

Abstract

In this thesis the meanings given by students to dress are examined. Then, these meanings are compared to those discussed in sociological literature dealing with dress and fashion. Dress is not only a protection of body against unpleasant weather but also a medium for meanings related to the wearer of the dress. Through a dress it is possible to express social status, social role, hobbies, opinions, membership in various groups and also lifestyle. Clothing and fashion are strongly associated with young people because the fashion is made for them and they contribute to its creation. For adolescents dress is a matter of particular importance because it enables them not only to express, but also to build their identity and thus reach adulthood. Dress has also an important role in our relations to other people. The analysis of interviews with students resulted in the finding that meanings given to dress by students are similar to those discussed in sociological literature. For interviewed students it is important to have a freedom to wear, what they want, because it enables them to be themselves. The findings from interviews rather contradict Simmel's assumption because a fashion is considered by interviewed students as uniform, while originality is located outside the fashion. Those students also realize the importance of cultural capital emphasised by Bourdieu. Dress is by interviewed students considered as a symbol of membership in groups rather than of social inequalities and position in stratification system.