Chapter 24

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'POWER DRESSING' AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CAREER WOMAN

IN THE BRITISH EDITION of his dress manual, *Women: Dress for Success*, John T. Molloy proclaimed that most women 'dress for failure': either they let fashion dictate their choice of clothes, or they see themselves as sex objects, or they dress according to their socio-economic background. All three ways of dressing prevent women gaining access to positions of power in the business and corporate world. In order to succeed in a man's world of work, the business or executive woman's 'only alternative is to let science help them choose their clothes' (Molloy 1980: 18). The science of clothing management which he practised and called 'wardrobe engineering' helped introduce and establish the 'power dressing' phenomenon of the 1980s, defining a style of female professional garb which has now become something of a sartorial cliché; tailored skirt suit with shoulder pads, in grey, blue or navy, accessorised with 'token female garb such as bows and discreet jewellery' (Armstrong 1993: 278). Whilst Molloy might not have been the first, and indeed was far from the only self-proclaimed 'expert' to define a 'uniform' for the business or executive woman, his manual remains a classic explication of the rules of 'power dressing'. Molloy's manual, and his 'power suit' as it came to be known, provoked a good deal of discussion on both sides of the Atlantic and spawned an array of articles in newspapers and magazines, all of which served to establish a discourse on how the so-called career woman should dress for work.

'Power dressing' was effective in producing a particular construction of 'woman' new to the social stage; it was also in part responsible for the emergence of a new kind of 'technology of the self'. First, the discourse on the career woman and her dress offered a particular construction of 'woman' constituted across a range of different sites: within the fashion industry the notion of a career woman opened up new markets and become associated with particular designers such as Ralph Lauren and Donna Karan. This career woman was also constituted within a range of texts, from television, to advertising, to women's magazines, all of which produced a profusion

of images of 'high powered' professional women. Some of the women in *Dallas* were to epitomise the style and she was to be found in the pages of magazines such as *Ms* and *Cosmopolitan*. Second, 'power dressing' can be seen as a 'technology of the self. It was a discourse which was very effective at the embodied level of daily practice, rapidly gaining popularity with those women in professional career structures who were trying to break through the so-called 'glass ceiling' and providing them with a technique for self-presentation within this world of work. Photographs of the streets of Manhattan during the 1980s show women in the 'power-dressing' garb sprinting to work in their running shoes or sneakers. 'Power dressing' was to become embodied in the shape of such public figures as Margaret Thatcher, who according to *Vogue* was redesigned in the early 1980s in line with the principles of Molloy's 'dress for success' formula.

In this chapter, I want to outline the development of 'power dressing' and to suggest that it is significant for three not unrelated reasons. First, this sartorial discourse played an important part in bringing to public visibility the professional career woman who was, or sought to be, an executive or a businesswoman. Women have long held down professional jobs, but this woman was someone aiming to make it to positions of power often in previously male-dominated career structures. The 'uniform' which the discourse on 'power dressing' served to establish was to play an important part in structuring the career woman s everyday experience of herself, serving as a mode of self-presentation that enabled her to *construct* herself and be *recognised* as an executive or business career woman. Indeed whilst the term 'power dressing' may have fallen out of use, the mode of dress associated with it, and perhaps more importantly the philosophy that underpinned it, have all become an established part of being a career woman in the 1990s. So prominent a part has this discourse on 'power dressing' played in the construction of the career woman that it would be hard for any professional or businesswoman today to escape its notice even if they chose not to wear the garb.

Second, I will attempt to show how this discourse on the career woman's dress fits into broader historical developments in the changing nature of work, especially the so-called 'enterprise culture' in the 1980s. In particular, 'power dressing' can be seen to fit with the neo-liberalism of the decade and the discourse on the so-called enterprising self. Finally, 'power dressing' is interesting because it marked the emergence of a new kind of consumption for women, who are traditionally associated with the 'frivolity' and aesthetics of fashion. What 'power dressing' served to inaugurate was a method for dressing which aimed to disavow fashion and which also necessitated the use of experts and expert knowledge for calculating what to buy.

Sartorial codes at work

How did a sartorial discourse mark out the career woman from previous generations of working women? For as long as women have been engaged in paid labour, dress has been a consideration at work. For example, the new department stores that developed in the nineteenth century were largely staffed by women, and their dress and overall appearance was under constant scrutiny from supervisors and managers. Gail Reekie in her history of the department store notes how female shop assistants were

required to dress smartly on very modest incomes and this was a constant source of pressure and hardship for many women (Reekie 1993). The development of female white-collar work over the course of the nineteenth century also necessitated a wardrobe of suitable work clothes and may have likewise been subject to surveillance by managers and bosses. Over the course of the nineteenth century, as office work shifted from male clerks to female secretaries, there was an increasing proletarianisation and feminisation of clerical work. However, unlike the male clerk who preceded them, these new female workers had little hope of becoming the boss; indeed as Steele notes, 'their clothing – as workers and as women – set them apart from the upper-middle-class male employers' (Steele 1989: 83). This new breed of working woman could receive advice on how to dress from ladies journals of the time. Steele notes how such journals at the turn of the century advised women to wear appropriate clothes that were smart but not provocative. There was, however, as yet no distinction between the dress of the female secretary and that of a female executive.

Many general fashion histories cite the war years as a significant moment in both the history of women s work and their dress. It is worth noting that during the Second World War we can find traces of the kind of female professional and business garb later advocated by Molloy: the tailored skirt suit with heavily accented shoulders. Joan Crawford in the classic film *Mildred Pierce* (1945) portrayed a tough, independent and career-minded business woman with a wardrobe of tailored suits to match; likewise in the same year Ingrid Bergman, as psychoanalyst Constance Peterson in Hitchcock s *Spellbound*, opts for attire which, like Mildred Pierce's, connotes toughness and masculinity. However, it is only over the last twenty years that representations of high powered, career-motivated women and their dress have gathered momentum. Discourse on 'power dressing' was a significant aspect in popular representations of career woman in the late 1970s and 1980s, serving to make her publicly visible. It is only at this time that we see a distinction being drawn between the female secretary and the female executive, largely through difference in the dress of each. The impetus behind Molloy's manual is precisely to make the female business or executive woman visible and distinguishable from her secretarial counterparts. Thus many of his rules include advice about avoiding clothes which are associated with secretaries and other female white-collar workers: fluffy jumpers and cardigans are to be avoided in the office, as are long hair, heavy make-up and too much jewellery.

Dress manuals and 'technologies of the self'

Important to the emergence of this phenomenon, then, was the dress manual where the rules of 'dress for success' were explicated. However, the dress manual is not a recent phenomenon and can be seen closely aligned with other kinds of self-help publications which have a longer history. We can find, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, manuals on 'how to dress like a lady' and how to put together a lady's wardrobe on a moderate budget. The notion of successful dressing is in evidence in these, as in manuals on dress in the 1950s, for instance. What is different about the manuals on dress that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s was the *type* of woman they addressed (and thus the kind of success she sought) and the notion of *self* that they worked with. To take the first point, 'power dressing' marked a new development in

the history of women and work; it addressed a new kind of female worker. It was a discourse that did not speak to all women; it did not address the cleaning lady or the manual worker or even the female white-collar worker, but a new breed of working woman who emerged in the 1970s, the university-educated, professional middle-class career woman entering into career structures previously the preserve of men: law, politics, the city and so on. The notion of success then was not about 'how to get a man and keep him', which was the implied success in many of the earlier manuals; it was about something previously the preserve of men, career success.

'Dress for success' 1980s style was also different in the notion of the self it conceived. A number of commentators have argued that a new type of self has emerged in the twentieth century which the dress manual can be seen to indicate (Sennett 1977; Featherstone 1991; Giddens 1991). Mike Featherstone calls this new self 'the performing self', which 'places greater emphasis upon appearance, display and the management of impressions' (Featherstone 1991: 187). He notes how a comparison of self-help manuals of the nineteenth and twentieth century provide an indication of the development of this new self. In the former self-help manual the self is discussed in terms of values and virtues, thrift, temperance, self-discipline and so on. In the twentieth century we find the emphasis in the self-help manual is on how one appears, how to look and be 'magnetic' and charm others. The emphasis on how one looks as opposed to what one is, or should become, can be found in the 'dress for success' manuals of the 1970s and 1980s. This emphasis on the management of appearance is apparent in Molloy's earlier manual of dress for men, *Dress for Success* (1975) as well as in his later one for women.

Such a discourse on what the career woman should wear can be seen to open up a space for the construction of a new kind of feminine subject. The sartorial discourse of 'power dressing' constitutes a new 'technology of the feminine self'. Technologies of self, according to Foucault,

> permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality.
>
> (Foucault 1988: 18)

Following Foucault, Nikolas Rose argues for the need to develop a 'genealogy of political technologies of individuality' (Rose 1991: 217). He goes on to say that

> the history of the self should be written at this technological level in terms of the techniques and evaluations for developing, evaluating, perfecting, managing the self, the ways it is rendered into words, made visible, inspected, judge and reformed.
>
> (ibid.: 218)

The discourse of 'power dressing' did indeed render into words (and garb) this new 'careerist woman', making her visible within the male public arena. It provided her with a means to *fashion* herself *as* a career woman. Molloy's manual offered women a *technical* means for articulating themselves as professional or businesswomen

committed to their work. The manual is full of detailed descriptions of the most effective dress for the professional and business work environment, and Malloy gives long lists of 'rules' as to what garments should combine with what. The detailed description is a formula for how to *appear*, and thus (if you are not already) *become* a female executive or a successful businesswoman. Hence his claim that:

> The results of wardrobe engineering can be remarkable. By making adjustments in a woman s wardrobe, we can make her look more successful and better educated. We can increase her chances of success in the business world; we can increase her chances of becoming a top executive; and we can make her more attractive to various types of men.
>
> (Molloy 1980: 18)

Whilst Molloy himself is careful to say 'can' and not 'will', the implications of his 'wardrobe engineering' are nothing less than the calculating construction of oneself as a committed career woman. As such they can be seen to constitute a 'technology of the (female, professional) self'.

Dressing for work

This 'technology of the self' can be seen to correlate with new work regimes developing from the 1970s onwards, a technology of the self commonly referred to as the 'enterprising self' because it is produced by a regime of work which emphasises internal self-management and relative autonomy on the part of the individual. We can contrast it with the technology of the self I am calling the 'managed self', because it is produced within regimes of work characterised by a high degree of external constraint and management. It is important to point out here that I am using these two technologies of self as 'ideal types' which should be seen as two extremes on a continuum rather than discrete entities. Having said that, I want to outline what I see as ideal features of both, first looking at the technology of the managed self before moving on to consider the emergence of an enterprising self which forms the backdrop to a discourse on 'power dressing'.

The managed self

If we examine the managed self we find a high degree of management control and discipline, not simply over the labour process, but regarding the bodies, hearts and minds of the workers. Arlie Russell Hochschild's (1983) study of the world of the air steward, entitled *The Managed Heart*, gives us an example of the construction of a managed self. Her study of Delta Air found that all aspects of the recruitment, training, management, marketing and PR at Delta Air set out to produce a highly disciplined worker. The outcome of this intensive training and supervision of the steward is a highly disciplined self, or as Hochschild puts it, a managed heart, who is required to manage emotions, demeanour and appearance in order to project the principles defined by the corporation. The extent to which the stewards have to manage their

emotions is summed up by the advertising slogan of one airline company, which goes, 'our smiles are not just painted on'; a request that does not call for a *performance* of happiness on the part of the steward, but the manufacture of genuine emotions. At Delta Air, the bodies and soul of the stewards are not simply a part of the service, they *are* the service and as such are subject to a high degree of corporate management. At least for the time that they are at work, the image and emotions of the stewards are not their own but part of the corporate image that Delta Air seeks to project.

What part does dress play in the construction of a managed self? Dress can be seen as an important aspect in the management and discipline of bodies within the workplace. Within many different spheres of work, strict enforcement of dress codes can be found. The high degree of corporate control within such spheres of work often involves the enforcement of a uniform which enables the image and identity of the corporation to be literally *embodied*. Even where a strict uniform is not enforced, management exerts a significant influence over the dress of its workers. Many shop workers not required to wear a uniform are, however, often required to purchase clothes from the shop at a reduced cost in order to look appropriate.

Carla Freeman's (1993) study of women data-process workers in Barbados gives us one empirical example of how the enforcement of a dress code can be seen as part of a corporate technique of discipline. In her study she looked at corporate management in one American owned data-processing corporation, Data Air. Staffed predominantly by women, Data Air was marked by a high level of corporate discipline exerted over every aspect of the labour process: from how many airline tickets the women could process in an hour, to how long each woman took for lunch, to how many times they went to the loo, and how they dressed for work. Such discipline required a high degree of surveillance and this was made possible by the careful layout of the open-plan office. The design of the office enabled the panoptic gaze of supervisors and managers to monitor the performance, conduct and dress of the female workers. The enforcement of what Data Air called a 'professional' dress code was so strict that it was not uncommon for women to be sent home by their supervisor for not looking smart enough. However, whilst the corporation demanded 'professional' dress and conduct, the work performed was anything but professional.

Freeman argues that the enforcement of a dress code enabled Data Air to discipline its female workers into projecting a positive image of the organisation, both to the women within and to those outside, one that belied the fact that the women were locked into a non-professional occupational structure which was low paid, boring and repetitive and offered very few opportunities for promotion. The women at Data Air carried an image of the corporation to the world outside which worked to create an illusion of glamour and sophistication so that even if they were paid no more than female manual workers in Barbados, and indeed less than many female agricultural workers, they were the envy of many women outside who longed for the opportunity to work in the sophisticated air-conditioned offices. Despite low wages, Data Air was never short of keen female labour. One of the things that is notable within this regime of work is the high degree to which workers bodies and souls are subjected to corporate management. As with the air stewards at Delta Air, the bodies of the women at Data Air are disciplined into *embodying* the message of the corporation.

The enterprising self

It is at this point that we can begin to sketch out the features of the technology of self, referred to by a number of commentators as the enterprising self, which corresponds to a rather different regime of work. This 'enterprising' worker emerged out of historical developments commonly theorised in terms of post-Fordism and neo-liberalism and was to become the focus of New Right rhetoric in its proclamations about 'enterprise culture'. The term 'enterprise culture' is problematic, as indeed is the claim that Western capitalism has moved from a Fordist to a post-Fordist mode of production (see discussions of these problems in Cross and Payne 1991; Keat and Abercrombie 1991). However, the 1980s did see a significant growth in self-employment and, perhaps more importantly, the emergence of a powerful rhetoric of individualism and enterprise.

The restructuring of work which began in the 1970s served to sever the worker from traditional institutions and organisations (one element in the New Right s attack on 'dependency culture'; for more details see Keat 1991), so that by the 1980s individuals were called upon to think that they were not owed a living, but were embarked upon a career path of their own, and not the corporation's, making. From the 1970s onwards this new regime of work gathered momentum, replacing 'corporation man' [sic] and producing, in ever-increasing numbers, the worker who is a freelancer, or an entrepreneur, or a 'self-made man' [sic]. However, as well as producing a shift in the organisation of work, the rhetoric of 'enterprise culture' aimed to stimulate a new attitude to work and as such gives considerable prominence to certain qualities and according to Rose

> designates an array of rules for the conduct of one's everyday existence: energy, initiative, ambition, calculation and personal responsibility. The enterprising self will make a venture of its life, project itself a future and seek to shape itself in order to become that which it wishes to be. The enterprising self is thus a calculating self, a self that calculates *about* itself and that works *upon* itself in order to better itself.
>
> (Rose 1992: 146)

Rose argues that one result of neo-liberal calls to make oneself into an enterprising self is the increasing incursion of 'experts' into private life to help one attain success and find fulfilment. The increasing pressure for self-fulfilment has necessitated the rise of new 'experts' to tell us how to live, how to achieve our full potential, how to be successful, how to manage our emotions, our appearances, our lives.

What is significant then about 'power dressing' as it develops in the 1980s is the degree of fit between this discourse on the presentation of self in the workplace and the emergence of an enterprising self. The rallying call to 'dress for success' or 'power dress' is a call to think about every aspect of one's self, including one's appearance, as part of a 'project of the self'. The mode of self advocated by the rallying phrase 'dress for success' is an enterprising one: the career woman is told she must be calculating and cunning in her self-presentation. Molloy's manual is one which seeks to encourage *responsibility* on the part of the female professional for her own success; one that demands the conscious *calculation* of her self-presentation; and calls on her to *work*

upon herself in order to produce an image which makes visible her commitment to the life (and lifestyle) of an executive or business woman. Thus we can see that 'power dressing', with its rules, its manuals, its 'experts' or image consultants, in both philosophy and rhetoric, fits with that of 'enterprise culture'. 'Power dressing', then, can be thought of as a practice of dress which opened up a mode of sartorial presentation for the enterprising self of the 1980s.

Managed versus self-managed dress

If 'power dressing' did not abolish dress codes and sought the establishment of a 'uniform', how then does it differ from the dress codes enforced in the office and the department stores? What distinguishes these professional occupations from less 'high-powered' occupations is the way in which dress codes are enforced: it is very unlikely a female executive will be told to go home and dress more appropriately by a supervisor. On the contrary, companies expect their professional female workers to have internalised the codes of dress required by the job. Rather than send her home, a company is more likely to suggest, or even purchase, the services of an image consultant to work with the woman. The difference then between the smart dress of a data processor in Barbados and a 'high-powered' female executive is not that the first woman is exposed to a dress code and the latter not, it is a matter of different modes of enforcement: the career woman is expected to manage her dress to such an extent as to make external pressure unnecessary.

A further difference arises out of the issue of intent. What identifies the power dresser as different from her counterpart in the typing pool or office is a different attitude towards dress and self-presentation, an *intentionality* signalled by her attention to dress as much as by what she paid for her clothes and where she bought them. Once an individual has internalised the concept of a career as a project of the self, fewer external management constraints are required. As it became established as a uniform, the 'power suit' became a more or less reliable signal that a woman was taking her job seriously and was interested in going further. The woman who went out and bought the 'power suit' was already an enterprising self, if only that in order to think about one's career success in terms of personal presentation, one needed to be enterprising and subscribe to a notion of the individual as self-managing, responsible and autonomous. Closely related to the issue of intention is the issue of autonomy. Professional occupations can be characterised as granting greater autonomy to the worker. However, this is not freedom as such, rather the autonomy granted to the professional requires simply a different regime of management, in this instance not exerted by corporate surveillance and management, but shifted to the internal level of self-management.

'Power dressing' offered women a conception of power located at the level of the body and rooted in individualism. Unlike the secretary or the shop assistant, the career woman s dress does not simply transmit information about the company or corporation she works for: her appearance is important because it tells us something about her, about her professionalism, her confidence, her self-esteem, her ability to do her job. The role played by clothes in transmitting information about the woman is demonstrated in the film *Working Girl* which stars Melanie Griffith. In this 1980s

film we witness the Griffith character effect a transformation from secretary to 'high-powered' executive. In the beginning of the film Griffith is seen as a gauche, gaudily dressed but bright young secretary no one will take seriously and who is harassed by all her male employers as an object of sexual fun. It is only when she starts to work for a female boss, played by Sigourney Weaver, that she begins to see the importance of dress in her professional presentation and learns the codes of 'power dressing'. What might have been a nice feminist tale of female bonding quickly turns nasty when Griffith finds out that her boss has stolen a bright idea she has for a takeover bid, and the ensuing tale sees Griffith take on her boss whilst at the same time developing a very similar taste in dress. The moral of this story is a highly individualistic one which emphasises that all a girl needs to succeed is self-motivation and good standards of dress and grooming. The message Griffith conveys is not a corporate image but an image of her as an enterprising, autonomous and self-managing subject.

Working at dress

The great female renunciation?

'Power dressing' may be underpinned by an enterprising philosophy which fits with the individualism of neo-liberalism; however it was not about expressing individuality in dress. 'Power dressing' did not set out to rock any boats, its main aim was to enable women to steer a steady course through male-dominated professions, and it therefore sought to work with existing codes of dress. In this respect 'power dressing' was inherently conservative, recommending women to wear the female equivalent of the male suit, and to avoid trousers in the boardroom at all costs since these are supposedly threatening to male power. As I noted earlier, the aim of Molloy's manual was to establish a 'uniform' for the executive or businesswoman, one that would become a recognisable emblem. As such, it should be resistant to change in much the same way as the male suit. Fashion, with its logic of continual aesthetic innovation, is therefore deemed inappropriate for the business and corporate world and must be disavowed by the determined career woman.

Indeed, much of Molloy's book is given over to a condemnation of the fashion industry. Molloy's call for the disavowal of fashion on the part of the career woman can be heard echoing an earlier renunciation on the part of bourgeois men when entering the new public sphere opened up by the development of capitalism. The 'great masculine renunciation' noted by Flügel resulted in the rejection of elaboration and decoration, which had been as much a part of male dress as female dress prior to the end of the eighteenth century, and which, according to Flügel, had served to produce division and competition in terms of status (Flügel 1930). The sober dress of the bourgeois man aimed to diminish competition and bond him in new ways to his colleagues. In much the same way that bourgeois men donned themselves in sobriety, the executive and businesswoman is thus called upon to reject the divisive 'frivolity' of fashion. In doing so, these women will not only get on in the male world of work, but will likewise have a code of dress which will hopefully see

them unite. Indeed Molloy suggests that 'this uniform issue will become a test to see which women are going to support other women in their executive ambitions' (Molloy 1980: 36).

'Wardrobe engineering': a 'science' of dress

Since women, rather than men, have traditionally been seen as the subjects of fashion, Molloy's manual heralded, at least in theory, a new era in the relationship between women and dress, which is perhaps something of an inversion of convention. He calls upon women to make their clothing decisions on the basis of 'science' and not aesthetics or emotion, which might have previously guided their decisions. Molloy's dress formula was the result of years of testing and monitoring of clothes. A strict positivist, the only validity he claims to be interested in is 'predictive' validity and only arrives at statements on what dress works for women if he can predict with accuracy the effects of clothes on the attitudes of others. The main 'effect' he is aiming for is 'authority'. This employment of technical means or 'wardrobe engineering promised to reduce the problem of what an ambitious career woman should wear to work to a purely technical matter of knowledge and expertise.

We can note therefore that what distinguishes the discourse on 'power dressing' as it addressed the new career woman is the way it applies *technical rationality* to what is in effect a question of consumption: the appeal of Molloy's 'wardrobe engineering' is that it provided many women with a reliable shopping tool when purchasing a wardrobe for work. Problems of time and money are hopefully eliminated, as is the possibility of making mistakes and buying items of clothing that do not suit you, work for you, or fit in with the rest of your wardrobe. One of the rules he outlines in the manual is 'use this book when you go shopping', the aim being to make irrational or impulse buying a thing of the past.

'Power dressing' in the 1990s

'Power dressing' and 'dress for success' may sound rather dated today and therefore no longer of any import. However, the principles erected by this discourse on dress, and the subjectivity they helped to establish, have not disappeared. On the contrary the technique of 'dress for success' and the enterprising self it adorned have become institutionalised and integrated, not only into the personal career plans of individual women, but into the structure of corporate planning. From the publication of Molloy's manual in 1980 we have seen, in the 1990s, a steady rise of this new 'expert', the image consultant whose services are bought in by individuals who are either under-confident about their image or simply too busy to think about it; or by big businesses and organisations who are keen to up the profile of their female executives. From the 1970s onwards, Molloy's knowledge and expertise, along with the knowledge and expertise of a growing number of image consultants, was quickly bought by big organisations who were concerned about the small number of women reaching the upper echelons of management and wanted to be seen to be doing something about it.

Image consultancy is a generic word for a whole range of different services from manuals on dress, to consultants who advise on how to plan and budget for a career wardrobe, to specialist services which advise people on what to wear when going on television, to shopping services offered to the career woman with no time to lunch let alone shop. The combination of services that is offered by image consultancy marks a development in a new *method* of consumption; it also marks a new *attitude* to consumption. The career woman who buys in the services of a consultant to plan and purchase her wardrobe treats consumption as *work* and not as leisure (and therefore pleasure) as it is commonly experienced. This attitude to consumption requires the same application of instrumental rationality to consumption that is required by work. Molly not only advocates a formula of dress for the business and executive world of work, he advises career women to treat their dress as part of the work they must put in in order to increase their chances of career success. There may of course be pleasures associated with buying in a consultant, but these pleasures are themselves new and are distinct from the traditional pleasures normally associated with shopping.

To conclude, the development of a discourse on the career woman's dress throughout the 1980s and 1990s marks the emergence of a new 'technology of the self', a self who demonstrates that she is ambitious, autonomous and enterprising by taking responsibility for the management of her appearance. The fact that so many women buy in the services of a consultant is also testimony of the extent to which this modern woman is an enterprising self. In seeking out an expert to guide her in her self-presentation, the career woman demonstrates her own commitment, initiative and enterprise. It also marks the emergence of a new pattern of consumption: the use of clothes manuals, the buying in of expertise in the form of image consultants and the purchase of shopping services mark out a new attitude to consumption which sees it as serious labour requiring the application of technical rationality and knowledge to make decisions about what to consume.

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