

The Folding Screen of Kitsch

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Abstract: Kitsch, a relatively recent concept in Western art and literature, has given birth to a great deal of debate and discussion. Owing to a variety of descriptions it is difficult to define it. Nevertheless, it can be characterized by discussing the impacts it creates over the audience. Milan Kundera, in his novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, has addressed the features of Kitsch by being quite faithful to the political reality of the West. However, he has taken efforts to explain them through the development of individual psychology in a social context. This paper examines how the supposed features of Kitsch surface through the experiences of a specific persona in the novel. The examination suggests, arguably of course, that Kundera's attempts to elucidate Kitsch experiences involve aesthetic misrepresentation leaving far reaching impact on social or political structure.

Kitsch has provoked a great debate regarding its definition and characterization since eighteen sixties.¹ Wikipedia, a well known online encyclopedia, introduces Kitsch as a term of German or Yiddish origin used to categorizing art as a "tasteless copy of an existing style." (7) The term is also loosely used to refer to pretentious art, to the point of being in bad taste, and to commercially produced items considered trite or crass. Kitsch "relies on merely repeating convention and formula, lacking the sense of creativity and originality displayed in genuine art."²

So far Kitsch has been characterized as a form of "really bad taste"(10) by Gillo Dorfles, "an incarnation of evil"(10) by Herman Broch, an especially aesthetic form of "lying" and "art that is produced for immediate consumption"(240) by Calinescu Matei, "the absolute denial of shit" of everything "which is essentially unacceptable in human existence"(248) by Milan Kundera, and so on. In *The Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch*, Matei claims "Kitsch cannot be defined from a single vantage point...Kitsch refuses to lend itself even to negative definition, because it simply has no single compelling, distinct counter-concept" (242).

Among a number of available varieties of kitsch, I have taken the comforting type for the present discussion, in which I would like to examine questions like how kitsch of this type creates impact over audience with a possible essential design in it. I begin with designing an acceptable characterization of comforting

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kitsch and then consider some of the suggested accounts of the effects it has on the observer who appreciates it.

Then I move on to discuss what a comforting Kitsch ultimately refers to, and how the comforting Kitsch functions to provoke a response. Kundera's presentation of comforting Kitsch quite faithfully depicts and addresses the different variety of Kitsch-experience of social and aesthetic life of Europe. In this regard, throughout the paper, I will depend heavily on Milan Kundera's specimens of comforting Kitsch that we come across in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, which are, of course, fictional cases, mainly based on socio-political development of the East Europe during the nineteen sixties and seventies. I will also use the storyteller's questions and suggestions that repeatedly appear side by side with the non-linear progression of narrative, and consider them as aesthetic propositions and commentaries and thus develop them in order to explain how Kitsch possibly operates beyond its apparent manifestation.

From the nomenclature it can be assumed that an instance of comforting Kitsch evokes touchy and inspiring types of emotions. The use of Kitsch that celebrates motherhood makes the experience touching, and the one that inspires patriotism induces the notion of being stirred. Such a type engages Kitsch to be figurative images.

Considering the observations available in a good number of aesthetic reviews and art criticism, comforting Kitsch, allegedly, creates a number of emotional experiences in the mind of the audience. Firstly, it makes the world sweeter and excludes what is difficult to stand. Secondly, it provides easy and effortless catharsis. Thirdly, it works as a means of self-enjoyment. Fourthly, it reassures its audience.

Let us concentrate on the first two claims. Lyell Henry in his essay, "Fetched by Beauty: Confessions of a Kitsch Addict," argues that Kitsch aims to "embellish the elemental sentiments," such as love of children, mother, country, God, and so on, and hatred for our country's enemies (203). He suggests that Kitsch engages light-hearted endeavor that tends to make our world somewhat more charming than it appears to be.

Milan Kundera, in *Unbearable Lightness of Being*, finds the comforting and sweetening of life to be a fundamental aim of Kitsch. He strongly suggests that Kitsch "excludes everything from its purview" that is unacceptable in human life (248). Kundera's analysis of the comforting Kitsch response reveals that he takes this to have, to some extent, objectionable implication. Let us explain the two tears set by Kundera as Kitsch:

Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass! The second tear

says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass! It is the second tear that makes Kitsch Kitsch.

The brotherhood of man on earth will be possible only on a base of Kitsch. . . .

And no one knows this better than politicians. Whenever a camera is in the offing, they immediately run to the nearest child, lift it in the air, kiss it on the cheek. Kitsch is the aesthetical ideal of all politicians and all political parties and movements. (251)

Kundera's reservation for Kitsch stems from his assessment of the propagandistic uses of art that is full of syrupy blend. His analysis of the first and second tears, however, would seem to be applicable to cases of comforting Kitsch whether or not they are employed for a propagandistic purpose. The claim that Kitsch causes syrupy effect seems quite plausible. The first tear is the result of a feature that Kitsch tends to make the world sweeter.

Another claim that Kitsch provides easy and effortless catharsis can be observed in the successive appearance of the second tear. Kundera is more emphatic in his description of the second tear than the first. The section dealing with the American senator and Sabina³ expresses the second tear metaphor. We wonder at the speedy transfer from being charmed by children to being moved with all mankind. Kundera points out that this transfer is essential in the course of Kitsch-experiencing. A serious reader can hardly ignore how quickly and easily the second tear follows the first; in other words, how the syrupy and comforting effect paves way for an easy catharsis in favor of the assumed "brotherhood of man" (234). However, Kundera uses a cryptic way of explaining the experience of Kitsch. Soon after pronouncing, "Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession," he concludes, "It is the second tear that makes Kitsch Kitsch" (235). The first tear thus matures into giving birth to the second. With the propagandist use in mind Kundera points out that Kitsch depends on deriving basic images people have engraved in their memories in order to be workable over large number of minds. However, such images play roles in creating non propagandist Kitsch-experiences too, which we come across in the development of the major characters in the novel. But I will come back to the point later.

Clement Greenberg, one of the noted art critics of the twentieth century, in his famous essay, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," makes this disclaimer: "Kitsch is mechanical and operated by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always same. Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except money- not even time" (10).

He clearly holds Kitsch to be responsible for degrading aesthetic sensibilities and thus to facilitate propagandistic manipulation to take place. In his essay, "Avant-

Garde and Kitsch," Greenberg chooses a painting by Repin, which depicts Russian peasants by using familiar elements. The painting, according to Greenberg, is not required to reflect on what is presented; instead "the reflected effect has already been included in the picture, ready for the spectator's unreflected enjoyment."⁽¹⁵⁾ The same can be said about the remark that the American Senator passes. The propagandist remark, comparable to a visual image of Russian peasants in a battle field in the afore-mentioned painting by Repin, presents an image (the Kitsch image) of jubilant children running on the grass, readily making gratification available for the audience before they are made to reflect.

The popular instances of syrupy Kitsch offer touching emotion so readily that the audience does not have to make any considerable effort. They seem to have been designed to strengthen the spirit of someone whose energy is fading. The second tear that is caused by emotion referring to the sense of being moved along with all mankind in Kundera's *Unbearable Lightness of Being* quite readily results without giving the urgency of being aesthetically experienced.

Another objection against syrupy Kitsch is it offers its audience enjoyment, not the object, but of a state of mind. Karsten Harries, in his *The Meaning of Modern Art*, complains:

The need for Kitsch arises when genuine emotion has become rare, when desire lies dormant and needs artificial stimulations. What is enjoyed or sought is not a certain object, but an emotion, a mood, even, or rather especially, if there is no encounter with an object which would warrant that emotion. Thus religious Kitsch seeks to elicit religious emotion without an encounter with God, and erotic Kitsch seeks to give the sensation of love without the presence of someone with whom he is in love. (79-80)

Greenberg gives emphasis on the characteristics of the object of the Kitsch. On the other hand, Harries traces the origin of Kitsch experience in the mind of the observer. I would like to accommodate both of the observations, coordinate them and develop Harries's scheme.

Let us go back to the two-tear analysis in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. It is quite useful to identify that the basic image is about experiencing self-enjoyment. The American senator's use of the image, "children running on the grass"⁽²⁴⁸⁾; and the Communist statesmen's one⁽²⁵⁹⁾, possibly something very close to "a parade of smiling citizens" ⁽²⁵¹⁾, enable them self-enjoyment. The first tear as described by Kundera has in its center, "children running on the grass," as the object of emotion. The second tear, "How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass!" is a tear meant for celebrating self-enjoyment. In case of the first tear, "the playing children" is the object of emotion. The object of the emotion has evidently shifted with the

appearance of the second tear. It is interesting to observe that the second tear is the response of an emotion that has in its center, as object of emotion, not the children or their joy, but the joy of, so to speak, a particular state of mind. Likewise, the center of the communist statesmen's emotion slips off far away from the smiling citizens' parade.

The claim that syrupy Kitsch offers reassurance without much assistance from outside of one's mind is dependant on its feature that it makes the world sweeter and it excludes what is difficult to stand. Two of such features perfectly equip Kitsch to misrepresent the world and indulge the observer's feelings. Mary Midgley in her influential essay, "Brutality and Sentimentality," comments that literature engages sentimentality to indulge our feelings.

Being sentimental is misrepresenting the world in order to indulge our feelings. Thus Dickens created in Little Nell and various other female characters as products of wish-fulfillment – a subservient, devoted, totally understanding mixture of child and lover, with no wishes of her own. This figure was well-designed to provoke a delicious sense of pity and mastery, and to set up further fantasies where feeling could continue. (385)

Sentimentalization has some common objects in both daily social life and fictional depictions, such as children and domestic pets. Projecting unto them an exaggerated vulnerability and innocence, a character in real life or fiction may feel encouraged to show a tender compassion for them. The qualities that sentimentality impose on its objects are the qualities of innocence. Comforting Kitsch certainly shares the quality of misrepresentation by shedding the light of innocence on an object. The evaluation employed in both Kitsch and sentimentality is absolutely idealized and hence misrepresented.¹

Having discussed the assumed features Kitsch displays simultaneously, now let us try to figure out a structure according to which Kitsch possibly operates with all its features discussed above. Echoing Kundera I would like to say that "the Kitsch images are derived from the basic images people have engraved in their memories: the ungrateful daughter, the neglected father, children running on the grass, the motherland betrayed, first love" (251). In the same way Kitsch effect or the feeling induced by Kitsch is relatively simple and catchy,--accessible to multitudes. The Kitsch image refers to something which does not become

¹ Mark Jefferson in his essay, "What is wrong with Sentimentality explains" says, "The cognitive theory of emotion suggests one's emotional responses to the world are typically determined by how one sees the world. And how we see the world – our beliefs and desires they inform – is not something that the world entirely imposes upon us. There is a degree of choice we can exercise over our beliefs need be no more than that we may or may not employ certain truth-orienting procedures." Sentimentality involved in Kitsch definitely plays a role in the idealizing and thus misrepresenting the world we see in the formation our beliefs and desires."

apparent with the image. It remains invisible; it does not surface, it does not articulate or manifest, yet plays a significant role from behind. It refers to a complicated structure of beliefs and values about the way things are in a particular culture and society. These beliefs and values operate in this case in a symbolic way and emerges through an image—the Kitsch image. Therefore Kitsch image is a symbolic representation. Essential in this representation is idealization. Comforting Kitsch idealizes the comforting and innocent parts and separates from the discomforting ones.

In some cases, the symbols working as Kitsch images are found to be archetypal of a particular culture or civilization. In chapter three of "Lightness and Weight," as Tomas contemplates on Tereza, he finds no resemblance to her with any of his prior acquaintances. The coincidental way he happened to meet her followed by the abrupt way he started to feel for her made him pick an archetypal metaphor for her, well known to all learned people of the west, "a child in a bulrush basket daubed with pitch" (254). As Tomas yearns to die beside Tereza, the narrator questions whether it is love or something "clearly exaggerated." Seemingly the narrator sides with the assumption that it was rather a self deluding effort to simulate love. The effort engages idealization of Tereza in the cover of a helpless child, an inevitable Kitsch image.

A reader of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is likely to come across a good number of developments and situations to examine them with the prevailing theories of Kitsch. Now I would like to analyze, explain and stretch a few of them to fit into the model I have proposed above. Here I will be limited mainly in the persona of Sabina, what her responses are to different instances and types of comforting Kitsch, which she encounters as well as evokes.

Sabina, as conceived by Kundera in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, is, in fact, "charmed more by betrayal than by fidelity" (91). She has always associated the word "fidelity" with the sheltered, limited world of her Puritan father, a provincial Sunday-painter of "woodland sunsets and roses in vases" (91). Although she had taken to painting after her father, already in her teenage years she was all too thoroughly aware of the escapism of his Kitschy paintings, as well as of normative injunctions of his religion. Her father was so scared at her daughter's falling in love when she was fourteen that he did not allow her to go outside of house for one long year. Although she could not love the boy of her age, she started to love Cubism, which her father had dismissed and ridiculed. For his father, a small town-puritan, betrayal is the most heinous offense. For Sabina, it is breaking ranks and going off into the unknown. Eventually, when Sabina migrates to Prague to study art she becomes euphoric to have been able to betray her home. Being a student of Academy of Fine Arts, she was not allowed to paint like Picasso. The school was recommended to manufacture portraits of Communist statesmen. However, Sabina goes on committing acts of betrayal:

"Her longing to betray her father remained unsatisfied: Communism was merely another father, a father equally strict and limited, a father who forbade her love (the times were puritanical) and Picasso, too. And if she married a second-rate actor, it was only because he had a reputation for being eccentric and was unacceptable to both fathers" (91).

It is no wonder that Sabina got interested in Cubism. It happened not only because of her symbolic protest to his father in terms of mutual ideological differences, but also in a more elemental form. It would not be an overt statement to say Sabina's inclination towards Cubism grows from the paintings' tendency to create an "ambiguous sense of space through geometric shapes that flatten and simplify form, spatial planes that are broken into fragments, and forms that overlap and penetrate one another"(256) It clearly defies the order of space and form of traditional painting such as the Sunday paintings of woodlands and roses would demand.

In her teens she had her father to warn her that betrayal is the most heinous offense imaginable. The author gives two different but interrelated aspects of betrayal: breaking ranks, and going off into the unknown. These two aspects provoke her, initially to commit betrayal and leave her family behind and switch to Prague, consequently to marry an eccentric actor whom her father would disapprove of, and later while in exile, to disassociate herself from the Czech expatriates in Geneva.

Sabina is a believer of sense perception with special importance given on visual kind of perceiving. "Living for Sabina meant seeing. Her range of seeing is limited within the two borders: strong light that blinds and total darkness" (94). Her understandings and responses to socio-political structure and situations are always guided by their visual associations related to her aesthetic preferences. Sabina's ideas are formed of visual images she perceives as symbols and snapshots into the memory. The ones bearing on her lack of freedom remain permanently locked in memory, get crystallized, and then work as icons, which in some cases, enable her to go through a Kitsch experience. "Fist of hands," "index fingers longer than their middle fingers," "barber-induced gray waves" are the images which make her respond with defiance and artificiality whether displayed by an anonymous expatriate leader or President Antonín Novotný (who had ruled the country for the fourteen years before the Soviet invaders replaced him with Alexander Dubček) are some of the Kitsch images we come across in the novel. As an active observer, Sabina finds them Kitschy because she senses that such symbols, in respective cases, do not properly illustrate the whole complicacy of the struggle and the hazard it poses. Rather it idealizes an over simplistic way so that a momentary comfort is provided.

Sabina's idiosyncratic way of identifying and responding to Kitsch involves investigation of both artistic standards and social power-structure. On one hand,

she smells Kitsch in family structure, protest against oppression; on the other hand, she traces the same in Sunday paintings, which being conservatively maintained as the standard of painting by his father, imposes obstruction in her possible artistic growth. In every encounter with Kitsch she changes her direction betraying the power structure of the then situation, one after another.

She finds a resemblance between the communist regimes who are always assessing and checking up on the populace, and the émigrés with long index finger, who are basically planning to fight against the communist government in Czechoslovakia, because both are concerned about how good a member of a group or community is in terms of respective political interests, and reluctant to evaluate his/ her merit. The figures of her biological father, of the communist regime, of the leader of expatriate protesters in Geneva— all stand for Kitsch images she finds objectionable and threatening for the role they play in the power-structure and in setting aesthetic standards.

Even she questions the basis of the unity of the people who take part in a gathering of fellow émigrés. She rules out the possibility of images like a common landscape, music of a famous Czech musician like Dvorak or Janacek, or literary work of Jan Hus, to be standing as the unity for a group of people so that they may identify with a common spirit of nationality. All of them may not be connoisseurs of landscape, music or any other mode of culture. She also considers the literary works of Jan Hus the great Czech reformer, but then doubts it too, because many of them may not be familiar to his writing. Sabina considers such possibilities with consequent negative conclusion:

Or great men? Jan Hus? None of the people in that room had ever read a line of his works. The only thing they were all able to understand was the flames, the glory of the flames when he was burned at the stake, the glory of the ashes, so for them the essence of being Czech came down to ashes and nothing more. The only things that held them together were the defeats and the reproaches they addressed to one another. (97)

In other words, Sabina observes that these images are in potential danger of being used to evoke comforting Kitsch and work as their notion of unity.

However, it is intriguing to observe that Sabina follows a pattern that after being exposed to a Kitsch that makes her decline her ongoing course of life, she occasionally falls victim of experiencing Kitsch herself, and then she once again changes her prevailing position in relation to society again.

When her father commits suicide having not been able to bear the shock of his wife's death, Sabina becomes conscience-bitten. The death of her father does not give her comfort. She does not commit another betrayal either. Rather her conscience makes her passively reexamine her father's world, values, and mode

of thinking: "Was it really so terrible that her father had painted vases filled with roses and hated Picasso? Was it really so reprehensible that he was afraid of his fourteen year-old daughter's coming home pregnant? Was it really so laughable that he could not go on living without his wife?" (92)

The suffering of her conscience gives way to experience Kitsch, through which, she idealizes her father-figure and the patriarchal family he maintained with order of space like the well defined ones of woodland sunsets and roses in vase-like-paintings. Sabina appears with a notion of apparent contradiction:

All her life she had proclaimed Kitsch her enemy. But hadn't she in fact been carrying it with her? Her Kitsch was her image of home, all peace, quiet, and harmony, and ruled by a loving mother and wise father. It was an image that took shape within her after the death of her parents... and more than once she shed tears when the ungrateful daughter in a sentimental film embraced the neglected father as the windows of the happy family's house shone out into the dying day. (255).

The person who with most intense sensitivity has traced Kitsch only to vehemently reject it and run away from it now herself embraces Kitsch to view her own past.

According to the proposed model, Sabina cannot help being instilled into such images from the culture she is brought up in. Historically she was brought up in a small town with colorful sunsets and serene woodland. But now she idealizes them. The Kitsch image transforms into something absolutely peaceful, quiet, and harmonious; devoid of conflicts and discords. But beyond manifestation it refers to the prevailing structure of family values and the power structure it maintained. Invariably the peace and harmony it designates can only be obtained through absolute obedience and submission to the structures, which emanates from the family, fundamentally.²

It is quite explicit that the political Kitsch has got behind its backdrop a set of political values in an idealized form. In its type of totalitarian Kitsch the backdrop power play would remain the same, but the Kitsch image may appear involving a collective icon (for example, a smiling parade instead of children running on the grass). In case of a non propagandist Kitsch, such as the one relating to Sabina, the Kitsch image appears as a "white clapboard house with two windows shining" (255), the backdrop power structure was the one of patriarchal family idealized. But the most thought provoking type of Kitsch

² Obedience, as Marcuse discusses it, in *Studies in Political Philosophy*, in the politico-religious context of Luther and Calvin, is "the mechanism which holds the worldly order together: a system emanating from the family, of *subjectio* and *superioritas*, to which God has given his name for protection: "The titles of Father, God and Lord, all meet in him alone."

Kundera proposes to have identified is the one involving death. In connection with the idea that one of the essential features that Kitsch involves is idealization of a situation or social structure, it is tempting to try to analyze in such a model Sabina's exposure to a Kitschy situation which deals with death.

Being utterly shocked at the news that Tomas has died she decides to calm herself down by visiting a cemetery. She happens to take a look at a gravestone. Sabina contemplates over her shock at the gravestone:

When graves are covered with stones, the dead can no longer get out.
But the dead can't get out anyway! What difference does it make
whether they're covered with soil or stones? (123)

She comes up with a possible explanation that "[t]he difference is that if a grave is covered with a stone it means we don't want the deceased to come back." (124). I believe it plausibly can be interpreted that Sabina observes the stones being used by the people alive to hide death, to dissociate themselves from death, and as it were to say, to defy death as such. The ultimate objective of the whole set up relating to graveyard, funeral, and gravestone is to disregard the unavoidable destiny of death. Beyond the manifestation of the symbol of gravestone, the social power structure is found to play their roles.³ The Montparnasse, a graveyard for aristocrat people of Paris has the gravestones in it erected like monuments. The higher the social power behind the concerning belated lies, the deeper the grave is dug for them, and the more grotesquely the gravestone is built. Sabina again reacts against the gravestone Kitsch, change her position, betrays as it were, and leaves Paris. In Kundera's use, Kitsch with its idealizing potential works at the level of hiding the cruelest destiny of life, death. The figurative interpretation of Tereza's dream reveals the secret: "...Kitsch is a folding screen set up to curtain off death" (253). The Parisian graveyard reveals to her how deeply the social structures make assertions of authority. It takes the shape of Kitsch in the architecture of gravestones and enables her to betray the Kitsch in concern because she recognizes Kitsch as Kitsch. By doing so she neutralizes the authority of Kitsch over her in this particular case.

³ Jolanta W. Wawrzycka in her essay, "Betrayal as a Flight from Kitsch in Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*," convincingly attempts to explain Kunderian approach to Kitsch in Foucaultian term of "cultural archives." Wawrzycka holds that Kitsch operates as a sort of "truth"- a common denominator for human emotions, a point of reference, a center, a teleological exclamation mark. She comments, "Foucault would see Kitsch as one of the 'cultural archives' and the reading of such an archive would result from 'strategically contesting all claims to truth which ignore the diversity of possible view points,' which is exactly how Kitsch operates." She adds, "By ignoring multiplicity of perspectives, Kitsch presupposes transcendental knowledge and power, and hence, claims a monopoly on truth, 'since what counts as truth for any given culture is a product of forces which work to legitimate certain forms of knowledge and repress or marginalize others.'" It implies that humans being locked into socio-cultural economies, cannot escape the forces, which are that of Kitsch in this case, but can only neutralize them at times, as Sabina does.

Notes

- ¹ Though its precise etymology is uncertain, it is widely held that the word originated in the Munich art markets of the 1860s and '70s, used to describe cheap, hotly marketable pictures or sketches.
- ² See "Kitsch." Wikipedia Online. Last modified on 26 August, 2006. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitsch>.
- ³ See Gillo Dorfles, *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste* (New York: University Books, 1968), p. 10.
- ⁴ See Herman Broch, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch," in *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste*, ed. Dorfles. New York: University Books, 1968. 10.
- ⁵ Matei Calinescu, *The Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1977. 240.
- ⁶ See Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984. 248. 248.
- ⁷ See Calinescu Matei labels it as a Kitsch of "saccharine type". It is also known as syrupy Kitsch.
- ⁸ See Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984. 248. (Section 7, The Grand March)
- ⁹ See Greenberg, Clement. "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." *Art and Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1965. 15.
- ¹⁰ See Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984. 248. 251.
- ¹¹ The reality based imaginary statesman has been attributed to with the smile on his face "was the smile of Communist statesmen beamed from the height of their reviewing stand to the identically smiling citizens from the height of the reviewing stand in the parade below" (250).
- ¹² Midgley, Mary, "Brutality and Sentimentality", *Philosophy*, 1979:385.
- ¹³ Charles Dicken's depiction of the bed scene of Nell can be mentioned here: For she was dead. There, upon her little bed, she lay at rest. The solemn stillness was no marvel now. She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death. Her couch was dressed with here and there some winter berries and green leaves, gathered in a spot she had been used to favor. "When I die, put near me something that has loved the light, and had the sky above it always." Those were her words. She was dead. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. Her life bird – a poor slight thing the pressure of a finger would have crushed – was stirring nimbly in its cage; and the strong heart of its child-mistress was mute and motionless for ever. See Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chapter 71.

The attempted heart-rending portrayal of Little Nell's death makes Oscar Wilde comment: "One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing." (See Oscar Wilde, quoted in *The Wit and Humour of Oscar Wilde*).
- ¹⁴ Cernuschi, Claude. "Cubism". Encarta Reference Library, 2007.

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