

## Tekst 5

# People will always judge by appearances

**L**OVING parents, if they can afford it, buy their daughters pretty clothes and get their teeth fixed. They take them to doctors for acne and to surgeons for birthmarks or squints, and for cleft palates, club feet or curved spines. If a boy messes up his face in a motorcycle accident, parents try to arrange cosmetic surgery. The 11 of such repairs to a child's well-being is often very obvious. And loving parents who are so protective of one of their children would not be any less protective of another.

My sister and I both damaged our front teeth in minor accidents when we were children. It would have been unthinkable in our family that my teeth should have been capped but not hers, just because she was 12 and I was supposedly normal. Yet this idea seems to lie behind the arguments last week, widely reported in the media, about a three-year-old girl with Down's syndrome, whose parents had arranged cosmetic surgery for her, and whose case was the subject of a television documentary. Many people expressed shock and disapproval.



**Minette  
Marrin**

There seems to be a widely held view that there is something wrong with 13 the disability that is Down's syndrome. At its extreme this view holds that it is demeaning to people with Down's to suggest that their condition is in itself undesirable. To suggest that it should be eradicated, or at least modified, is to devalue them as individuals. Therefore it is 14. Society, not the individual, should change.

I sympathise with this feeling, but it is undisciplined sentimentality. The truth is, however much we may love an individual sufferer, that Down's syndrome is undesirable. So is spina bifida or Huntington's chorea. Which of us would not wave a wand, if we could, and magic it away? For one thing the

life of a child who is peculiar is often harsh. Other children can be surprisingly cruel. My little sister's birthday parties, 15, were full of tiny girls in pretty party dresses, who before long would start taunting my sister for her oddities, and end up leaving her in tears. If there had been any kind of scientific magic to change all that, or even to make it only slightly better, of course I would have been in favour of it.

## After the surgery she is pretty, but still unmistakably a Down's person

In the case of the three-year-old girl, there is surgery that can subtly alter her appearance, relieve some physical difficulties and make her look less odd. Her oversized tongue has been reduced. She will now find eating and speaking easier. Her malformed teeth and bite can be made to look better and to work better. Who could deny such improvements to any child?

I don't think it was so obviously desirable to

make subtle adjustments to her eyes, or pin back her ears, but anyone looking at her must be 16 her new prettiness, and her confidence, while still unmistakably a Down's person. If there is one thing I have become convinced of, it is that it is essential to think pragmatically, and always about the 17. Philosophical principles about the meaning of handicap in general are irrelevant to the question of what was best for this little girl. Her photographs show that her appearance is now enormously more attractive and acceptable.

A young Down's syndrome man said on the same documentary last week: "I wish people wouldn't judge by appearances." But they do and they always will, for deep-seated reasons, and not always bad ones. 18 appearances work both ways. The appearance of Down's is, to anyone capable of kindness, a sign to be gentle: stigmata have their gentler uses. Curiously enough, one of my sister's problems was that her quite normal appearance worked against her: there weren't any disarming signs in her appearance.

*'The Sunday Telegraph'*

## ■ Tekst 5 People will always judge by appearances

*Kies bij iedere open plek in de tekst het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.*

1p **11** ■

- A desirability
- B potential risk
- C uselessness

1p **12** ■

- A difficult to handle
- B far from good-looking
- C mentally handicapped
- D very pretty already

1p **13** ■

- A ignoring
- B interfering with
- C studying
- D suffering from

1p **14** ■

- A illogical
- B impermissible
- C impractical
- D inevitable

1p **15** ■

- A by the way
- B for instance
- C however
- D moreover

1p **16** ■

- A confused by
- B insensitive to
- C jealous of
- D touched by

1p **17** ■

- A individual case
- B medical issues
- C moral choices
- D public interest

1p **18** ■

- A But
- B For
- C So