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"The basic element in Kitsch is dishonesty, which may be allied ^{a very rich culture and} with a very clever technique. By dishonesty, I do not mean departing from literal truth: poets are not scientists, romancers are not historians. All art is pretense; but Kitsch is pretentiousness. It implies a desire to impress beyond the candid worth of the things presented. It is an attempt to steal pseudo-artistic effects through a non-artistic appeal.

'The most evident form of Kitsch is vulgar display. Richness, per se, is a quality. It was no fault in the Parthenon to be built of marble and not of unbaked clay; and Pheidias himself worked in ivory and gold. Richness is the effort to secure the most adequate material: the finest in texture, the most pleasing to the eye and touch, the most durable. But, if richness be emphasized for its own sake, then we have the gorgeous, which is Kitsch. It is Kitsch even if the richness thus displayed be perfectly genuine; it is Kitsch in the second power if it be false, if we are offered tinsel for gold. Then we have the gaudy, the tawdry, the very essence of bad taste.

"On this basis, we may write in parallel columns genuine qualities, and their equivalent in Kitsch. Here is a tentative list:

Rich	Tawdry, gaudy gorgeous
Frank, outspoken	Indecent; obscene
Realistic	Vulgar, sordid
Attractive	Meretricious (alluring and seductive on borderline)
Touching, moving, pathetic	Sentimental
Eloquent	Bombastic, claptrap, ranting
Patriotic	Jingoistic
Great or grand	Colossal, grandiose
Pious	Sanctimonious
Courageous	Bragging, bullying, hectoring
Profound (or even honestly difficult)	Cryptic (esoteric on borderline)
Subtle, cultured, urbane	Sophisticated, smart