



Distinctions in the Flesh: Social Class and the Embodiment of Inequality (CRESC)

Dieter Vandebroek

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The past decades have witnessed a surge of sociological interest in the body. From the focal point of aesthetic investment, political regulation and moral anxiety, to a means of redefining traditional conceptions of agency and identity, the body has been cast in a wide variety of sociological roles. However, there is one topic that proves conspicuously absent from this burgeoning literature on the body, namely its role in the everyday (re)production of class-boundaries.

Distinctions in the Flesh aims to fill that void by showing that the way individuals perceive, use and manage their bodies is fundamentally intertwined with their social position and trajectory. Drawing on a wide array of survey-data – from food-preferences to sporting-practices and from weight-concern to tastes in clothing – this book shows how bodies not only function as key markers of class-differences, but also help to naturalize and legitimize such differences. Along the way, it scrutinizes popular notions like the ‘obesity epidemic’, questions the role of ‘the media’ in shaping the way people judge their bodies and sheds doubt on sociological narratives that cast the body as a malleable object that is increasingly open to individual control and reflexive management.

This book will be of interest to scholars of class, lifestyle and identity, but also to social epidemiologists, health professionals and anyone interested in the way that social inequalities become, quite *literally*, inscribed in the body.

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