

A STUDY OF KITSCH IN SOUTH AFRICAN SUBURBAN SOCIETY

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(i)

YOU DO SOMETHING FIRST THEN SOMEONE
COMES ALONG AND DOES IT PRETTY.

Pablo Picasso

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank Professor R B Brooks for the very effective supervision he gave me while I was conducting this research and preparing the report.

FOREWORD

Consider the possibility of the remnants of our present day society being excavated and studied in centuries to come. Imagine the craftsmanship, the art, artifacts and architecture that will then be compared to those of the past centuries. Our entire culture will be labelled by the endless array of rubbish that has become an integral part of our lives. The increasing prevalence of kitsch in the society goes almost unnoticed where it should be causing concern. Few people are aware of its existence, or the permanent aesthetic scars induced by this prevalence.

How has this cult of sheer awfulness come about and why has it become prevalent? It is impossible to pursue all the avenues of kitsch - so vast is it - but it is the purpose of this study to try and answer some of the questions, in order to make people more aware of what has crept into our society, to help them become more discriminating, and not merely to level criticism at the perpetrators of kitsch.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE MEANING OF THE WORD KITSCH

Origins: Websters Third New International Dictionary:

KITSCH: from kitschen to slap (a work of art) together - to scrape up mud from the street: artistic or literary material to be of low quality, often produced to appeal to popular taste and marked by sentimentalism, sensationalism and slickness.

Gillo Dorfles¹ (1969) in his book : Kitsch: An anthology on the world of Bad Taste, says that it is thought that "certain writers claim that the word derives from the English 'sketch' while others attribute it to the German verb etwas verkitsche ('knock off cheaply').

L Giesz² attributes it to kitschen, meaning den Strassenschlamm zusammenscharren, literally 'to collect rubbish from the street' which in effect is the interpretation closest to the concept of 'artistic rubbish' and might be linked to the term 'junk art'. This latter term has been used by English and American writers for a certain type of art which makes use of refuse taken bodily from the rubbish dump. The word Kitschmensch, meaning 'kitsch-man', is used by Giesz in his book and should, I think, be taken into the English language".

¹Dorfles, Gillo. Kitsch the World of Bad Taste, p.2.

²L Giesz In: G Dorfles op.cit., p.156.

Jacques Sternberg¹ states that as early as 1860 "Kitschen" was used to describe switch selling - to use or manipulate art ... in the manufacture of articles for mass production.

An inquiry into the word kitsch yielded the aforementioned while reference books such as the Little Oxford Dictionary, Collins Modern Encyclopedia, or even Bronowski's Ascent of Man, make no mention of the word, so we can presume, therefore, that it is only recently that the need for such a word in the vocabulary has come about. Recent, in terms of History, this is certainly so, but in fact kitsch as we know it, has been creeping into the society over the past two centuries with increasing rapidity and now permeates all areas of our environment.

It is when we come to define it that the trouble starts, at the very mention of the word, heated controversy ensues. Dorfles describes it in following McDonald's² (1962) terminology as "... the mid-cult, which indicates that kind of half-way culture, that mediocrity which is probably the most widespread of all and provides the artistic nourishment of the masses".

Professor Richard Roth, assistant art professor at Ohio State University, following the broadest definition, said kitsch can be

¹ Sternberg, Jacques. Kitsch, p.9.

² McDonald, Dwight. Against the American Grain, p.14.

"any type of debased art - trite versions of a traditional art form"¹ but it appears to be also characterized by over-sentimentality, poor quality and obvious stereotypes.

The word 'taste', on the other hand, has been with us for centuries, and it appears to be the misconception of words such as 'taste' and 'beauty' and 'truth' that have contributed to the spread of Kitsch. So let us take a look at the real definition of these words as pertaining to art.

Anthony Raphael Mengs² as early as 1762 when writing on beauty and taste in painting, remarks on Renaissance artists who found beauty and good taste in the perfection of the Ancients; and Raphael, Correggio and Titian arrived at beauty by a compromise of nature and the imitation of the ancient perfection. Mengs states no one should tolerate, examine or immitate anything ugly; one should question the reason for beauty and train the justness of the eye.

John Ruskin³ when defining taste, states that it is on our natural instincts and senses that education and accident operate to an unlimited extent, that they can be cultivated and directed or checked and diverted, that they become gifted by the right guidance with the most acute or faultless sense, or subjected by neglect to error or

¹ Davies, Donna M. The Denver Post.

² The Works of Anthony Raphael Mengs. Enlightenment, pp 30-31.

³ Ruskin, John. Modern Painters, Vol. 1, pp 26-27.

disease. A person who has followed up the natural laws of desire and aversion making them more authoratative, then derives the greatest possible sum of pleasure from any given object and is then a man of taste. "Perfect taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material sources which are attractive to our moral nature in its purity and perfection". Those who have no taste receive little pleasure from these sources, and those who receive pleasure from any other source have false or bad taste. It is in this way that 'taste' is distinguished from 'judgement' with which it is constantly confused.

On taste, W Proudfoot Begg¹ says that although the artists have freedom as wide as the range of possibility within their art, it is not arbitrary, irrational or lawless, but with feeling and an address of reason to reason in a rational way. And while there cannot be an outward standard of taste for all there must be some universal principles of judgement involved in all productions of art. The laws of nature and human nature are within them all and are made known by them; and art speaks of these in excellence, in truth and intensity.

Taste is so often confused with fashion and different ideas of beauty among different nations and social classes has been made much of. There may be differences that can be seen in customs, dress and

¹Begg, W.P. The Development of Taste and other studies in Aesthetics. pp 153-154.

general habits but the differences are all on the surface and do not necessarily indicate a difference in taste. People are influenced in their choice of dress and formation of habits by thoughts of beauty, comfort and convenience and a thousand other things and they may like them better for a time, but prejudices and preferences from habits and associations are not to be confused with aesthetic taste. They are different. The art of the cavemen and Egyptian tombs has not lost its beauty for us in the twentieth century. The true beauty of art does not grow old and is of universal significance. "Talk as you will then about the differences in taste ... it is no more than is necessary to set off general unanimity of sentiment and to illustrate the principle as applied to the nations as a whole, as some lay down as the most general expressions and fundamental law of beauty, and which lies at the very root of being, unity and variety".¹

Beauty and truth are very often discussed together by the philosophers and authors on the subject of aesthetics. J.W. Purser² in his discussions says that the sensations we call "beautiful" are more rightly "pleasant", they are the sweet tones, the clear colours and the regular geometric figures, smooth pronouncable words etc; they are as agreeable to man's nature as are also ease of manner and gentleness of character and the like. We are prejudiced in favour

¹Begg, W.P. op.cit., p.188.

²Purser, J.W. Art and Truth. pp 63-68.

of certain headings under which we see things as beautiful and if we are looking only for those things that seem to symbolize beauty, a grotesque like a gargoyle may seem ugly; but if we look for cunning, malice, perversity and cruelty, the grotesque is our beauty, although this is not the kind of thing we usually find beautiful. So there are certain groups of sensations that are expressive in an unpleasing way that are not beautiful to us though, they may be so in truth; "... and beauty has a power very often of forcing us to look at them in the right light". It can make them pleasant to us sometimes against our normal predispositions and overcome our stubbornness so that we view them from a proper angle, under more appropriate headings than those which the plain man is likely to expect pleasure. We must go beyond the ordinary conceptions of expression to find beauty. "Beauty exists only when a sufficient number of sensations have been brought together in an expression to convey something final and true; and when this expression has a power of attraction such as the mere coherence of agreeable or disagreeable sensations has not. Perhaps the pleasing nature of beauty is the result of its truth and finality. It is hardly the result of its mere coherence".

If John Ruskin¹ says "... no picture can be good which deceives by its imitation for the very reason that nothing can be beautiful which is not true", we must look at Albert Schweitzer's² definition

¹ Begg, W.P. op.cit. P.

² Burnett, W. Ed. This is my Philosophy. p.89.

of the living truth as that alone which has its origins in thinking. "Just as a tree bears year after year the same fruit and yet fruit which is each year new, so must all permanently valuable ideas be continually reborn in thought. But our age is bent on trying to make the barren tree of scepticism fruitful by tying fruits of truth on its branches".

We come to the conclusion from these readings that the true meaning of the words 'taste', 'truth' and 'beauty' are of much greater significance than those in general use, bandied about and hackneyed. It is pertinent at this stage to take cognisance of what can be termed as ugly or possess a low degree of beauty, and Collingwood¹ says that ugliness is beauty spoilt, beauty uglified. "... all ugliness, so far as it does exist, is not the ugliness of an object not imagined: not imagined, that is, in the strict sense of the word. When a person engaged in thought makes a mistake, we say that he has not really thought: we exhort him to think, and we take it as obvious that one cannot think anything out and at the same time think it falsely. In the same way when someone imagines something ugly he has not really imagined; he has not 'imagined out' the object, but has been content with half-imagining it... A low degree of beauty means a beauty which we can apprehend with a comparatively slight exertion of imaginative energy; such a beauty is a trivial, hackneyed or vulgarized beauty".

¹Collingwood, R.G. Outlines of a Philosophy of Art.

And Clement Greenberg¹ said "All profoundly original art looks ugly at first". Herman Brosch² in his essay states that the artist has to subject himself unconditionally to the object and listen to the secret voice of the object and that the truly unknown cannot seduce him but that which he is just beginning to sense can, he can see a new shred of reality and must manage to formulate it. The important thing in both science and art is the creation of new expressions of reality. "Art is made up of intuitions about reality, and is superior to kitsch thanks to these intuitions". He goes on to say that the danger is in that of imitation, that there are so many religions of imitation which carry the seeds of evil within them and that kitsch is also imitation. It can resemble the system of art in every detail but the imitation will still show through. "The kitsch system requires its followers to work beautifully while the art system issues the ethical order 'work well'. kitsch is the element of evil in the value system of art".

In the attempt to discover the true value of the words used in describing aesthetics, and coming to the conclusion that kitsch is an imitation of these values and systems, we can see how it has become generally and incorrectly believed by the bourgeois that one should pursue so called 'beautiful art', 'good taste' and be 'artistic'; and that in fact art should be pleasant, a saccharine or uplifting experience. And in this same vein we have 'background music',

¹Dictionary of Contemporary Quotations. p.148.

²In: Dorfles. op.cit. pp 49-67.

'decor' and 'romantic novels', and an array of gadgets that represent status more than function or genuine appreciation.

A distinction between taste and fashion has already been discussed but there is no doubt that fashion, as dictated by the media, does play a most important role in the spread of kitsch, and that this fashion does change. Articles that satisfy only temporary needs become redundant and obsolete, and it does dictate to the masses on how to be an acceptable member of the society; on what to wear, what kind of house to buy and what it should contain, what car to buy and even where you should travel, regardless of taste. All this will give acceptability, a position that is safe and inviolate and cannot be criticised. Besides being safe, kitsch is also decidedly false. It is the imposing of the false onto the real, the changing of fundamentals such as birth, life and death and making them into sentimental, sugary, emotional occasions.

Industry is quick to note what is in demand by the largest sectors of the public, and makes sure this demand is met by gross imitation and mass production, careless of craftsmanship and utility. These articles and ideas are rapidly spread about the world in excess. Aldous Huxley¹ writes: "Advances in technology have led ... to vulgarity... Process reproduction and the rotary press have made possible the indefinite multiplication of writing and pictures.

¹Huxley, Aldous. "Beyond the Mexique Bay". A Traveller's Journal.
in Illuminations, pp 274-ff.

Universal education and relatively high wages have created an enormous public who know how to read and can afford to buy reading and pictorial matter. A great industry has been called into existence in order to supply these commodities. Now, artistic talent is a very rare phenomenon; whence it follows ... that, at every epoch and in all countries, most art has been bad It (also) follows that in all the arts the output of trash is both absolutely and relatively greater than it was in the past.

The bourgeoisie, who emerged as the ruling class in the late nineteenth century were driven by a desire to create power, assimilated traditional patrimony. This led to the flowering of industrial capitalism. This situation together with increased transport speeds aided the development and spread of kitsch. Dwight McDonald¹ puts it sharply in saying "Mass culture is imposed from above. It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen; its audience are passive consumers, their participation limited to the choice between buying and not buying. The Lords of Kitsch, in short, exploit the cultural need of the masses in order to make a profit and/or maintain their class rule".

America, as one of the most powerful economies in the world is the greatest exponent of kitsch, and perhaps the original exponent. It is also probably the most emulated nation in the world. American

¹ McDonald, Dwight. "A Theory of Mass Culture" in Gans. Popular Culture and High Culture. p.20.

pop art is said "to have begun to flourish between the New York skyscrapers"¹, to originate in a world of supermarkets, discount houses and drug stores. Comic strips were basic material for the artists and the world was seen through the mass media, magazines, films and television. A new language developed out of the "impersonal heraldry of industrial and patriotic insignia". Roy Lichtenstein depicted comic-strip e.g. Takka Takka, and advertisements adopting the techniques of commercial artists as seemingly mechanical techniques. He said he tried to make a painting so disgusting that no one would buy it, however, it was bought with avidity. A whole new world of pseudo-myths; celebrities of the rich world of advertising and industry had their images repeated on shirts, posters, wrappings and advertisements showing the consumer a dream world of perfect beauty, everlasting youth etc. and these were all used as material by the artist. Martial Raysse painted a clean, unblemished world of green forests and red sunsets and stereotype figures - Simple and Quiet Painting. James Rosenquist juxtaposed slick personalities, shiny cars, and juicy pieces of cake - President Elect. These artists were commenting on a stereotyped world perpetuated by the consumer society's advertising men. The world in these works was, and is easily understood. Their popularity can be explained by the expression in cliché of the wishes of the consumer world. These works reached for the very essence of modern life that is responsible for the ever increasing permeation of kitsch throughout the world.

¹ Von der Osten, Gert. Art of the Sixties. p.110.

Raymonde Moulin¹ states that "The dignity that our society recognizes in art constitutes one side of a system, of which the reverse is commercialization in art". And Van den Haag² describes his conception of the process: "Corruption of past culture by popular culture takes numerous forms, starting with direct adulteration. Bach candied by Stokowski, Bizet coarsened by Rodgers and Hammerstein ... Freud vulgarized into columns of newspaper correspondence advice (how to be happy though well-adjusted). Corruption also takes the form of mutilation and condensation ... works are cut, condensed, simplified and rewritten until all possibilities of unfamiliar or aesthetic experience are strained out ...".

I do not pretend to have completely covered the question or to have arrived at an entirely satisfactory definition of kitsch but for this essay it can be understood what is meant by saying that kitsch is the very opposite of the true pursuit of art. It is the imposing of the false on the real. It is the imitation of the truth and beauty in art. It is not concerned with taste in the true sense of the word but rather with fashion that allows its perpetrators to hide safely behind it. It appeals to the sentimental and the emotional. It is even more pervasive and indestructable in this century because it has become fused to a civilization relying on mass production and public consumption. It is nourished by excess

¹ Moulin, Raymonde. "The Arts in the Age of Change", in Art and Confrontation. p.6.

² Van den Haag, Ernest. "Of Happiness and Despair we have no Measure", in Popular Culture and High Culture. p.27.

and over-emphasis and can be found in and around modern homes, as vulgar and false grandeur in architecture and monuments, in decorated facades, greeting cards, souvenirs, religious trappings, epic films spewing blood and saccharine sweetness, radio and television regurgitating a continuous stream of imitation music, and advertisements playing on an ideal. The sample selected does not extend further back than this century and should be seen as a reference.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study was inspired by an article¹ on the appraisal of domestic letterboxes and in spite of computer search and inquiry into journals there appears to be very little serious literature written on the subject of kitsch. Gillo Dorfles' collection of essays in his book "Kitsch, the world of bad taste" is perhaps the only one and certainly the most thought provoking. To quote from the introduction "Kitsch threatens to become the most pervasive 'style' of our times, even though, until the appearance of this volume, it has never been systematically documented, analyzed and evaluated". There appears to have been nothing of significance since. Prior to this, Jacques Sternberg² documented kitsch in England and America and whilst pointing to the difficulties in discussing the subject and the reason for its prevalence, offers no real definition or solution to the problem.

It is also significant to note that Barry Humphries' "Treasury of Australian Kitsch"³ has been translated into thirty-seven languages; as he points out, no single book has addressed itself to so immense a public. His horrendous kitsch verbiage in the introduction and the copious use of pretentious phrases in the captions to the illustrations provide the reader with an excellent and humorous view

¹Stannard, Richard. The Letterbox - a neglected product? Brief.
pp 12-13.

²Sternberg. op.cit.

of the Australoid culture, without any explanation for the phenomena.

Obvious concern is shown by writers on design such as Bruno Munari¹ and Richard Wollheim² who advocate the re-establishment of the long-lost contact between the artist and the public, without losing their aesthetic sense, the artists must respond to the demands of the public.

Much has been written on the subject of taste and beauty by the philosophers and the exponents of aesthetic criteria over many centuries, but this only helps to define the problem but makes no reference to the modern phenomena of kitsch.

As recently as 1980 Francis Haskell³ wrote on some aspects of taste, fashion, and collecting in England and France but only deals with the hundred years prior to 1880.

In recent years there have been small articles in newspapers and magazines putting forward views of people such as Professor Richard Roth⁴, or a collection of opinions by Jani Allan⁵ or Lin Sampson⁶

¹ Munari, Bruno. Design as Art. p.15.

² Wollheim, Richard. Art and the Objects. p.36.

³ Buchanan, William. Rediscoveries in Art. Some aspects in taste, fashion and collecting in England and France.

⁴ Davis. op.cit.

⁵ Allan, Jani. "Ya well no fine". Sunday Times Magazine.

⁶ Sampson, Lin. "The Real Thing". Sunday Times Magazine.

avoiding any confrontation and written in a tongue-in-cheek vein.

Talks were given by Robert Kirby on the S A B C dealing with kitsch in the home some years back and Professor Robert Brooks lectured at the Cape Town Summer School on the subject, but lamentably neither of these have been published.

In 1976 Herbert Gans¹, a sociologist wrote on an analysis of taste and culture advocating the identification of the cultural content of the people in order to implement sub-cultural programming to satisfy the diverse needs, as he believes 'high culture' only serves a small public that prides itself on its exclusiveness.

Because of the deficiency in literature on the subject, and the apparent uneasiness aroused by any attempt at a definition, and the uncertainties as to whether kitsch is bad, or has an important role to play, it is, therefore, important to include a short survey in this study to try and clear up some of these questions. To try and reach a consensus on what constitutes kitsch other than a personal opinion; and to try to provide evidence for the recognition of this modern phenomena.

¹Gans, Herbert. Popular Culture and High Culture. p.135.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCUSSION AND EXAMPLES OF KITSCH

i. Transpositions.

One of the most common examples of kitsch is when a single element or whole work of art is transferred from its real status and used for a totally different purpose from the one for which it was created. Adaptations from one medium into another represent a betrayal of the original content. So-called exact replicas of a masterpiece fail to take into account the constituent material, the substance of the original, or the personal style of the artist and the particular way in which the work was conceived and executed is neglected.

In recent times there has been an increase in the number of reproductions and replicas owing to mass production and engineering techniques. We find replicas of Rodin's Thinker and The Kiss reproduced in a dubious manner in all types of plastic and Michelangelo's Moses, Leonardo's Mona Lisa, and all the decorative paintings of Klimt, Gauguin and van Gogh, reproduced and mounted on board for sentimental or technical values. By reproduction all respect for scale and nuances of colour and the overall feeling of the images are lost. There is a prevailing attitude that works can be enhanced when produced in another medium for decorative reasons on tiles, mosaic, towel, wall hangings and tapestry. There are artists like Tretchikoff who paint specifically for reproduction. They paint solely for financial gain by satisfying the demands of the people who prefer substantive 'pictures' that

are unconcerned with innovative forms or any real aesthetic satisfaction. This can only be called a debasement of art.



GRANDMA MOSES PAINTING PRODUCED IN TAPESTRY.

ii. Monuments

In ancient times monuments like the Pyramids represented their age because they were true exponents of the ideas embodied in them.

We must then ask why, in modern times, they have suffered a debasement of values. "Perhaps, instead of evoking authentic religious, patriotic or mystical sentiments, they evoked only the customary ersatz for these sentiments and have suffered the fate of becoming sentimental".¹

¹Dorfles. op.cit. p.79.

What is a memorial or a monument? Lance Morrow¹ says "... it is not the same as a memory. In some deep ways, the two are opposite. The memorial makes memory objective. The memorial rescues suffering from its degrading pointlessness and installs it in the stone Perhaps it is grotesque for people to wish to commemorate their blackest acts. In their traditional function, memorials glorify our heroes, our battles, our ideals, our (presumably) higher values. Erecting memorials to our horrors is the moral equivalent of impaling heads on spikes by the roadside: it rivets the attention of the passers-by and leaves them with a memorable warning".

Monuments are erected in every town; in parks and squares, inside and outside buildings and on top of hills as symbols of patriotism or heroic events, or to commemorate some historical event or person. These all tend to be over-emphatic and imbued with tradition which becomes sentimental and loses the historical content. Unfortunately these monuments are usually the focal point of a town or the region in which they are situated.

¹ Morrow, Lance. "The Morals of Remembering". Time Magazine.

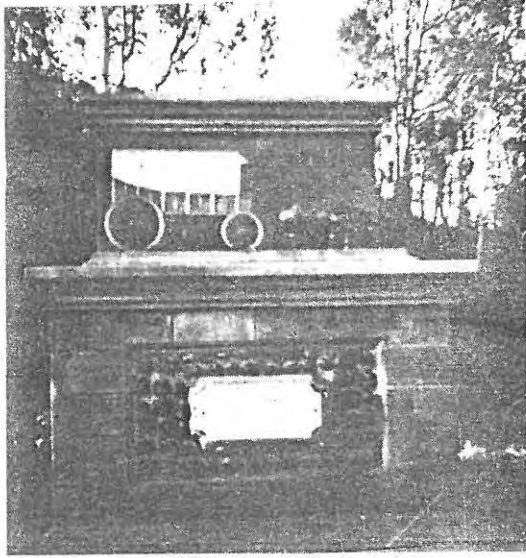


3. BRITSE SETLAARSMONUMENT . . . GRAHAMSTAD

J. SIMBOLIESE OSSEWATREK, 1938

1. BETHULIE

Die Ossewatrek het op 13 Oktober 1938 Bethulie uit Venterstad, K.P. bereik. Honderd spoggerige perde-ruiters het die groot optog met 'n historiese veerwa en die Louis Trichardtwa aan die voerpunt gelei. Dr. S. H. Pellissier was die feesredenaar. Die wagedenkteken is deur mnr. Henry Myburgh uit gesmelte koeëldoppe gegiet.



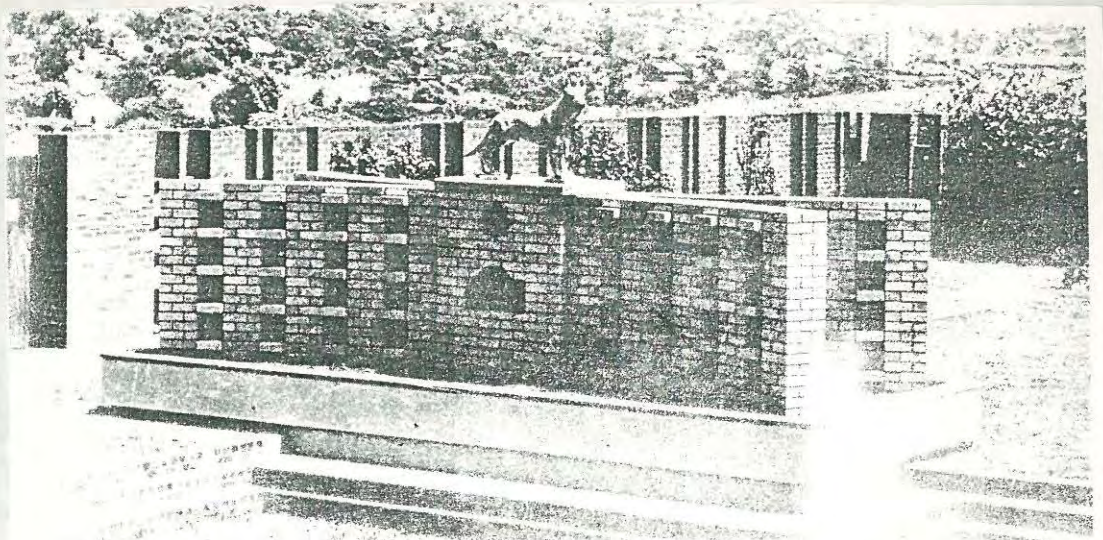
BEELD VAN VOORTREKKERMEISIE BLOEMFONTEIN

Another category of monument swamped in superficial dedication and devotion are those erected to the glorification of prospectors (Roodepoort), the tillers of the land (Lichtenburg), police dogs (Durban) and a single language (Welkom), and Father Time, the weather beaten old tramp of Oudtshoorn.

13. VADER TYD MONUMENT OUDTSHOORN

Die monument is tydens 'n groot Langenhovenfees op 11 Augustus 1973 deur die Administrateur van Kaapland, mr. W. H. Vosloo, onthul. Die beeldhouster, mej. Te Water staan langs mr. Vosloo.



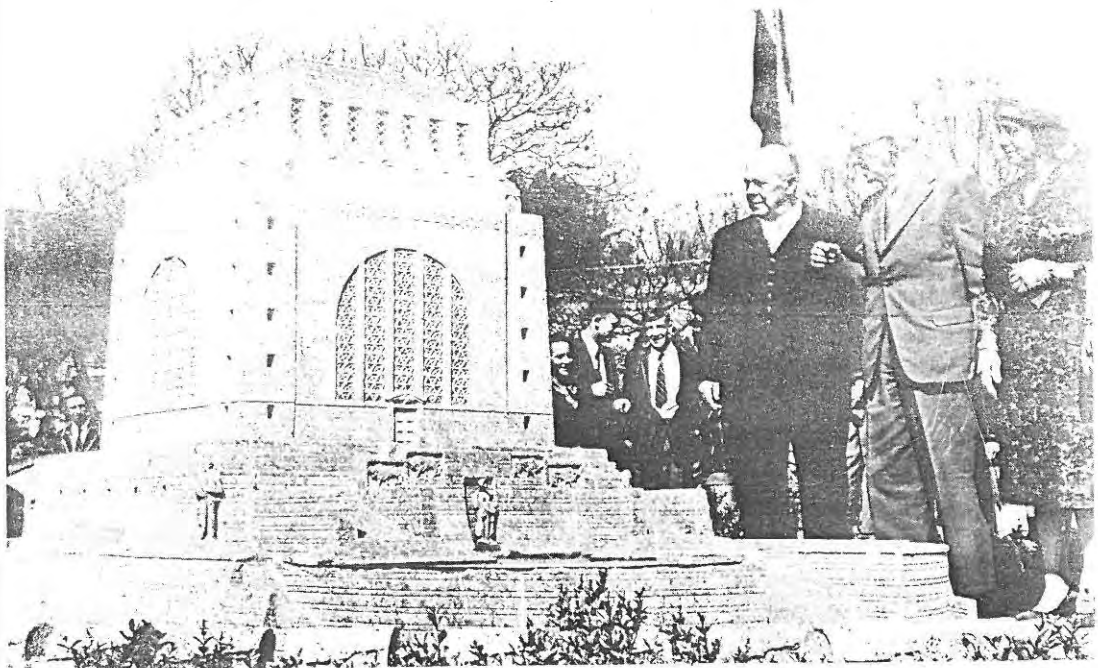


25 POLISIEHOEDEMONUMENT DURBAN



Miner's Monument.

Vast buildings, decorated with clumsy sculpture of heroics and pathos, reeking of suffering and providing platforms for thanksgiving and empty promise. Aesthetically the most damaging are the little replicas of monuments erected in schools in order to instil patriotism and worship of the heritage. (Little Voortrekker monument).



15. HELPMKAAR HOËR SEUNSKOOL JOHANNESBURG

In contrast to these monuments mentioned for their kitsch connotations, there have been successful attempts at good, simple and direct statements in monuments such as Isandhlawana and the Battle of the Blood River. The Memorial to the War Dead in St George's Park, Port Elizabeth solemnizes and legitimizes and dignifies those who have departed.

Public buildings are as good an excuse as any for bad taste, being decorated with bad relief sculptures, very often totally out of context with the purpose of the building. These can be found at almost all travel terminals (Jan Smuts airport, Durban Marine terminal, or Universities or Colleges (Pretoria University)).



Oom Paul looms above a hardy Boer follower

Fortunately history very often takes its toll on monuments and public buildings and many of these will be destroyed before they can become antique. (See Appendix No 1 items 1-6).

iii. Tourism and Nature Transformed.

Every monument, landscape, folk lore, park or garden is instantly made kitsch by tourism because the tourist "borrows" the admiration or indignation. They are not a part of it, and do not live with it. Tourism panders to the transitory nature of the visitors and over-emphasizes those aspects demanded. The environment is seldom completely genuine so the tourist travels through sequences of events of nature transformed for his benefit.

Dorfles points out that there are two clearly defined situations with regard to nature: there is the kitsch-nature and the kitsch-man confronted with normal nature. In the first instance the nature is transformed to become kitsch for the benefit of the tourist, for instance, the real Congo Caves illuminated and transformed by coloured lights accompanied by organ music. In the second instance, the kitsch-man is moved to fictitious tears by the sunrise over the mountains and bay at Cape Point. By tourist we do not mean the person who travels with specific educational or work programmes, but that person who travels in the organized system of mass-movement lured by brochures offering 'new experiences', 'an overall atmosphere' and 'images of paradise'.

Ludwig Giesz¹ refers to kitsch as being an experience brought about by man to satisfy the basic pre-conditions of his quest for happiness, but this does not involve either a genuine adventurous search for the unknown or a genuine and static tranquillity; therefore, tourism offers a pleasant "pseudo-adventure". The souvenir become a representation of the past, a past recollection which is more peaceful than a headlong passage into the unknown future.



KUDU HORN SOUVENIR

¹Giesz, Ludwig. "Kitsch-man as Tourist", in Dorfles. op.cit. p.156.

Some of the most important tourist attraction in South Africa are national monuments like Table Mountain, The Howick Falls, Bushmen paintings (Die Wit Vrou van die Brandberg, South West Africa) and The Cango Caves transformed by coloured lights and organ music.

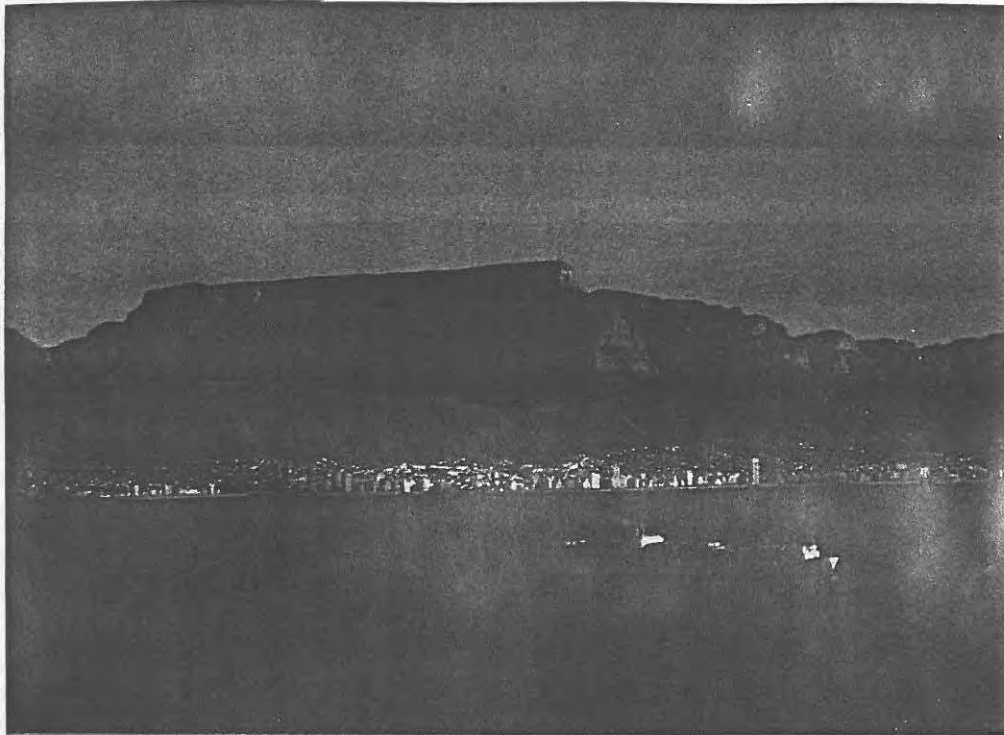


Table Mountain

Pseudo-nature is offered by the game parks, where one can "shoot" the wild life with cameras, explore the wilds in guide driven vehicles, enjoy camp-fire meals, and rest in comfort with all the modern conveniences. (See Appendix No. 1 items 7-10).



CAMP FIRE CUISINE



SUBURBAN HOME

iv. Homes and gardens.

The urban scene and large scale infrastructures produce a state of such overcrowding and such insensitivity that individual buildings lose their identity and significance generally representing a large scale degeneration of our environment. An urgent reappraisal of mass produced building materials and design is required to remedy the escalating problem of the suburban home.



WALL DECORATION



BEDROOM FURNISHINGS

The house beautiful is the dream of every middle class citizen. Small family homes set cheek by jowel on the outskirts of every town with flowers in the garden and net curtains reveal a pre-occupation with conformity and safety and minimise any scope for individual creativity. The avant-garde initiates the process of art.



INTERIOR

When they, the modern family, feel like looking at pictures or furnishing a home they turn to kitsch because they can enjoy this without effort and actually believe that this can be of advantage to them. It is not the comfort of a home or the convenience or snugness that is the interest, but the luxury. Value is confused with price and things that cost more are more luxurious. "Someone using an enamelled chamber pot thinks that luxury means having a gold one".¹ Baths, telephones, water taps made of gold, embossed or engraved, all gold. There must be walls covered in expensive materials, expensive carpets and velvet armchairs and windows large indeed to bring the traffic into the heart of the home, washable net curtains. Kitsch made more disgusting by the expense. To match the outrageous expense the person living in the house must also conform. Munari calls them the "Luxuriously Appointed Freaks".



INTERIOR DECORATION

¹Munari. op.cit. p.135.

The type of home is more often dictated by the economy and availability, together with what is acceptable in the community. Colours go, like clothes, through fashion changes. During the sixties it was pop art colours, the seventies - crunchy grenola beiges and browns, and now during the eighties all new colours like softer avocado and sahara sands, related to the colours of cars available at the moment.



EXPENSIVE KITSCH

The commerce that serves the householder is a veritable hive of kitsch. "In one shop I see a brass boot, size 25 (approximately).

'I'll have a pair of those.' I say. 'We have only one sir.'
'What can I do with only one boot?' 'Its not a boot to wear on
the foot sir, it is a boot to keep umbrellas in' ... I am greatly
embarrassed by this gaffe, and leave the shop at once, nearly trip-
ping over a marble cat decorated with floral reliefs and serving as
a doorstep."¹ So it goes on with elephant feet to rest your pipes
in, copper kettles sporting a clock, a fly-swat made into a woman's
face. Brushes like cats and ash-trays in the shape of a lavatory.
Cheese-boards shaped like cows or pigs; a child's potty with a
duck's head. A lamp disguised as a bunch of flowers; a corn cob
becomes a pipe; a sauce dispenser a plastic tomato; an ice bucket
looks like a beer barrel and a beer barrel like a wine barrel and
table lamps made of wine bottles, and wine bottles like fish,
cigarette lighters like lamps and lamps like cigarette lighters
and do you put the cigarette out in the lavatory or sit in the
ashtray? These objects are believed to satisfy a family's needs
and cultural requirements.



WALL CLOCK

¹ Munari. op.cit. p.154.



SAUCE DISPENSER

They are not interested in functional forms for the reason they are unable to understand them and are content with substitutes which are thought of as more beautiful. An aesthetic need is, therefore, satisfied by false showiness. This also paves the way for the mass manufacture of garden ornaments in the form of copies of antique statuary, garden gnomes and so on.

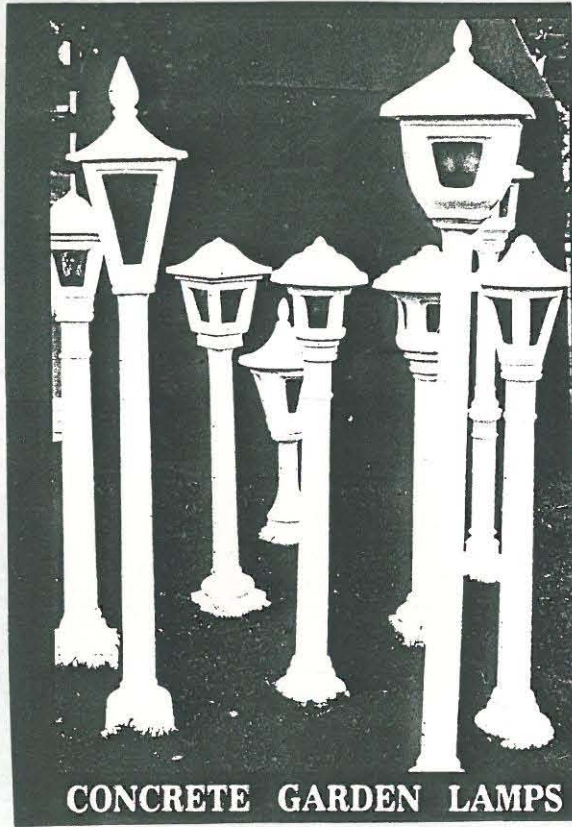


KNICK-KNACKS

Most of our present day design gears itself purely to the stimulation of consumption. Most objects become an ornament or piece of window dressing or the image of a status symbol. Transformations of functional articles are brought about by changes in scale or change in material, or the use of inappropriate materials and the disguise of the objects function.

The embodiment of fantasy seems of prime importance in the home. Although Sternberg's¹ comparison of living rooms in the 1890's and the 1960's point to the latter as being an extension of the kitchen and the bathroom and as a "sadly functional place", with no room for fantasy, he states that the 70's indicated a revolt. Has this revolt proved to be an escape into even more kitsch? It appears so. The modern home has more stainless steel, formica, real and imitation wood, imitation leather, designer furnishings and background stereophonic music. Practical necessity is lost. Quality comes to depend on approval within the society and kitsch becomes the whole essence of the operation.

¹Sternberg. op.cit. p.32.



CONCRETE GARDEN LAMPS



POST BOX



GARDEN GNOMES

Pseudo classical statues and garden gnomes have been mentioned but a quick drive around any suburban housing complex will reveal an amazing collection of nature transformed through its reduction to familiar dimensions, i e to extend the inside substitutes out into the garden in the form of ornate benches, carefully controlled minimal flower beds, postboxes and bird baths in the most grotesque variety of little naked barrel bearers, bird houses, dice, tree trunks, the variety is endless.



FLOWER POT



HOME IDENTIFICATION

No lift-off for this Apollo



Earthlings MRS OLGA STIEBEL and BOSUN on the launchpad of the Apollo rocket at Redhouse.

Garden rocket a hit with kids

By CLIFF FOSTER

A FAMILY moving into the former Redhouse home of a Port Elizabeth inventor, Mr John St Clair, have inherited an extraordinary device which the father, Mr Peter Stiebel, would like to dismantle, but which visiting children resolutely refuse to let him do.

It's a 15 metres high mock-up of an Apollo rocket, complete with electronic gadgetry, sleeping quarters, radio mast, count-down system and other space-age paraphernalia as well as flashing lights.

It's a child's towering wonderland, and anybody who tries to rip it down is going to incur the wrath of all the earth's little people, if not the little people from Mars as well.

Says Mr Stiebel, who transferred to the city recently to manage a tyre firm: "We moved in and here was this enormous rocket standing in the back yard, its nose jutting out above the rooftop."

"This chap who built it had rigged up various lights, etc. There was a count-down system, signals, lights flashing and bells ringing. He had it all connected up to two 12-volt batteries.

"I wanted to break it down, but the kids wouldn't hear of it. My own kids are teenagers now but there are others

who visit us as well and they climb inside and you never hear another sound from them all day."

Says Mr Stiebel's mother, Mrs Olga Stiebel: "They all love it. It must have been a very indulgent father who built all this."

Access is gained by scaling a ladder to a bunkroom six metres above the ground. Internal ladders then take occupants up through more control rooms to the aerial on the nose or down to the electronic powerhouse at the base.

The walls of the rocket are made of sheets of coloured glass fibre and the whole apparatus is concreted into its launch pad right outside the Stiebels' back door.

For variety Mr St Clair — who has since set up a weather satellite tracking system on his garage rooftop in Wares Road, Mill Park (Weekend Post August 8, 1981) — employed his inventiveness on the front stoep of the house, looking out across the towpath and the Swarthope River.

He paved the stoep with transparent green plastic and beneath it are growing ferns illuminated by electric bulbs — some thing like a strange disco dance floor. Which is about as out-of-this-world as the backyard rocks can be expected to take you.

Plaster birds and dolphins romp together on lawns, fishermen, gnomes and plaster dogs keep an endless vigil on almost every verandah step. (See Appendix No 1 items 11-27).



GARDEN ORNAMENTS

v. The Family.

The family is particularly prone to sentimental emotional exaggerations. From birth sentimentality sneaks into every family event and ceremony most of which are traditional and out of tune with modern times. Dorfles describes it as 'ethical kitsch', that which surrounds the baby, the Christening and any religious rite through marriage, maternity, commercialised St Valentine and mother's day all noted with greeting cards, little artifacts like bronzed baby shoes, sumptuous framed photographs in most blatant bad taste. It is hard to believe that man's closest relationships are so debased as to become perverted ceremonies. At the same time there are anti-family movements that can be as kitsch as the senti-



FAMILY PORTRAITS

A warm coat for mummy's bundle of fluff

By VAL CARTER-JOHNSON
IT'S a dog's life when you need a track suit for your morning run and a T-shirt shirt for your afternoon walks.

Especially when you are a dog, with your own, very adequate hairy coat which didn't cost you a cent.

Residents in the fashionable suburb of La Lucia, near Durban, are spending a small fortune on dressing their hounds in the latest fashion gear.

And the track suits are not cheap — ranging in price from a "cheapie at R11", to the more expensive model at R56.

The T-shirts, made by the same company, Puppy Love, are slightly cheaper. Salesman Victor Govindasamy said the pet shops were selling "at least" 20 of the miniature garments a month, with no complaints from customers about the price.

A La Lucia housewife bought a T-shirt and a track suit for her miniature poodle.

"It's a little cold in the mornings, and this will keep him warm," she said.



A Maltese poodle models one of the Puppy Love garments
Picture: SELWYN TAIT

FAMILY PET



GAY WEDDING CAKE

mentalized family. They come in the form of hippies and beatnik types and are prone to kitsch in their contrived manner of striving to be identified with these groups.

Death today is swamped in grief and suffering and is no longer linked with art as it was in Ancient Egypt, Gothic Churches and ceremonies, or the Baroque equivalent or even the catacombs. Cemeteries are becoming row upon row of kitsch in the form of statues, sickly verse, plastic flowers in plastic domes, mini temples and dolmens. It is only in old abandoned cemeteries that one can still find remnants of craftsmanship and dignity.



GRAVESIDE FLOWERS

The authentic severity still to be found in primitive or under-developed society has eluded us and the loss of respect for death can be attributed to fear or the desire to counterfeit death, or even to modern medicine which does not always allow the aged person to die naturally and with dignity. (See Appendix No 1 items 28-33).

vi. Advertising, television, cinema, publications and fashion.

There is no doubt that advertising is one of the most powerful means of communication. There is no one, regardless of age or social standing that is not reached by advertising. It comes through the press, daily and periodically; it blares from bill-boards, posters, pamphlets, television and even through the post box, so it escapes no-one. Therefore, it is the responsibility of this huge and varied industry to guide the taste of the man-in-the-street. It is true that there are instances of excellent advertising; and publications that only accept the very highest standards of advertising. There are also companies that bring true art to the public and use it as a means of advertising, but it is not these rare instances that need to be dealt with here but the aspects which convey bad taste.

According to Dorfles, there are two 'graftings' of kitsch onto advertising. One is the use of kitsch material for the advertisement. This encompasses all the elements towards which the kitsch-man aspires. The other is the use of acceptable material for the advertising of kitsch objects, for instance, the abuse of patriotic themes, exploitation of good art and substitution of feelings.

To give a few examples; as an advertisement for shoes and jeans, Michelangelo's figure from the Sistine Chapel ceiling are used to give status to the products. This particular work of art is violated many times by advertisers. It features again in a paint advertisement where Michelangelo himself is presented with an effeminate apprentice to mix his paint. These extravagances tend to turn the artist and his work into kitsch objects.



ADVERTISEMENT



SHOE ADVERTISEMENT

As does the British Airways advertisement portraying statues winking at the potential tourist. Under the same category name dropping of international celebrities or sportsmen give dubious status to the products advertised.

To a large extent our agricultural shows have become primarily an outlet for advertisers presenting a magic-box of large proportions encompassing the past and the future in its promise of exceptional discoveries and acquisitions. Helium filled heart-shaped silver balloons, the loud and dusty hubbub give false hope for a better future in a fantasy world of new technology and exotic escape routes.

The most prolific method of advertising is the crypto-sexual message - with suggestive symbols and imagery and in the verbal sense, with double meanings.



Television advertisements rely heavily on the sexually suggestive and make a mockery of every day events like the shower or bath. Babies and children again come in for the sentimental nostalgic approach, as do many of the television programmes on interior design - these being not only intended as advertisements but as programmes to educate, offering pseudo Baroque and Renaissance homes at budget prices. Television panders incessantly to the kitsch-man in most of the programmes offered with the Dallas' and Westgates. Music in bad taste accomplished by Sonia Herholdt, Gé Korsten and Nick Taylor and the art of the 'Sunday painter' on Crossroads on Sunday evenings.



AFTERGLOW

Not a dressing gown, but an extremely smart kimono-style mini-dress, wrapping to the side and tying with three rouleau bows, designed thus by Henry Schickerling for its versatility, we suspect. Anyway, such ladies are only naked when they're without their perfume.

CLOTHING ADVERTISEMENT

On the subject of the cinema, let it suffice to say that in spite of many films of excellent merit being produced throughout the world, South Africa falls very far behind. The movie industry is tied up with commercialism and, therefore, panders to the public, but I think it is correct to say that the public would very soon appreciate good movie making if they were exposed to it.

Obviously when film directors resort to fake elements and 'backdrops' they risk falling into kitsch. Travesty is made of history in epic films belching fire and thunder, blood, dust and tears. Many famous novels have been distorted in filming resulting in disaster. Many films made of famous people in which some characteristics have been altered or ignored in order to make them more glamorous or acceptable to the audience, thereby destroying the character.

The South African film industry is inhibited by a lack of available funds but to a large extent those films that have been locally produced are 'snot en transe' movies - portraying personal mishaps, or glorified historical events - with the occasional comedy or animal adventure - mostly simply bad.

A comparison of the best magazines produced in South Africa with those better ones produced, for instance in America, indicate bad taste in the extreme. The American Architectural Digest and English World of Interiors, to name only two, have no South African counterparts. The most popular periodical "Scope - the magazine for today's adult", only publishes articles of the most sensational kind enhanced by gruesome or vulgar illustrations. There is so much bad material the ordinary can be dismissed and the bad quality of magazines such as Scope and Garden & Home reflect an area for research in order to upgrade the publications of this country.



SCOPE MAGAZINE PIN-UP

A PAVILION FOR GARDEN ELEGANCE

by FAY GOLDIE

Although long popular in Europe, this decorative idea is only now being pioneered in South Africa



Ornamental pillars on a base of cut stone around a stone floor make up this beautiful garden belvedere with flowers in hanging baskets

GARDEN AND HOME

Garden and Home, a magazine for the homeowner can possibly be considered one of the greatest perpetrators of kitsch as it makes absolutely no distinction between what is good and bad, and gives the reader a very wide area from which to choose for himself, mostly in the interior decorator's choice and the pseudo Greek statue vein and the carefully cultivated garden.



FLOWER ARRANGEMENT



PAPER-MOON GRAPHICS

On the other hand the most lucrative publications produced are the romantic novels and photo-comic stories. These fall into the category of cheap adventure and escape into fantasy without calling on the intellect. They offer a substitute to good literature, in the form of adventure magazines for the male public and fan and confession magazines for the female public. This literature does not pretend to be anything other than cheap adventure and fantasy.



Fashion magazines offer instant social success and sex-appeal represent the same values mentioned in the paragraph on homes. These sentiments are of the utmost importance to the Barbara Barnards of bourgeois society. The couturier and interior decorator alike thrive and profit through them, and at no time is the person allowed to show through the veneer of good grooming and tasteful furnishings. As there are the anti-family cults, so are there the anti-fashion cults with an equally contrived public image. Both are excessive in their pre-occupation with their particular image. The nostalgic movement at the moment is big business in fashion and music, encouraging its followers to indulge in a phase of melancholia due to unsatisfied contemporary desires. (See also Appendix No. 1 items 34-37).

vii. Religion and Morals

These all concern ethics and as already noted in paragraph v kitsch is the falsification of sentiments and also the substitution of spurious sentiments for real ones. Unfortunately, in spite of some genuine attempt to create sacred buildings of merit, they are usually contaminated with furnishings and decoration in bad taste. It appears that an art that is genuinely sacred has no longer any place and it now aimed at the public who it is believed should be dealt with inferior products for fear they may not be acceptable and lead the faithful away from religion. Everyone who lives with terrible monsters in their home and garden and encounters them in every shop and street would not feel uncomfortable under the gaze of sacred statues with permed curls; this explains how congregations and

churches are simply staying within the same framework.




Karl Pawek¹ writes on Christian kitsch and says there is more to it than simply a stylistic deficiency but that the statuary displays a theological deficiency as well. Discussion is only possible if we cut out the consideration of the existence of Christian phenomena, and talk objectively. The very substance of religion has been hidden and only the superficial has been allowed to flourish. In other words an "occurrence" has been transformed into an object and

¹Pawek, Karl. In Dorfles. op.cit. pp 143-150.

a sentimental world of ideas. He goes on to say that Christian kitsch is not really an aesthetic problem at all, nor is it a mere concession to the people but it is the result of a watering down of theological spirit and consciousness and the substitution of something sweet and nice for something extremely powerful and that it is on the emotional level that kitsch could flourish properly. It lurks behind the pious statements of the preacher and is embodied in every representational object and liturgical trapping. It abounds in advertisements for religious services and promises of eternal peace and hope for the future. It is found in healing crusades where legs grow and all types of illness are healed.

A woman wept as she discovered
**SHE WAS HEALED OF
OSTEO ARTHRITIS**
at our Service last Sunday.

Mr van der Merwe's high blood pressure, heart disease and asthma all disappeared in our Service two weeks ago — Jesus can do it for you too.



PASTOR J. R. CROMPTON

Healing Rallies at THE REVIVAL CENTRE
53 THIRD AVENUE, NEWTON PARK
SUNDAY, 10.30 am and 7 pm — All welcome
Video's of our Services for hire, plus correspondence course.
ENQUIRIES 312676

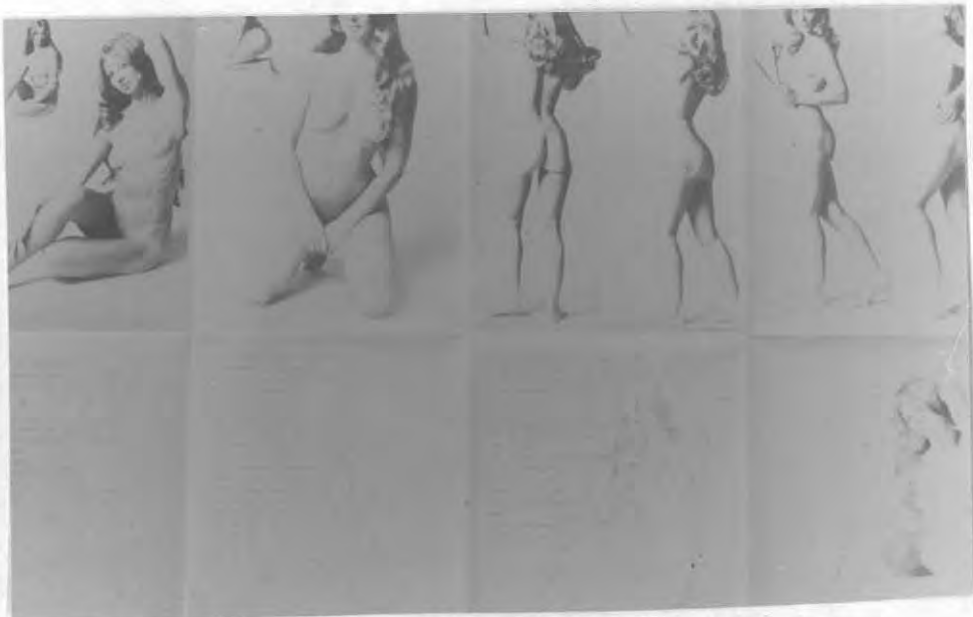
P.77973

Religious texts have become demystified through translation "which seeks to state clearly and accurately the meaning of the original texts in words and forms that are widely accepted by people who use English as a means of communication".¹ Holy Bible, Isaiah 29.9

¹ Good News Bible. Foreword.

"Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry; they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. Lo for the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered". Good News Bible, Isaiah 29.9 "Go ahead and be stupid. Go ahead and be blind; Get drunk without any wine. Stagger without drinking a drop. 10. The Lord has made you drowsy, ready to fall into a deep sleep. The prophets should be the eyes of the people, but God has blindfolded them".

In South Africa pornography is banned. It comes under the guise of technical instruction or education or something for aesthetic contemplation, hence the only permissible pornographic materials are the sex education manuals recommended by medical, religious and academic authorities and sealed nude studies for the artist.



way that makes them banal rather than poetic. The female form becomes an object submerged in a great mass of spurious mystique. Particularly misused and sentimentalized for erotic purposes, for example, "Jane Russell's bra set a trend in bosoms later catered to by Exquisite Form"¹ and Volupta used in a late night advertisement "As round, firm and fully packed as any, Volupta shapes he lips for a goodnight kiss". The centre page spreads of the playmate of the month and as Hamilton says "You might come across her anywhere ... She is built (37, 22, 36) sociable (show a record cover and highballs), intelligent (use a record cover with Zen in the title) ... has friendly eyes that come out green in Eletachrome ... pinky tints which filter out over bed and sand and walls and carpet and record sleeve and towel until even the words are made of flesh", and of Penn's photography in Vogue "Sensuality beyond the simple act of penetration - a dizzy drop into swoonlike coloured fuzz ...".



¹ Hamilton, Richard. Collected Words. pp 53-54.



TROPHIES

The virtues of champion sportsmen, pop singer, film stars who are raised to the level of mythical heroes must not be forgotten. The false qualities, coarseness and vulgarity are forced upon the image. A great deal of decorations and ritual apparatus that accompany any movement or group are decidedly kitsch. Sports clubs, button holes and emblems all assume the same place, the same 'myth' as religion or astrology in the eyes of the kitsch-man. (See also Appendix No 1 items 38-39).



FAIR LADY and NORTEX ELLE have got together to launch this special annual award.

The champion will win:

* The magnificent FAIR LADY NORTEX ELLE floating trophy presented by NORTEX

TROPHY

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARTIST'S, THE SEMI-INITIATED ARTIST AND THE LAYMAN'S INABILITY
TO REACH A CONSENSUS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES KITSCH.

Immediately one tackles the problem of kitsch, one is confronted with the problem of the layman's and very often the uninitiated artist's inability to reach a consensus in a discussion on what constitutes kitsch. It is the intention of this study to assist in the understanding of kitsch in other than a personal opinion. The aim is, therefore, to demonstrate and provide evidence for the recognition of what is kitsch and what is not.

In order to resolve this problem a simple statistical analysis is made of the sophisticated and naive observers of a graded collection of photographs interpreted by the investigator of artifacts photographed of what constitutes kitsch together with photographs of recognized art.

The Sample:

Choosing a statistically acceptable sample is always difficult. The random sample is very rarely achieved. In this case use has been made of a simple selection of professional artists, untrained people with some exposure to art and laymen in the form of homeowners living in a select area of a small town.

The professional artists, which constitute the control, consisted of four professional artists and three post-graduate fine art students.

The two experimental groups consisted of seven homeowners each of whom had produced in one form or another, a publically acclaimed piece of art or who have close contact with an artist; and seven homeowners with recognizably well cared for homes.

Method:

The method used for this experiment is derived from the Q-Sort method devised by Stevenson and adapted for personality assessment in research by Jack Block¹ Ph D, University of California, Berkley, California.

The Q-Sort Technique.

Photographs were numbered 1 - 38 according to the conceptual choice of two artists judging from 1 as most aesthetically pleasing to 38 as least pleasing. The photographs were chosen by the experimenter of articles considered to be kitsch and including ceramic art and recognized paintings, as well as different types of interior decoration. A sample of this selection is included in Appendix No. 3. These photographs, then formed the score source of the Q-Sort technique, and were, therefore, analogous to the Q-set of Block's in the California interpretation of the personality assessment used in Block's original research. In his Q-set the list is of statements made. Instructions for using the California Q-Sort Test have been included in Appendix No. 3.

¹Block, Jack. The Q-Sort Method in Personality Assessment and Psychiatric Research. p 131-141.

The Record Sheet for the present experiment was based on the California Q-set of 100 items. Because only 38 items were used in this experiment it has been adapted to conform with the Q-set. The essential elements were, however retained; that of listing the category values from 1 to 9 and then discovering the number of items in each category. Subjects arranged the photographs in the 1 to 9 configuration from the most aesthetically pleasing to the least aesthetically pleasing, placing the requisite number of photographs in each category. The number of photographs to be put in each category are contained in figure 1.

	Most pleasing					Least pleasing			
No. of categories	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No. of items in each category	2	3	4	6	8	6	4	3	2

A value of 1 indicates the aesthetically most pleasing
A value of 9 indicates the aesthetically least pleasing.

Figure 1.

The Results

The results are presented in terms of a diagram of the combined scores for each group. (See Appendix No. 4). The analysis of the diagram in this study relies on a purely visual interpretation of the change of the number of choices made in each group from most pleasing to least pleasing in relation to the card numbers. Scanning the result sheet for professional artists from left to right one can

easily detect a pattern of the distribution of card numbers closely associated with the original numbering made by the experimenter. An alternative analysis following a statistical procedure was considered but rejected because the results are clear, and it appears to be unnecessary in this study. However, the material is available should such a study need to be done.

The professional artists:

A look at the diagram for the professional artists reveals that without exception the low number cards, representing the recognized art, were chosen as the most pleasing, while the high number cards - representing obvious kitsch - were chosen as the least pleasing. It is interesting to note that in this group each artist included in their pleasing group one item that could be termed kitsch, but in most cases it was an unusual item, for example, the Humpty Dumpty garden shed. (See Appendix No. 1 item 11).

The semi-initiated:

This group included those subjects who believed they knew what was kitsch, and those in regular contact with art and artists. This diagram reveals a much greater spread of choice, although the low number cards were generally pleasing and the high number cards least pleasing, it was only those subjects who were in regular contact with art that chose the same cards as the professional artists. The others in this group chose as their most pleasing those items such as the interior decorators choice and the bone china ornaments or the

simple unprofessional paintings. The recognized art was left in the middle.

The un-initiated artists:

In the analysis of this diagram it is obvious that the low numbered cards were not chosen as the most pleasing nor were the high numbered the most favoured for the least pleasing. What happened with this group is that they chose two groups of cards. One which was found pleasing and the other not pleasing. Both these groups largely consisted of the mass-produced and familiar items. The real art was then placed in the middle, perhaps indicating a lack of understanding due to unfamiliarity.

Indications from the results.

It can be assumed that the professional artists distinguished between what they liked and what they did not like very quickly and precisely. The semi-initiated fell into two groups, those in contact with artists or who had studied something to do with art e.g. Visual Communication and those who believed themselves art critics. The first group as already mentioned were able to discriminate between the pleasing and not, but taking a much longer time over it. The second group mostly chose the expensive "good taste", whilst making rather derogatory remarks about the genuine art, altogether taking a long time with much verbalization. The un-initiated group chose their cards quickly and with very little thought. The indications point very clearly to the amount of ex-

posure a person has to such basic a concept as thinking about what they, as an individual, would prefer to have about them. That those people who are only exposed to what is available accept them without question. The semi-initiated are very concerned about what they like, as seen through the eyes of anyone likely to judge them by their taste.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Philosophers of the past argued back and forth on what constitutes beauty and taste and often came to the conclusion that there is nothing ugly which does not increase the appreciation for the beautiful. It is in fact a very different problem that has concerned us in this essay. This problem is a modern problem brought about by modern technology which does not require thinking, and the use of elements in accordance with their nature, it does not involve morals and comparisons but is a mindless acceptance of everything worthless.

A Sociologist Herbert Gans¹ takes cognisance of the fact that popular culture lowers the taste level of society as a whole, thus impairing its quality as a civilization, and it "also encourages totalitarianism by creating a passive audience peculiarly responsive to the techniques of mass persuasion used by demagogues bent on dictatorship". He also believes people have a right to what they prefer regardless of whether it is popular or high culture but argues against the idea that only cultural experts know what is good for the people. He also writes of the middle culture as those who have attended colleges and universities but who are not creator-oriented, as not finding high culture satisfying, but who nevertheless want culture and want to be cultured, so they rely on critics

¹Gans. op.cit. p.19.

and borrow from high culture. He, therefore, advocates the use of technological improvements that make filming and printing cheaper, to make low budget films and programmes more diverse to add additional content to the cultural menu. I believe he is advocating an even grosser mess of pottage.

In contrast to this, Bruno Munari¹ believes that the subjective values in art are losing their importance in favour of values that can be understood by a greater number of people. That the artist in using the huge forms made from every conceivable material is making the viewer participate at all costs, he is looking for a point of contact with commercial articles stripped of mystery. Mass produced articles are at the bottom of the anxiety and drive artists to abandon traditional techniques. He goes on to say that if we have to mass produce objects for sale at low prices, it is actually a problem for the artists. The artist must regain his modesty and instead of despising the very public he needs, he must make contact with it again. Perhaps his message is in the area of the artist and designer to combat kitsch.

Even in this there is a word of warning in Ruskin's² words. "If ... it is petty self-complacency in your own skill, trust in precepts and laws, hope for academical or popular approbation, or

¹Munari. op.cit. pp 12-13.

²Ruskin, J. in Begg. op.cit. p.145.

avarice of wealth, - it is quite possible that by steady industry, or even by fortunate chance, you may win the applause, the position, the fortune, that you desire; but one touch of true art you will never lay on canvas or on stone as long as you live".

The major conclusions to be drawn from this study is that kitsch does exist, and that it does impair the quality of each person's individuality and perhaps by the introduction of a more concerned thought-provoking effort on the part of anyone to whose notice it has been brought, strides could be made in combatting it. Not to impose merely another set of values that will in themselves become kitsch, but to instil a philosophy that can be referred to when making personal choices. To remember that "critics, historians, connoisseurs and dealers have in fact pondered over, deplored, welcomed and frequently benefitted from changes of taste in the visual arts ... though frequent attempts have been made to limit the scope of the problem raised by these changes ... everything in art which is excellent in itself will remain so"¹.

¹Buchanan. op.cit. pp 3-4.

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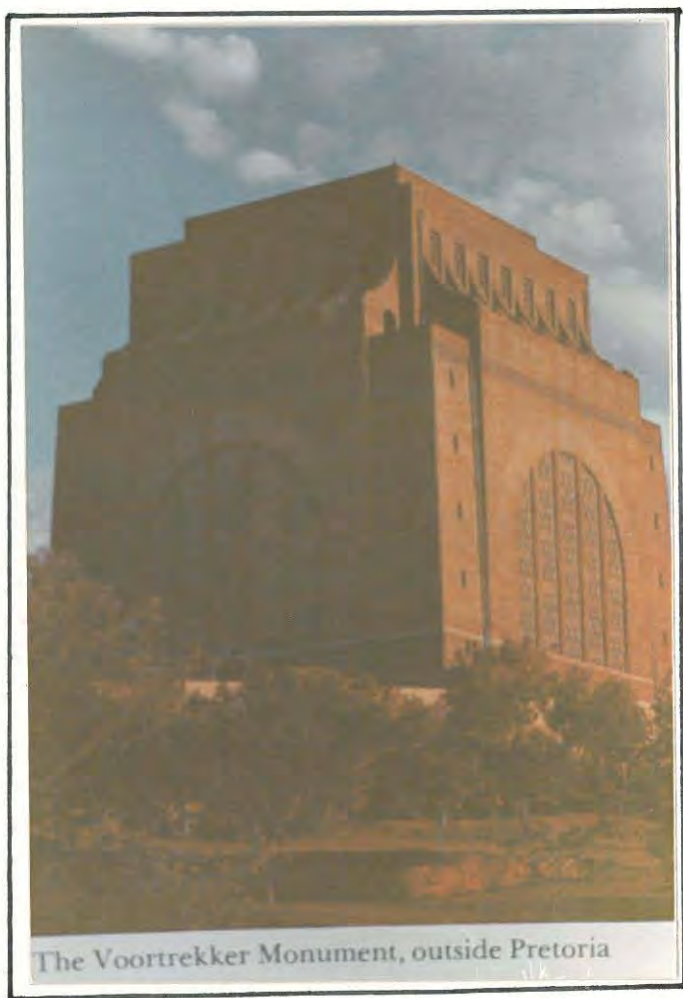
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APPENDIX NUMBER ONE

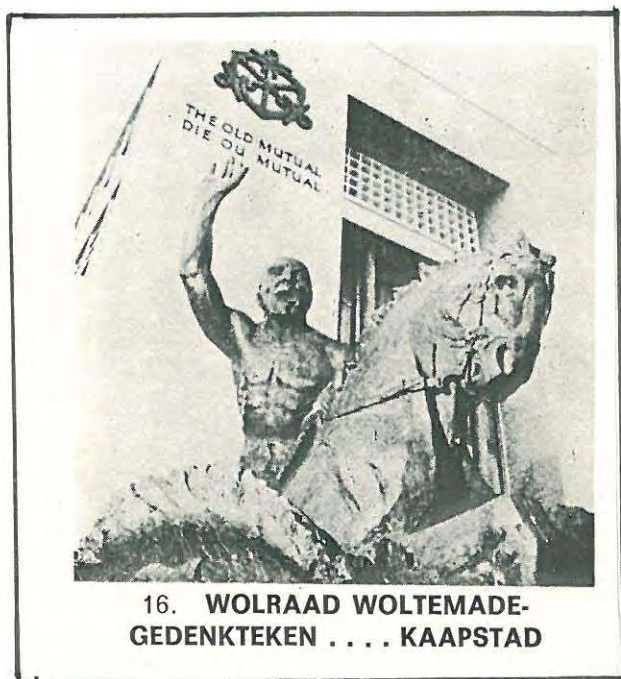


ITEM 1. IDENTIFICATION PLAQUE



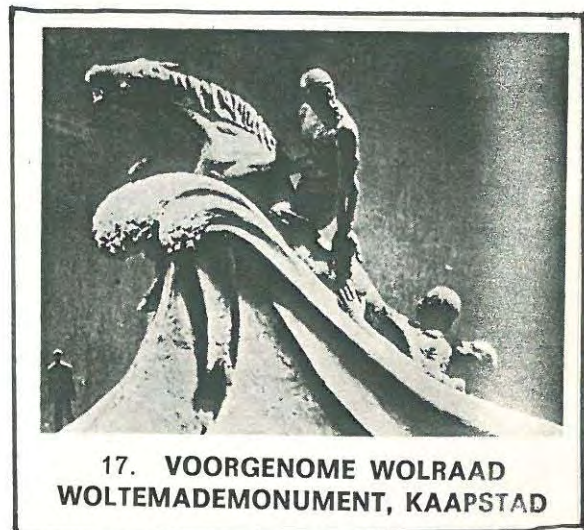
The Voortrekker Monument, outside Pretoria

ITEM 3



16. WOLRAAD WOLTEMADE-GEDENKTEKEN . . . KAAPSTAD

ITEM 2



17. VOORGENOME WOLRAAD WOLTEMADEMONUMENT, KAAPSTAD

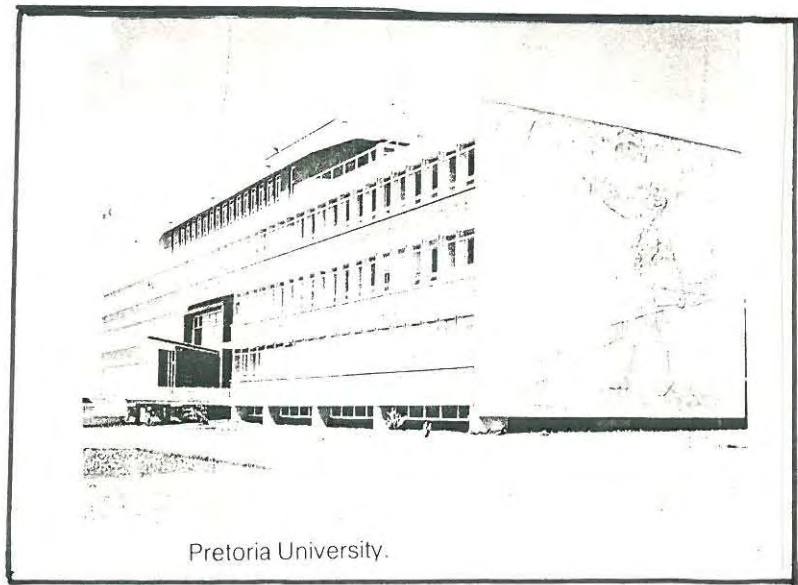
ITEM 4

MONUMENTS



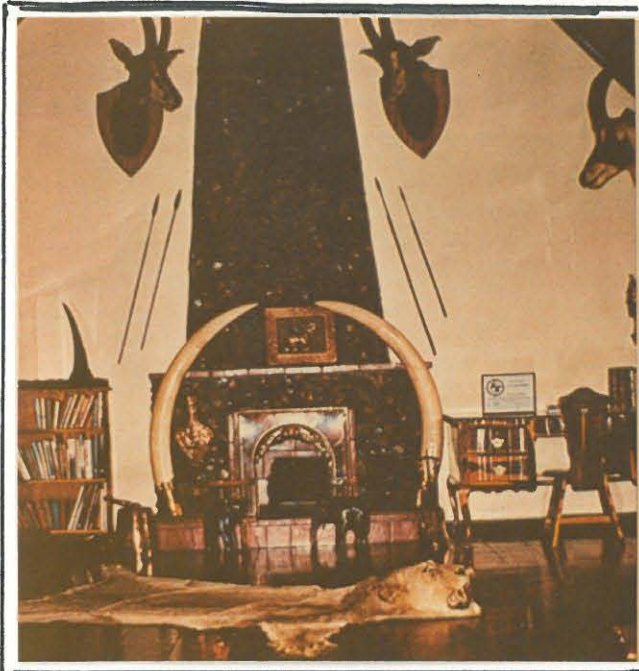
ITEM 5

1820 Settler's Monument

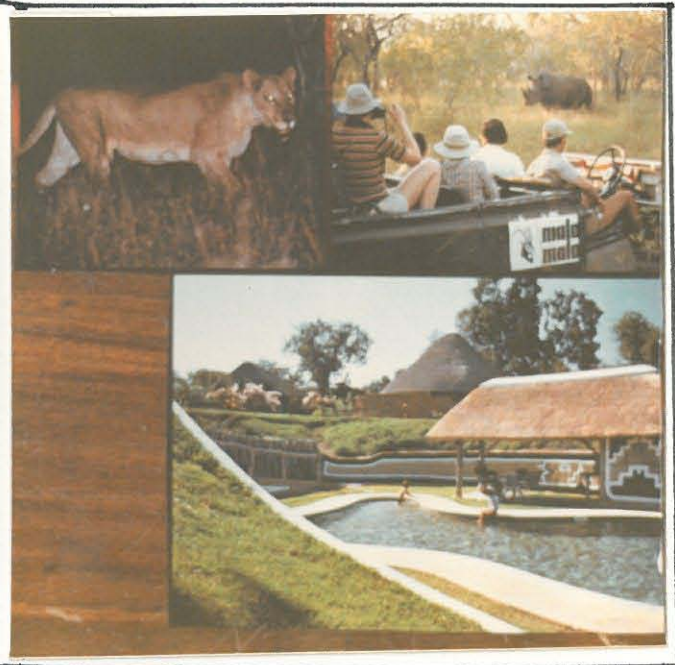


ITEM 6

Mural Decoration



ITEM 7 Lodge



ITEM 8 Facilities

TOURISM



ITEM 9 Plaques



ITEM 10 Wall hangings



ITEM 11

Garden Shed

HOMES AND GARDENS



ITEM 12

Niche



ITEM 13

Lamp



ITEM 14 Painting



ITEM 15 Bar Gadgets



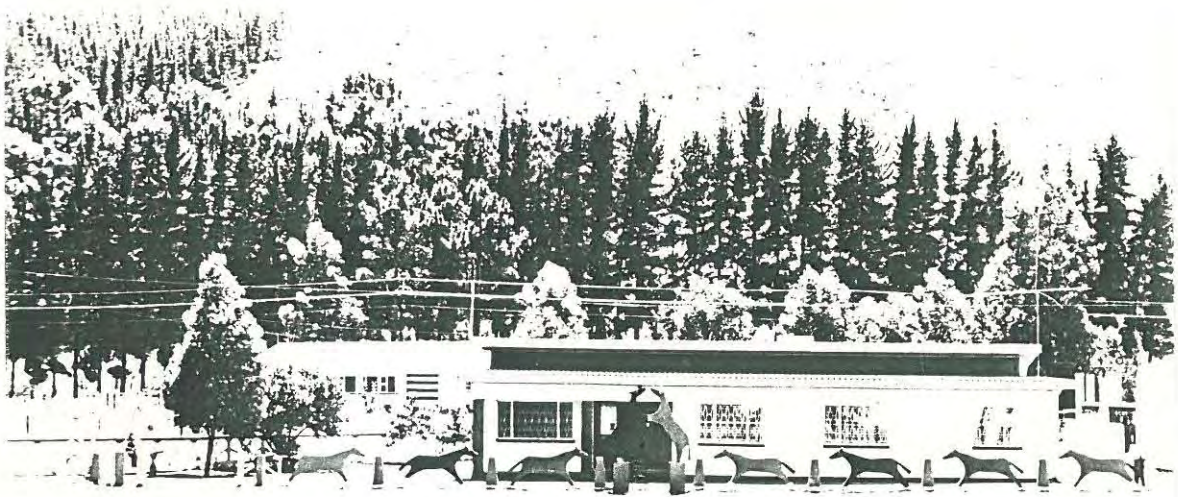
ITEM 16 Verandah Ornaments



ITEM 17 Flowers



ITEM 18 Picture



ITEM 19

Wall Motif



ITEM 20

Postboxes



ITEM 21



ITEM 22 Mirror



ITEM 23 Study Nook



ITEM 24 Garden Decoration



ITEM 25 Stool



ITEM 26 knick - knacks



ITEM 27 Curtain



ITEM 28 Cards



ITEM 29

F
A
M
I
L
I
E
S



ITEM 30

The world draws closer together
At this joyous season — when
Hearts and homes are filled with love
And the world is young again.



ITEM 31

Greeting card



ITEM 32

Labels



ITEM 33

Wedding Invitation



ITEM 34 Advert for Horrocks Sheets

ADVERTISING



ITEM 35 Car Advert



ITEM 36

Easter Delights

Silhouette Desire

**A new
romance series
you'll fall madly
in love with.**

To experience all the excitement, the passion and the joys of falling in love, slip into the romantic adventures of your dreams. Simply fall for the exciting new series of contemporary romances from Silhouette Books — Silhouette Desire. Every month, there'll be six new Silhouette Desire titles for you to devour. Romances that are more powerful, more passionate . . . and more compelling. Romances that will capture your heart and imagination.

Desire
Romances that
begin where others
leave off.

ITEM 37

PUBLICATION

HEALING CRUSADE
CHRISTIAN FAITH CENTRE
 Peel Street, off Main St., City (formerly Bet-El Centre)
 Last week people were healed without anybody praying for them.
 Legs grew, all types of illnesses were healed.
 The power of God was present to heal.
 Sunday, May 1, 1983 at 9.30 am and 7 pm another great
 Healing Crusade.
DON'T MISS YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH GOD
ENQUIRIES: 313851, 28075
 Sunday, May 15, 1983 — Min Shaw will be ministering in song

ITEM 38 Healing Crusade

RELIGION AND MORALS



ITEM 39 Sex Aids

APPENDIX NUMBER TWO



Painting



China

EXAMPLE OF SURVEY



China



Nursery Decoration



Ceramic Art



Ceramic Art

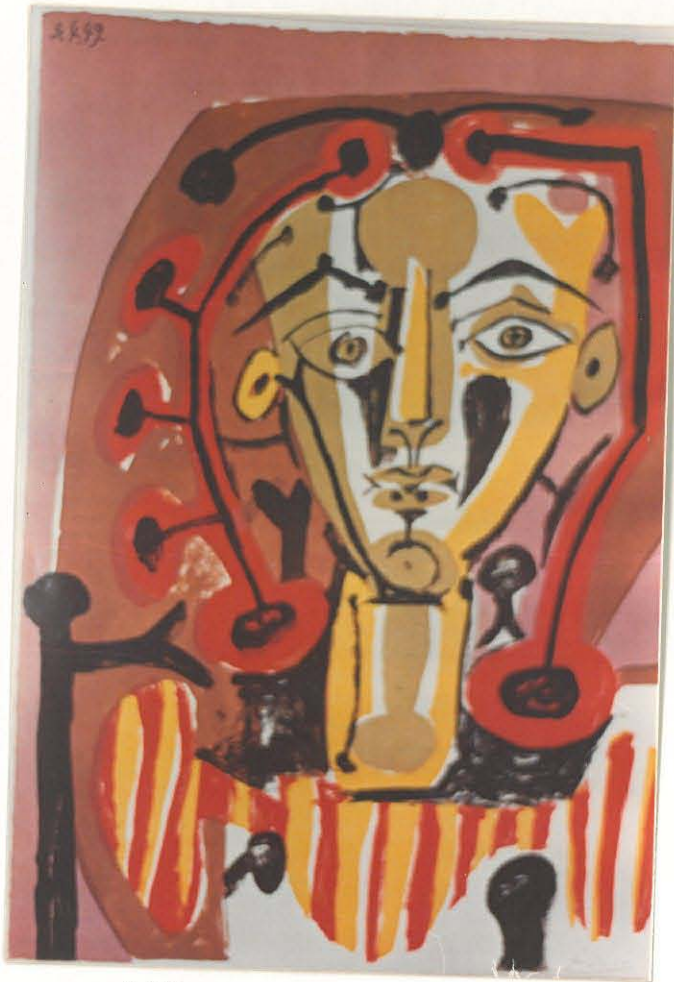


Flowers

China Ducks



Arrangement



Lithograph



Plate

APPENDIX NUMBER THREE.

Appendix B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE
CALIFORNIA Q-SET

Before describing in detail the procedure to be followed in sorting the California Q-set, a few words on the rationale and general purpose of the method are in order.

The non-comparability of clinical formulations because of differences in language usage is a great obstacle to clinical communication and research. Many controversies arise and persist because of this language problem. Thus, clinical interpretations of a patient may differ for two reasons: (1) divergent points of view and analysis, and (2) the basically irrelevant differences in the phrase-making of clinicians. We are interested in the first of these factors, not the second, which operates to confuse the critical issues.

The purpose of the 100 items in the California Q-set is to provide a "Basic English" for clinicians to use in their formulations of individual personalities. Ideally—and the set is not yet ideal—the items should permit the portrayal of any kind of pathology and any kind of normalcy. It is felt that the use of a standard language and procedure permits the descriptions of an individual in a way that is not too atomizing or constraining and by so doing enables comparisons to be made which otherwise could not be achieved.

The procedure is essentially simple, if somewhat cumbersome. With the individual to be "formulated" in mind, look through the 100 cards. You are to sort these statements into a row of nine categories placing at one end of the row those cards you consider most characteristic or salient with respect to the subject and at the other end, those cards you believe to be most uncharacteristic or negatively salient with reference to the subject.

A convenient method of sorting is to first form three stacks of cards—those items deemed characteristic being placed on one side, those items deemed uncharacteristic being placed on the other side, and those cards remaining falling in between. No attention need be paid to the number of cards falling into each of these three groupings

The number of cards to be placed in each category are:

Category	No. of Cards	Label of Category
9	5	extremely characteristic or salient
8	8	quite characteristic or salient
7	12	fairly characteristic or salient
6	16	somewhat characteristic or salient
5	18	relatively neutral or unimportant
4	16	somewhat uncharacteristic or negatively salient
3	12	fairly uncharacteristic or negatively salient
2	8	quite uncharacteristic or negatively salient
1	5	extremely uncharacteristic or negatively salient

at this time. When the three piles of cards have been established, they may be further fractionated, this time into their proper proportions.

You will probably feel resentment at the constraints imposed upon you by the Q-deck and the sorting procedure. In justification, it should be noted that specifying the number of cards to be assigned to each category has proven empirically to be a more valuable procedure than the freer situation where the clinician can assign any number of cards to a category. The Q-items themselves represent a good deal of reflection and advice. They have been phrased to keep the distinction between the manifest and the latent. Items referring to pathology *per se* are not present. Pathological characteristics can be expressed by the extremeness of placement of certain of the statements, however, or by a conjunction of two or more of the items.

The intent in constructing this set of items has been to allow it to express any pattern of personality by means of suitable placement of items and the configuration of statements that consequently is built up. If you find any kind of personality that cannot be suitably described by the item set as presently constituted, we would appreciate hearing about these instances in anticipation of the time when the CQ-set will again be revised. If the CQ-set, presently or in the future, is capable of characterizing fairly the kinds of humanity encountered, then it becomes a language instrument of wide applicability in both research and teaching settings.

APPENDIX NUMBER FOUR
