

Women as a Signifying Presence

- * in a patriarchal society, women's appearance is taken to always signify messages to others → it always communicates *even the woman does nothing and there is no way for her to not be read as a **signifying presence***

John Berger once writes: "A woman's presence expresses her own attitude toward herself, and defines what can and cannot be done to her. Her presence is manifest in her gestures, voice, opinions, expressions, clothes, chosen surroundings, taste - indeed there is nothing she can do which does not contribute to her presence. Presence for a woman is so intrinsic to her person that men tend to think of it as an almost physical emanation, a kind of heat or smell or aura."

- * heterosexual men are trained to read from the signifying women's body

The assumptions of rape logic

1. women's presence is always *signifying* → it communicates with others even they do nothing → the messages are like heat that naturally radiates its energy to the surroundings
2. sexual force emanated (射出) from women's body, especially their appearance, naturally triggers and generates a reaction in heterosexual men
3. men are said to be sexually aroused and provoked by the sexual force of women's body
4. to protect themselves from sexual assault, women need to mute, cover or hide their body in a way that men's natural reaction will not be triggered
5. women are raped because they did not stop their sexual force from emitting → women rape victims are themselves the causal agent for what they suffer → **they could and should have dressed differently and "properly"**



= Sexual Consent



- * rape logic: when you open the wardrobe and making choices of what to wear, you are also **making sexual consent**
- * before a woman is sexually assault, she has already given sexual consent to the other by the way she dresses