

Anti-kitsch uglism

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The classical, concept as well as many other concepts in aesthetics and philosophy, has acquired, with the passing of time, a polysemy such that its use requires a previous demarcation of its meaning. In the case of classicism in architecture and in the theory of the arts, this term may range from the use of a formal repertory derived from the Greek-Latin antiquity –the concept of the classical employed, for instance, by John Summerson in *The Classical Language of Architecture*¹– to the idea of classicism as a cultural stage, recurrent in history, often conceived in opposition to the Baroque, and characterized, in the end, by a stable correspondence between language and the world that it intends to represent. In the present text, this second idea of classicism is the one we will be using here.

This univocal relationship between words and things, characteristic of the classical periods², is correlative with specific states of the soul: the ability of language to represent and think the real creates a confidence in reason and in the ability of Man to model his environment according to his being, which favour a sense of familiarity with the world, a “feeling of being at home”, in Heidegger’s words. The opposite pole to classicism, the Baroque stage, will be characterized by the so-called “ruin of representation”³, a phenomenon that, unleashed by a progressive mistrust in the ability of language –and, therefore, of reason– to think of the world, promotes a peculiar and specific pathos, that can be found time and again in times of crisis and uncertainty, from medieval Millenarianism to the present postmodernity –which is already a commonplace to describe as *neo-baroque*⁴– including the *fin de siècle* or the 17th century baroque⁵.

With no need to fall into any form of historicism á la Spengler, it is possible to observe how, throughout history, repeated with some frequency, and in different versions, an alternation between classical and baroque phases, takes place after a similar succession of civilizations and archaic styles. It is after a more or less long period of development, that they turn into classicisms, brief zenith from which they drift to mannerisms and baroques, which, after reaching the extreme of the dissolution of forms, generate neoclassical reactions and start a new cycle.

The classical temper produces artistic forms that cannot help expressing an essentially optimistic view of the world. The classical form is a unitary form, transparent to its reader, it is the form of homogeneity, coherence and continuity, in which the parts

keep clear and understandable relationships among them and with the whole. In architecture, this stance has meant a call for simple geometrical forms and proportional systems that ensure that kind of unity⁶, incorporating thus, in the conception of the work mathematical thinking, as the summit of rationality and the confidence of Man in the harmony between his intellect and the world. A modern example of this classicist perfection is, in general, the work of Mies van der Rohe, of whom Peter Smithson said that “his isolated buildings reached such level of perfection that a theologian would have assured that they were divine objects”.

The authors that have posed the question of the evolution of forms seem to coincide in the brevity of this midday of human thinking and its artistic manifestations. In the zenith of classicism, reached after the gestation of the archaic period, the repertoire of the style achieves an ephemeral moment of equilibrium⁷. Soon, however, the possible combinations, virtually contained in the defined elements and rules⁸, become exhausted: the style turns into formula, recipe, and the commonplace mode for artistic production, always present to a greater or lesser extent in any cultural period⁹, taking the lead over genuine creation. This is the phase of Mannerism, which in the case of the classicism of Latin origin leads, after *Baroque and Neoclassical*, to academicism –such as the *Beaux-arts* in France or the English Victorian architecture– as final dissolution. If this scenario is maintained, once exhausted the possibilities of the systems, the artistic activity gets doomed to the copy of itself.

The early exhaustion of the virtuosity of the styles in their classical stages is conditioned both by the univocity of language in those phases and by the very essence of the classical nature, characterized by its immediate relationship with things. Both factors are, in fact, aspects of the same issue: if language and categories represent reality closely, both become transparent, their work of *mediation* is not perceived any more, and therefore, the link between mind and universe seems *immediate*. The classical solutions are the direct, simple, “natural” solutions, with neither artifice nor artistry, characteristics of the univocal correspondence between language and world. However, the space of such solutions, established by the immediate need, is limited, as well as the elements and combination rules that generate them, that. As supposedly “true” and “necessary”, they are certain, unique, absolute and eternal, characteristics which restrict even more the possibilities. Think, for instance, about the apodictical, almost sacred, sense that classical orders have had in architecture for centuries, or about the requirements of formal coherence as a response to the “nature” of human perception. Besides, if language reveals its distance from reality, its radical opacity, if every attempt of laying the foundations shows the impossibility of reaching solid ground even in those disciplines that looked like the unshakable rockbeds of reason –such as mathematics–, it turns out that there is no such thing as “true” and “necessary” solutions,

and therefore, the very idea of classicism as truth or nature is questioned.

The ruin of representation and the loss of confidence in language attack the paradigm of unity homogeneity and coherence also at a different level. When the world, far from being apprehensible by language, turns into an alien place, unknowable, even unthinkable, and therefore chaotic and irrational, the classical personality that feels “at home” in the world derives towards the baroque temper and its peculiar existential anguish. The unitary work of art, far from expressing the *Weltanschauung* of its present, turns into the parody of a way of thinking that has become naïve, insufficient, a bitter memory of an irredeemable lost paradise.

The exhaustion of the formal spaces of styles, the impossibility of a generally accepted “truth” in which to fund a classical attitude, and the existential anguish characteristic of the advanced cultural stages –all of it, linked in one way or another to the crisis of referentiality– encourage the exploration of formal strategies that are not based any longer on homogeneity, continuity and coherence. However they take collision, dissonance, fragmentation and juxtaposition as formal principles, opening new possibilities beyond classical unity, suggesting new forms that are, moreover, more in line with the characteristic subjectivities of advanced stages of civilization: *uglism*.

In aesthetics, the ugly has been often conceived as a defect or want of unity. Thus, for Friedrich Schiller, “the link between the constitutive parts in a whole presupposes a dominant force to which the forces of the constitutive individual parts are subordinated. The preponderance of the dominant force is distinguished of the preponderance of the subordinated forces, and we call that beauty, perfection, etc; to this, we call ugliness, decadence, imperfection [emphasis in the original]”¹⁰. Closer to us, for Theodor W. Adorno, “dissonance is the *technical term* for the reception through art of that which both aesthetics and naivety call ugly [...] According to the *usual aesthetics*, that element is *opposed to the formal law that dominates the work* [...] In the ugly, the formal law capitulates for impotence [italics mine]”¹¹.

The opening to new formal spaces requires the resorting to dissonance, that is to say, the acceptance of forms that infringe the rules of harmonic unity –the alternative of inventing a style *ex novo*, with its own elements and rules of composition, is far more costly and uncertain–. The use of dissonance opens a way that leads hopelessly to the complete dissolution of unity, going through every possible stage between the starting point of organic unity and the juxtaposition of fragments as the final point. To understand this process, it is necessary to consider what follows: the concept of the ugly as a rupture of unity only takes into account the formal proprieties of the object, without considering the role of the subject in its appreciation. However, since Kant, it has been understood that the ugly or the beautiful resides more in the subject that contemplates than in the

contemplated object –these categories are, therefore, historical and cultural variables–, although they lie at the same time in the formal characteristics of the object. Therefore, dissonance, which is difficult to accept at first, ends up being assimilated by the subject. The eye or the ear end up accepting it, which leads to the search of even greater formal transgressions, and therefore leads towards a progressive dissolution of unity¹².

This process is well exemplified by the work of the musician Arnold Schoenberg. The exhaustion of the classical space of forms and the insufficiency of classicism as an expressive form becomes evident in the world of musical composition between the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Because of this, many authors will turn towards dissonance, leaving progressively behind the principles of traditional harmony. Schoenberg, in his early works, will practice a gradual introduction of dissonance, as it can be appreciated in his *Transfigured Night* (op. 4), a piece composed in the Wagnerian wake. Besides, in the case of this author, this is accompanied by a critic to the “natural” character of the classical rules, that is, to the postulate that sustains the affinity between the tonal system and the nature of the human ear, a principle that served to legitimate that system throughout history; by contesting the naturalness of the tradition, its arbitrary and conventional character is revealed, justifying the proposal of alternative structures. This even greater resort to dissonance questions the need to solve the tensions concerning tone, and ends up leading to atonality, that Schoenberg will practice in works such as *The Happy Hand* (op. 18) or *Pierrot Lunaire* (op. 21). Later on, this author will develop his own composition system with dodecaphonism, with which he opens a new space independent of the traditional forms¹³.

The final stage of the dissolution of the classical form is the *collage* or assemblage. This is a composition strategy consisting of the inharmonic juxtaposition of uneven fragments, in which every will to reach a homogenous and coherent unity is abandoned. In modernity, it is often considered the step from Analytic Cubism to Synthetic Cubism, as the moment of the invention of the assemblage. In this first form of *collage*, the so-called *papiers collés* are introduced in the canvas; they are newspaper cuttings or other materials taken directly from reality and superimposed to the hand painted parts. Schoenberg’s dodecaphonic series can be regarded as their musical counterpart; in architecture, we find parallel attitudes, for instance, in the work of Hermann Finsterlin or in some proposals of Russian Constructivism and, later on, in the work of Hans Scharoun or Frank Gehry. Assembly is, really, a formal strategy shared by the different arts, as all of them show the same problems regarding the expressivity and exhaustion of the systems. In our days, the form that incarnates best these principles is video-art, where objects are organized as a series of disconnected fragments, in which the most varied contents follow one after another without transition. Mass media, as a commercial drift of video art, adopts these

procedures and, in their ubiquity, educate or form the spectator's look, establishing a way to experience the work of art akin to the way in which the advertising sequences are watched on TV. In this way, through video art and media, the *collage* form is generalized either from the production's side or the beholder's side, and therefore it can be considered as the proto-artistic form of our time¹⁴, in a way unlike the theatre of the 17th century Baroque¹⁵.

Besides, the use of dissonance has a clear expressive will. Modern Movement in architecture was a timely –and characteristic of these cultural stages- reaction to the Baroque that, as was earlier pointed out, was the *fin de siècle*, and was brought up as a form of classicism. In it the characteristic features of the classical language, can be distinguished: the use of a restrained formal language, rigorous, inspired in the abstraction of the pictorial avant-garde, the will to limit oneself to solutions that answer in a strict way to what is necessary, the refusal of the arbitrary and the irrational, even when the work is intended to have unique interpretations, predetermined and controlled. That in the case of architecture consists in the reading of the –supposedly univocal- correspondence between form and function.

(It is surprising to see the fact that these attitudes were brought up in the field of architecture when, at that time, in the field of literature creations so characteristic of advanced cultural stages, so baroque, polysemic and allegoric appeared, Examples of which could be as can be the works of Joyce –Ulysses is published in 1922-, or other that were so disillusioned by the power of reason as the philosophy works by Ciaran¹⁶).

However, this new classicism ends up being culturally unsatisfactory in a scenario of social crisis worsened by globalization, the progressive rationalization of life, the twilight of social-democracy and its promise of a better world –that repeats in an exact way the collapse, in the 17th century absolutism's vanish, of the hopes of progress awakened by Renaissance¹⁷-, the inability of classical reason in the complexity of the present and the continuous bombardment of cultural discourses by the mass media and the industry of culture. The appeal to Classical reason, to the trust in science, the omen of a reconciled world represented by the unity of coherence and homogeneity, embodied in the work of modern classicism, can only alienate the subject immersed in this agitated world. This, together with other factors¹⁸, unleashes the change of paradigm.

This new paradigm, on the positive side, will give answer to the new stage of civilization with proposals that react to modern sensitivity and abandon the classical unity, making a criticism of the existent one in an emancipatory way, and proposing new ways of life with more freedom and more in accordance with the world of today. Relating to this, we find, for instance, the early works of Frank Gehry, more specifically, his own house in Santa Monica¹⁹, with the use of industrial materials, its composition based

on a juxtaposition of fragments and the use of DIY construction techniques. On the negative side, the break with modernity will drift towards more “spectacular” architecture –in a Debordian sense, characterized by its pure visibility of fast consumption, the use of production procedures akin to those of the industry of culture – in which it is immersed in - and, in the end, by its connivance with the ideological postulates of the new economy.

(It is not possible, however, to see Classicism or Baroque as positive or negative categories *tout court*. Not just due to the ambiguity of these concepts, but due to the fact that they refer to realities with very different nuances, and also that, as everything which is human, they show both lights and shadows. The Classical tends to be associated to the conventional, the conservative and, in short –as it will be argued later on- with *kitsch*. Other classicisms appear as a timely and healthy revulsive when the pendulum of history reaches the extreme of the Baroque. Classical is what we could say Loos was in his attacks to ornament and the *Secession*, in his will of aesthetical –and, therefore, ethical- regeneration of the decadent Wien of the decline of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or the Purism, in his attempt to overcome Cubism that, after its revolutionary moment, became ornamental art, a copy of itself. The adjective “classical” can be applied to such unlike authors such as Stravinsky, in his post-Wagnerian return to traditional forms, or to Schoenberg, in his proposal of a new composition system freed from the restrictions of the harmony implemented since 16th century and so overcoming the exhaustion of its virtualities. It can be said the same about the Baroque: its ability to free itself from the limiting categories of Classicism should not be underestimated, its ability of “de-territorialization”, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari. But, at the same time, we have to be aware of its dissolutive negative moment, in which art becomes superficial, empty content-wise, full of arbitrariness, as in the final stages of Rococo; since, as Benjamin already pointed out, “it cannot be disdained the danger of leaving oneself fall from the heights of knowledge to the immense depths of the Baroque mood”²⁰).

The abandonment of the unity of Classicism together with the loss of a univocal language in the crisis of referentiality in the present explains the allegorical character of the postmodern²¹ work of art. Again, it is advisable to set the limits to the meaning of the term “allegory” as referred to here. It is not so much a formal structure conceived as a set of interrelated metaphors, but rather a dynamics of language that comes from the ruin of representation. Charles S. Peirce named “illimited semiosis” the process by which some significant refer to others in an endless chain that never reaches an ultimate foundation, since the definition of a referent or sign is always another referent or sign²². In an advanced cultural stage, every term of language acquires a strong polysemy and sees its semantic field enlarged by virtue of its use in time, in a process sharpened by the activity of mass media that superpose endlessly the most varied discourses, and

therefore multiply the links that a given term establishes with others inside the cultural semantic field. By virtue of this mechanism, originated by hyper-connectivity of the cultural field, any concept can refer, within limits, to any other, anything can refer to anything²³. This phenomenon relates to the concepts of “dissemination”²⁴ –in Jacques Derrida- or that of intertextuality. This dynamics of continuous references is what will be understood here as an *allegorical* device, a process in which, when an object or concept is presented, it creates the evocation of another meanings to which such object or concept is linked to by virtue of the connectivity of the conceptual web –of the connections that every cultural unit keeps with others. This process is created by or at least favoured by the contemporary crisis of referentiality and the maturity of language.

The exegesis of the work of art, in young societies with not very dense cultural webs, with little connectivity, produces limited and predictable readings. For instance, in mediaeval hermeneutics, where the interpretation of work is strictly limited to a few very specific and predefined set of meanings²⁵. Today, the readings of works of art are indefinitely multiplied, since the meanings referred to by the forms and the connections of every meaning with any other has grown exponentially with regard to earlier cultural stages. Therefore, the pretension of univocity of the modern work is illusory at present, something that was very clear for some authors even in the heyday of the avant-garde of the last century –nevertheless even in the 60's, authors like Peter Eisenman reclaimed this kind of enclosed readings for his algorithmic houses²⁶. As opposed to this, the postmodern work is conscious of the role of references that takes place in its contemplation. It knows about its allegorical nature, and therefore incorporates this phenomenon in the creative process, instead of ignoring or denying it in a naïve and, in the end, useless fashion, since this device operates anyway, with or without the creator's cooperation.

In the assembly, the contiguity between disparate juxtaposed fragments unleashes the semantic associations between the contents referred to by their components, in what José Luis Brea calls “allegoric strategy of juxtaposition”²⁷: the discontinuity between fragments tends to be filled in the mind of the beholder, who reconstructs in an active manner the absent relationships between the disconnected parts, in a process in which the evoked semantic associations multiply²⁸. This will is already be present in the first Cubist assemblies: the inclusion of literal elements, taken straight from reality and introduced in the picture, intends to reconnect with reality some forms that had become excessively abstract and thus had lost all link with their original referents²⁹. As opposed to Analytic Cubism, of a pure-visual character [F4], the Synthetic Cubism *collage* [F5] intends to operate deliberately in the field of meaning, unleashing a multiplicity of verbal associations through a mechanism similar to the one acting in the allegoric work of the Baroque. Other well-known cases

of juxtapositions with allegoric effects are those of Surrealism, from the Lautreamonian “random encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a surgeon table” to the early work of Vicente Aleixandre; or the *Fountain* by Duchamp, in which the exhibition of an ordinary object in the context of a museum alters completely its reading, triggering the mechanism of semantic remissions in the attempt to understand the meaning of the operation; or Joyce’s neologisms in *Ulysses* or in *Finnegan’s Wake*...

The concept of *kitsch* not only has a strong polysemy, but is by itself difficultly limited³⁰. Often, that term refers to the simply corny: no doubt that the commercial porcelain figures of sad ballet dancers or the statuettes of deers, eaglets, dwarfs and other creatures that proliferate in the gardens of *Suburbia* fit in the idea of *kitsch*; however, the term corny does not embrace the phenomenon completely. It is not possible either to reduce the *kitsch* to a false art, given the difficulties to define what consists that falsity of in the field of art³¹. With the aim of this discussion, it will take two complementary meanings. On the one hand, the one used by Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method*. For this author, in the work of art contents belonging to a specific tradition, which is what allows the reading and understanding of the object by the beholder, and at the same time allows it to be reinterpreted, re-elaborated and renewed in its content generating a moment of novelty of the work. The artistic experience is therefore composed of this combination of the already known, that makes the work understandable, and of the new, that challenges the beholder to question and overcome his or her cultural horizon³². According to this structure, *kitsch* would be a form of pseudo-art in which continuity and tradition take place. The repetition of the already known, without new events. Every work of art would contain a *kitsch* moment in its recognizable aspect, of the already-known, some sort of redundancy³³. *Kitsch* is identified, in a good measure, with the products of the postmodern industry of culture³⁴, which are not very different actually in that sense to some 17th century artistic productions³⁵. That reiteration of contents stirs up the narcissist pleasure of going along the path of what is well-known, of seeing reasserted one’s own convictions, instead of questioning them, as it happens in true art, what leads us to the second meaning of the term, that of Ludwig Giesz in his *Fenomenología del kitsch*³⁶. As opposed to Gadamer’s concept, for whom *kitsch* is a feature of the work – a specific form of contents-, for Giesz, the *kitsch* resides more in the subject than in the object. It constitutes rather a specific form of experience, essentially narcissistic, of self-enjoyment, favoured or propitiated, yes, by certain kind of objects. According to this idea, it is possible to have that sort of experience even when dealing with the most authentic works of art. That is also Abraham Moles’ perspective, for whom the *kitsch* is “one of the kinds of relation that man keeps with things, a way of being rather than an object or even a style [emphasis by the author]”³⁷. The *kitsch* will be characterized by a hasty, superficial

appreciation of the object, an attitude that, far from trying to understand the deep meaning of the work and look in its experience for some sort of revelation or transfiguration – what Heidegger called *aletheia*³⁸, or the Gadamerian *fusion of horizons*-, it is pleased with its hedonist consumption. Although there is no room here for further explanation, this is a way of consumption of the work of art favoured by the industry of *entertainment*, whose profit require a continuous production in which, from the producer’s side, there is no room for truly artistic quality – something that is often justified as a response to the consumer’s taste, making him responsible for the vulgarity of its creations-, and from the spectator’s side, it does not ask but for the superficial side that only searches for a moment of distraction. So it happens in front of the TV screen, mass tourism or in some architecture magazines, in which the architectural object is reduced to a flat image in which the brilliant tones of the couché paper are highlighted with more emphasis than the truly architectural features of the work: “many are the postmodern buildings that seem to have been designed for photography, where alone they flash into brilliant existence and actuality with all the phosphorescence of the high-tech orchestra on CD”³⁹.

The nexus between *kitsch* and repetition allows us to link the Gadamerian concept of *kitsch* with the idea of classicism⁴⁰: if the classical form, given the limitedness of the virtualities of the classicist formal systems, of their space of possible forms, is, after a relatively brief development, doomed to repetition, the destiny of classicism is *kitsch* as redundancy without novelty that, on the subject’s side, derives in an experience of mere uncritical and passive recognition, in the narcissistic enjoyment of confirmation of the already-known. Besides, classical unity, the image of a reconciled world and without tensions⁴¹, can only be perceived by the postmodern subject as a consolatory lie, a relief of the anguish suffered before the world of the present⁴², a sad response to the nostalgia of the lost order. Classical unity, as regularity, order, harmony, today can only give place to a *kitsch* enjoyment⁴³.

Kitsch, as a way of reception and as an attitude towards the work of art and, in the end, towards existence itself, is far from being a diminished but harmless enjoyment of the object. It is not about, as Giesz affirms, the *kitsch* moods which are “already trimmed, shortened, in other words, they are diminutive moods that are looked for or found in the corny”. However, that pseudo-art strengthens the more insidious aspects of the culture of the present, such as the hedonist consumption as an end in itself – the “consumption of consumption, in Jameson’s expression”, the uncritical acceptance of the spectacular – in a Debordian sense- nature of the contemporary public sphere, or the narcissistic component of works in the era of the management economy. If Moles describes *kitsch* as the “art of happiness”, this happiness cannot be but the lukewarm substitute that can be reached by those means. The aesthetic acquires here, as so many other times, an

ethical relevance: the *kitsch* attitudes⁴⁴, favoured by the industry of culture, block the way to critical standpoints – however, as Moles shows in his book, not even the *kitsch* is an univocal reality and it also contains its own positive moment.

Ugliness / dissonance seem to be the way to conjure the menace of *kitsch*: at the most immediate level, it denies the spectator, with its violence and harshness, the temptation of the self-complacent enjoyment of the work without tensions, deceitfully optimistic in its impossible return to the order of classical unity. Besides, it constitutes a formal strategy that expands exponentially the space of possible forms, with which it eludes the repetition that dooms to the *kitsch* consumption of the work, and allows the creation of new forms – novelties that, if not supported by a depth of content, are not enough by themselves to prevent a *kitsch* enjoyment; on the contrary, there is a *kitsch* enjoyment of the new in itself, as the industry of culture proves. But, at a more essential level, the assembly or *collage*, the extreme poles of ugliness/dissonance and the definite breakthrough with the unity of classicism, allow a qualitatively reading, more enriching than the superficial and distracted of the *kitsch* look, by virtue of the device of semantic remissions unleashed by its allegoric character: the adjacency between fragments triggers the mutual references between them, in a mechanism favoured by the postmodern crisis of referentiality. The work becomes thus almost-inexhaustible, always admitting new readings and interpretations, and eluding therefore, in its almost unlimited depth – although of a verbal-allegorical character- the *kitsch* experience of redundancy in the commonplace. An allegoric device that, given the impossibility of a return to the infinity of the symbol, only acting in young and unitary societies, is not a despicable substitute of it, “perhaps the only that is still accessible to us, modern baroque-men”⁴⁵. This ugliness – understood as a work with an allegorical character derived of its composition in an assemblage form- has, all in all, the ability to retrieve the experience of the work of art or architecture as a transfiguration of the being.

(However, even the concept of ugliness is ambiguous: for Tafuri, the art of the modern avant-garde did not intend but to educate the eye in the ugliness of the new industrial city, looking for the acceptance of the new production structure. Here, ugliness loses its emancipatory character, and is put at use to the interested conditioning of sensitivity).

1. SUMMERSON, John, *The Classical Language of Architecture*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2004.

2. Cf. FOUCAULT, Michel, *Las palabras y las cosas*, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 2010.

3. Cf. for instance RAMPÉREZ, Fernando, *La quiebra de la representación. El arte de vanguardias y la estética moderna*, Madrid, Dykinson, 2004.

4. Cf. por ejemplo CALABRESE, Omar, *La era neobarroca*, Madrid, Cátedra, 1994.

5. The historical baroque goes from 1600 to the years 1670-1680 in Europe and its American colonies. For this space-temporal demarcation of historic Baroque, and for a discussion about the scientific validity of the analogies between more or less affine historical periods, cf. MARAVALL, José Antonio, *La cultura del Barroco. Análisis de una estructura histórica*, Barcelona, Ariel, 2008, pp. 23-51.

6. “The aesthetics of the pleasant coincides with mathematical proportions in the artistic object, the most famous of which in the plastic arts is the golden section, which has its equivalent in the simple relations of concomitant sounds in musical harmony” (“La estética de lo agradable [...] coincide con proporciones matemáticas

en el objeto artístico, la más famosa de las cuales en las artes plásticas es la sección aurea, que tiene su equivalente en las relaciones sencillas de los sonidos concomitantes en la consonancia musical [trans. by author]). ADORNO, Theodor, W. Teoría estética, Madrid, Akal, 2011, p. 71. The references made in this work to the Aesthetic Theory are justified by its lucid and penetrating analysis of the relations between the unity of the work of Art, the conditions of social production and contemporary subjectivity, among other issues.

7. Among others, Henri Focillon has described the evolution of the styles, from their beginnings to their exhaustion: "The states through which the styles pass successively are more or less long depending on the particular style: experimental period, classical period, refining, baroque period [...] in every media and in every period in history, those ages or those stages represent identical formal characteristics, in such way that it should not come as a surprise when we find narrow correspondences between the archaic greek and the archaic gothic [...] between flamboyant art, that baroque stage of the gothic, and Rococo [italics mine]" ("Los estados por los que sucesivamente pasan [los estilos] son más o menos largos según los estilos: período experimental, período clásico, de refinamiento, período barroco [...] En todos los medios y en todos los períodos de la historia, esas edades o esos estados presentan idénticos caracteres formales, de modo que no hay que sorprenderse al constatar estrechas correspondencias entre el arcaísmo griego y el arcaísmo gótico [...] entre el arte flamígero, ese estado barroco del gótico, y el rococó [trans. by author]). FOCILLON, Henri, La vida de las formas y elogio de la mano, Madrid, Xarait, 1983, pp. 17-18. However, nowadays these generalizations are to be taken with caution, questioning above all their absolute character.

8. "What is it, then, what constitutes a style? The formal elements [...] its repertory [...] and a series of relations, a syntax. A style is affirmed by its equilibrium and proportion" ("¿Qué es lo que, pues, constituye un estilo? Los elementos formales, [...] su repertorio y [...] una serie de relaciones, una sintaxis. Un estilo se afirma por su equilibrio y proporción [trans. by author]"). Focillon, La vida de las formas, p. 15.

9. It is fitting to remind here the remark of Luigi Pareyson about the permanent coexistence of mannerism and authentic art, being both attitudes originary and simultaneous in the historic dynamic of the artistic activity. In decadent epochs, the imitative attitude would prevail over the creative one; cf. PAREYSON, Luigi, Estética. Teoría de la formatividad, Madrid, Xorki, 2014, pp. 204-205.

10. SCHILLER, Friedrich, "Calias, o sobre la belleza", in Schiller, F., Escritos sobre estética, Madrid, Tecnos, 1991, p. 8.

11. Adorno, Teoría estética, p. 69.

12. "Dissonance chills down till it turns into an indifferent material [...] with no trace of memories of that from which it came out" ("La disonancia se enfria hasta convertirse en material indiferente [...] sin ninguna traza de recuerdo de aquello de donde surgió [trans. by author]"). Adorno, Teoría estética, p. 28.

13. This brief synopsis of the schoenbergian evolution is based on the study by Teresa Rovira about this author's work; cf. ROVIRA, Teresa, Problemas de forma: Schoenberg y Le Corbusier, Barcelona, Edicions UPC, 1999, pp. 177-224.

14. Cf. Jameson, Fredric, Postmodernism, or, the cultural logic of late capitalism, Londres, Verso, 1991, p. 76.

15. Emilio Orozco says, paraphrasing Gillo Dorfles: "Theatre has been seen [...] as the proto-art of the Baroque, that influences and projects this, as torn off from the deepest of the soul of the epoch, over all the other arts and over the forms of secular and religious life [emphasis mine]" ("Se ha visto el teatro [...] como el protoarte del Barroco que influye y se proyecta así, como arrancado de lo más profundo del alma de la época, sobre todas las demás artes y sobre las formas de vida religiosa y secular [trans. by author]"). OROZCO, Emilio, El teatro y la teatralidad del Barroco (Ensayo de introducción al tema), Barcelona, Planeta, 1969, p. 89.

16. E. M. Cioran's first book, In the summits of desperation, is published in 1934 and, as its title suggests, its withdrawal from the progressive optimism of Modern Movement cannot be greater. Peter Eisenman refers to this gap between architecture and the culture of its presence by indicating that architects never reached modernity, and that the so-called Modern Movement is but a prolongation of 19th century functionalism into 20th century, in such way that the humanism questioned by modernity would have been uncritically continued by modern architecture. (cf. EISENMAN, Peter, "The Houses of Memory. The Texts of Analogy", in Eisenman, Peter (ed.), Eisenman Inside-Out, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004, p. 135).

17. Regarding Baroque temper as a reaction to the disappointment of the expectancies of progress promoted by Renaissance, cf. Maravall, La cultura del Barroco, pp. 55ss.

18. It is questionable that the formal virtualities of the modern system are already exhausted, an important section of contemporary architectural culture affirms the opposite; cf., for instance, PINÓN, Helio, Teoría del proyecto, Barcelona Edicions UPC, 2001, pp. 18ss. Other authors defend that modern crisis is unleashed not so much by the exhaustion of the possibilities of the system but by the ineffectiveness of its principles in the resolution of contemporary problems, a process in which the social crisis is only a secondary factor –unlike the role of World War First in the gestation of Modern Movement; cf. SCHUMACHER, Patrik, The Architecture of Autopoiesis, Chichester, Wiley, 2010, pp. 108-109 (vol. 1). Schumacher's argument is also relevant to the present discussion as it describes the dynamics of styles by analogy to "the structure of scientific revolutions" as it is exposed by Thomas Kuhn in its classic work.

19. It is not possible here to elaborate about the way in which this work poses a critic of the present and how it can be analyzed as an artwork as unity of form and content in which such aspects as the composition by juxtaposition of fragments, the project defined by means of models or the DIY construction acquire meaning, from the site plan down to the construction detail. However, it has to be pointed out that, as it always happens in architecture, the paradigm shift is not motivated only by cultural factors, but also by issues of material or functional nature, the response to social requirements, etc. For an analysis of this work as an allegorical operation of collage, and its relation to contemporary culture, cf. Jameson, Postmodernism, pp. 108-129.

20. BENJAMIN, Walter, El origen del drama barroco alemán, Madrid, Taurus, 1990, p. 41.

21. As "postmodernism", it will be understood here the present moment, regarded as differentiated, but not necessarily opposed, to modernity. Postmodernism would continue modernity in many aspects; postmodernism would not imply a flat cultural space, a total ruin of representation and of modern categories –the concept of postmodernism used for instance by José Luis Brea –his Nuevas estrategias alérgicas (cf. BREA, José Luis, Nuevas estrategias alérgicas, Madrid, Tecnos, 1992), – but would show significant differential aspects that would make it qualitatively different from modernity.

22. Cf. for instance ECO, Umberto, Tratado de semiótica general, Barcelona, Lumen, 1985, p. 114.

23. Cf. BENJAMIN, Walter, El origen del drama barroco alemán, Madrid, Taurus, 1990, p. 167.

24. Cf. por ejemplo DE PERETTI, Cristina, Jacques Derrida: texto y deconstrucción, Barcelona, Anthropos, 1989, p. 79.

25. As an instance of this, it can be checked the exegesis of a

medieval text by Hans- Robert Jauss in JAUSS, Hans-Robert, Experiencia estética y hermenéutica literaria. Ensayos en el campo de la experiencia estética, Madrid, Taurus, 1986, pp. 127-132.

26. In these works, the experience of the built object should be limited to the reading of the sequence generative of form, leaving aside any other features, in particular the visual ones. Cf. MONEO, Rafael, Inquietud teórica y estrategia proyectual en la obra de ocho arquitectos contemporáneos, Barcelona, Actar, 2004, pp. 150ss.

27. Cf. Brea, Nuevas estrategias, p. 40.

28. According to this, the allegorical strategy of juxtaposition can be explained from the concept of "place of indeterminacy" in the literary work of art, according to Roman Ingarden, which consists of the introduction of discontinuities in the literary discourse with the intention of producing an aesthetic effect derived from the active restitution of those discontinuities by the reader; cf. INGARDEN, Roman, "Concreción y reconstrucción", en Warning, E., Estética de la recepción, Madrid, La balsa de medusa, 1989, pp. 35-53.

29. Cf. Kahnweiler, El camino hacia el cubismo, p. 59.

30. Adorno, Teoría estética, p. 55.

31. Cf. GIESZ, Ludwig, Fenomenología del kitsch, Barcelona, Tusquets, p. 24n.

32. GADAMER, Hans-Georg, Verdad y método, Salamanca, Sígueme, 2007, p. 122.

33. MOLES, Abraham, El kitsch. El arte de la felicidad, Barcelona, Paidós, 1990, p. 10.

34. The formal strategies characteristic of the neo baroque industry of culture are analyzed by Omar Calabrese in his work about the postmodern neo baroque. Cf. Calabrese, La era neobarroca.

35. José Antonio Maravall describes the baroque artistic production destined to the new urban masses of the time as "industry of culture" in several places in his book. Cf. for instance Maravall, La cultura del Barroco, p. 185.

36. Giesz, Fenomenología.

37. Moles, El kitsch, p. 11.

38. Cf. HEIDEGGER, Martin, "El origen de la obra de arte", in Heidegger, M., Caminos del bosque, Madrid, Alianza, 1997, pp. 11-74.

39. Jameson, Postmodernism, p. 99.

40. However, Gadamer's concept of classicism does not have anything to do with the one referred here.

41. Cf. Adorno, Teoría estética, pássim.

42. The issue of modern man's anguish has been tackled by many contemporary authors, from Heidegger in Being and Time (cf. HEIDEGGER, Martin, El ser y el tiempo, Ciudad de México, FCE, 2010), to Paolo Virno in his Gramática de la multitud (cf. VIRNO, Paolo, Gramática de la multitud. Para un análisis de las formas de vida contemporáneas, Buenos Aires, Colihue, 2003), including Jameson in his Postmodernism.

43. "The dissatisfaction with any version of classicism is due to the fact that [...] the more its own structure resembles (by virtue of its coherence) a logical structure, the more clearly the difference between this logic with respect of the one that prevails outside turns into a parody on it; the more rational is the work according to its formal constitution, the more stupid it is according to the measure of reason in the real world" ("La insatisfacción con cualquier variante del clasicismo se debe a que [...] cuanto más se parece su propia estructura (debido a su coherencia) a una estructura lógica, tanto más claramente la diferencia de esta lógica respecto de la que impera fuera se convierte en parodia de esta; cuanto más racional es la obra de acuerdo con su constitución formal, tanto más estúpida de acuerdo con la medida de la razón en la realidad [trans. by author]"). Adorno, Teoría estética, pp. 162-163.

44. Giesz speaks, moreover, of a kitsch personality, of a kitsch man, to which he devotes the last chapter of his book. Cf.

45. Cf. MARTÍNEZ, Francisco José, Próspero en el laberinto. Las dos caras del barroco, Madrid, Dickinson, 2014, p. 19.

46. Cf. Tafuri, Manfredo, Architecture and Utopia. Design and Capitalist Development, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1976, p. 86.

Aglism
Classicism
Allegory
Kitsch
Collage