uses touch. Much of the interpretation of subtext depends on assumptions based on gender or racial stereotypes. In his book entitled *Subtext*[3], Julius Fast writes about Mina Chow, a young Korean-American high school student in New York City who noticed that teachers base grades on what students look like. Mina originally had a "punk" look with spiked hair and blue lipstick. Once she had toned down her image, her grades went up. She tested her hypothesis about teacher's perceptions in a science project by collecting "neutral" pictures of black, white and Asian students, both male and female, and distributed them with a questionnaire to 87 teachers in New York City high schools. Asian students were rated highest for motivation, blacks the lowest. Blacks were rated highest for physical activity, Asians the lowest. Mina concluded that Asian students may get better grades simply because of the teacher's preconceived notions.[4]

Mina Chow studied what most women of color intuit. Our acceptability, our effectiveness, our performance depends on how well we use subtext. Issues of subtext are of critical importance to outsider groups. Such issues are laced with intra-group and inter-group aspects.

For me, as a Latina, language, speech, clothes, and makeup are all heavily laden with subtextual meaning. Appearance is so caught up with notions of my ethnic identity that I can't remember what it feels like to wear clothes merely to cover up.

When I arrived as a student at Harvard Law School, I dressed so as to proclaim my politics. To the orientation program held