardization bring us to the uneasy relationship between kitsch and art, and the issues of imitation and creativity. As stated by Dorfles (1969), since kitsch imitates art, it consists of objects and works, which resemble art, but “which are assumed to be artistic merely to satisfy a certain temporary need” that is forgotten once it goes out of fashion (p. 17). For this reason, kitsch is not seen as an outcome of creative artistic effort, rather it is deemed to be connected with imitation, banality and repetition (Eco, 1989; Binkley, 2000). As Calinescu (1986) asserts, by applying well-known sets of rules, kitsch attempts to convey all kinds of greatly foreseeable messages in stereotypical “aesthetic packages” in order to deliver itself to the standard audience of “average consumers” (p. 248). Therefore, in the production of kitsch, creativity is not a primary concern, on the contrary, there is the implementation and perpetuation of obtained artistic procedures that prevent the effort of the creative act.

As Eco (1989) also confirms, in the production of kitsch, there is this use of ‘artistic means’ for attaining practical results, but these artistic means ‘should not be confused with art’ (Eco, 1989). Since art, as defined by Broch (1969), exists as “the continuous search for the creation of the new expressions of the reality”, kitsch contrasts with art due to its search for standard means and imitation (p. 61). In this context, the main goal within the production of kitsch appears to be the creation of immediate, emotionally charged effects on the average consumer with an allegation of being art (Friedlander, 1997). As stated by Eco (1989) in this sense, kitsch attempts to validate its agitative aims under the guise of an aesthetic experience, by marketing itself as of art. It exists as the “restoration of an apparent adherence to the timeless value of beauty”, which is only “a disguise for its commercial nature” (Eco, 1989). This way, kitsch hides itself under the mask of artistry and submits itself to ‘bad taste’.

All in all, when the characteristics held by kitsch that cause it to be qualified as bad taste are listed, we can see that it uses standardization and familiarity of clichéd themes; it contains predictable messages and predictable forms; it imitates art and aspires to be beautiful; it uses artistic means and standard aesthetic procedures; it lacks a real effort of creativity and possesses a hidden agenda of

catching attention; it attempts for immediate and emotionally charged effects; and it wants to affect the average consumer or ordinary people as such.

Among these characteristics, two of them are especially worthy of note, the effect of which are underlined also by more recent research, which are the use of familiarity and the exploitation of charms and emotions for seeking attention. Explaining kitsch comprehensively and emphasizing mostly these two traits, Kulka's (1988, 1996) research shows that there are three conditions to be met by kitsch. First, kitsch needs to depict objects which are generally regarded as beautiful or are heavily charged with easy to cope, standard emotions, such as love or compassion, that impulsively activate an automatic emotional response. Second, this subject matter should be "effortlessly and instantly identifiable" by the general public; and third, it should not attempt to challenge the viewer's basic sentiments and beliefs about the subject matter.

The first suggestion states that kitsch uses the collective subject matters of human life with a (generally) positive emotional meaning such as love, family, or friendship to provide a lowest common denominator of emotional experience for the general population (i.e. mothers with babies, embracing couples, or cute and clumsy puppies, etc.) (Kulka, 1996). The second suggestion denotes that for the sake of effortless identification of the subject matter, kitsch examples adhere to representational conventions known by the general public and they refrain from artistic innovation for this reason (Kulka, 1988). And the third suggestion states that kitsch works do not make us question the familiar reality of the depicted subject matter, or make us see it from a new perspective, which could cloud our standard emotional response (Kulka, 1988). In order to consolidate the standard mental associations regarding the subject matter and to protect our basic sentiments, they basically use stereotypes. For Kulka (1988), the first two of these conditions explain why kitsch has mass aesthetic appeal, and the third explains why it is considered as bad taste. The admirer of kitsch admires not the aesthetic quality of kitsch, but admires what it stands for, or in other words, the subject matter itself (Kulka, 1988). Therefore, by mostly using familiar norms and attractive emotional cues, kitsch tries to maintain what is already there to attract our attention. As Greenberg (1939) states, it exists in this sense as the "rear-guard of cultural change" (p. 39).

The latest empirical research on kitsch also puts forward these characteristics about familiarity and emotional gratification. As shown by Reber, Schwarz and Winkielman (2004), visual stimuli that is easily and fluently perceived, as seen in kitsch items, is more prone to aesthetic liking, since liking increases as correlated to the processing speed (p. 367). Familiar items on this basis are shown to be preferred more by the general population thanks to their fluency of perception (Ortlieb and Carbon, 2019). Due to its familiarity, kitsch provides such a fluent aesthetic experience that delivers prompt emotional gratification and sense of comfort, in contrast to a disfluent one that necessitates cognitive elaboration as we see in art (Ortlieb and Carbon, 2019). Works of art need a culture capital for aesthetic appreciation, as they search for innovative ways to express ideas at the expense of understandability by common people (Hanquinet et. al., 2014). Kitsch on the other hand, provides familiar and conventional aesthetic stimuli with positive emotions, and is more prone to aesthetic liking in this sense by general population in terms of effortless identifiability and emotional gratification (Ortlieb and Carbon, 2019; Palmer and Griscom, 2013).

Therefore, it is seen that the research that portrays kitsch as ‘bad taste’ puts forward two essential qualities of kitsch, which are its use of familiarity for easy appreciation and the exploitation of charms and emotions for attracting attention. In the following reading on ‘bad taste’ in Kant’s “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”, over an examination of the notions of aesthetic judgment and taste, the conditions of ‘bad taste’ will be scrutinized thereof and the presence of these two qualities, which are the use of familiarity and the exploitation of charms and emotions, will be questioned in order to make a comparison with the descriptions of kitsch and to see if there are any philosophical roots of the term before its name has been coined.

AESTHETIC JUDGMENT AND THE NOTION OF TASTE: A READING FROM KANT’S “CRITIQUE OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT”

In the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”, Kant presents a systematical argument where he analyzes and puts forward his thoughts regarding the issues of aesthetics, aesthetic judgment and taste. Before explaining these concepts in detail however, he examines the human mind and delineates its basic faculties that also include the faculty of judgment. Kant states that the human mind has three main cognitive faculties, which are the understanding, judgment, and reason (Kant, [1790]1987, 345). He defines understanding as a faculty of cognition, which forms and recognizes concepts in our minds that maintain our ability of forming knowledge; and defines reason as a faculty of cognition, which processes concepts to form ideas, as bound to the ability of desire (Kant, [1790]1973, 3-7).

He portrays judgment on the other hand, as located in the middle ground between understanding and reason, and defines it as a faculty of cognition, which binds sensory or imagined information to the concepts or ideas that are formed by understanding or reason. It consists of intuition, which is the reception of information by five senses; imagination, which is the production of mental representation by mind (with or without the presence of the object) (Kant, [1790]1987, 241); and lastly, the matching of the perceived or imagined information with a concept or idea. Kant finds judgment as bound to the feelings of pleasure or displeasure (Kant, [1790]1987), and states that just as judgment remains in the middle of understanding and reason as a transitory element, the feelings of pleasure or displeasure remains in the middle of knowledge and desire (Kant, [1790]1973, 15-17).

Aesthetic, as Kant describes it, depends on and has immediate bearing upon these feelings of pleasure and displeasure. Aesthetic judgment appears as a task of determining the value of the considered phenomenon according to the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, as a question of taste. Question of taste on this basis, appears as a matter, which aesthetic judgment decides in relation to the feelings of pleasure and displeasure (Kant, [1790]1973, 15-21). For Kant, ‘taste’ exists as a faculty of aesthetic judgment, where the feeling of pleasure or displeasure is determined in relation to the sensation and mental representation of the object in the mind of the subject. Kant defines taste briefly as “the ability to judge the beautiful” (Kant, [1790]1987, 43), and analyzes the judgment of taste to find out what is needed for calling an object beautiful.

Kant states that a judgment of taste is inevitably ‘aesthetic’, meaning that it is essentially related with sensation and imagination (Kant, [1790]1987). Defining the imagination of the object by the subject as the (mental) ‘representation of the object’¹ (Kant, [1790]1973), Kant states that in order to decide if something is beautiful, we refer to the mental representation of the object in the subject, and his/her feeling of pleasure and displeasure out of it (Kant, [1790]1987). Therefore, the thing, which is subjective in the mental representation of an object, constituting its reference to the subject, is the aesthetic quality of the related object (Kant, [1790]1973, 15-21). In this framework, aesthetic quality is defined as a purely subjective thing bound to the mental representation of the object within the subject, which itself is evidently a subjective experience. As stated by Kant, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure is thus connected with the mental representation of the subject, and therefore judgment of taste is a subjective phenomenon (Kant, [1790]1973, 15-21).

Kant asserts that, when the form of an object is considered as the medium of pleasure in the mental representation of the object, then this pleasure is also considered to be united with the object's physical existence. Moreover, this happens (or should happen) not only for the subject perceiving its form but also for all who pass judgment. Kant calls this object, whose form is considered as the medium of pleasure, as ‘beautiful’ and defines the faculty of judging by virtue of such a pleasure, as ‘taste’. Therefore, Kant asserts that the beautiful is estimated aesthetically by means of pleasure; that estimation of ‘beautiful’ is achieved by ‘taste’; and the activity of that estimation is called the ‘aesthetic judgment’ (Kant, [1790]1973, 41-46).

Therefore, for Kant, what is needed for calling an object beautiful is related with the judgment of taste and to distinguish the object as beautiful, we essentially refer to the mental representation of the subject and his/her feeling of pleasure or displeasure. In this context, taste depends on the meaning that the subject can give to the mental representation of the object in his/her mind and it is independent of the physical presence of the object. With this subjective quality, the judgment is described as ‘aesthetic’, since, as asserted by Kant, judgments that are empirical and referring to the subject are aesthetic judgments (Kant, [1790]1973, 41-45).

This sensation of pleasure by the subject is called delight² (liking) by Kant (Kant, [1790]1973). Kant determines three kinds of delight that is in relation to the judgment of taste, which are the delight for the agreeable, the beautiful and the good (Kant, [1790]1987, 207-210). These three kinds of delight denote three different forms of pleasure. In agreeable, the liking (or delight) and the judgment depends on the sensation of the object. In good, the liking and the judgment depends on reason and on the purpose (or the concept) of the object. Whereas in beautiful the liking and the judgment depends on the sensation and the reflection (mental representation) of the object, which together is called by Kant as ‘the sensory contemplation of the object in our minds’ (Kant, [1790]1987, 207-210, 213-219).

As Kant details further, “agreeable is what the senses like in sensation” (Kant, [1790]1987, 205). It provides sensory enjoyment and gratifies a person for this reason (as the object of empirical aesthetic judgment). If we find a flower agreeable for example, it means that it is appealing for our

¹ ‘Representation’ of the object’ is referred as ‘presentation’ in Pluhar’s translation (Kant, [1790]1987).

² ‘Delight’ is referred as ‘liking’ in Pluhar’s translation (Kant, [1790]1987).

senses (by its smell perhaps) and we are inclined towards it. The good on the other hand, is liked because of its purpose or, its use for a cause (as the object of intellectual judgment) (Kant, [1790]1987, 207-209). If we find a flower good for example, it means that we find it good for a purpose, such as for gifting it to someone (Kant, [1790]1987, 213-219). Therefore, as Kant states, the liking for the agreeable and the good are both connected with interest and they are not free. Kant defines interest as the liking of an object's existence with the purpose of using it for some reason, and it refers to the desire of having the object (Kant, [1790]1987, 205).

The liking of the beautiful on the other hand, is seen by Kant as disinterested and free (Kant, 1790/1987, 207-209). It is established by pure aesthetic judgment of taste, and it is indifferent to the existence of the object itself (unlike in sensory enjoyment of the agreeable or the purposeful usage of the good) since it depends on the sensory contemplation of the object in our minds (Kant, [1790]1987, 209-210). As mentioned before, this sensory contemplation depends essentially on the form of the object as carried by its mental representation. If we find a flower beautiful for example, it means that we get pleasure out of it because of its form in our minds (Kant, [1790]1987, 213-219).³

Therefore, as asserted by Kant, the liking (or delight) attained from beautiful is disinterested of the particularities of the subjects (Kant, [1790]1973, 48-50). In this sense, beautiful is characterized as the object of a universal delight, and taste appears as the faculty of estimating the beautiful apart from any particular interest in a universal manner. Thus, as Kant states, the judgment of taste with its impartiality from particular interest, becomes inevitable to contain a ground of delight for everyman. By this characteristic, the judgment of taste appears to have a claim on 'subjective universality' (Kant, [1790]1973, 52-55). It is universal in the sense that it is same for everyone since it is independent from the interests of subjects, and it is subjective in the sense that it depends on the subject holding the feelings of pleasure as being detached from the object (Kant, [1790]1973, 52-58).

Kant affirms that, when the judgment of taste presumes an object as beautiful, the liking for an object is ascribed to everyone and this claim to universality becomes an essential feature of the judgment of the beautiful. In other words, if something is declared as beautiful, it must be beautiful for everyone. The reason for this is that the subjective universality of the delight taken from the beautiful is determined by a universal cognitive communication (Kant, [1790]1973, 55-58), and it depends on agreement from everyone by means of common sense (which is defined as a subjective, but universally accepted norm) (Kant, [1790]1973, 84-85). On this basis, Kant states that "beautiful is...the object of necessary liking" (Kant, [1790]1987, 231-240).

Another important aspect of the judgment of taste and of the beautiful is defined by Kant as the capacity of imagination, which is the capacity of producing mental representations by mind. For Kant, aesthetic judgment is subsumed under the coalition of imagination and understanding, but

³ Later in the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment", under the section of "Analytic of Sublime", Kant also adds the category of 'sublime' next to these three forms of pleasure, which are the good, agreeable and beautiful (Kant, 1790/1987, 250, 267-268). Describing the liking of sublime also as a disinterested form of aesthetic judgment, Kant states that while beautiful concerns the form of the object, the sublime is found in formless objects that make us experience a 'delightful horror' (such as a storm, tsunami, or volcano) (Kant, 1790/1987, 250).

in here, imagination is not under the command of understanding (and its store of concepts), but on the contrary there is a free play of imagination that enlarges understanding (Kant, [1790]1987, 291). In beautiful, imagination is deemed free because it contemplates free from a concept. Therefore, for the beautiful, understanding is at the service of imagination and taste is “the ability to judge an object in reference to the free lawfulness of the imagination” (Kant, [1790]1987, 241, 280-287).

Very significantly in here, Kant asserts that the pure judgment of taste is required to be independent of charm and emotion that is sourced by the object. As a reason for this, Kant states that when charm and emotion are involved in the judgment, there occurs a direct interest in the object, and the judgments influenced this way cannot reach to a universally valid delight. Kant defines the conditions where charm and emotion are added to objects in the name of beauty, as conditions where the taste is “crude and untrained” (Kant, [1790]1973, 65-68).

For Kant, the pure judgment of taste therefore, appears as uninfluenced by charm and emotion and its basis is determined simply by the ‘finality of form’. The notion of ‘finality of form’ (or the unity of form) is described by Kant as a finality/unity apart from a purposive end, which means that the form is produced just for the sake of form, in an off of itself, and not for a practical or objective end (Kant, [1790]1987, 221). Kant calls this finality/unity of form “purposiveness without a purpose” and ascribes the beauty of the object and the pure judgment of taste onto that. He states that any assumption accepting beauty to be available of being improved by charm is a common error that is very harmful to sincere taste, as shall be underlined in the next section of this study (Kant, [1790]1973, 67-69).

In addition to the pure judgment of taste, whose focus is (free) beauty, Kant also talks about conditioned (or impure) judgment of taste, whose focus is dependent beauty⁴. Therefore, Kant also differentiates between two kinds of beauties, which are the free beauty (whose conditions are explained up until now) and the dependent beauty. In contrast to free beauty, which is self-subsistent and does not require a concept of what the object is meant to be; dependent beauty is seen as dependent or accessory to a particular concept (Kant, [1790]1973, 52-58). According to Kant, while the beauty of a flower is free beauty since it represents nothing other than itself; the beauty of a building is dependent beauty since it is dependent on the concept of its purpose, which decides what the thing is meant to be (Kant, [1790]1987, 229-230).

Art is identified with dependent beauty by Kant in this sense, as it nestles onto conceptual elaboration (Kant, [1790]1987, 231-232; Stecker, 1987). It is evaluated by conditioned judgment of taste, and according to that, the conditions of liking are defined by certain aesthetic principles that depend on an intellectual ground. For Kant, these principles can create dependent beauty in a rational manner, and through them the conditioned judgment of taste can still become universal (Kant, [1790]1973, 72-72). However, as Stecker (1987, 95-97) also points out, in later sections of “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”, Kant also mentions about the conditions of free beauty in art

⁴ Conditioned judgment of taste is referred as applied judgment of taste, and dependent beauty is referred as accessory beauty in Pluhar’s translation (Kant, [1790]1987).

when he talks about the characteristics of fine art, and the addition of charm and emotion to objects as an application of crude taste (Kant, [1790]1973, 65-68).

THE NOTION OF BAD TASTE IN KANT'S "CRITIQUE OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT": A COMPARISON WITH THE NOTION OF KITSCH

As explained above, what Kant has written about aesthetic judgment and taste depends evidently on the evaluation of the beautiful. As Kant states, beautiful is assessed aesthetically by means of the ability of taste, and the activity of that assessment exists as the aesthetic judgment (Kant, [1790]1973, 41-46). On this basis, in order to evaluate kitsch as an aesthetic judgment of taste and analyze it as a case of 'bad taste' in relation to what Kant has written about aesthetic judgment and taste, we should necessarily look at the conditions of 'bad taste' as Kant defines it. But to be able to do this, we should first clarify how kitsch will be seen and analyzed in this comparison.

The analysis of Kant's explanations regarding the terms of aesthetic judgment and taste shows us that the concept of kitsch cannot be analyzed as an example of free beauty, since unlike kitsch, free beauty is disinterested from the desires of subjects, and it is judged by free imagination, which is independent from concepts. Kitsch, on the other hand, cannot be seen disinterested since it is bound to the liking of its physical existence by subjects, and it depends on conceptual elaboration just as other forms of artistic, manmade production.

We can perhaps analyze kitsch in terms of being an example of dependent beauty, since kitsch also depends on conceptual elaboration. However, this wouldn't be very proper either, since dependent beauty and conditioned judgment of taste are generally identified with art in Kant's philosophy. In "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment", we see that Kant's understanding of art is very different from today's understanding. Kant equates art with the creation of (dependent) beauty, and sees the disinterested, formal beauty as a sign of good taste in art. Therefore, when he talks about the judgment of artworks, he mainly talks about an aesthetic judgment of taste that is held on (dependent) beauty.

For this reason, when we look at Kant's words on beauty and its judgment of taste in order to make an analysis in relation to the notion of kitsch, we should be approaching the subject essentially from an aesthetic point of view. We should look at kitsch as an aesthetic value judgment (and not as an art work), and analyze it as an example of 'bad taste' as the literature portrays it. We should analyze what Kant writes about 'bad taste' in "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" in order to see if there are any convergences or discrepancies with that of kitsch.

We notice that Kant talks about the conditions of 'bad taste' at three points in the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" while he talks about the relationship of aesthetic judgment of taste with charm and emotion. In order to describe the situations where aesthetic judgment of taste is not sustained, he first talks about the conditions of 'good and sincere taste', then the conditions of 'crude and untrained taste', and lastly the condition where emotion is added to the objects of aesthetic appreciation (Kant, [1790]1987, 224-228).

Kant talks about the conditions of ‘good and sincere taste’, and ‘crude and untrained taste’ first in relation to the notion of charm. Charm, which is the power of attracting attention, is seen as directly related to our five senses by Kant. Kant states that charms such as colors, lights, smells and sounds can make the object vivid to sense, however, what makes the object beautiful is its form (Kant, [1790]1987, 300). The pure judgement of taste depends on the unity of form and it is disturbed by sensations that are alien to it (Kant, [1790]1987, 225).

Therefore, according to Kant, we ascribe beauty to an object only by virtue of its form. Any charm such as colors may only supplement beauty, however, things are only beautiful when we get pleasure out of their forms that appear in our minds by means of sensory contemplation (Kant, [1790]1987, 225). Kant gives the example of nature in this sense, stating that charms in beautiful nature are always fused with beautiful forms; and the colors or sounds (color of a flower, sound of a bird for example) are not enough by themselves to call something beautiful (Kant, [1790]1987, 300). For Kant, in real beauty, the person admires the beautiful form with no interest in benefit, and if charm is used to heighten this beauty, it becomes only the subject of ‘crude and vulgar taste’.

“But the view that the beauty we attribute to an object on account of its form is actually capable of being heightened by charm is a vulgar error that is very prejudicial to genuine, uncorrupted, solid [*grundlich*] taste. It is true that charms may be added to beauty as a supplement: they may offer the mind more than that dry liking, by also making the presentation of the object interesting to it, and hence they may commend to us taste and its cultivation, above all if our taste is still crude and unpracticed. But charms do actually impair the judgment of taste if they draw attention to themselves as (if they were) bases for judging beauty.” (Kant, [1790]1987, 225)

Therefore, Kant sees beauty assigned to the object on the basis of its form, stating that the assumption accepting beauty as capable of being enriched by charm is a common error which is very detrimental to ‘genuine, uncorrupted and sincere taste’ (Kant, [1790]1973, 67-68). Kant states that, these instances where charm is added to the object for creating an adventitious interest for the mind in the name of beauty, would only occur if the taste is ‘crude and untrained’ (Kant, [1790]1973, 67-68). Therefore, for Kant, if charm is allowed to present itself as a ground for estimating beauty, this would be destructive for the judgment of taste.

In addition to charm, Kant also talks about the condition of ‘crude and untrained taste’ in relation to the notion of emotion. Defining emotion as “a sensation where an agreeable feeling is produced merely by means of a momentary check followed by a more powering outpouring of the vital force” (Kant, [1790]1973, 68), Kant states that such sensations are foreign to real beauty, and they are a sign of low aesthetic taste. He even describes the instants where charm and emotion are added to objects in the name of beauty, as conditions where the taste is ‘barbaric’ (Kant, [1790]1987, 224). Therefore, for Kant, “neither charm nor emotion, in other words, no sensation” is the determining basis of the aesthetic judgment of taste (Kant, 1790/1987, 226; Kant, [1790]1973, 68).

Explaining the reason for aesthetic judgment to be independent of charm and emotion, Kant states that when charm and emotion are involved in the judgment, there would appear direct interest in the object, and the judgment influenced this way would not be universally valid. Consequently, the

only measure and determining basis for the aesthetic judgment of taste and the existence of beauty for Kant is the presence of the finality (unity) of form and a disinterested liking for it (Kant, [1790]1987, 224).

It is seen that the conditions of ‘bad taste’, as portrayed by Kant through the elements of charm and emotion, overlap in many ways with the characteristics of the notion of kitsch. When we look at these characteristics, we see that using familiarity for easy appreciation, exploitation of charms and emotions for emotional or sensational gratification, and using artistic and aesthetic means for attracting attention are among the most significant ones.

As the literature have shown, kitsch tries to be beautiful and attempts to attract attention by using artistic means and the charm of sensual cues (such as vivid colors); it tries to comfort its viewers by carrying familiar messages in predictable forms; it attempts to produce immediate effects in its viewers by using conventional emotional stimuli; and it mainly targets the untrained taste of ordinary/average consumers by utilizing all these qualities. Therefore, kitsch wants to appear beautiful and trigger our emotions by familiar means, but since it does so because of a hidden agenda, it seems to lack the quality of a sincere judgment of taste that is ascribed to the beautiful in Kant’s “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”. As an aesthetic value judgment therefore, kitsch coincides with the description of bad taste as portrayed by Kant. It might also be seen as detrimental to good taste by the similar reasons that Kant declares, since it hides its agenda under the mask of aesthetic means.

Moreover, on account of what is written about the role of charm and emotion in the aesthetic judgment of taste in Kant’s arguments, we also cannot evaluate kitsch as an example of dependent beauty. As stated previously, dependent beauty depends on conceptual elaboration, is evaluated by the finality of form (formal unity), and it is disinterested from the particularities of subjects (Kant, [1790]1987, 224). Although kitsch could hold on to two of these criteria, as it depends on conceptual elaboration and as it could have a finality of form, it does not hold onto the criterion of being disinterested, since it is bound to the liking of its physical existence by its viewing subjects. Its use of charm and emotion creates a direct interest in the object for the viewing subject.

Therefore, the analysis comparing what Kant writes about ‘bad taste’ in “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” with the notion of kitsch as a case of ‘bad taste’, shows us that there are many convergences between the two set of explanations that rest essentially on the use of charm and emotion. The main characteristics that make kitsch an example of bad taste, which are essentially its use of familiar norms, charms and emotions for attracting attention, and the conditions of bad taste as listed by Kant converge at many points as explained above. These convergences verify the main argument of this study, which suggests that the use of charm and emotion by kitsch in its attempt of attracting attention is also valid in Kant’s arguments in defining bad taste, and this commonality could justify the philosophical roots of kitsch, even before its creation as a modern term of aesthetics.

In fact, this convergence among the descriptions of kitsch and Kant’s arguments about bad taste over the use of charms and emotions, goes back to a change of approach towards sentimentality, both in moral philosophy and in the arts (Solomon, 1991). As explained before, by using

sentimentality or provocative manipulation of emotional content, kitsch is seen to tug over and abuse emotions for attracting attention and providing a (false) comfort to the viewer (Eco, 1989; Solomon, 1991; Scruton, 2014; Ryyänen, 2018). As stated by Solomon (1991), this reaction against kitsch on the basis of its use of emotions is actually a reaction to sentimentality, which became the object of harsh despise both in philosophy and in arts after 1800s, under the leadership of Kant himself.

Led by Kant, sentimentality or the use of emotions started to be seen derogatively by most scholars in art theory and criticism, a century prior to the invention of the term kitsch. Later, kitsch started to be criticized by most modernist scholars (such as Greenberg) on this basis, for making real art lose its purity (disinterestedness, aesthetic autonomy) and authenticity; except for Benjamin (2002), who approached it with curiosity, noting its ‘warming’ role for intimacy (Cheetam, 2001; Menninghaus, 2009; Ryyänen, 2018). Therefore, the use of fake emotions (and clichés) in arts and the attack towards sentimentality were seen in art theory and criticism already before the invention of the term kitsch (Scruton, 1999; Solomon, 1991). In this sense, before its coinage as a term, we can find the philosophical roots of the term kitsch and the view towards it as ‘bad taste’, in Kant’s “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”, when he talks about the judgment of ‘bad taste’ as related to the presence of sentimentality or the pretentious use of charms and emotions in an object or a work of art.

JUDGMENT OF TASTE AND BAD TASTE AS RELATED TO ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN KANT’S “CRITIQUE OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT”

In the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”, Kant talks about the judgment of taste and bad taste also as related to art and architecture. Defining art and differentiating between its different types, he describes the conditions of beauty in art, its aesthetic judgment, and the conditions of bad taste thereof when beauty is not sustained.

In its most general form, Kant calls art as ‘aesthetic art’ and sees it essentially as a production that triggers the feelings of pleasure (Kant, [1790]1987, 305-306). Dividing aesthetic art into two, as the agreeable art and the fine art, he defines agreeable art as the art of sensual pleasure, which is enjoyed by the senses of hearing, tasting, smelling (etc.), and which provides charms to gratify, such as in a beautiful talk, delicious meal, or a bouquet of flowers. He defines fine art, on the other hand, as the art of providing pleasure by the mental representation of forms, which is judged on the basis of its formal unity (finality of form) (Kant, [1790]1987, 305-306). Kant also divides fine art into three, as the art of speech, the visual arts, and the art of the play of sensations (Kant, [1790]1987, 321-322). Defining the art of speech as the art of expressing thoughts, such as in oratory or poetry; he defines the art of the play of sensations as the art of expressing intuitions with matter, such as in music (Kant, [1790]1987, 321-322). Kant defines the visual arts, on the other hand, as the arts of expressing intuitions with forms, and also divides it into two, which are the art of expressing sensible truth by sight and touch, such as in sculpture and architecture; and the art of expressing sensible illusion by sight, such as in painting.

In accordance with the 18th century understanding of art, Kant essentially sees fine art as the representation (or imitation) of nature as in figurative art, and he equates it with the creation of (dependent) beauty (Kant, [1790]1987, 302, 307, 320, 344). Declaring “a natural beauty is a beautiful thing” whereas the “artistic beauty is the beautiful presentation of a thing” (Kant, [1790]1987, 311), Kant states that nature has free beauty and judged with pure judgment of taste, as it does not require a concept of what the object is meant to be; but art has dependent beauty and judged with conditioned judgment of taste, as it imitates nature and depends on a concept for being understood for what it stands for or intended for (Kant, [1790]1987, 231-232, 304). Therefore, Kant sees art as the expression of dependent beauty, and likewise, he accepts it to hold disinterestedness, conceptual elaboration and formal unity.

For Kant, what makes the object beautiful in fine art is its form, and the only principle of aesthetic judgment for art therefore is the formal unity (Kant, [1790]1987, 225, 348, 351). In explaining the condition of formal unity, Kant talks about the issue of design and composition, and states that what makes any art form as the object of good taste is its design and composition (Kant, [1790]1987, 225). For Kant, in all kinds of visual arts, including architecture, design is what is essential for taste, since in design, our involvement with taste is not related with our gratification by charm or emotion, but our liking of form. Kant states that charms such as colors can make the object more prone to sense, but what makes the object beautiful in art is its form:

“In painting, in sculpture, indeed in all the visual arts, including architecture and horticulture insofar as they are fine arts, design is what is essential; in design the basis for any involvement of taste is not what gratifies us in sensation, but merely what we like because of its form. The colors that illuminate the outline belong to charm. Though they can indeed make the object itself vivid to sense, they cannot make it beautiful and worthy of being beheld.” (Kant, [1790]1987, 225).

While explaining the production of all fine arts (including architecture), Kant brings up three important attributes held by any work of fine art, which are the genius, the spirit and the aesthetic idea. Kant states that the production of fine art and artistic beauty is realized by genius, which is the talent that gives its own rule to art (Kant, 1790/1987, p.311). Genius causes the occurrence of originality in art, which is seen by Kant as the *sine qua non* of the real art (Kant, [1790]1987, 308-311). As the other significant attribute of art, Kant defines the spirit (*geist*), as the “animating principle in the mind” (Kant, [1790]1987, 314), which occurs as finding the right expression in art via the material medium. Spirit is also defined as the ability of exhibiting aesthetic ideas (Kant, [1790]1987), which then are defined by Kant as the “intuitions of the imagination”, or in other words, the mental representations of the imagined art work that prompt thought (Kant, [1790]1987, 343). For Kant, beauty in fine art occurs as the expression of the aesthetic idea by means of the spirit (Kant, [1790]1987, 321-323). On that account, genius creates originality in art, spirit finds the right way to express the original aesthetic idea, and the aesthetic idea forms the beauty in art.

Among the other fine arts Kant describes however, architecture holds a slightly different place due to its use value. Kant defines architecture as the art of manifesting concepts, which are not based in nature, but in the purpose of their use (Kant, [1790]1987, 322). On this basis, he portrays architecture as a visual art that has both a purpose and an aesthetic purposiveness (formal unity).

Kant states that the main concern in architecture is what use is to be made of the aesthetic object, therefore the use is the condition of its aesthetic idea (Kant, [1790]1987, 322). Listing the glorious buildings for public gatherings, temples, residences, triumphal arches, columns, cenotaphs and household furnishings under the scope of architecture, Kant states that what is essential in architecture therefore is its sufficiency for a use (Kant, [1790]1987, 323):

“In architecture the main concern is what use is to be made of the artistic object, and this use is a condition to which the aesthetic ideas are confined.” (Kant, [1790]1987, 322)

Consequently, for Kant, fine art (and architecture) are aesthetically judged in relation to the presence of formal unity, disinterestedness, conceptual elaboration, genius, spirit and the aesthetic idea. The judgment of bad taste in art and architecture therefore depends on the lack of these conditions. In relation to bad (vulgar and untrained) taste in art, Kant especially points out the significant role of the lack of formal unity, disinterestedness and originality (which occurs due to the lack of genius).

As explained above, for Kant, the only condition of the aesthetic judgment of taste in fine arts is formal unity (or the finality of form) that is realized by means of design and composition. Any kind of charms (such as the use of vivid colors) or emotions added to works of fine art (including architecture) in the name of beauty is a sign of bad (vulgar and untrained) taste. This kind of exploitation of charms and emotions for attracting attention, is described by Kant as the state where the art work loses its disinterestedness, by means of which it becomes the focus of a crude taste (Kant, [1790]1973, 65-68). Kant states that if art is produced just to be different from the ordinary in order to catch attention, it lacks a spirit and demonstrates an example of vulgar taste as such (Kant, [1790]1987, 319). The lack of spirit on the other hand, is found to be closely bound to the lack of originality by Kant, which is the state where genius is not present to create the original aesthetic idea. Then, the lack of the original aesthetic idea appears as the case where imitation takes place and Kant describes it as the state where art loses its spirit, making it an object of vulgar taste (Kant, [1790]1987, 310, 319).

What is written about bad taste in art and architecture in the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” therefore demonstrates several commonalities with the descriptions of kitsch. Although kitsch is analyzed in this study as an aesthetic value judgment and not compared with art in Kant’s philosophy, these commonalities, as in the use of commonplace artistic means, the exploitation of charms and emotions for attracting attention, and the lack of originality might indicate that a similar way of thinking about poor taste in art existed as an earlier remnant of the notion of kitsch even before its creation as a term of modern aesthetics.

This commonality in the descriptions of bad taste in the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” seems to be relevant also for the architectural examples of kitsch. In architecture, the most prominent characteristics that make us identify an architectural work as kitsch are delineated as its attempt of grabbing attention and its effort of conveying a message. In parallel with these attempts, we see that kitsch is mostly produced for commercial purposes in architecture, as in trade-related or touristic establishments, such as shops or hotels (Gregotti, 1969; Uysal Urey, 2013). Such buildings use many charms (such as colors, lights, dimensional or formal exaggerations, or ornamentations)

and emotional cues (such as providing a specific atmosphere) for the purpose of grabbing attention and selling out what they want to sell.

As Eco (1989) states, by way of using charms and emotional cues as attention grabbing tools, kitsch tries to lure its viewers as such and provides an escape from daily reality in architecture. For this reason, it sometimes offers “out of context experiences”, as in the imitation/reproduction of well-known historical monuments elsewhere to create stage sets that offer the users an escape from reality (as we see in the replicas of Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty, the Great Sphinx of Giza, or the city of Venice in the hotels in Las Vegas), or, in the eclectic use of historical styles that convey specific messages and psychological cues (as we see in theme parks or hotels that try to provide different temporal or cultural experiences for its customers, as in hotels with ‘oriental’ themes) (Gregotti, 1969; Dorfler, 1969; Uysal Urey, 2013). As Scruton (2009) said for art, we might call this the “disneyfication” of architecture for the purpose of grabbing attention and selling itself out (p. 191).

Maybe the most prominent examples for the use of kitsch in architecture in this sense are the works of postmodern architecture because of the reasons listed above. With their emphasis on communicating with people by means of several effects and well-known signs (as in the use historical styles, well-known icons or symbols in architecture), the examples of postmodern architecture try to grab people’s attention, convey their messages and lure them to escape from their daily reality (Goodman and Mallgrave, 2011). By employing several charms related with the use of bold colors, façade ornamentation, formal distortions and bold geometries, or by inciting several emotional cues related with the eclectic use of historical styles that create stage like spatial contexts, kitsch in postmodern architecture does the same thing; it tries to attract attention on the basis of superficial use of charms and emotions.

Therefore, we might suggest that because of the same reasons, which are basically the use of commonplace artistic means, the exploitation of charms and emotions for attracting attention, and the lack of disinterestedness and originality, Kant’s arguments about bad taste seem relevant with the description of kitsch in architecture, before the invention of the term or the emergence of such traits in architecture.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, this study has attempted to question the possibility of tracing the notion of kitsch, as a product of the 19th century aesthetic theory, in the writings of Kant, who laid the philosophical foundations of the aesthetic judgment of taste in the 18th century. With this objective, it reexamined the notion of kitsch, which was defined as an aesthetic value judgment identified as ‘bad taste’, through a reading of Kant’s arguments over the concepts of aesthetic judgment, taste, and bad taste as expressed in his work “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”. The main aim in this attempt was to compare Kant’s definitions of bad taste with the descriptions of kitsch in order to see and put forward any convergences or discrepancies that may be for having an understanding about the philosophical roots of the term.

It was seen that the conditions of ‘bad taste’, as portrayed by Kant through the presence of the elements of charm and emotion in the aesthetic judgment of taste, overlap in many ways with the characteristics of the notion of kitsch, which was coined a century later. In his “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment”, Kant derogatively talks about the addition of charm and emotion to the aesthetic object as a factor that hampers ‘pure and sincere taste’, making it as an example of ‘crude and untrained taste’. His descriptions regarding the characteristics of works that are supplemented by charm and emotion coincide with many characteristics of kitsch on the basis of its using familiarity for easy appreciation, exploitation of emotions for emotional gratification, and using artistic and aesthetic means for attracting attention.

Therefore, we can state that this seminal work of Kant that defined the main benchmarks of aesthetic theory before the appearance of kitsch, reveals the traces of some significant conditions that convene by the characteristics of kitsch, which make it qualified as bad taste. On this basis, this study argues that the pretentious use of charms and emotions by kitsch in its attempt of attracting attention is discernable in Kant’s arguments in defining bad taste, and this commonality could justify the philosophical roots of kitsch and the view towards it as ‘bad taste’, on the basis of the presence of sentimentality or the pretentious use of charms and emotions, even before its creation as a modern term of aesthetics.

As has been explained earlier, this derogative look towards kitsch was actually based on the change of approach towards sentimentality in arts and philosophy, which was commenced by the works of Kant himself and continued later by modernist art critics. Kant was among the first who identified an object or a work of art as an example of bad taste on the basis of its sentimentality and the use of charms and clichés. On this basis, we can find the philosophical roots of the derogation of kitsch in the denunciation of sentimentality in the 18th century, before kitsch was actually coined.

Obviously the approach towards sentimentality and kitsch has changed tone today as parallel to the change in the definition of art and the idea of beauty. In arts, beauty is evidently not seen as a precondition as it was in the 18th century, and the approach towards kitsch became much more positive and emancipatory today (Ryynänen, 2018; Artun, 2010; Solomon, 1991). Since 1960s, the derogation of sentimentality, along with the polarity between kitsch and avant-garde, has been blurred in the sphere of art (Artun, 2010). Although what registers as ‘bad taste’ still remains as a valid form of judgment and it still includes the derogation of the pretentious use of charms and emotions, or so to say kitsch, in the field of architecture, the clear-cut boundaries in aesthetic appreciation nevertheless have become much vague today.

However, spotting the commonalities between the descriptions of kitsch and Kant’s arguments about bad taste over the presence of sentimentality or the pretentious use of charms and emotions in an aesthetic object, could still be seen noteworthy for providing an understanding about the philosophical roots of the term kitsch as an aesthetic value judgment that existed long before its name has been coined.

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A. Fikir / Idea, Concept	B. Çalışma Tasarısı, Yöntemi / Study Design, Methodology	C. Literatür Taraması / Literature Review
D. Danışmanlık / Supervision	E. Malzeme, Kaynak Sağlama / Material, Resource Supply	F. Veri Toplama, İşleme / Data Collection, Processing
G. Analiz, Yorum / Analyses, Interpretation	H. Metin Yazma / Writing Text	I. Eleştirel İnceleme / Critical Review

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