The Social Construction of Beauty/ Dramaturgical Perspective

Feb. 18, 2005

http://www.iastate.edu/~soc.134

Extra credit projects

- **Volunteer project**
  - Feb. 23: Completion of volunteer form
  - April 15: 16 hours and short (3+ pages) paper

- **Photo essay project**
  - Feb. 23: One-page summary (must indicate key concept)
  - April 15: 10-20 photo essay with intro and captions

- **Research paper project**
  - Feb. 23: One-page outline with two sources
  - April 15: Paper (5+ pages) with four sources

Beauty is stratified

- Women and men have different beauty standards
  - Attractiveness is prerequisite for femininity, not masculinity
  - Female beauty standard requires more time and money to achieve

- U.S. beauty standard idealizes Caucasian features and devalues those of other races
  - However, black women have more satisfaction with their bodies than white women

- Wealthy can better afford to be beautiful

Personal consequences of beauty standards

- Bad first impressions for non-beautiful
- Discrimination in many institutions
- Economic costs
- Time costs
- Medical side effects of achieving beauty
- Dissatisfaction with bodies
- Appearance may play a large role in age discrimination

Impression management

- Impression management: act of presenting a favorable public image of oneself so that others will form positive judgments (p. 138)
  - Impression management differs from role to role
  - Impression management of self (who I am), the situation (what is going on) and my team or organization are connected
  - When people believe they are failing to give off correct impressions, they attempt to correct the bad impression

- Concept developed by Erving Goffman (1922-82)
- Goffman used concept of drama as metaphor for social life
Dramaturgical perspective

- Dramaturgy: study of social interaction as theater, in which people ("actors") project images ("play roles") in front of others ("audience") (p. 144)

- Some elements of performance
  - Front stage: area of social interaction where people perform and work to maintain appropriate impressions (p. 144)
  - Back stage: area of social interaction away from the view of an audience, where people can rehearse and rehash their behavior (p. 144)
  - Props and costumes
  - Verbal expression
  - Nonverbal expression
  - Performance team: set of individuals who cooperate in staging a performance that leads an audience to form an impression of one or all team members (p. 150)