



That's Disgusting: Unraveling the Mysteries of Repulsion

Rachel Herz

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“A lively look at all things revolting.”—*New York Times*

Why do we watch horror movies? What is the best way to persuade someone to quit smoking? Why are we more likely to buy a given item if an attractive person has just touched it? And what on earth is the appeal of competitive eating?

In this lively, colorful new book, Rachel Herz answers these questions and more, shedding light on an incredible range of human traits—from food preferences and sexual attraction to moral codes and political ideology—by examining them through the lens of a fascinating subject: disgust. One of the most complex human emotions, disgust is the product of both culture and instinct and so it allows us a unique perspective on the relationship between nature and nurture. A component of fear and prejudice, it also gives us powerful—sometimes disturbing—insights into the fabric of society.

Herz draws on the latest psychological studies and neurological research to offer surprising observations about human behavior and biology. For example, we learn that a man's scent matters more than his looks or his income in determining whether or not a given woman will find him attractive, that lust and disgust activate the same area of the brain, and that watching a gory movie triggers your immune system as if you were facing an actual threat. We even learn that washing your hands after thinking about a past misdeed—a la Lady Macbeth—can help you feel less guilty.

What makes *That's Disgusting* so remarkable is Herz's ability to weave these curious findings and compelling facts into a narrative that tackles important questions. What matters more: our brain wiring or our upbringing? Is there such a thing as “normal”? And how might politicians and marketers use disgust to manipulate us?

Combining lucid scientific explanations and fascinating research with a healthy dose of humor, *That's Disgusting* illuminates issues that are central to our lives: love, hate, fear, empathy, prejudice, humor, and happiness.

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