Gronow, Jukka

The Sociology of Taste


CONTENTS

Preface ix
Acknowledgements xiii

1 INTRODUCTION: 1
Need, Taste and Pleasure — or understanding modern consumption 1
The parallel between philosophy and gastronomy; The need for food and nutrition science; Good taste, gastronomy and social distinctions; Good taste and the problem of the aesthetics of taste

2 PHILOSOPHICAL AESTHETICS AND THE REFINEMENT OF TASTE 13
Sociological aesthetics or aesthetic sociology 13
Custom, public opinion and social cohesion 18
What is good taste? 18
The refinement of taste in France; Distinction and class tastes; The hedonism of the new classes and the emergence of the ideal consumer; From the social hierarchy of tastes to mass fashion

3 LUXURY, KITSCH AND FASHION 31
Kitsch, fashion and the corruption of taste 31
How social interaction is apt to corrupt taste; Why do the standards of the respectability of the leisure class become the general standard of decency?: In spite of our inborn sense of beauty our objects are not getting more beautiful; Why does the entire material culture of the late nineteenth century create an impression of kitsch?: The war against kitsch in the name of democracy; Marketing kitsch; Kitsch as a historical stage between class and mass fashion;

Kitsch and luxury in the Soviet Union 49
The secret of the caviar sandwich; The old and the new luxury; The great retreat; The new happy life; ‘Happiness lives in the country of plenty’: The coming into being of the new middle class; Democratic luxury and the pleasures of the few; Was there any Soviet design? The socialist way of life: decency and small delights; Consumers and the end of socialism;

Fashion and plenty in the post-industrial society 70
Consumer society as an abundant society
4 TASTE AND FASHION

Fashion as a self-dynamic social process
The modern fashion pattern; The pleasures of novelty;

The social function of style and fashion
Immanuel Kant and Georg Simmel on fashion; The antinomy of taste;
Kant's community of the united tastes; Fashion and taste; Class
fashion or mass fashion?; Lifestyle, style of art and fashion; The
community of fashion;

Taste and the process of collective selection
Fashion as Zeitgeist; The Finnish study of fashion design

Food fashions and social order
The confusing picture of modern food culture; The ideal diet of the
Finns?; Health sells, but education is needed; Scientific and folk
models of nutrition; Health food ascetics and the management of the
body; Vitamin deficiency and the ‘hidden hunger’; The product as the
real ascetic; Marketing the ‘fashion for health’; The role of fashion in
food culture

5 THE BEAUTY OF SOCIAL FORMS

Simmel on social forms
Can a taste or a smell be beautiful?; The beauty of a meal; The
aesthetic sociology of Georg Simmel; Sociability and pleasure;

Play and beauty
Play, art, and social forms; The ideal world of play and art; Friedrich
Schiller’s programme of aesthetic socialization;

6 CONCLUSION:

The aesthetic sociology
and the aestheticization of everyday life

Does money beautify social relations?; The aestheticization of
everyday life; The community of art and the art of community; The
facticity of a community vs. aesthetic sociation

Notes
Bibliography
Index