

About Dress, Law and Naked Truth

Why are civil authorities in so-called liberal democracies affronted by public nudity and the Islamic full-face 'veil'? Why is law and civil order so closely associated with robes, gowns, suits, wigs and uniforms? Why is law so concerned with the 'evident' and the need for justice to be 'seen' to be done? Why do we dress and obey dress codes at all? In this, the first ever study devoted to the many deep cultural connections between dress and law, the author addresses these questions and more. His responses flow from the radical thesis that 'law is dress and dress is law'.

Engaging with sources from The Epic of Gilgamesh to Shakespeare, Carlyle, Dickens and Damien Hirst, Professor Watt draws a revealing history of dress and civil order and offers challenging conclusions about the nature of truth and the potential for individuals to fit within the forms of civil life.

Table Of Contents

Series Editor's Foreword

Author's Preface

Chapter One: 'Dress is Law'

Chapter Two: 'Foundations of the State of Dress'

Chapter Three: 'Shakespeare on Proof and Fabricated Truth'

Chapter Four: 'The Face the Law Makes'

Chapter Five: 'Addressing the Naked and Unfolding the Veil'

Chapter Six: 'Something More Comfortable: A Fitting Conclusion'

Reviews

"In a finely fluent and eruditely entertaining fashion, *Dress, Law and Naked Truth* provides a radical revival of the philosophy of clothes for common lawyers. Watt's sartorial jurisprudence draws upon the rich history and homology of costume and custom, livery and law, body art and *habeas corpus*, to show that the social contract could never be *nudum pactum* because habit is of the essence of law." – **Professor Peter Goodrich, Professor of Law and Director of Law and Humanities, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, New York, USA**

"Professor Watt's book represents such a dramatic leap forward in legal thought about dress that it demands the recognition of a new category of scholarship. *Dress, Law and Naked Truth* presents an array of startlingly original ideas about the relationship between dress and the law. Happily, Watt's book manages to combine intellectual heft with beautifully crafted prose, making it not only a remarkable scholarly accomplishment, but also a joy to read." – **Charles Colman, NYU School of Law and Director of the Center for Study of Fashion, Law and Society, USA**

"What does the seemingly superficial subject of fashion have to do with the serious realm of law? *Dress, Law and Naked Truth* offers an indispensable study of law and its surprisingly profound sartorial imagination. More than simply registering the law's propensity for a rhetoric that likes to flirt with the conceit of 'dress,' Gary Watt shows us the deep philosophic connections between the articulations of cultural order and sartorial discipline. This smart and elegantly written book is a must-read for anyone interested in legal studies, literary and cultural studies, and the politics of fashion." – *Anne Anlin Cheng, Princeton University, USA, author of Second Skin: Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface.*