DRESSED TO IMPRESS
Looking the Part
Dress, Body, Culture

Series Editor  Joanne B. Eicher, Regents’ Professor, University of Minnesota

Books in this provocative series seek to articulate the connections between culture and dress which is defined here in its broadest possible sense as any modification or supplement to the body. Interdisciplinary in approach, the series highlights the dialogue between identity and dress, cosmetics, coiffure, and body alterations as manifested in practices as varied as plastic surgery, tattooing, and ritual scarification. The series aims, in particular, to analyze the meaning of dress in relation to popular culture and gender issues and will include works grounded in anthropology, sociology, history, art history, literature, and folklore.

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Edited by
William J.F. Keenan

Foreword by
David Martin
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Arguably, this volume has its remotest foundations in the accident that the schoolboy crocodile of my early adolescent years snaked its weary weekend walk, under the watchful eye of religious Brothers, past the Scottish Lowland village of Ecclefechan, then etched on our impressionable memories as ‘the birthplace of Thomas Carlyle, the grand historian of the French Revolution’. Four decades or so on, Carlyle – now reconfigured as ‘the grand philosopher of dress’ – came unexpectedly to life again through the pages of Sartor Resartus as I searched for intellectual foundations on which to erect a professional sociologist’s interest in dressways. At the Annual Conference in 1998 of the British Sociological Association held at the University of Edinburgh – Carlyle’s own Alma Mater – where the theme of that year was ‘Making Sense of the Body: Theory, Research and Practice’, I was able to meet and share ideas on dress with the seven other authors included in this collection. I wish to record here my deep appreciation of the generous response of this ‘magnificent seven’ in allowing me the opportunity to exercise – exorcise is too final a word here – my Carlylean ghost via the present extended Introduction to their work. I am indebted to Berg’s Kathryn Earle who encouraged me initially to draw the collection together and Regents’ Professor Joanne B. Eicher who supported the project from the first stitch – and to whom its title is due. For his inspiration and friendship, I am especially indebted to Emeritus Professor David Martin who graciously wrote the Foreword. The love and support of my wife and children are beyond measure. They exist for me as, in Carlyle’s words, ‘divine apparitions’. I like to be haunted by them.
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