



Appearance and Power (Dress, Body, Culture)

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Appearance has repeatedly been shown to have a potent and immediate effect on others in a wide range of circumstances. In particular, the consequences of women's appearance are severe and have social, economic, and legal ramifications. From the more obvious role of uniforms in social control through to the subtle interplay between size and status, appearance counts. The vast number of people seeking body alterations or modifications through dieting, tattooing, piercing and plastic surgery attests to the importance of how we look, not only to others but also to ourselves.

This book tackles the charged and frequently painful subject of how appearance affects social interaction and the role of larger social structures in perpetuating and institutionalizing it as an evaluative criterion. What effect does obesity have on power(lessness)? What role does women's dress play in others' perception of consent in cases of rape? How do groups operating on the margins of mainstream society use appearance to negotiate power, make statements and effect change? What roles do gender and ethnicity play in the workplace?

This provocative book attempts not only to answer these questions, but to lay foundations for future research in an area which affects everyone in profound and often invisible ways.

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