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**How the  
Evolutionary Imperative Process Impacts  
upon the  
Development of Body Adornment and  
Jewellery**

**Scilla Speet**

**A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of  
The University of the Arts London for the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy**

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis is concerned with the imperatives which drive the evolution of body adornment and the creation of jewellery in order to establish a tenable new model which may be used to categorise and explain the nature and intention (both functional and conceptual) of body-related artefacts, past, present and future.

Existing models offer value judgements constrained by a Eurocentric anthropological perspective. The thesis investigates the theoretical potential of a neo-Darwinian imperative critique informed, *inter alia*, by post-Freudian and post-modern values, and feminist theory.

It is argued that a mechanism has been operating throughout human history / evolution which has led both sexes to transform their natural bodies in aspiring to an idealised vision. An explanation of this process is approached through an analysis of the place of sexuality and sexual aesthetics in representation / re-presentation through the act of body decoration.

An investigation of the evolutionary history and psychology of humans in relation to body adornment shows how the concept of beauty may have evolved as a mode of communication in culture and, most importantly, how jewellery came to be a significant factor in the construction of social and cultural structures and the social control of women's sexuality.

The model presented offers a critical perspective placing the biological imperative in a pre-determining role and underpinning other imperatives impacting upon and reflecting levels of consciousness. The thesis argues that no contemporary discourse which excludes the neo-Darwinian dimension can enable the proper analysis of issues such as the interrelationship (co-evolution) between genes, culture, artefact, design and representation in one coherent framework. This critical approach, and its incorporation into the resulting model, proffer the richest resource for informed analysis and is therefore an original contribution to knowledge.

Some contemporary jewellers demonstrate a unique understanding of the human condition and human nature, and their ability to encapsulate / translate psycho-emotional narrative through conceptualisation evidences the cognitive / physical relationships with jewellery. Analyses of structured academic case studies of this work seek to identify and establish the principal imperative driving the design process.

This thesis uses jewellery, body presentation and their accompanying iconography and semiotic indices to suggest an alternative rationale for understanding human behaviour as expressed in the cultural representational forms understood as jewellery

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Dedicated to the memory of my brother Hugo

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## GLOSSARY

**Anthropic Principle.** The anthropic principle is used by theorists such as Bohm and David Peat who, “. . . develop the idea of implicate order by suggesting that all forms of organisation whether inanimate, living or experimental, originate in a generate level of order within the universe. This level of order they identify with active conscious intelligence.” (Pickering and Skinner, 1990, 66).

**Australopithecus Afarensis.** A species of hominid that lived in eastern and southern Africa from 4 to 2.5 million years ago. Research indicates they were bipedal and employed simple tools.

**Biosocial.** “Characteristic of those features of behaviour that are a result of interactions between social and biological factors. The classic example is sexual behaviour.” (Reber, 1985).

**Cognition.** “A collective term for the psychological processes involved in the acquisition, organisation, and use of knowledge..... The term is now used in cognitive psychology to refer to all the information-processing activities of the brain, ranging from the analysis of immediate stimuli to the organisation of subjective experience. In contemporary terminology, cognition includes such processes and phenomena as perception, memory, attention, problem-solving, language, thinking, and imagery.” (Bullock, stallybrass and trombley, 1988).

**Conceptual Jewellery.** A particular area of jewellery design which is driven by emotive and emotionally charged concepts drawn from the infinite well of life experiences.

**Conceptualisation or concept formation.** “If the bits of matter that constitute a symbol are arranged to bump into the bits of matter constituting another symbol in just the right way, the symbols corresponding to one belief can give rise to new symbols corresponding to another belief logically related to it, which can give rise to symbols corresponding to other beliefs and so on”. (Pinker, 1999, 25).

**Copulatory Gaze.** Dawkins’ ‘long reach of the gene theory’ argues that biological sexual imperatives impact upon social and thereby individual psychology as conditioned social psychology (Dawkins 1999). This thesis develops this argument to suggest that as the Lacanian Gaze emanates from the phallogentric, socio-psychological perspective there is, underlying this, a primary copulatory gaze which emanates from bio-psychological. This copulatory gaze differs from the Lacanian inasmuch as it is a bio-logical common denominator for both sexes as an interactive coalescence of both male and female needs and desires.

**Culture.** “The system of information that codes the manner in which the people in an organized group, society or nation interact with their social and physical [and psychological] environment.” (Reber, 1985)

**Culturgen.** “. . . an array of transmissible behaviours, mentifacts, and artifacts, which we propose to call *culturgens* (from. L. *cultur(a)*. Culture, +L. *gen(o)*, . . . ” (Lumsden and O Wilson.1981, 7). They argued that there is an affinity between genetic evolution and cultural evolution and that the evolution of culture is driven by and is the result of the needs of genetic evolution. The thesis argues that these culturgens operated during the long process of evolutionary bonding which saw humans develop from organic soup, through to cells from which living entities emerged to take all sorts of divergent routes. Some theorists go as far as to suggest that this process seems to be the expression of a form of cosmic consciousness which foreshadowed the beginning of life and yet embeds itself into individual physical elements.

**Evolutionary Psychology.** “. . . is psychology informed by the fact that the inherited architecture of the human mind is the product of the evolutionary process. It is a conceptually integrated approach to which the theories of selection pressures are used to generate hypotheses about design features of the human mind and in which our knowledge of psychological and behavioural phenomena can be organized and augmented by placing them in their functional context.” (Barkow, Cosmides and Toby, 1995, 7)

**Extended Phenotype.** A theory proposed by Dawkins, “it attempts to free the selfish gene from the individual organism which has been its conceptual prison. The phenotypic effects of a gene are the tools by which it levers itself into the next generation, and these tools may ‘extend’ far outside the body in which the gene sits, even reaching deep into the nervous systems of other organisms.” (Dawkins, 1999, vi)

**Gene.** “The definition I want to use comes from G.C. Williams ‘A gene is defined as any portion of chromosomal material that potentially lasts long enough generations to serve as a unit of natural selection.’ . . . a gene is a replicator with high copying fidelity” (Dawkins, 1989, 28)

**Genetic assimilation.** “Term coined by C.H. Waddington, 1953, for the process which mimics Lamarckian inheritance without involving directed mutation. If those members of a population which respond to an environmental STIMULUS in a particular way are selected, naturally or artificially, this will result in the accumulation of GENES which favour the response, until the response appears without the environmental stimulus.” (Bullock, Stallybrass and Trombley, 1988)

**Genotype.** “Genotype. The genetic constitution of an individual, as deduced from ancestry or breeding performance, in contrast to its phenotype, the characteristics which are manifested in the individual. The distinction is important because it is the genotype, not the phenotype, which is reproduced and can be transmitted to future generations.” (Bullock, Stallybrass and Trombley, 1988). However the study of developmental psychology argues that gene characteristics and their interaction with environment do influence the nature of development of the individual giving rise to “the recognition that a given genotype can be expressed in a variety of phenotypes.” (Reber, 1985)

**Gestalt.** A German word meaning, to take: form, shape, to configure, to transform, it is a term given to an offshoot (established in the 1910s) of psychology which demonstrated through experimental documentation that the brain does not remain sedentary in the act of perception when receiving incoming data. The brain has a tendency to group

incoming sensory data in an attempt to identify and often guess at what is being perceived. If the data is scant or the perceived image is incomplete the brain will attempt to decipher information based on past experiences. The result is that the brain will often complete the gaps or reconstruct the image in order to complete it, like trying to fit missing pieces to a puzzle. This kind of visual stimulus often results in two or more interpretations.

**Hominid.** “A member of the group *Hominidae*, a taxonomic family of humans and humanlike apes. It includes all humans (living and extinct) of the *genus Homo* and their close relatives, the australopithecines.” (Parker 1992, 141)

**Humans.** Humans’ mammalian heritage can be traced back approximately 65-70 million years, the ancestor of contemporary primates to approximately 65 million years. Research has evidenced that as primal forms primates progress from monkeys to apes to humans. Generic primate characteristics, in response to environmental pressures, show an elevated mental and physical capacity for problem solving.

**Instinct.** A natural impulse, especially in the lower animals, leading them without reasoning or conscious design to perform certain actions tending to the welfare of the individual or the perpetuation of the species; an innate or intuitive impulse. (Cassell Concise English Dictionary, 1994).

**Memes.** “Memes are ideas, skills, habits, stories or inventions that are passed from person to person by imitation. Like genes their competition is for space in our memories. . . Just as genes have created our bodies, so memes have created our minds and our cultures.” (Blackmore, February 26<sup>th</sup> 1999).

**Mentifacts.** “By converting ideas, products of the mind (mentifacts), into material objects ‘out-there’, we give them relative permanence, and in that permanent material form we can subject them to technical operations which are beyond the capacity of the mind acting by itself.” (Leach, 1991, 37)

**Natural selection** is seen as a mechanism of an evolutionary process of survival and reproduction of that most fit for these purposes, especially in coping with an unstable environment. Organisms with qualities most useful in the struggle for survival will pass their genes on to the next generation. Thus those with the most favourable characteristics evolve as the dominant type whilst those with the less favourable die out, mutate or lie dormant. Additionally natural selection takes advantage of the most beneficial random mutations. The resultant characteristics equip or adapt to determine successful qualities for subsequent reproduction and / or re-presentation responsive to behaviour in the next phase.

**Object.** “Most broadly *anything*. Within the study of perception and cognition, an aspect of environment of which one is aware . . . In psychoanalytic theory, [an object can be], a person, a part of a person, or a symbol representative of either, towards which behaviours, thoughts and desires are orientated. In the classical model, an object is required for one to obtain satisfaction of instincts. [It goes on to explain] . . . that these meanings run quite a gamut from the physical to the perceptual, the conceptual and the

symbolic as well as from the inanimate to the personal.” (Reber, 1985).

**Palaeoanthropology.** “Paleoanthropology calls on a broadly conceived and strategically implemented multidisciplinary approach to discover and interpret the evidence for human evolution. It is the responsibility of the paleoanthropologist to coordinate activities in the field and in the laboratory, biology, and the social sciences. The goal is to understand, as thoroughly as possible, the process by which we became human.” (Johanson & Edgar, 1996, 21).

**Phenotype.** See Genotype and genetic assimilation.

**Pleasure principle.** The conception that there is a mental process which calls on the unconscious, primitive instincts (the Id) which seek gratification with total disregard of the consequences to self or others. “Sexual love - has given us our most intense experience of an overwhelming sensation of pleasure and has thus furnished us with a pattern for our search for happiness.” (Freud 1991, 270).

**Representation.** When one thing replaces, represents, symbolises another. “. . . it is through culture and language *in this sense* that the production and circulation of meaning takes place. The conventional view used to be that ‘things’ exist in the material and natural world; that their material or natural characteristics are what determines or constitutes them; and that they have a perfectly clear meaning, *outside* of how they are represented. Representation, in this view, is a process of secondary importance, which enters into the field only after things have been fully formed and their meaning constituted, But since the ‘cultural turn’ in the human and social sciences, meaning is thought to be *produced* - constructed - rather than simply ‘found’. Consequently, in what has come to be called a ‘social constructionist approach’, representation is conceived as entering into the constitution of things; and thus culture is conceptualised as a primary or ‘constitutive’ process, as important as the economic or material ‘base’ in shaping social subjects and historical events - not merely a reflection of the world after the event.” (Hall, 1997, 5-6).

**Re-presentation.** Body manifestations as expressed by humans’ natural instincts or in their natural form as representation of a condition are taken up re- modified / amplified and re-presented in an augmented enhanced form.

**Selection.** “1. Broadly, choice. The term is used freely with respect to any operation whereby some individual, group, subject, item, etc, is chosen to be included in a sample, an experiment, a group, etc, 2. In individual organisms, possessing particular genetic characteristics which make survival and reproductive successes in their environmental niches more likely, cause a progressive sequence of changes in the genes for that species. Strictly speaking, it is the genes themselves that are selected for by this process, although it is the success of their associated phenotypes that is the causal process.” (Reber, 1985).

**Self, social.** “A general term used in several ways, all of which reflect some aspect of the “interface” between society and self: 1. Those aspects of self that are largely

determined by societal values and social influences. 2. The (usually delimited) aspects of one's self or personality which are readily perceived by other persons in social interactions. 3. Those components of personality that an individual regards as important in social interactions. 4. The general characterization of one's self that an individual perceives as being perceived by others." (Reber, 1985).

**Sexual selection.** Whilst natural selection involves both sexes in the competitive struggle for survival and reproduction, sexual selection involves competitiveness between the same sexes whereby the most successful competitor is selected by the opposite alpha sex partner. Humans choose certain physical characteristics less, it has been presumed, for survival reasons and more for their sexual attractiveness. However research has revealed that many sexual features double up as signs, signals and codes of fertility and superior genetic material.

**Soma.** The body as a whole as separate from the mind, soul or spirit.

**Symbolisation.** Symbolisation as a process is "... the unconscious process whereby repressed desires or wishes are transformed or disguised so as to be dealt with on a conscious level without psychic disturbance. Several theorists, notably Jung, have argued that this process forms the very foundations for all art, myth and religion." (Reber, 1985).

**Theory of mind.** The understanding, interpreting, anticipating, conjecturing of what another may be thinking, their perspectives and motives.

# CHAPTER 1

## **The critical evaluation of the history and context of jewellery as a mode of representation**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Many ‘jewellery specific texts’ are of limited value in the context of this research project because the vast majority are concerned with the technical aspects of making. Many of the remainder are self referential re-iterations of conjecture and therefore continue to promote the traditional myth that the role of adornment is to enhance and beautify women’s bodies to make them more attractive to men. Consequently the idea that body enhancement or representation was and is an exclusively feminine concept is presented as established fact.

Other texts utilise semiotic linguistics as a tool for the deconstruction and analysis of visual significance relative to interpretations of representation but do this only from a specific cultural perspective. Semiotic interpretations are often subjective and invariably time specific, providing valuable insights as to the significance of the object in its specific context. However, they do not provide an holistic critical framework for analysis of the nature and content of body adornment and jewellery in terms of motivation, concepts and codification applicable to a multiplicity of contexts.

The analysis of jewellery to date has therefore been confined to these established texts and, as a consequence, exploration of even the most basic underlying motives has been severely neglected. What is or has been offered is fragmentary and lacks rigorous discourse and cohesion, providing only limited insight into the multiplicity of interconnecting socio-cultural influences. In order to construct a cohesive critical framework with which to analyse, evaluate and model the significance and motivational imperatives of self-adornment through the creation of jewellery and its application to the body it is necessary to reappraise critically the traditional explanations available.

### **1.1 A critique of Oppi Untracht’s “Psychocosmogram or Jewel Mandala”**

This research has succeeded in identifying only one hypothetical model, by Oppi Untracht,<sup>1</sup> (see figure 1.1) which has attempted to present a socio-psychological interrelational diagram or rationale of the interconnecting multiple formative influences which determine the appearance of jewellery in relation to its wearer.

Through a review of the objects in its professional field and their social contexts, Untracht’s model attempts to provide a reductive and subjective classification of elements within a matrix representing the structure of contemporary society. An attempt is made to locate specific interrelating patterns of representational choice available to the person who wishes to

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<sup>1</sup> Oppi Untracht, *Jewellery: Concepts and Technology* (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1982), 9.



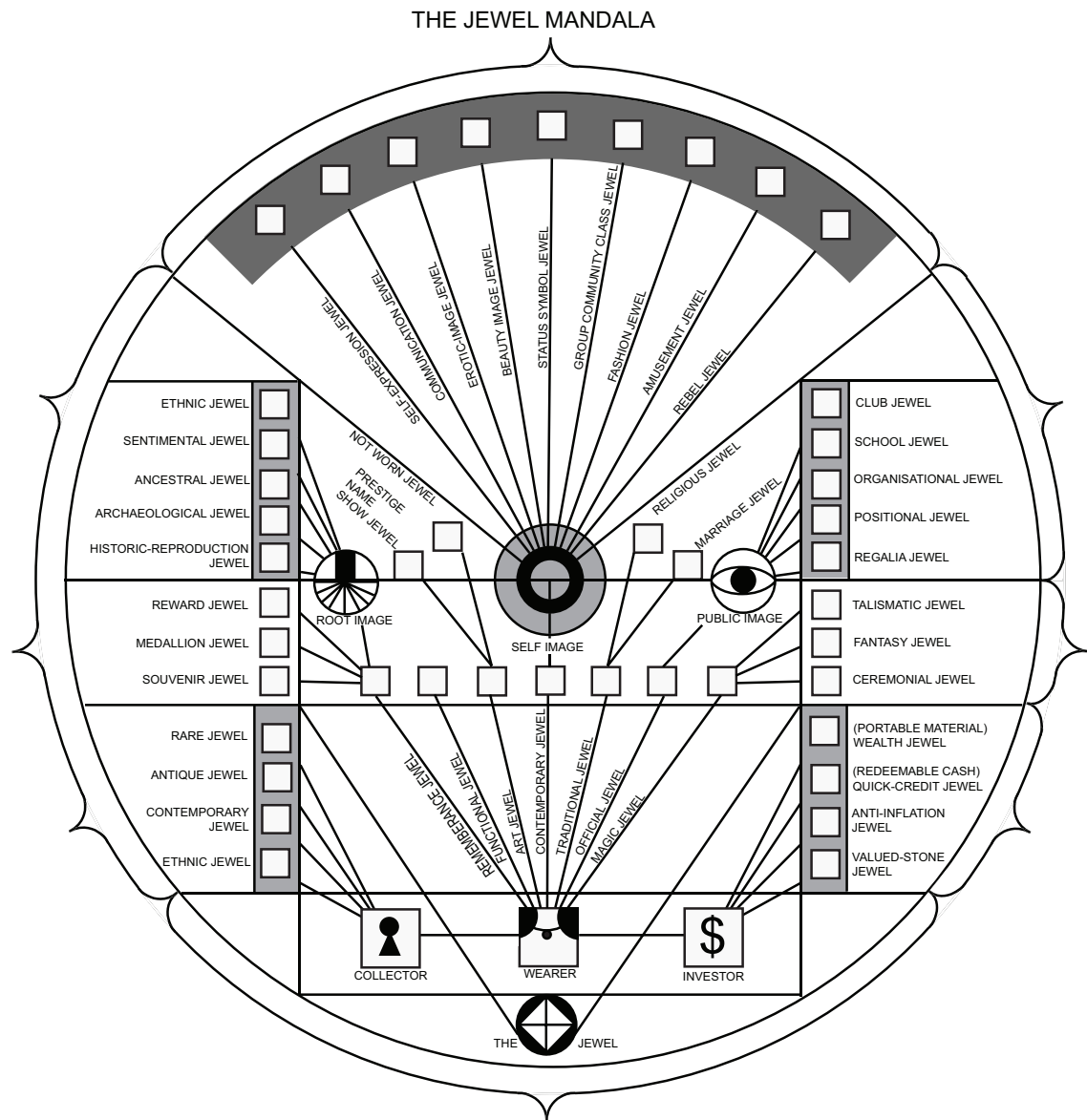


Figure 1.1 Oppi Untracht's hypothetical model "The Jewel Mandala"

construct his or her "self-image"<sup>2</sup> in an anthropological and contemporary social context relative to the social / economic status of the potential owner.

At first glance the model is seductive, but on reflection the pattern of the mandala is revealed to be more or less random since Untracht's view is a personal projection, not supported by any research methodology or rationale, predicated on a singular perspective of contemporary (1982) Western, Euro /American socio-cultural superiority and its economic context. He disregards the diversity of existing patterns of representation, concepts, socio-cultural, psychological and other aspects of 'self' in relation to other times in history and other parts of the world.

<sup>2</sup> Untracht further clarifies his interpretation of "self-image" with his definition: "By self-image is meant the inner concept or sense of identity each individual has of his or her being, in which the whole of the conscious and subconscious personality is integrated; this is the image which he or she desires to project to others. Because of its primal importance, and because it is the origin of self-identification, it is placed at the central axis of the mandala.

Radiating from the self-image are the universal motivations that a jewel's possession can incorporate and satisfy. Primary is the desire for self-expression, the affirmation of the ego and the psyche as expressed by an individual's intellectual, emotional, and impulsive activities and predispositions." Ibid., 9



In fairness his mandala / model is derived from a mystic concept of a life's meaning or pattern but in this case we are provided with a snapshot, a slice across the universal context of jewellery practice and function, listing separate, isolated genres, devoid of informed or detailed anthropological, historical / cultural data or any evolutionary rationale.<sup>3</sup> It does not shed light upon, or question, the psychological and generative issues behind his wide-ranging sociological construct which is offered without any accompanying tools for analysis. The model underpinning his mandala seeks to define jewellery as a consequence of choice, a collection of disassociated significances brought together by the wearer who is, we are to suppose, aware of them.

Current cultural theory (post modernist / post structuralist) in relation to areas of art and design other than jewellery has facilitated the awareness that one can no longer explain the role of representation through artefacts in simplistic terms such as visual appearance and / or making techniques and processes.<sup>4</sup>

Arbitrary attachment to the body of clothing, jewellery pieces or other objects as representational of the rudiments of 'self-expression' because they are available choices is an inadequate explanation for the enduring imperative of 'self-adornment'. If there are choices how did these come into being and what relationship do they have to those who do the choosing? By Untracht's own admission there are elements of conscious and unconscious personal motivations or imperatives at work which need to be considered. A theoretical construct for the understanding of jewellery as 'material culture choices' (selectivity) should therefore take account of evolution in all aspects of human development impacting upon the process. For example ritual as a facet of human behaviour has not yet been fully explained / analysed relative to body adornment and in relation to its impact upon the creation of jewellery.

Despite these criticisms of Untracht's model, his contribution has been significant and useful. It provides an entry point for re-evaluation aimed at a more sophisticated revised model, taking into account additional research material from other disciplines. However, as a culture and time specific mandala / model it has limited application in a dynamic situation where history and origins impact upon both the present and the future. Therefore any developed model should take into account and be able to explain the parallel evolution of multiple factors and their convergence in any selected period.

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<sup>3</sup> A mystic symbol of the cosmos generally of circular form with representations of deities arranged symmetrically around it. Used chiefly in Hinduism and Buddhism as an aid to meditation, it has become popular recently in the West for similar functions. In Jungian theory it is the symbolic representation of the striving for unity of the self. Arthur S. Rober, The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (London: Penguin Group, 1985), s.v. "Mandala"

Untracht's version: "A diagrammatic *jewel mandala* is presented here with the hopes of enabling the reader to better understand the interrelationships of the various forces that contribute to the creation of our desires for jewels. The image of a mandala (the circular, radial "psychocosmogram" originating in India and used in meditation and the invocation of deities) is a particularly useful organizing principle." Oppi Untracht, Jewellery: Concepts and Technology (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1982), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Representation: Here a good definition is provided by Hall: "So it is through culture and language *in this sense* that the production and circulation of meaning takes place. The conventional view used to be that 'things' exist in the material and natural world; that their material or natural characteristics are what determines or constitutes them; and that they have a perfectly clear meaning, *outside* of how they are represented. Representation, in this view, is a process of secondary importance, which enters into the field only after things have been fully formed and their meaning constituted. But since the 'cultural turn' in the human and social sciences, meaning is thought to be *produced* – constructed – rather than simply 'found'. Consequently, in what has come to be called a 'social constructionist approach', representation is conceived as entering into the very constitution of things; and thus culture is conceptualised as a primary or 'constitutive' process, as important as the economic or material 'base' in shaping social subjects and historical events – not merely a reflection of the world after the event." Stuart Hall, ed., Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1997), 5-6.

Darwin's theory of evolution resulted from his observations of a method of selection in reproduction brought about as 'adaptive responses' to numerous variants or permutations in conditions impacting upon species and bringing about changes to them over time. His principles, deriving from observation, were originally applied to the explanation of nature's processes but in recent times they have been adapted to permit them to be applied in other fields of enquiry such as evolutionary psychology,<sup>5</sup> evolutionary biology and cognitive psychology as defined in the next chapter. In the context of this research Darwinian approaches would enable the multifaceted fragmented mandala / model of Untracht to be underpinned by a cohesive theory demonstrating that the apparent arbitrariness of choice was possibly preordained by being inextricably linked to human evolution.

By adapting Darwin's basic methods it would be hypothetically possible to plot an evolutionary pathway of human adaptive and dynamic self adornment / re-presentation activities which took account not only of varying conditions but also biological and other imperatives for change. An evolutionary approach and its application would interpret jewellery in evolutionary terms as a metaphorical species adjunct, a genera which has primal origins; a progression of sequential changes which enables survival and generative accomplishment in humans' variant environmental compartments, a developmental history, a diversity of cultural agendas.

### 1.1.1 The Question of 'Self' in Untracht's Mandala

In support of this proposed approach there is mounting evidence that the central axis of the mandala, focussing primarily on the representation of the 'imagined self' and based on specific claims that this activity is an ultimate act of 'self expression', is at odds with some significant trends in current understanding.

Untracht sees the concept of 'self' in the context of a particular choice of objects selected by the wearers which provides the key to their "self identification", "personality needs" and "individualising force."<sup>6</sup> It is here that another flaw in the model becomes apparent: one cannot use the concept without understanding what the content and context of the expression of 'self' really is. Untracht has offered a structure using a superficial interpretation of "self expression" as a function motivated by an act of impulse or whim. He misidentifies the 'self' as an individual in total control of his or her free will and destiny, but there is no such thing as the uncontaminated self or the phenomenal self, it cannot exist. Untracht seems to imply that, in the context of the representation of self, a person's selection and orchestration of jewellery components comes from the 'inner self'. One could argue that for this to happen the individual must exist in a non-social environment.

Various recent sociological / psychoanalytic research models on the subject of representation have ascertained that the physical and social world of 'self' is not static, is not something which chooses its own destiny. The very idea of self-image is fraught with assumptions. The question becomes, where does the concept of 'self' come from, how is it defined?

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<sup>5</sup> Evolutionary psychology: "It sees living humans as creatures shaped by an ancestral environment long since left behind, which it calls the environment of evolutionary adaptation or EEA. The idea was first raised in 1969 by the child psychologist John Bowlby, in the first volume of his work, *Attachment and Loss*. . . . Evolutionary psychology conceives the mind as a collection of adaptations made to address specific problems in the founding environment. In contemporary environments, people's behaviour will sometimes be adaptive, and sometimes not". Marek Kohn, *As We Know It: Coming to Terms with an Evolved Mind* (London: Granta Books 1999; reprint, London: Granta Books 2000), 11. (page reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>6</sup> Oppi Untracht, *Jewellery: Concepts and Technology* (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1982), 9.

Thinkers from Freud through to Lévi-Strauss, Saussure and Chomsky,<sup>7</sup> from the fields of psychology, socio-anthropology and linguistics, are now regarded as individual specialists contributing to the founding of a social science which influenced the subsequent generation of intellectuals in respect of notion and ideas of the self as a social entity.

More recent theorists including Barthes, Goffman, Lacan, Berger, Foucault, Mulvey,<sup>8</sup> have added to the academic and philosophical debate in the subject by means of their analytical methods and interdisciplinary approach. They have further redefined and extended ideas concerning 'self being' by positioning an individual self image constructed by a multiplicity of concepts and issues impacting upon the self in the context of contemporary cultural theory.

As Barthes would have it, the independent 'self' is a myth,<sup>9</sup> The informed perception of our physical form no longer accepts the body as a natural entity, rather it is viewed as a cultural product which, when fully transformed, shaped, starved, fattened, mutilated, re-formed, augmented, painted and adorned, is an object, and society's most central vehicle for the encoding of its values and cultural identity. Thinkers such as Mulvey and Foucault, from the feminist and gay perspectives respectively, have picked up on important elements of this and have illuminated and elaborated on many of the lacunae in it.

In the light of these discourses one cannot look at self as the centre of Untracht's kind of universe, it is not static or stable. Self is connected to environment, something which is in a constant state of adjustment, which fluctuates. Recent feminist writers like Mulvey have vigorously attempted to highlight the notion that the interface between the physical and social has, in the context of women's lives, a very different reality than is historically represented. Male-dominated culture and academic reasoning have totally neglected to take account of this idea.

If one takes the understanding of 'self' as being a reflective process and take the 'self-image' as the 'imag(in)ed self' developing through this process, then it becomes possible to investigate how particular concepts of 'self' and the representation of women's bodies, in all their various modes, came into existence.

Seldom are specific artefacts, which are of deeply encoded psychological and metaphysical substance in themselves when applied to women's bodies, analysed as an aspect of an integrated

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<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works*, Volume 12, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books 1985; reprint, London: Penguin Books 1991), (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition). Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: three essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, Volume 7, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books 1977; reprint, London: Penguin Books 1991), (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition). Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, trans. James Harle Bell and John Richard von Sturmer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967). F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1983; reprint, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1990). Noam Chomsky, *Language and Mind*, 3d ed., (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (Great Britain: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1972; reprint, London: Vintage Books 1993). Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (U.S.A.: Anchor Books, 1959; reprint, Great Britain: Pelican Books, 1987). Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (Great Britain: Fontana Press 1991). John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Great Britain: Ellis Horwood Limited and Tavistock Publications, 1986 reprint London: Routledge, 1989). Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House 1978; reprint, Vintage Books 1990). Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Barthes points out that: "Semiology has taught us that myth has a task of giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal.

What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of reality." Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (Great Britain: Jonathan Cape Ltd., reprint, London: Vintage Books 1993), 142.

investigation of human evolution relative to behaviour. This phenomenon is seen as an individual response to social constraints and not an important contributory factor affected by evolution. The evolutionary physical effects on the being and psyche of women may impact upon behavioural responses to and within male-prescribed social organisations but might also influence the nature of these evolving structures.

Many feminist critics have already reversed the perspective of 'self' to see it not as an end product which is in control of its own destiny, making independent decisions, but regarding it as a cultural construct. This progressive emphasis on the 'self' as separated from the body, constructed entirely by responses to external forces, has necessarily introduced notions of gender autonomous from the body. However, it is the issue of gender differentiation relative to the body which requires a re-evaluation to establish what role the body plays in the determination and differentiation of gender.

The concept of 'self' could be redefined from an entirely fresh standpoint and might relocate self to a central role as the definer of socio-cultural mores. Any such refocusing has to be grounded in a new more factually based analysis. A different group of thinkers, theorists like Lumsden, Wilson, Dawkins, Jones, Berkow, Cosmides, Tooby, Pinker, and Mithen,<sup>10</sup> have pioneered the application of evolutionary psychology which has begun to address issues associated with the biological imperatives which mould social and individual behaviour.

Evolutionary Psychology is psychology informed by the fact that the inherited architecture of the human mind is the product of the evolutionary process. It is a conceptually integrated approach in which the theories of selection pressures are used to generate hypotheses about design features of the human mind and in which our knowledge of psychological and behavioural phenomena can be organized and augmented by placing them in their functional context.<sup>11</sup>

Their ideas are relatively new and gaining credibility inasmuch as, within the context of what has now come to be known as the nature / nurture debate, they suggest that social evolutionary change is primarily predicated upon natural biological and genetic imperatives which transform and govern behaviour. According to this group, in the first instance this primary imperative precipitated individual but interrelated human behaviour, which later transformed into a symbiotic relationship with the changing parameters and complexities of the socialising imperatives of socio-cultural evolution, in short, biological imperatives mediated by psychological influences arising from social need. This thesis later develops these notions in the context of case studies.

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<sup>10</sup> Charles J. Lumsden and Edward Wilson, *Genes Mind and Culture: The Coevolutionary Process* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press Inc., 1981). Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 2d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press 1989).

Richard Dawkins, *The Extended Phenotype: The Long Reach of the Gene*, with a Foreword by Daniel Dennett 2d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Steve Jones, *The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future*, 2d ed., (Great Britain: Flamingo 1994). Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, eds., *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press 1995). Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (USA: W. W. Norton, 1997; London: Penguin Group, 1999). Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A search for the origins of art, religion and science* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd. 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, in introduction: "Evolutionary Psychology and Conceptual Integration" eds., *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 7.

### 1.1.2 An evolutionary approach

Evolutionary reasoning is relocating the locus of research, especially interdisciplinary research where it is incorporating work from many specialist areas such as archaeology, anthropology, physiology, sexology, genetics and paleoanthropology.<sup>12</sup> This has a profound influence in a field where many have failed to recognise the link between the cultural and behavioural, especially the socio-biologists who have looked at culture as being solely biologically driven.

If the 'self' is analysed as an evolving organism one needs to look at the situation in reverse and ask: what was it about the self which generated the need for humans to project this particular kind of self image to the outside world, the need for the making and the use of these jewellery objects in the way that humans do? How do these activities act as the interface between nature and nurture, how and why did they originate? How, when and why did individuals collectively make the shift from the physical to the social and to the cultural, and how can a proper analysis of today's complex social interactions be carried out? In order to answer these questions one must see the 'self' at the centre of a physical and social universe, as part of a past, present and future, as a carrier, as a reproductive mechanism in several contexts. How can this be done?

It may be possible to present a theoretical construct of 'self' using evolutionary reasoning but it requires considerable lateral thinking. The concept of 'self' is loaded. Even when confined within the boundaries of jewellery we are beleaguered by traditional assumptions and dismissive attitudes, but if these can be set aside we can reposition our perspective to give the ritual of body adornment and re-presentation of 'self' a new interpretation.

That the post-modern Eurocentric socio-cultural context, distinguishable and discussed today, has its origins in the primordial past of our species, and therefore has a 'bio-historical' past<sup>13</sup> is also evidenced by numerous literature and science based sources of reference. It therefore follows that it should be possible to hypothesise that humans' earliest relatives / ancestors, whether living primates or the early Hominidae family, learned to 'read' each other through the presentation of their bodies prior to the development of complex verbal / sound based communication and evolved languages.

A level of visual language was in place relative to their 'primal' awareness of 'being' long before hominids experienced a 'concept of self' or even possessed an awareness of self, in learning to translate their immediate world into communication through visual signs. A composition of physical signs, gesture, contortion and in some cases altered states in body chemistry (as in changes of colour) can all evidence the need to communicate with one another without the capabilities or need of verbal language.<sup>14</sup> The physical, biological and mental

<sup>12</sup> "Paleoanthropology calls on a broadly conceived and strategically implemented multidisciplinary approach to discover and interpret the evidence for human evolution. It is the responsibility of the paleoanthropologist to coordinate activities in the field and in the laboratory, biology, and the social sciences. The goal is to understand, as thoroughly as possible, the process by which we became human." Donald Johanson & Blake Edgar, *From Lucy to Language* (London: George Weidenfield & Nicolson Ltd., 1996), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Humans' mammalian heritage can be traced back approximately 65-70 million years, the ancestor of contemporary primates to approximately 65 million years. Research has evidenced that as primal forms primates progress from monkeys to apes to humans. In response to environmental pressures, generic primate characteristics, show an elevated mental and physical capacity for problem solving. For a summary of "the major primate trends that have a bearing on human adaptation" see: Serena Nanda, *Cultural Anthropology*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1991), 54-58.

<sup>14</sup> and at a speed faster than sound. A smile can be read well out of earshot.



behavioural presence of the 'other' can be identified and codified in terms of response. Humans have evolved to interpret their environment as a 'language' of signs, as categories of non verbal language which they have learned to read and interpret in order to make sense of a world in which they needed to survive and reproduce.

If one applies Structuralist and Post-Structuralist theory to human evolutionary history to arrive at a point where humans are living in a sophisticated, social and cultural environment such as the one presented in Untracht's mandala, one needs to understand that the language of each jewellery object is a highly complex capsule of communication whose store of 'words, meanings and grammar' is constructed from a communal archive of life's accumulation of experience and knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Relative to Untracht's mandala some of the layering and communicative meanings can be defined as the codes, signs and images of the object, as reflective of the 'self' or the 'other'. Untracht's jewellery objects may be representative of meanings the origins of which may long since have been lost in time. However, in order to reveal the underlying drives, significances or imperatives to identify primal origins in this contemporary context, the nature of the veneer or multi-layering must be known and stripped away.

Followers of Saussure like Barthes and Berger used theories of semiotics in language to form an applied deconstruction method when evaluating the significance and meaning of individual and cultural representation from a visual perspective. Therefore in order to strip away the first and most immediate layer one must understand the visual codes of body representation, body enhancement and representational objects (such as jewellery as a code carrying instrument). It would seem that a semiotic analysis is required and needs to pursue not only a synchronic approach to the subject but also a diachronic one, which takes into account the conditions for the body's existence.

Saussure's focus and methods, like many others, are confined to conditions of here and now, evaluating only what is in existence at this or that moment in time.<sup>16</sup> However, despite this limitation, his work does indicate that an analysis may be possible which provides an historical dimension for contextualisation of the visual in terms which reflect socio-cultural imperatives. The difference, it is here proposed, is that these signs have been generated from deeply embedded primal biological imperatives going back thousands of years and that we are driven by an archive of collective subconsciousnesses to which, irrespective of whether they are in Europe, Africa or Asia, our 'living' visual languages still refer.

To this end, therefore, the research proposes an investigation of conditions governing why forms of body representation arose, and why and how they were preserved as fixed base determinants, irrespective of time yet perpetuated through time. A holistic but multi-faceted approach is adopted in the creation of an interdisciplinary critical framework for the evaluation of significances and imperatives in body adornment in its representational forms.

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<sup>15</sup> Words are units (a symbol, sign or code) from which sentences are constructed.

<sup>16</sup> "The first thing which strikes one on studying linguistic facts is that the language user is unaware of their succession in time: he is dealing with a state. Hence the linguist who wishes to understand this state must rule out of consideration everything which brought that state about, and pay no attention to diachrony. Only by suppressing the past can he enter into the state of mind of the language user. The intervention of history can only distort his judgement." F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1983; reprint, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1990), 81.

Of the multiplicity of different aspects constituting the ‘contemporary self’ much can now be explained in terms derived from evolutionary theory which sees presentation of self and sign systems arising from the body’s biological needs. This analysis explains how and why humans may have evolved their use of the body, its adornment / modification and later its objects of representation as a tool of social signing.

Like a word, an object can be seen as a separate entity or as an attachment to a system. Unlike the linguistic sign, however, jewellery (as object) comprises two separate elements, physical and metaphysical, which impact upon its interpretation because, over time, the physicality of the object becomes autonomous and therefore carries significances of its own. (see figure 1.2)

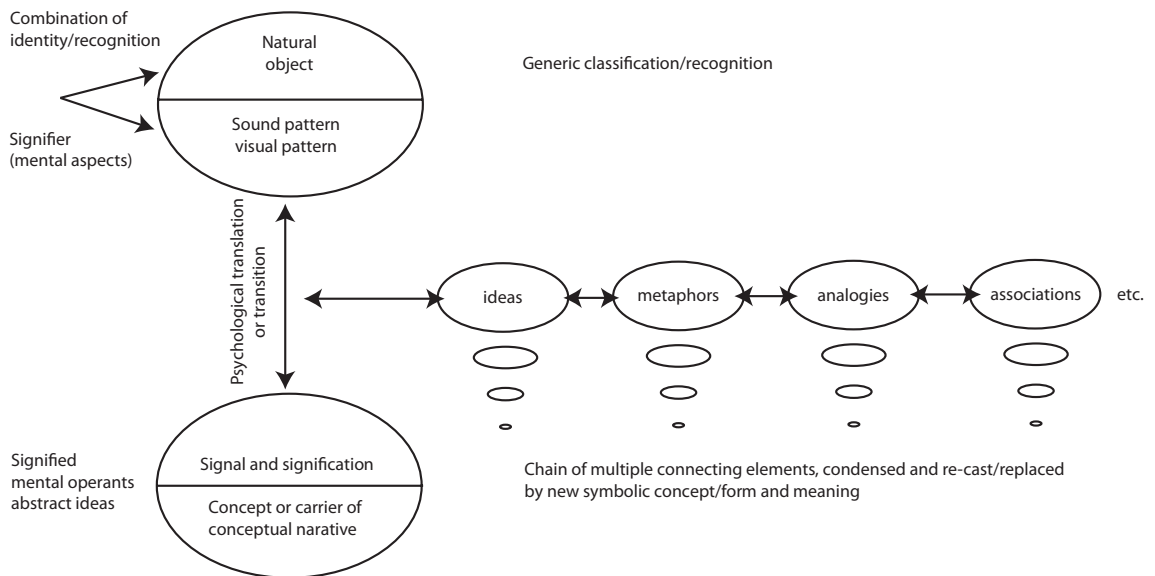


Figure 1.2 Chain of concept connections

For the purpose of this analysis semiotic theory is useful because it highlights the physical and metaphysical aspects of objects, identifying signified and signifier. This has allowed us to diagram conceptually an actuality of elemental relationships which are pertinent to specific relationships and so elucidate the formation of conceptual narrative.

Accepting that each piece of jewellery is an object (word) with two elements, its natural existence (for example a ring) or its other existence, as an object or vehicle for signs, codes and symbols, one can surmise that each object (element of jewellery) is encoded with its own rules and symbolic language and, as in linguistics, each is subordinate and collectively answerable to a higher structure, the ideologies of that culture.

**The Signifier** - the material aspect (in oral language the vocal sound or in writing the physical word), in objects the natural, material element external to the mental concepts (independent of the sign).

**The Signified** - mental concepts, abstract mental operants / concepts which carry and communicate the ideas associated with the object, (where the object is a product of sign).

This process is clearly exemplified in the case study of the flower (Chapter 5.5-5.6 and figure 5.6 and 5.7) which demonstrate the transitional connections between objects of ‘natural existence’ and objects of sign, and the processing of abstract thought into complex patterns of text.

The human capacity for the detachment of an object from its primary purpose and its elevation to its distinctive communicative status as ‘cultural object’ could be considered to be one of the most profound developments in the history of human development. In this context it would be helpful if research / investigation could establish how the association of signs with particular objects and their presentation was generated in the first place. This specific sign systems of jewellery objects and associated modes of adornment can be seen as separate containers of signs and codes. Designation of meaning through the analysis of sign and its overarching of sign systems should be understood from an evolutionary perspective since for any given object there are variations in meaning for the several generations existing at any given moment.

It is worth noting that certain distinctive characteristics embodied in the individual objects consistently survive and are reproduced like a ‘species’<sup>17</sup> in natural history. What therefore makes these object characteristics viable, in what environmental niche or social context are they supported and to what do they refer? Signs generate further signs according to how a sign co-exists with other signs. Abstract sign components provide the elements for an expanded semiotic which instigates all kinds of compositions of expression and meaning suggesting a further generic hybridisation as society evolves (exemplified in the case study of the red heart. Figure 8.3 Chapter 8.2).

Jewellery objects, which are used by individuals within a community and have a common usage, such as a wedding ring, may be considered as evidence of objects being tools for the reinforcement of social value and cohesion. These objects convey and embody the rules and conventions which govern a community. Jewellery can in certain circumstances be the speech of a community. Common usage of jewellery objects evidences and reflects a collective mentality / psychology which draws on human experience and inherited values, defined by Emile Durkheim as “collective consciousness” and “collective representation”<sup>18</sup>.

There are universal objects which, when attached to the body, designate and locate the identity of ‘self’, from the most fundamental such as gender, age, reproductive viability, social status, community and so on, to the most complex of meanings and connotations. Embodiment appearances evoke reflective responses in those with whom one needs to communicate. However these are not random selections, as Untracht would imply, but rather purposeful signifiers of specific socio / psycho / bio-sexual intent.

Culture is structural, culture has evolved by a complex formulation of regulations and representations which have been refined and ‘transmitted’ through augmentation by successive generations. The rules are abstract, put in place before we are born, we grow up understanding and learning them as a part of life, rather than seeing the myths which may uphold them (see Barthes and Berger). Experience provides context and a background of passive acceptance so that they become a part of consciousness and seem ‘natural’ to the majority.

Foucault’s interpretation of the development of the self in modern societies should also be placed in question in a rather basic way. Instead of seeing the self as constructed by a specific ‘technology’, we should recognise that self-identity becomes particularly problematic in

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<sup>17</sup> Interesting word in this context, its origin in Latin meaning: ‘appearance, form, beauty’, from *specere* ‘to look’.

<sup>18</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method: And selected texts on sociology and its method*, trans. W. D. Halls (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982).



modern social life, particularly in the very recent era. Fundamental features of a society of high reflectivity are the 'open' character of self-identity and the reflective nature of the body. For women struggling to break free from pre-existing gender roles, the question 'Who am I?' - which Betty Friedan labelled 'the problem with no name' - comes to the surface with particular intensity. . . . The self is for everyone a reflexive project - a more or less continuous interrogation of past, present and future.<sup>19</sup>

Appearance means specific identifications of one's 'self' and with the 'other'. In the act of 'appearance' a composition of objects on the body make visible physical accounts which depict the values to which the wearer subscribes. The representation of the 'aesthetic self', an important definition which will be discussed later, is a consequence of both collective and individual representation in appearance.

## 1.2 Jewellery as a mode of representation

In examining the components of the self constructed in self-representation and manifest in appearance it is useful to look at how this happens in terms of process. One of the most important aspects of appearance representation is the ritual of dressing which provides some clues as to the motivation impacting upon contemporary society and hints at evolutionary imperatives.

### 1.2.1 The daily ritual

Shortly after waking, we stumble to the mirror, pause, acknowledge our reflection. We look closer, peer into our eyes as though searching out our soul, as though it may have disappeared during the darkness of our sleep. Absentmindedly, we comb our fingers through our hair, check our smile, assess what we see. More often than not, our reflection declares our face to be a virtual disaster and we are overtaken by an urge to rebuild our image. Within the next twenty-four hours, thousands of people will have gone through the same process. It is a daily ritual so natural to us that the action seems to be innate.

Michael Bacchus, an eminent entomologist from the Natural History Museum, once remarked that he "was once asked, by a baffled New Guinea tribesman, what he was searching for, as the tribesman observed with concern how he would look into his reflection each morning after shaving."<sup>20</sup> We might well ask the same question. We know that since childhood we have been trained by our parents in the importance of self-presentation and caring about personal hygiene. It has become second nature and therefore we may never have asked very deeply 'why?'. There seems to be an underlying anxiety which we cannot account for, we are aware of our 'self' but not yet secure enough to stand alone in presenting our self to the world. We are not yet sufficiently confident to go it alone in the world.

Dependency is related in human evolution, to nurturing the infant to the point of independent capability to survive. In the social context, depending upon the complexity of interdependency, the move to independent survival can take considerably more time, through adolescence into adulthood.

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<sup>19</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992; reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 30 (Page reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>20</sup> Personal information; Michael Bacchus, entomologist specialising in beetles, was Senior Scientific Officer to the Natural History Museum, London. The incident occurred whilst he was on a collaborative collecting expedition (1964-65) with the Natural History Museum, London and Manchester University.



Figure 1.3 'Dressing up' The search for self identity

Even though some parents do not consciously wish to persuade their children to adopt specific sex roles, there nonetheless actively exists an overarching strategic undertow of conditioning. An awareness of sex models and roles starts early in a child's development where children readily begin to comprehend their gender and what is expected of them and begin to mould themselves accordingly. Girls especially, in their early childhood, will tend to model themselves on their mothers, soon to be followed by the inevitable 'princess' stage. Role re-enactment seems to be critical in the growing up process. At an early stage little girls inevitably seem to sense or recognise the sexual empowerment of the body adorned and the representation of femininity. See figure 1.3. Teenagers avidly follow sex role models, especially those adulated in the mass media, as they grow up into adulthood. Imitation enables them to extend their skills in relation to their cultural sex role appropriateness.

By the time we become adults we have developed specialised skills, not only in manipulating appearance and behaviour to suit certain social situations, but also in interpreting specific situations and adjusting to them. We were not born with these skills but have had to acquire them through the socialising process, part of which is ritual repetitions achieved through training and parents' critical approval.

While in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure. [Routinely performed ritual] . . . constitutes one way in which a performance is 'socialised', moulded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented.<sup>21</sup>

This socialising process is the basis of the springboard to further our development and expertise. By combining personal experience, trial and error, ingenuity and insight, we set about the task of honing the science of presentation down to a finely tuned instrument of personal

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<sup>21</sup> Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (U.S.A.: Anchor Books, 1959; reprint, Great Britain: Pelican Books, 1987), 40, 44. (Page reference is to reprint edition).

communication and ego projection tempered by particular social constraints. As participants in human society, we have been trained by our parents to observe and absorb the intricacies of social interaction and to become accomplished performers. Every day we adorn ourselves to perform, every day we hold a dialogue with our audience; applause reflects approval and our endless quest for self-esteem is rewarded. Our inner thoughts are imaginings, fantasies of encounters, of coming events. Our imaginings are rehearsals for the real thing, or for anticipated or expected tasks and social encounters, with all their pleasure, pain, fear and excitement.

With dexterity we set to work to transform ourselves. We become a collage, a masterly piece of mobile art. Body and mind become an assemblage of codes and images, which are to be exhibited as the broadcaster and communicator of our psyche, acting as a semaphore for our deepest desires, emotions and ideals. When we are finished, we stand back from the mirror as though to admire a painting and say: “Yes, here is the real me, this is how I want to be and how I wish people to understand me”. We have metamorphosed, we are ready to embrace the world.

It is in our most liberated fantasies where we imagine that, if only we can encapsulate all we wish to communicate and if we can construct our presentation with intelligence, skill and accuracy, then we can become supercharged. We have the potential to control any situation, we can transmit an electrifying beam, we can freeze our recipients in their tracks, like a rabbit caught in the dazzle of an automobile headlamp. We can become whoever we wish to be: Robert de Niro, Attila the Hun, Cleopatra, Madonna or any imaginary icon. We keep illusory manipulations sensibly in balance, so that at best we are credible. With the right kind of presentation, we can illuminate our personality, be confident, at ease and be accepted with respect; at worst, we can overstate and the effect of disguise turns into farce. ‘Metamorphosing’ is a highly skilled trick in life.

The 2003 exhibition and debate on: ‘Metamorphing: Changing Bodies, Altered States’ (Victoria and Albert Museum in collaboration with the Wellcome Trust) endeavoured to “explore some of the urgent and varied issues raised by metamorphosis in science and art today”,<sup>22</sup> and evidenced that a new spirit of enquiry is in the air. Reality, consciousness, self-awareness, self-identity and the transformation of self through body representations have returned to the agenda as issues in the cultural environment as well as in contemporary psychology. Furthermore this discernible zeitgeist has also been felt by a variety of disciplines including the philosophical, genetic, biological, neuro-scientific, anthropological, etc. This collective interest has provided a productive conceptual meeting ground for the reformulation of debate, research and analysis. Issues and concerns raised by discussing the ritual of dressing in the social context relative to personal experience hint at further questions of underlying motivation.

### **1.2.2 What governs these rules and rituals?**

In order to understand what motivates such an exclusively human activity as dressing, a wide ranging appreciation of the other factors which construct and constrain a human being is required. The study of psychology relative to self-image and expression, the ego, conscious and subconscious, is now well established and there are many well-known and documented case studies.

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<sup>22</sup> Quote from the invitation to a critical debate at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Metamorphing: Changing Bodies, Altered states. Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

The focus of this study is the ritual of and pre-occupation with the use and making of adornment as the vehicle for the 'self-image', one of the most persistently pursued activities of human behaviour since its history began. It ought therefore to be given serious consideration as a unique phenomenon which must have made a consequential impact on the cultural and creative development of human life. If not, humans would have abandoned it as a fruitless activity before now.

Theories of evolutionary psychology have introduced issues to the gender debate which can be subsumed within discussion surrounding sexual objectification. According to Paglia " . . . sexual objectification is a supreme human talent that is indistinguishable from the art impulse,"<sup>23</sup> thereby linking the biological / psychological to the creative spirit.

Humans instinctively know that emotional expressions are often primal prompts from the murky terrain of the subconscious and the employment of body decoration as its vehicle is deep-seated in history. It is possible to speculate that the practice of body decoration could have existed as a complex system for communication long before spoken language developed and there is no doubt that it existed well before written language. Yet even academic opinion frequently dismisses this as the most trivial of mankind's pursuits. It is often historians who claim that the human's concern with adornment produced some of the first non-functional artefacts to have been made by what some historians have referred to as 'primitive'<sup>24</sup> beings. There is the notion that, as soon as humans had spare time on their hands after attending to their subsistence needs such as clothes, shelter and food, they aimlessly frittered their time away making useless trinkets. What is seldom acknowledged in this context is that, when humans behave in this way, they are participants in the process of evolution: the evolution of their own lives, the evolution of humankind and the expansion of its thinking. Human intelligence, coupled with visual perception and physical manipulative abilities, promoted the evolution of technological advancement commensurate with social development.

What individuals do every morning is to prepare to perform in a drama that has been enacted day after day, from the ancient past to the present day, forever perfecting the performance, forever adjusting to the demands of their audience, forever seeking applause. The performer has a long list of successors in future generations, and the accumulating and passing on of knowledge and skills adds profound significance to the meaning of future lives. All are on a roller coaster, which is accelerating not only in terms of technological achievements but also in relation to science and the perception of self.

Twenty first century humans are socio-cultural constructs at the end of a long line of events and influences of which an understanding can only be achieved by comprehending the natural and evolutionary socially nurtured cycle of events. These influences impact on the mind / behaviour link in individual psychology which mediates the extent to which bio-sexual display is either revealed or hidden.

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<sup>23</sup> Camille Paglia, Sex, Art, and American Culture (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 17.

<sup>24</sup> Pre-industrial / hunter gathering groups, small scale and pre-literate.

Mulvey pointed out that:

Psychoanalytic theory opened up the possibility of understanding the mechanics of popular mythology and its raw materials: images of sexual difference, instincts and their vicissitudes, primal fantasy. Structuralism and semiotics opened up the possibility of understanding the way images work as signs and symptoms, patterns of rhetoric, narrative and narration. A previously invisible world whose images, sensations and inklings had previously evaded one's grasp materialised with the language that could name its objects, like the appearance of invisible ink in front of a flame.<sup>25</sup>

Gamman and Makinen argued that Freudian and Lacanian phallogocentric biased theory has further inhibited analysis and interpretation of women's relative status in relationship to the socio-cultural order.<sup>26</sup> Other works, such as Goffman's 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', an otherwise excellent work of analysis, constructs a "conception of self"<sup>27</sup> from the male standpoint. For women revisiting these writings through a post modernist's reading of signification it is possible to arrive at an understanding, as Mulvey, Gamman and Makinen point out, that the concept of self for women develops "within the specific symbolic order, . . . [ie., gender] with reference to the phallus."<sup>28</sup> Women and men take up their identity within the current vernacular of discursive asymmetric dynamics and dichotomies in socio-cultural norms, conventions and constructs.

Here the thesis takes into account a deeper analysis of the evolved bio-psycho male copulatory gaze and in the case of women's body representation, women observe what the male gaze desires and then interpret and re-present accordingly. As yet no single word has been invented that can be used to describe man or woman as one asexual concept. Male and female are very different, and have their separate cultures even though they may have common desires and be aiming at similar goals. Humans' biological, emotional and physical differences, their separate expectations and ambitions of life, will be taken into consideration.

In relation to this it will be argued that human beings are constructed of overlapping component factors, evolved over time, which follow a sequence: (1) biological, (2) physiological, (3) behavioural (socio-cultural) and (4) psychological. We observe and discuss how these are imposed and self determined consciously and unconsciously in the contemporary situation. Therefore any object which has been or is employed for personal adornment is equally complex and often ambiguous since it is made by and embodies the sequence of evolutionary experience.

There are underlying principles involved here, for example the double function (a) practical in its purpose, the comb in the East, such as Japan and Korea, can also be (b) symbolic suggesting a profession or status. These principles will be discussed and illustrated later. However, in his book 'Art History and its Methods' 1995, (see figure 1.4) Fernie cites in the glossary under 'evolution'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Laura Mulvey, Visual and Other Pleasures (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989), xiii.

<sup>26</sup> Lorraine Gamman & Merja Makinen, Female Fetishism: A New Look (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1994), 100.

<sup>27</sup> Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (U.S.A. Anchor Books, 1959; reprint, Great Britain: Pelican Books, 1987), 13 (Page reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>28</sup> Lorraine Gamman & Merja Makinen, Female Fetishism: A New Look (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1994), 100.

<sup>29</sup> Eric Fernie, Art History and its Methods: A critical anthology (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1995; reprint, London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999), 336-337 (Page reference is to reprint edition).



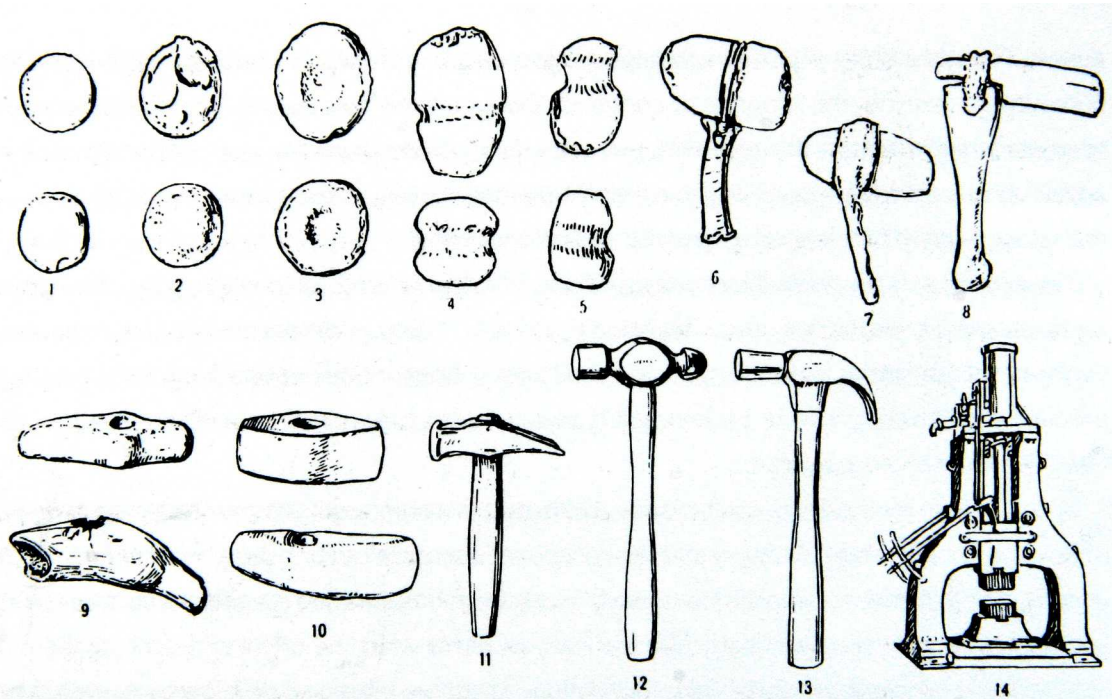


Figure 1.4 The typology of the hammer

The Typology of the Hammer. From G. Barsalla, *The Evolution of Technology*, Cambridge, 1988, fig. 14. The caption to Barsalla's diagram begins: 'The Evolutionary history of the hammer, from the first crudely shaped pounding stone (1) to James Nasmyth's gigantic steam hammer of 1842 (14). . . ' [Ferne goes on to say] "This figure illustrates the extent to which it is productive to apply evolutionary metaphors to human artefacts and the point at which it ceases to be useful to do so. While all of the examples apart from the last bear some resemblance to the sequences of the anatomical parts proposed in the evolutionary theory, the last, a punch hammer, stands out as having nothing to do with such a sequence and represents a jump which is not explained. . . . This example suggests that the notion of evolution has become so much part of our mental furniture that we assume its relevance even when there is no reason to do so. This is of course a good reason for avoiding it.

In differentiating his definitions of evolution Fernie suggests that there is a shift in emphasis dependent upon whether or not the discussion is focussed upon the biological, the psyche or the culture, be it social or economic. It is apparent therefore that there is a relationship arising from the impact of each upon the other, tempered, as Dawkins argues in *The Extended Phenotype*,<sup>30</sup> by the dynamic of the initiating force, a theoretical process discussed later in the thesis.

It will be argued that all human decorative practices relative to self-representation and adornment can be traced back to basic prehistoric imperatives, the offshoots of which lead to all other practical considerations and consequent psychological conditioning. Where humans have left no words of explanation, as is the case of prehistory, or where no formal documentation can be found, parallels with the contemporary situation will be addressed by applying deductive reasoning based upon principles drawn from artefacts left behind. In addition, many of the artefacts from prehistoric times must have been organic and, because of their perishable nature,

<sup>30</sup> "The phenotype effects of a gene are the tools by which it levers itself into the next generation, and those tools may 'extend' far outside the body in which the gene sits, . . . ." Richard Dawkins, *The Extended Phenotype: The Long Reach of the Gene*, with a Foreword by Daniel Dennett 2d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), vi.

there may be little evidence except the merest hint of representation as to their motivational imperatives. However in many societies today there are still similar items created in similar conditions or stages of evolution which can be viewed as paralleling the artefacts in question and can therefore be perceived as carrying equivalent significances. In these cases, which will be discussed later, the contemporary offers an almost direct link to the prehistoric origins and motivational primal root.

In the process of fitting together the pieces of a complex puzzle in a framework of overlapping priorities in creation and usage, some hypotheses will be drawn from accepted and credible research on other animals, and most notably non-human primates (humans' closest relatives). Study and comparison is useful because, unlike humans, the primates are natural and unfettered by culture in their activities. This study can offer invaluable insights into associated matters such as grooming habits, social and gender roles, hierarchy, use of tools, etc. Some of the theories will draw attention to the significance and implication of human and animal similarities, and also to their differences.

This will be used to highlight what could be nature and what could be nurture, and to demonstrate that humans as a species are unique in their highly refined methods of communication, intellectual patterns and technological skills. However they retain traces of their primal nature as animal unconsciously manifested in their artefacts and in particular their jewellery and its use in their personal adornment.

It is hoped that through this research human beings' preoccupation with self adornment in all its dimensions will reconcile differences, explain differentiation, inform and achieve a truly complementary critical discourse relative to those which have up until now overlooked the biological imperatives.

### **1.3 Conventional socio / historical framework**

The search for philosophical reference points which might put human activities into context (relative to the artefacts they produce and the way in which they are used to represent individuals and or reflect the culture of their time) is a relatively new phenomenon.

Differing authorities in what is now the canon beginning with Lévi-Strauss, to date, have made significant contributions to a wider understanding of 'representation'. Their investigations have consequently led to the decoding of material culture in the context of the linguistic semiotic (a verbal deconstruction of the visual), cultural mythology (conventions and controls), psychological sociology (societies' effects on the individual) and anthropological history (events and behavioural responses). <sup>31</sup> Jewellery and adornment could be included by implication in this interpretation but have not yet been formally analysed as a specific subject area.

This led to further discussion, research and analysis under the academic banner of cultural studies which has placed some emphasis on jewellery, but only as an aspect of fashion and as a subordinate accessory to clothes, since in recent human evolution clothes are seen as the

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<sup>31</sup> Note. British cultural studies as a discipline has no clear subject boundaries. It investigates, utilises and applies whatever is useful from a vast variety of other disciplines, such as anthropology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, philosophy etc., however genetics, biology, neuro and cognitive science have not yet been fully embraced.

primary form of body representation. However, if human evolution spans a possible period of eight million years, clothes, as opposed to forms of body adornment inherent or adaptive, only appeared with modern humans (*homo sapiens sapiens*) towards the end of the last ice age, approximately 26,000 years ago,<sup>32</sup> whereas from the beginning of the history of the human species the imperatives and motivations to adorn were being established.

Because jewellery as adornment has spread from its primal roots out into the domains of body presentation and social behaviour, attempts to understand its contemporary relevance and significance beyond that of accessory to fashion is often obscured by myths of popular culture and commercial values in the belief that it has similar origins and similar social and cultural politics to those of fashion. This overlooks the profound fundamentals of its origins. For example, Elizabeth Wilson makes this obvious in her book, 'Adorned In Dreams', in which she explores fashionable dress as a mode of cultural expression stating that,

The earliest forms of 'clothing' seem to have been adornments such as body painting, ornaments, scarification (scarring), tattooing, masks and often constricting neck and waist bands. Many of these deformed, re-formed or otherwise modified the body.<sup>33</sup>

However, after this bold statement the remainder of her argument revolves around the perception of clothing seen as the prime form of body representation, dismissing the other elements identified as merely the historical forerunner of and subsidiary to the act of dressing up, rather than considering dressing up as a sophisticated development of the former imperative / motivation. Adornment, the ancestor of fashion, could hardly be regarded as subordinate to its child. The significance of body adornment is either neglected or misunderstood by fashion writers / historians who confuse the issue by concentrating attention on the garment as holding primary position as decoration of the body rather than as an extension of prior forms of adornment and therefore of their motivations.

Sex is between your legs, gender is between your ears. . . . people have de-stabilised the meanings of masculinity and femininity and challenged the border controls around the definition of gender.<sup>34</sup>

Contemporary European American (Western) cultural theorists are trying to rationalise arguments concerning sex and gender and are grappling with the relentless challenging of conventional boundaries presented by popular culture. Sexuality, society and art have always had a close relationship with and influence on each other and there is a preoccupation with body and with the body as 'art'. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the topic of body transformation is high on the agenda in arts discourse. This is presumably based on the premise that art is the first area which assimilates, internalises and re-presents in visual form the collective consciousness and social psychology of representational forms.

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<sup>32</sup> Donald C. Johanson and Blake Edgar, *From Lucy to Language* (London: George Weidenfield & Nicolson Ltd., 1996), 99. Note: it is conjectured that European Homo Neanderthals wore crude clothing made from animal skins and furs to help survive the cold of the glacial environment of the last ice age, which finished between 10,000 and 13,000 years ago.

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned In Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, 2d ed., (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2003), 3. Note, wording has not changed since first edition (London: Virago Press Limited, 1985), 3.

<sup>34</sup> Caroline Evans. Dress, Gender And Identity. Spring Term Seminar. 1st Year Fashion, textile and jewellery students at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. 1995.

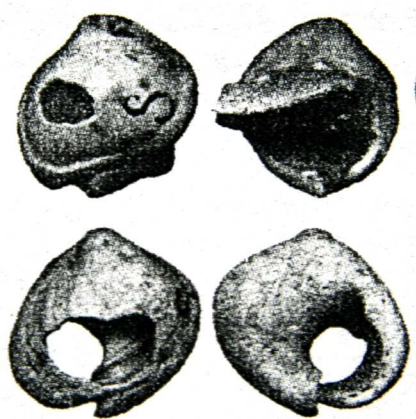


Current enquiry into gender issues is based on the politics of feminism, some of which may cross the boundaries of personal representation but without telling the whole story. Fashion deals with the transitory and is forever dependant on the shifting sands of contemporary socio-cultural conditions or issues, its pendulum often swinging from the purely whimsical to the more serious, from protest against social conformity to protection from environmental elements. Body enhancement outside clothing seems to be more involved with the deeper bio- / psychological needs of the human with many metaphysical determinants at work. Because of these origins, body enhancement as opposed to clothing has a different value system, history and philosophical and contemporary context as well as differing manifestations.

This raises questions of separation of multiple facets of representation which, in order to resolve and clarify any confusions, it is necessary to evaluate with regard to imperatives and motivational dynamics in an evolutionary context. Current rationales concerning the adorned have confined enquiry to 'end result manifestations'. The many underlying motivations have not been fully explored because interpretations of jewellery traditionally tend to be primarily historical and frequently male biased with a Western Europeanised, Judaeo-Christian vision.

Further, because, in the triangle of inter-relationships in a contemporary cultural context, the object used in adornment is viewed as a commodity of exchange rather than an extension of the body. Elucidation has been confined to classical frameworks from antiquity to the present (in chronological order Egyptian, Greek and Roman etc), in terms of social convention, impact upon visual style (mannered), thereby limiting value judgements to Western Europeanised culture in both philosophy and context.

In discounting other cultures and values, such as those of Africa and Asia, and being dismissive of 'ethnic' jewellery, the interpretation has starved research of vast tracts of relevant information and opportunities for analysis and has thus prevented the objective and holistic consideration of the object as subject. There is sufficient evidence, for example, for us to accept that there is a connection between self awareness and promotion of self image. Symbolic personal artefacts and body painting (see figure 1.5 and 1.6) not only pre-date all other representational activities but do so by thousands of years. Recent finds of beads (figure 1.5) have been dated to 100,000 to 135,000 years ago and are representative of the earliest of humans' personal decoration for



*Figure 1.5 Perforated shell beads*



*Figure 1.6 Red ochre from Becov, Bohemia*

symbolic communication.<sup>35</sup> Pigments have been discovered from as far back as 500,000 to 300,000 years ago in Southern Africa. Red ochre (figure 1.6) begins to be found in ancient prehistoric sites of *Homo Erectus* 250,000 to 100,000 after which a widespread explosion in use can be evidenced, which strongly supports the theory that these pigments were used specifically as body paints and were applied for the same reasons as they are today.<sup>36</sup>

Consideration of why humans found the construction of identity and promotion of self- image necessary in the first place is critical in a search for meanings relative to history and rational explanation. Untracht's model tantalisingly suggests several possibilities which are not developed in his commentary. Psychologically, his term 'self-expression' recurs as either a cure all or a missing link. Reward, souvenir, positional, ceremonial, talismanic are all social constructs which impact upon or are at odds with the individual frame of mind as either incentive or repression. In response to these social constructs he suggests that self-expression, communication, eroticism, beauty (the aesthetic), status and class (identity), fashion, amusement (diversion), rebellion are self-initiated, self-conscious and within our control relative to the making and wearing of jewellery and or adorning the body. See top row of Untracht's "Jewel Mandala" Chapter 1.1 figure 1.1.

### 1.3.1 The wearing of jewellery: Not just a simple act of 'self expression'

The argument put forward here is responsive to Untracht's contemporary 'end results' based analysis, but is predicated on the idea that this exclusion of the biological driving force which is unseen and impinges upon the unconscious mind is a serious omission from these discourses. There should be a reappraisal of the issues and influences which may have shaped the social behaviour of human beings, based on nature and its sexual reproductive agenda manifest in the human psyche as it has evolved over the last 8 million years, or even from the very origins of life itself. Evidence presented re-examines and re-evaluates the impact of evolutionary psychology on sexual display and upon visual culture and representation. This research brings into focus a rationale for and an interpretation of the reasons why a specific mode of representation, as seen in jewellery, has a basic universal consistency in its structure, its application and its role in the re-forming and transformation of the sexes' bodies. The analysis is filtered through a broad range of reference, re-applying neo-Darwinian theory in a context of Structuralist and Post-structuralist ideas oriented towards a new model which reflects the biological and accompanying gender-related sexual imperatives.

Subsequent chapters deconstruct the underlying configuration, which precipitates the embodiment of bio-sexual sublimation. Of importance are the contributions made through the application of the structuralist approach by the feminists, who have made considerable advances

<sup>35</sup> Previously it was believed that the first durable, 'purposeful, personal art objects' were artefacts in the form of beads and simple pendants. These creative forms (where the aesthetic and symbolic have precedence over function) appeared simultaneously with the emergence of modern humans (*Homo Sapiens Sapiens*) approximately 35,000 to 40,000 years ago. However in 2006 Marian Vanhaeren's and her colleagues' investigations into perforated shell beads unearthed in Skul Israel showed the beads to date from 100,000 to 135,000 years ago. This predates a find in 2004 by archeologists who unearthed a set of 75,000 year old shells from the Blombos Caves, South Africa. These recent findings have unravelled the theory that modern humans only appeared in parallel with the creative explosion and the first finds of personal adornments in Europe from 40,000 years ago. Marian Vanhaeren, Francesco d'Errico, Chris Stringer, Sarah L. James, Jonathan A. Todd, Henk K. Mienis, "Middle Palaeolithic Shell Beads in Israel and Algeria," Science vol 312 (23 June 2006): 1785-1788.

<sup>36</sup> Timothy Taylor, *The Prehistory of Sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual culture* (London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1996; reprint, London: Fourth Estate, 1997), 99 (Page reference is to reprint edition). For further information see: Ian Watts *et al.* Ochre finds and use <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/c.bekker/diss7.htm>

in gender studies. However it is argued that they have so far not taken biological issues as a starting point relative to material culture, because a biological determinist argument to some extent impacts upon the feminist supposition of gender inequality and / or feminine sexual initiation as the prime driving force for reproduction and thereby human motivation.

In this context the underlying principles inherent in oral and visual communication offer us (through kinesics in the context of visual and body language) the potential for a re-reading of images, stripped of their institutional, cultural baggage in signification and less obscured by the myths of socially constructed body representation. Interpreting and deconstructing the myths embedded in or associated with jewellery and adornment within the framework of new or revised critical values relative to bio-sexual imperatives allows the heritage of motivation to be revealed, exposing what the iconic indices explained in semiotic analysis as that which is re-presented as natural as being only partly rationalised.<sup>37</sup>

In conclusion it should be stressed that there is always a simultaneous process of synthesis required in contemporary theoretical inquiry, therefore the dynamics of interaction / relationship of nature and nurture is a key issue as it modulates the perception of the meaning of representation of the body as transmitted in both the making and wearing of jewellery. For example, any hypotheses which seek to refute the myths associated with the use, significance and motivations of representation of the body through the application of adornment cannot overlook issues of overt and sublimated sexuality signified in the object in its relation to body re-configuration. The centrality of this analysis to the thesis argument is described in Chapter 9.

In constructing a continuous diachronic argument, based upon the analysis of selected texts oriented both to the rationale for the critical framework and to the evidence content of the case studies, further analysis of the bio-sexual imperatives is fundamental in revealing anew how human evolution relates to, interfaces with and invigorates material culture through creative acts of representation on or off the body.

### 1.3.2 Methods and hypotheses

#### Definition of a hypothesis:

*“In common usage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a hypothesis refers to a provisional idea whose merit requires evaluation. For proper evaluation, the framer of a hypothesis needs to define specifics in operational terms. A hypothesis requires more work by the researcher in order to either confirm or disprove it. In due course, a confirmed hypothesis may become part of a theory or occasionally may grow to become a theory itself. Sometimes, but not always, one can also formulate them as existential statements, stating that some particular instance of the phenomenon under examination has some characteristic and causal explanations, which have the general form of universal statements, stating that every instance of the phenomenon has a particular characteristic.”*<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1972; reprint, London: Vintage Books, 1993), 127-129 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>38</sup> In researching current and well established literature on theoretical conceptualisations concerning research methodologies and principles of usage for hypotheses it was nonetheless difficult to find a clear definition which embodied all of its operant values. The most succinct and accurate summarised definition of a hypothesis was to be found quoted in the above anonymous unreferenced. Wikipedia definition <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypothesis>.

## **How are these definitions employed in the research?**

The literature search identified key gaps in currently available discussions of the research topic, especially the evolutionary process and the identification of the causal impacts this had on human behaviour and associated cognitive developments. This in turn required a move beyond approaches taken in existing literature in the field of jewellery and led to a revised approach to the literature search. This strategy generated a need for the consolidation of a wide variety of multi-disciplinary strands leading to the development of specific criteria of investigation. These in turn led to the identification of fresh grounds for enquiry feeding back into a revised formulation of theory in the context of the thesis topic.

In the quest to ascertain and set out contemporary critical values in a framework for analysis of the role of jewellery in the context of body adornment / representation / re-presentation the research must build upon data established in its preliminary stages by reference to a range of literature drawn from the social sciences, biology, humanity and psychology but also from associated disciplines which seek to account for determinants of behaviour on several levels of interaction. Textual analysis from this literature establishes key concepts, which correlate across disciplines and subject areas. Where commonality is perceived this is an indication of the need for further data collection and analysis and eventual evaluation of correlations leading to the identification of characteristics which might be deduced as being defining criteria. Established traditions within the field of jewellery created models for the purpose and function of body adornment. However, after close scrutiny both text and models were found to be insufficient to reveal the origins, drives and motivations for the evolution of human behavioural creative acts of re-presentation.

Therefore this investigation seeks to explain and present, relative to those evolutionary imperatives, a new model offering generic categorisation and definitions of the diversity of artefacts which constitute the subject area of jewellery and / or body adornment and which inform continuing creative practices. Additional theories need to be introduced from which additional criteria can be identified. To this end the Darwinian theory of evolution is applied because, in the context of the biological being, the ecology of human existence has an impact and there follows the need to understand the inter-relational, perceived as differential behaviour manifest in the social being, the psycho-social being and the psycho-sexual being. Once explained, these concepts form the basis for fresh analysis and the identification of specific imperatives located at specific points of human development within an evolutionary context (from our basic beginnings as humans to the modern cultural context). This should make possible the identification of criteria for a critical framework for the analysis of jewellery objects. This in turn would enable the construction of a verifiable revised mandala for understanding creative jewellery practice, its evolution and significances.

The new critical framework and development of a new model of evolutionary imperative driven motivations will be used to define and describe the origins and role of representation in artefacts of jewellery and body adornment. It is suggested that this will reveal hitherto un-investigated impact factors which provide a refreshed interpretation of the meaning and significance of the selected jewellery exemplars in the revised context. If we use an evolutionary context as our research base then the underlying motivations, and specific imperatives should be able to be identified and evidenced.

As stated previously the critical approach taken is that social evolutionary change is primarily predicated upon the influence of biological and genetic imperatives which, mediated by psychological influences arising from social need transform and then govern behaviour, transforming further into socialising imperatives of socio-cultural evolution.

The thesis develops these notions within a new critical frame comprising a set of hypotheses see pages 24 and 25, and propositions see chapter 2 (2.1 - 2.2.6). Taken together the context of the research and the structures of the thesis enquiry enable the following to be determined and defined (1) the historical, co-evolutionary processes of humans' need for body representation / re-presentation and (2) the interrelating / interactive role of the copulatory gaze from its bio-genetic origins to its resolved form as part of social structure and culture.

### **The aim of the enquiry was to:**

- formulate a set of key focal points (arising from the testing of a series of assumptions) which would determine the nature and direction of the research enquiry.
- identify and explain evolutionary causal patterns / mechanisms impacting on change in relation to social structures and social relationships
- conduct a structural analysis to identify the covert forces and relationships manifested in human behaviour and the phenomenon of creative output
- show evolving human history as a sequential pattern of developments supported by research resources which could be critically examined, analysed, evaluated, and applied to the material contents of both conceptual formation and the visual interpretation of physical form.

Based on the critique of Untracht's mandala and incomplete modes of semiotic interpretations and analysis of representation / re-presentation through the medium of self-adornment and the creation of jewellery the set of hypotheses below was formulated to act as components in the development of a new critical frame for investigation.

The new critical framework deconstructs conventional interpretations by means of analysis supported by newly collated and constructed research criteria, arguing that body / brain, mind / consciousness can no longer be seen as separate entities, but must be viewed as an holistic product of evolutionary development. The new framework maps out a critical history based on a more scientific holistic view, which identifies and evidences the biological and psychological influences, leading up to the formation of social and cultural structures. This resulted in the evidence based model of an imperative-driven categorisation system for jewellery presented in this thesis.



## **The research was informed by the following hypotheses:**

Note: The highlighted sections are key determinants in each level of the enquiry, and are delineated in the hypothesis / proposition tables at the end of each chapter.

### **Hypothesis One**

Models which attempted to classify and interpret jewellery in a current context without reference to the **underlying historical creative imperatives** are inadequate because they cannot explain **how or why they are connected** to social structure or individual psychology and thereby also fail to explain the purpose / function imperatives of what is represented. A study of the **significant evolutionary stages** in human development in relation to the complexity of making motivations will enable an holistic and or generic classification to be made.

### **Hypothesis Two**

Untracht's Mandala shows arbitrary components or units of jewellery e.g., tribal, religious, medals, symbols of wealth or power which act as satellites, containing separate areas of meaning or consciousness which operate and interact within the context of a continuum of creative expression. However they lack a clear delineation of imperatives and motivation, the dynamic dimension. It is therefore suggested that **each component has its own consciousness** (reasons for existence) much like the separate genetic codes which help construct a single organism. Thus **each component has its own cultural context**, with its own ordered framework of distinct rules, codes and **modes of body re-presentation**.

### **Hypothesis Three**

Therefore the psychology of adornment and body re-presentation is also the **expression of a form of consciousness**, reflecting and impacting upon aesthetic sensibilities, part of a much wider, universally overarching agenda of collective consciousnesses which has its roots in the origins of the creation and reproduction of life. Jewellery and body adornment parallel the same levels of consciousness as the extended phenotype.

### **Hypothesis Four**

**Jewellery composition** and construction, although they are driven by a **common consciousness**, have separated over time into the specific **areas of social and psychological awareness** recognised as mores, anxieties or neuroses.

### **Hypothesis Five**

**The copulatory gaze** informs a visual aesthetic sensibility founded upon evaluation of fitness for reproduction as the extended phenotype / meme, searching for the ideal. Therefore interpretation of data using analysis based upon these principles enables the **construction of an order** of the compositional elements utilised in jewellery making and body adornment.

## Hypothesis Six

**The components of body adornment** as creative expression and **body re-presentation** sustain and gratify the **evolving psychological needs** relative to a particular facet of the human condition behind which can be traced the evolutionary **construct of gender**.

## Hypothesis Seven

The cognitive processes as evolved impact upon the aesthetic sensibility according to the level of consciousness. They are based on biological imperatives but are psychologically sublimated by individuals in the social context. It can be shown that design processes have been programmed to follow the embodiment of the human consciousness relative to the contemporary psyche, and that **sublimation imperatives** which start at the core of life, are filtered through creative displacement activity in order to gratify cognitively in various forms.

Sublimation in the context of this thesis has two facets. The first is a process whereby the biogenetic imperatives are manifested *via* natural body signs and primal instinctive behaviour, and the second is its social and psychosexual counterpart whereby primitive, libidinous imperatives are suppressed and re-directed, and re-presented into socially acceptable non-instinctive controlled behaviours.

Sublimation is a process from which signs have been generated and with its own iconography which can be read and interpreted. The thesis research investigation is conducted *via* the analysis of selected images on the premise that their embodied iconography and semiotic contents offer a rationale for behaviour / psyche expressed in the cultural representational forms understood as body adornment and jewellery.

The hypotheses are applied to the study of separate evolutionary stages throughout human history. They determine the trajectory of the thesis enquiry: key patterns and mechanisms emerge wherein a structure of causal events can be discerned which identify the determinant features of human motivation and the arts of representation and self re-presentation. These are laid out / defined at the end of each chapter where the operational values of the hypotheses are presented in table format not only to provide context for a specific level in time but also an evolutionary context through time.

The hypotheses above are further expanded by the propositions as presented in chapter 2 (2.1 - 2.2.6) whereby a furthering of an imperative-driven evolutionary context is pursued / explored and identified. This generated a set of linear maps expounding the trajectory of the thesis enquiry / research. Chapter 11.2 describes in detail how each of these maps, the matrix, as relationship map (figure 11.1), and the diagrammatic form of the critical frame (figure 11.2a) and the design trajectory (figure 11.2b) provide analytical tools for the interpretation of imperative processes driving human evolution.

The thesis hypotheses ascertains / defines determinant specifics of phenomena in operational terms which is instrumental to the thesis enquiry as a process. The propositions act as a supplementary extension to the hypotheses / findings and are applied in parallel for the purpose of identifying and delineating the various elements of the copulatory gaze.

The thesis hypotheses and propositions are pursued within the specific operational structures as follows:

That the overarching evolutionary drive / mechanism is the sexual imperative. This is broken down into separate units of imperative areas as presented in 2.1-2.2.6 from these separate units of imperatives are determined the distinct components of the copulatory gaze. These are identified as key focal points of causation which progressively co-integrate and overlay one another in symbiotic manner to formulate the dynamics of how humans have come to look at each other the way we do today (see Chapter 2 figure 2.4 and figure 11.2a).

That collectively these imperative units are further recognised as falling loosely into three main categories (1) The bio-imperatives (2) The sociological imperatives and (3) The psychosexual imperatives. These categories later form the reference points for determining the imperatives' changing relative impact at each level in time and also cumulatively through time in the evolution towards the formation of culture. (as defined by hypotheses / proposition table at the end of each chapter and figure 11.2a)

The thesis propositions therefore have further expanded the thesis enquiry / argument to provide a parallel and symbiotically integrating framework for the copulatory gaze.

The research seeks to establish why and how:

the copulatory gaze acts as a mechanism for the evaluation of selected visual criteria aspiring to the ideals of specific imperatives in human evolution which form the basis of the structure of society and culture.

the copulatory gaze perceives, registers cognitively, defines, patrols and controls response as social coercion and in turn forms this mechanism.

The above propositions and hypotheses determinants are presented as a sequential progression of specific event levels of consciousness, social progression and the impact of the psychosexual. In this thesis the levels introduced in Chapters three to ten are analysed systematically. The status of the hypotheses and the propositions change as the study develops.

At the start of each chapter key concepts are listed which indicate what is about to be discussed within the ensuing chapter and summarise the causal elements as key factors which have determined the development of a particular level of consciousness at a certain point of time in human history.

These separate levels are defined within the research criteria of each chapter and summarised at the beginning and end of each chapter wherein the changing status of the hypotheses and propositions are clarified. This is also reflected in the hypotheses / proposition tables at the end of each chapter. Elucidation of key causal factors and their subsequent effect on change are further consolidated in the Matrix, figure 11.1, from which the Critical frame map, figures 11.2a and 11.2b are subsequently derived



Running in parallel, selected artifacts / images (as visual, conceptual criteria) further evidence the research argument by providing specific investigative areas for analysis and evidence. This is further discussed in following the case study section below.

## **Definition of a Case Study / Research Strategy**

A case study is an in-depth investigation / empirical enquiry of an individual, a group, an occurrence or a phenomenon: a case. Case study methods provide a systematic structure to the subject of investigation, data collection, analysis of findings and formulation of results. They can also be defined as a research strategy both to generate and test hypotheses within a particular area of enquiry and in the context of real-life situations.<sup>39</sup>

### **How are these definitions employed in the research:**

The thesis sets out its criteria and methodology as previously described relative to theories which are further expanded upon through object / image analysis, descriptive accounts and appropriate case study. The visual analysis and case studies support research analysis hypotheses / propositions and copulatory gaze theory.

The aesthetic and semiotic interpretation part of the study utilises several approaches such as image survey / deconstruction methods and includes where appropriate theoretical deduction from analysis of accompanying literary sources in conjunction with the set of case studies. The case studies not only support and evidence the thesis argument but, in the context of the thesis topic, they locate and define the various structures and levels of consciousness / cognitive abilities and the operational impact of psychosexual needs / anxieties embodied, expressed, released in concrete sublimatory form.

The case study research data is collated from a series of semi-structured interviews which are analysed for measuring collective theoretical and semiotic resonance both qualitatively and summatively. They not only make it possible to define and analyse perceptible external causes and consequences but also provide the vehicle with which to investigate and identify the internal forces mechanisms which drive human motivation.

Therefore the case studies function as an analytical tool whereby the visual theory context is integrated into the research theoretical discourse / argument pertaining to the purpose and role of body adornment, jewellery and creative design as a process in human evolution and the formation of culture.

### **1.3.3 Research question**

The research question which follows from the above, therefore becomes the basis upon which the research is progressed and facilitates the development of the thesis argument leading to the new model construct as evidenced:

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<sup>39</sup> Definition by author of this thesis. Sources consulted: Robert K. Yin *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3d ed., (London: Sage Publications, Inc.2003). Colin Robson *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, 2d ed., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2002). Further works consulted are listed in the bibliography.

If jewellery has to date only been evaluated, analysed and defined in its current manifestation relative to the current or a relatively recent historical context on the basis of what might be described as surface values, then how can an holistic evaluation / analysis be made and / or modelled which links what is made to the evolutionary imperatives which gave rise to it? The focus of the required research has necessitated a different approach to current traditional discussions of the topic based upon an application of the concept of reverse engineering as practised by evolutionary psychologists so that primary imperatives of environment and their psychological impact on human behaviour can be identified as bases for analysis and the resultant findings opened out and built upon.

It is argued that the 'selfish gene' has resolved to replicate itself through the reproductive / survival mechanism of sexual reproduction. It will be further argued that in the human species as vehicle for the gene body, brain and mind were genetically structured, in selective symbioses, reflecting the evolutionary agenda and the copulatory gaze as a mechanism for the assessment of the selective visual criteria for sexual copulation and reproduction fitness, aspiring to the ideals of heredity perfection evolved in parallel.

The research argument is based on the concept that all human activity at whatever level of consciousness is driven by the overarching imperative of genetic survival and reproduction. It will be proposed that the construct / concept of 'self' (individual and collective) and its representation through body adornment is constructed by specific imperatives in human evolution which form the basis of the structure of society and culture.

Relative to evolution there is also a presumption that in this context an evolutionary pattern falls into three separate categories which are inextricably linked: bio-imperatives; sociological imperatives; and psychosexual imperatives. The expression of self is perceived as conditional upon these and forming a multilayered set of influences which are identified and analysed as they manifest themselves in the various levels of human physical and cognitive development.

The biological imperative has a specific physiological / psychological symbolic expression based on genetic reproductive viability that impacts upon the aesthetic sensibilities relative to beauty. Therefore the identification and analysis of representations emanating from socially structured sexuality are seen as the expression of the phenotype extended, a contemporary situation similar to the concept of memes.

## **1.4 Summary**

To recapitulate, it is hypothesised that existing critical frameworks are reductive in nature and have shortcomings such as focussing only on moments in time, being eurocentric in interpretation and classification as evidenced in the analysis of Untracht's hypothetical model. It is proposed (see 1.1 last two paragraphs and 1.1.2) that a revised model is required which sets out a new and holistic framework with fresh tools for analysis which evidence the generative and psychological motivations behind the sociological dependency on the construction and projection of self re-presentation. Current Post-modern / Structuralist theory does not provide an adequate framework as it is limited in application.

A case is made (1.3) for a serious investigation into how human mental capacity arose and developed into the ability to utilise objects as representations of thoughts, ideas, signs and concepts. It is argued that the search for possible answers requires an interrogation of the various specialist areas which contribute to knowledge of human physical and mental development from its earliest beginnings and as it evolved over time through the development of self perception and expression of the concept of 'self'. It is also necessary to ask why we have the need to perform the ritual of representation and the art of the objectification of our perceived self.

Using the theory of evolutionary psychology as a basis for hypotheses / propositions, it is proposed that the ritual of self-adornment in a cultural context is a part of an extended evolutionary biological process manifested as particular behavioural patterns within which the sexes can relate to each other and present representational values which persuade each other's copulatory gaze.

All this contributes to the conceptualisation of an alternative rationale for the socio-cultural need for the representation and re-presentation of women's consciousness and bodies. The hypothesised critical framework argues for a neo-Darwinian approach, which has not been previously debated. Reviewing the span of human history in this way enables the exploration of issues concerning human behaviour, allowing the interrelationship (co-evolution) between genes, culture, design and representation to be explored and addressed in one coherent framework. The new model establishes imperatives which cross-reference in a complexity of correlations and in turn establishes theories resulting in a critical evaluation which, when later applied to case studies, supports the criteria and justifies this proposed model. The argument within the critical framework is built upon the premises that (1) the mechanism forging human psyche and behaviour can be identified and evidenced and (2) that the mechanism's inception and its development through evolution can be traced from its starting point with the origins of life and on through the span of human history.

A new interpretation of jewellery's history is proposed based on the theory that a mechanism has been generated through a set of social demands which coerces women to transform and re-present their natural bodies into some idealised and intangible vision. As stated earlier the new critical framework deconstructs conventional interpretations by means of an analysis supported by newly collated and constructed research criteria, arguing that body / brain, mind / consciousness can no longer be seen as separate entities, but must be viewed as an holistic product of evolutionary development. The new framework maps out a critical history based on a more scientific and holistic view, which identifies and evidences the biological and psychological influences, leading up to the formation of social and cultural structures. Whereas hitherto the prevailing anthropological rationale for body representation was presented through the study of humankind and the origins of human activities in the context of separate structures of societies and their cultural developments, the new rationale for representation through jewellery presents a wider vision which argues that all humans share a common biological and therefore psychological template, that a collective psyche exists which manifests itself culturally in relation to a common overarching agenda.

The thesis therefore sets out its criteria relative to other theories, which are further amplified through deconstruction / descriptive accounts and case studies addressing such issues as

beauty, body representation and the wearing of jewellery etc. These are also based on the author's own experience of creative practice and are augmented by and set alongside similar evaluations, thereby providing evidence of both gaps in the evidence and links between other discourses. This will result not only in a better explanation and model of an imperative-driven categorisation system for jewellery but also an original contribution to knowledge, stimulus for debate and hopefully open up more avenues for further research, especially in relation to the gender discourses reflecting the potential of a sub-cultural social order where copulation imperatives are no longer a mediating factor.

A new model construct is discussed suggesting that, at different points in evolutionary time, levels of design aesthetics, elements of re-presentation could be equally specifically aligned with a jewellery object. The Matrix (as developed for this thesis, see figure 11.1) can be read as providing a sign generating map, which can be read in either direction of linear sequence to provide a simple overview of key historical developments, but which might also form a guide to correlation into categories pertinent to any conclusions presented.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Bio-imperatives: in the context of women's bodies and the development of a psychology of 'self re-presentation'**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In the previous chapter it was concluded that available text, discourse and critical frameworks were inadequate. In developing a new critical framework of imperatives within which the identification and analysis of the underlying motivations for the acts of body enhancement and self adornment can take place there needs to be some understanding of the complex mechanisms which have formed and controlled physical / biological and human evolution. The interaction between the genetic evolution of the human as animal and the psychology and socio-cultural evolution impacting upon it, resulting in a human being, is discussed in the context of what has come to be known as the 'nature / nurture' debate.

Within this debate many misconceptions concerning the identity, interpretations and rationales of the phenomena of the human quest for 'ideal beauty' have become established over a long period of time which are mythologised in philosophical theories. This has resulted in the generation of a set of social demands which compel women to transform and re-present their natural bodies into some idealised and intangible vision. The collective cultural power embracing this ideology, enforced through deliberate misrepresentations, has socially legitimised it and made it so believable that it has penetrated every aspect of women's individual psyche and further fuelled male desire, resulting in adherence to the ideal as a requirement of acceptance. Seldom is the ideal questioned despite its persistent appearance from its evidenced local origins in the ancient world to the present day where it can be found to have permeated every part of the globe.

This phenomenon presents itself in a variety of ways in different cultures but in most societies the female body is the vehicle through which social order is constructed and controlled, irrespective of notions of beauty. What is it that compels women to transform the subjective self into the objective? Who or what makes the rules and sets the agenda, who or what constructed and holds up the blueprint of this vision for women and men to refer to? Although this has not been fully investigated several small steps have been taken.

These enquiries have tended to be limited in scope and have not therefore been subjected to the kind of interdisciplinary analyses which might reveal underlying (and possibly disturbing) motives for the creation and cultural evolution of jewellery. The underlying social coercion implicit in some women's body adornment needs to be questioned more closely as a bio-socio-cultural construct.

Critical discourse is addressed with reference to historical and associated anthropological research, and especially the social sciences and humanities. However these are separate rather than integrated approaches, implying either that nature dominates and thereby evolves mechanisms for transformation or that nurture provides the imperatives resulting in the mechanics of transformation and representation in adornment. The argument that the physical has been replaced by the metaphysical is not sustainable. Evolutionary theorists' research

is providing fresh insights into the nature *verses* nurture debate. They are evidencing that evolutionary bio-psychological factors have an influence on the structures and the workings of the mind. A new rationale might be that socio-sexual / biological imperatives of cultural coercion lead to mechanisms of representation, thus acknowledging that nature / nurture are interrelated. The previous argument that the move to the symbolic order presupposed a static state in the development of humanity can no longer be upheld. Pioneers of evolutionary psychology model-led research suggest that evolution can be demonstrated to have occurred not only in society but also in the other determinants of humanity, the brain and the mind. See Mithen's diagram "Two views of the mind" in Figure 2.1.

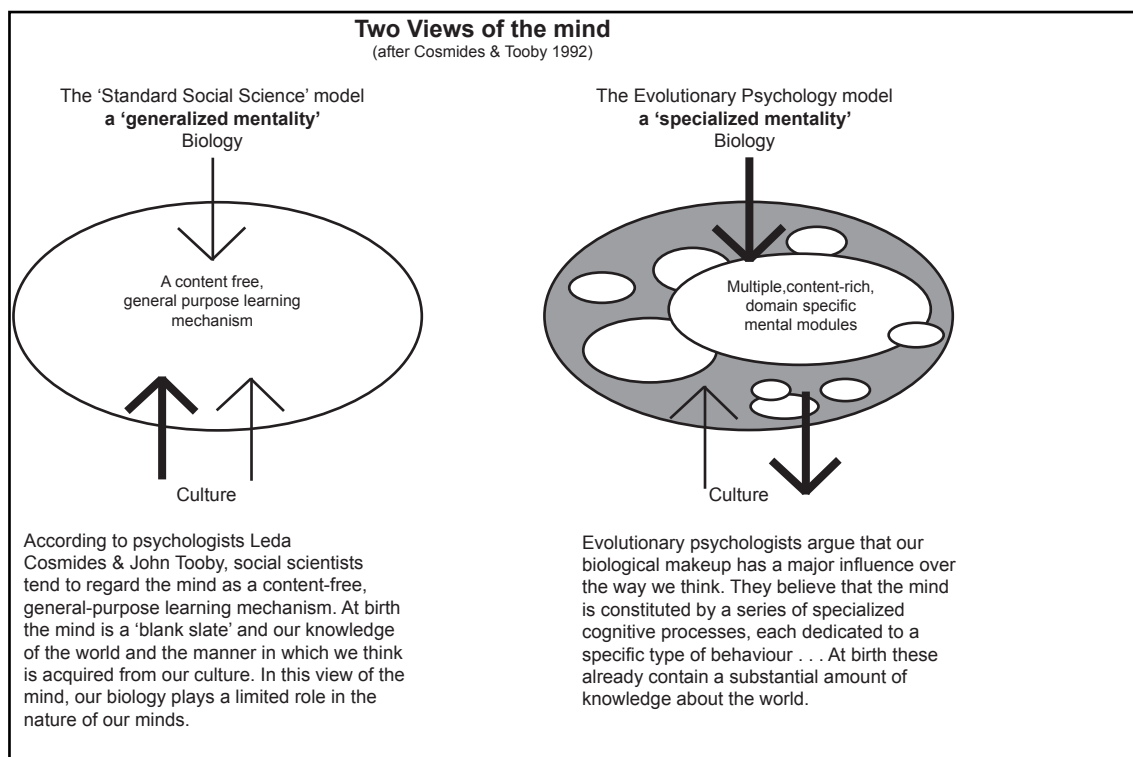


Fig 2.1 Two views of the mind

Evolutionary Psychology consolidates cognitive psychology and evolutionary biology as one operative tool for analysis and explanation, claiming that the mind evolved as part of the process of natural selection. The previous barrier to analysis and discussion is partly historical. In the last century there were two prevailing dogmas: The first was the entrenched view of the Social Sciences now known as the "Standard Social Science Model (SSSM)"<sup>1</sup> which adhered to the 'Blank Slate' theory and saw the mind as a *tabula rasa*, at birth an empty chamber which was only furnished by knowledge, behaviour and thought processes acquired through the incremental exposure to social and cultural conditioning, where nurture ruled mind and culture, and biology had nothing to do with it. The second was the accepted doctrine of the

<sup>1</sup> So labelled by Cosmides and Tooby who claim it to be a very limited perspective on human nature. For a full discussion see: John Tooby and Leda Cosmides in section 1. "The Psychological Foundations of Culture", chap. 1: "The Evolutionary and Psychological Foundations of The Social Sciences", in *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, ed. Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 19-54. See also: Steven Pinker's excellent account of history of reactions when SSSM orthodoxy was first challenged by evolutionary thinkers such as socio-biologists as E. O. Wilson. Steven Pinker, *How The Mind Works* (USA: W. W. Norton, 1997; London: Penguin Group, 1999), 44 - 48.

Behavioural Psychologists. From the 1920s to the 1960s experts in the discipline believed that behaviour was the result of responses to environment and that the mind had little to do with it. The 1960s brought a revived interest in the mind when it was realised that behavioural psychology had certain shortcomings. Ideas on human behaviour began to be reviewed through Cognitive Psychology. This involved scientific research and analysis where controlled testing of hypotheses in the laboratory could demonstrate how the brain / mind processed information and solved problems.

**Cognitive Psychology:** is based on two essential rationales: human behaviours are the result of ‘mental processes’; the mind computes incoming data, responds, acts upon and controls ‘mental processing’.

**Evolutionary Biology:** is based on one essential rationale: the evaluation of life’s process of adaptation and natural selection through a system of mainly inherited qualities and random mutation, thus explaining why and how certain species have evolved their particular characteristics.

More recently, evolutionary theorists have drawn upon a variety of aspects within cognitive sciences which investigate the workings and function of the internal processes of the mind relative to the physicality of the brain. Such interrelated fields of enquiry as the neurosciences, cognitive psychology, linguistics, behavioural psychology, computer science and artificial intelligence suggest that evolution has been and is an integrated interactive dynamic process.

Evidence enables us to postulate that the early evolution of the brain / mind as engine to the body might have been more integrated and operative in its responses to language (verbal and visual), concept formation and human cognition etc. than has previously been thought. Clear evidence of the changes to the brain and its expanding capacity, tool conception and creation are evidenced from *homo habilis* to *homo erectus* and on to *homo sapiens sapiens*. Though the earliest of these humans could not speak there is evidence to show that the brain had nonetheless the capacity for language *in situ*.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of the metaphysical transforming the physical in Europe some 40,000 years ago with the sudden emergence of cultural development and creativity in sophisticated tool, social and ritual artefact production such as beads, necklaces, figurines and animal representations over quite a short period of time relative to the total duration of the existence of the human species on earth, is under challenge. Recent theories and research findings indicate that evolutionary / adaptive problem solving mechanisms which could now be seen as foundations to facilitate the acquisition of related physical and mental skills may have started developing some two million years ago. The significance of this to the development of adornment will be discussed in the following chapter.

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<sup>2</sup> Steve Parker, *The Dawn of Man* (London: Crescent Books, 1992), 112-113. Also Rod Caird, *Ape Man: The Story of Human Evolution*, with a Foreword by Dr Robert Foley (London: Boxtree Limited, 1994), 80. Michael Arbib and Mihail Bota “Language evolution: neural homologies and neuroinformatics” [www.ElsevierComputerScience.com](http://www.ElsevierComputerScience.com) (14<sup>th</sup> August 2003 Special Issue.) 1237-1260. Ricardo Gil-da-Costa, Alex Martin, Marco A. Lopes, Monica Muñoz, Jonathan B. Fritz and Allen R. Braun, “Species-specific calls activate homologs of Broca’s and Wernicke’s area in the macaque.”, *Nature Neuroscience* vol. 9 no.8 (August 2006), 1064-70.



## 2.1 The thesis propositions (structuring the thesis enquiry)

These theories and other post-modernist discourses have led the thesis's re-investigation and evaluation of the origins of body enhancement / adornment enabling the decoding progress to identify further the mechanisms at work in adornment.

Using the two theories of evolutionary psychology as previously defined<sup>3</sup> the following propositions were extrapolated from the hypotheses to develop the argument and provide a framework for later evaluation of the 'copulatory gaze'<sup>4</sup> as proposed in this thesis (see figure 2.4) and the image / research studies. These propositions are as follows:

- a) the ritual of self-adornment in a cultural context is a part of an extended biological process or imperative
- b) this is the mechanism by which the sexes relate to each other and realise their socio-sexual and cultural political agenda which is
- c) implemented through sexual representation in adornment which stimulates, manipulates, implicates and captivates each of the sexes in the evolved bio-psychological male 'copulatory gaze'
- d) coercion and compliance are pre-requisites triggered by mutual need for procreation in order to perpetuate the genetic inheritance of each.

These propositions will be discussed in the categories which follow in relation to literature surveyed.

## 2.2 Factors affecting the nature of sexual relations, outcome determinants within the hypothesis / propositions.

### 2.2.1 Genetic imperative: The raw materials of sexual life

Unconscious purposeful behaviour patterns govern reproductive survival mechanisms. That is to say that such body component materials as our DNA, chromosomes and genes act autonomously and impact upon behaviour, which in its turn determines to some extent the next phase.

### 2.2.2 Natural selection imperative: Two separate sexes are established

The mechanism of natural selection is to reshuffle genetic combinations. Thus those with the most favourable characteristics evolve as the dominant type whilst those with the less favourable die out, mutate or lie dormant. The resultant characteristics equip or adapt to determine successful behaviour for subsequent reproduction and / or re-presentation responsive to behaviour in the next phase.

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<sup>3</sup> For definitions of evolutionary psychology see footnote 5 Chapter. 1 of this thesis. Marek Kohn, As We Know it: Coming to terms with an Evolved Mind. London: Granta Books 1999, reprint 2000), 11. And also note 11 Chapter 1 of this thesis. Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, in introduction: "Evolutionary Psychology and Conceptual Integration", eds., The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 7.

<sup>4</sup> A term borrowed from Helen E. Fisher, Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992), 21.



### **2.2.3 Sexual selection imperative: Competition between members of the same sex**

Whilst natural selection involves both sexes in the competitive struggle for survival against adverse forces of nature inhibiting the reproduction of offspring, sexual selection involves competitiveness between the same sexes where the most successful competitor is chosen as a mate by the opposite alpha sex partner.

Hominids choose certain physical characteristics, it has been presumed, less for survival reasons and more for their sexual attractiveness. However many sexual features do in actuality double up as signs, signals and codes of fertility and superior genetic material. Therefore it might be assumed that exaggeration of or increased emphasis upon certain characteristics is in effect a reinforcement relevant to the next phase.

### **2.2.4 Aesthetic imperative: Associating beauty and sexual allure**

Beauty relates to ‘sexual attraction’, specific imperatives related to the reproductive agenda which is responded to as an associated visual reference.

Four million years ago in Africa, a small group of chimplike creatures began walking exclusively on their hind legs. The reason they did so is debated, but it marked a profound turning point, leading to the emergence of modern people. Our tree-swinging ancestors were very successful breeders. What they found erotic was probably quite varied: they may even have been as extreme as the pygmy chimps of today, who take their pleasure singly or in groups, often with no particular focus on reproduction, sometimes with members of their own sex or immediate family. However varied the behaviour of our prehuman ancestors was, sex involved ideas of beauty, the physical basis of recognition and desire.<sup>5</sup>

Reference to developments in facial and bodily physiology, (physical features and characteristics such as symmetry, proportional balance and bodily ratios) provides clues to reproductive qualities and gives possible leads towards an understanding of the psychology of aesthetics and thus opens new avenues for investigation, pointing to an analysis of components of the copulatory gaze (as discussed in Chapter 3.5 to 3.5.3 and also Chapter 4, progression of the copulatory gaze. (See also components of the copulatory gaze in figure 2.4 which relates to 2.1 to 2.2.6 (2.2.5 and 2.2.6) being the psychological component). The extent to which socially conditioned selective breeding is a response to the associative and individual preferences of each sex relative to a post reproduction nurture of offspring (in other words, maintenance of the genetic pool) also relates to the next phase.

### **2.2.5 Control imperatives for gene pool protection**

As Fisher points out, patriarchy seems to be an opportunist’s reproductive manoeuvre.<sup>6</sup> In the selfish goal to replicate the self, males have evolved ruthless strategies. From its primitive origins patriarchy has provided pre-ancestral access to and domination of the opposite sex

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Taylor, *The Prehistory of sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture* (London: Fourth Estate Ltd., 1996; reprint, London: Fourth Estate, 1997), 4 (Page references are to reprint edition). For reference and context see Appendix. Evolutionary pathway figure A.24 and Trajectory of Human Evolution figure A.26 second stage.

<sup>6</sup> Helen E. Fisher, *Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy and Divorce* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1992), 282-288.

and the control of female sexuality. The history of the struggle between the sexes evidences how life evolved into a patriarchal pattern of biological structure, cultural assimilation of which determined consciousness from the most basic of primordial ideologies to the most sophisticated. The biological is the supra-structure to the cultural.

### **2.2.6 Bio-social / psycho-sexual sublimation imperatives**

It will be argued that symmetry, balance of space, colour, line and form, distribution of light and rhythm etc. all elements of visual aesthetics ever present and formalised in arts theory and philosophical discourse, are rooted in the biological substructure and consequent basic responsive interactivity in behaviour to reproductive needs and urges. In the human being these impulse responses to search out the ideal biological composition evoke a physical sensation triggered by other sensual messages. The aesthetic 'experience' is a response in nature which would be consummated in touch, physical contact and in copulation. The response to stimuli arising from the functional needs of reproduction and the success of the most viable qualities of the opposite sex are transposed or sublimated in the formality of the socio-cultural order of complex or large scale groupings.

What we experience is a consequence of an inherent biological shopping list filtered through a structure which deprives us of the raw and leaves us with the cooked. This metaphoric idea of Lévi-Strauss suggests that, the raw being 'natural' and the cooked the 'cultural', any changes to the natural body ('the raw') via enhancement / modification/embellishment ('the cooked') broadcasts a particular social role in a specific social context. ". . . in accordance with a systematic binary code.",<sup>7</sup> indicative of plural or parallel evolution.

Where social circumstance or definitions impact upon the metabolic / biological imperatives, the brain has a role to play in blocking out the senses or relegating them to subordinate memory. It is stimulated to this subversion by the conditioning of deterrence in the process of selection or rejection (whether on an individual or a collective basis). The result of this paradigm shift in the evolution of the species, it is argued, reinforces the notion of the copulatory gaze as an instinctive response.

In the extension of this individual inner restraint on the group / tribe social sphere the generally accepted premise is that with the advent of social structuring of humans a male dominant hierarchy was established. Male dominance, control, patriarchy, no matter how disagreeable many aspects of them seem today, arose from imperatives put in place thousands of years ago in order to optimise the male's reproductive success. From the male's point of view bio-psychological adaption, profitable in that it promotes his genes, makes biological sense. Even in present day cultures physical mechanisms that reward success in the reproductive sphere continue to have an influence.

Generations of male consciousness and selectiveness in breeding created barriers of entry to the opposite sex. An aesthetic judgement based upon visual appearance relative to regulated

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<sup>7</sup> Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication: the logic by which symbols are connected* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 60 (page reference is to reprint edition). See also: Edmund Leach, *Lévi-Strauss* (Great Britain: Fontana, 1970, revised edition 1974; reprint, Great Britain Fontana, 1982). 38,39,44,45. (Page references are to reprint edition).

biological and communal demands or imperatives (that is the collective sensibilities derived from or embedded in the senses) established the new evolutionary status quo. (as seen in Chapter 9).

The evolutionary socialisation of women (male self-assertion through the control of women's emotional and physical development) is used for the fashioning of women in conformity to male determined values and needs. Patriarchal culture formalises or sublimates the copulatory gaze into a cultural response which in turn impacts upon the physical form of the female body through the constraints of body augmentation as part of a pressure to conform.

In turn, ritualisation of the female body in relation to its representation sublimates overt sexual instincts which might undermine the male dominant structure and becomes part of the control mechanism, as will be shown later through the image / research studies in chapter 9.

## 2.3 Convergence of the physical and metaphysical

As stated, recent research based on evolutionary theory is providing convincing evidence that humans' behaviour may be grounded in their biological and evolutionary makeup where genetic elements have dictated adaptive survival strategies and techniques right from the origins of DNA to the present stage of human evolution. As Helen Fisher, evolutionary theorist in behavioural biology and anthropology, affirms "In my view human beings have a common nature, a set of shared unconscious tendencies or potentialities that are encoded in our DNA and that evolved because they were of use to our forebears millions of years ago." <sup>8</sup> Cognitive theorists like Pinker expand such theories further " . . . contrary to the widespread belief that cultures can vary arbitrarily and without limit, surveys of ethnographic literature show that the peoples of the world share an astonishingly detailed universal psychology." <sup>9</sup>

Fisher and Pinker made it possible to identify elements of ancestry and descent which would provide explanations of the development of human behaviour. The innate quest for primal genetic and reproductive gratification has been defined and redefined through adaptation and adjustment, from its primitive origins. Contemporary speculations about our origins necessitate not only a discourse on human biological origins but also on the origins of intelligence and culture. The thesis argues that, in forging and evolving culture from this generic genetic makeup, human intelligence, would have begun from a base constructed upon reproduction and sexual procreation (the sexual culture) moving on to a more complex construction, its resultant socio-sexual structures leading by degrees to present and future culture.

The evolution versus cultural growth, nature versus nurture, humans and animals debate is now becoming clearer through the work of several leading evolutionary theorists. The research of the theorists referred to above is beginning to provide the missing links between the nature, nurture, animal debate by presenting " interesting causal relationships between selection pressures and psychological mechanisms on the one hand, and between psychological mechanisms and cultural forms on the other." <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Helen E. Fisher, *Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1992), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Steven Pinker, *How The Mind Works* (USA: W. W. Norton, 1997; London: Penguin Group, 1999), 32.

<sup>10</sup> Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, in introduction: "*Evolutionary Psychology and Conceptual Integration*" eds., *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 6.

Evolutionary theorists propose that ‘culture’ is the result of an evolutionary process which involves the development of the body, the brain, and the mind working as a co-operative and reciprocal entity assigned, in unison, to a particular agenda. This understanding provides a basis for the hypothesis that these elements have significant implications for the way in which humans have evolved and crafted the copulatory gaze and implemented its gratification in the metaphysical.

The findings of most of the theorists previously referenced seem to uphold the view that psychological mechanisms evolved and adapted through the process of natural selection and that major developments of this kind of adaptation and transformation probably took place during the Pleistocene era, <sup>11</sup> a span of at least two million years (wherein 99% of human existence had been adapted to a life as hunter-gatherers) and well before the relatively recent (in evolutionary terms) emergence of agriculture, <sup>12</sup> “ . . . an evolutionary perspective suggests. . . a close functional mesh between adaptive problems and the design features of the mechanisms that evolved to solve them,” <sup>13</sup> [during that particular time].

### 2.3.1 The evolution of ‘brain’ and ‘mind’, physical and mental interface

How can brain, the mind and consciousness be conceptually interrelated?

**The brain:** Cognitive psychologists and evolutionary theorists believe that the brain can no longer be seen as a single unit. Rather it should be understood as a collection of components, with each component acting as an information processing system which is programmed to deal with specific problem solving related to the biological body as a whole. Just as the biological body is composed of separate elements such as sensory organs, the heart, lungs, kidneys etc. which, when operating separately, cannot support the body on their own, but collectively drive the human organism, likewise the brain is composed of separate modules which perform specific functions and particular tasks. <sup>14</sup> Behaviour is the outcome of a response to this information processing mechanism.

Alternative design features are selected for on the basis of how well they solve adaptive problems – problems whose solution affects reproduction. How an organism processes information can have enormous impact on its reproduction.”<sup>15</sup>

. . . The brain itself evolved to solve adaptive problems, and its particular systems of organisation were selected for because they physically carried out information-processing procedures that led to the adaptive regulation of behaviour and physiology. <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> see Appendix. Evolutionary pathway figure A.1 and Trajectory of Human Evolution figure A.3 second stage.

<sup>12</sup> Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, in introduction: “Evolutionary Psychology and Conceptual Integration” eds., The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture, (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 6. See also (Steven Pinker How the Mind Works (USA: W.W. Norton, 1997; London: Penguin Group, 1999), 42.

<sup>14</sup> Steven Pinker, How The Mind Works. ((USA: W. W. Norton, 1997; London: Penguin Group, 1999), 28.

<sup>15</sup> John Tooby and Leda Cosimides Chap. 1: “The Evolutionary and Psychological Foundations of The Social Sciences”, in section 1. “The Psychological Foundations of Culture”. in The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture, ed. Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, (New York: Oxford University Press 1995) 64.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 123. Endnote 4.

Brain and body operating in tandem had a biological, physiological and psychological impact on human evolutionary augmentation. The brain and body are wired up to produce all sorts of chemical and sensory responses which dictate behaviour. These do not come into operation on their own, but only in response to a trigger from something in the environment.

**The mind: cognitive information processing:** The mind collates, analyses information, processes and makes decisions about appropriate action. It is the mind which synchronises connections, synthesises, evaluates data, abstracts. The realm of the mind operates over the organised totality of physical / mental modules, internal, external, conscious, unconscious, emotional, psychological and philosophical. Physical and psychical interaction, organs of perception, make sense of a labyrinth of conceptual complexities. One's history, experience and personal mental processing may define each person as an individual but, within the context of an evolutionary psychology, it was the sequence of evolved, collective experiences and necessary problem solving during humans' slow development in the Pleistocene period which set in motion a collective emergent consciousness.

. . . 'the environment' is just as much the product of evolution as are genes. . . . the environment as interacted with by the organism – that, in a meaningful sense, can be said to be the product of evolution, evolving in tandem with the organism's organized response to it. . . . the environment contributes a biological inheritance parallel to that of genes, which acts co-equally with them to evolutionarily organize the organism throughout its life. . . . the evolutionary process explores and sifts the environment for aspects that will usefully organize the developing organism. The evolutionary process puts to work sources of organization and information anywhere they are unearthed, whether in genes or in the environment, in a mother's smile, or in a companion's expression of surprise. Selection has crafted the design of the development programs so that organisms tap into these reservoirs of information or hook themselves to environmental forces that help construct them, . . . Thus nothing the organism interacts with in the world is nonbiological to it, and so for humans cultural forces are biological, physical forces are biological, and so on. The social and cultural are not alternatives to the biological. . . . Our developmental and psychological programs evolved to invite the social and cultural worlds in but only the parts that tended, on balance to have adaptively useful effect.<sup>17</sup>

A myriad of selective criteria have been hard wired in our bodies and minds over thousands of generations. Fundamental elements which stimulate primitive responses in the human brain and mind are amplified *via* the humans' mind through their body language, their body attributes are artificially enhanced, transformed and re-presented, larger than life. Through selective evolution of the sexes, the art of self representation has become ever more deeply embodied in the human psyche as a built-in compulsion.

Cultural representation had enormous potential in that it opened up endless new opportunities to broaden the strategies in mate selection and the mating game. The contemporary 'copulatory gaze' makes calculations, which we now recognise in its searches through its database of highly tuned sensors, tapping in to the biological, physiological and psychological memory file. Today's humans still make decisions based on the selection, rejection process programmed deep in their primal bio-psyche. Within seconds the subliminal critical appraisal process has taken place.

The 'copulatory gaze' has evolved to be programmed with specific aesthetic criteria (the aesthetic gaze). The genders have been genetically constructed to compete, to attract, to repel, to register pleasure and pain. The arousal of love fuelled by erotic, sexual impulses directed at the sex object, discern difference, categorise, discriminate, recognise opposites,

alongside hundreds of other <sup>18</sup> genetically driven forces which may compel us psycho-sexually to act or not to act. This mental process could be evidence of a rudimentary form of the conception of meaning, <sup>19</sup> and the inception of primitive developments of cultural representation.

It is proposed that this evolutionary understanding will support the theory that humans have a genetic predisposition, biologically and mentally, for the processing of such concepts as: a sense of aesthetics; of self and other; binary opposites; paired concepts; gender assignment etc, and, at the more complex end of the phenomenon, design and the design process, in the context of making aesthetic judgements, art and decorative artefacts, and for generating these as tools in their social and personal environment.

## **2.4 Model concepts supporting the hypothesis / propositions.**

In a male dominated culture and in the context of the need to gratify the male gaze, the social construct of women, their sexuality and the feminisation of their bodies, is controlled by men and therefore women's identity is prescribed through the medium of their body adornment and re-presentation. This argument will be developed in order to establish a new set of parameters for a theoretical discourse leading to the development of a model / models and for selection of critical criteria for subsequent application in the research analysis of the image based studies. The historical evolution of art theory and discourse, in the context of the design and the creative process of jewellery, its making and its application to the body for representation are interconnected and therefore any construction of new models and / or critical frameworks must incorporate the latest theories.

### **2.4.1 Construction of theories: Model of developmental phases of the mind's evolution.**

The attached matrix in Chapter 11, figure 11.1, and the critical frame figure 11.2a and design trajectory 11.2b, postulates that at several progressive stages of evolution from primal to cultured ie., from the prehistoric to the contemporary, primary imperatives have combined, evolved and shaped the male copulatory gaze. Therefore over time this has provided identification of the generative structure of control and social coercion and the mechanisms which uphold it.

The bio-copulatory gaze, the socio-copulatory gaze and the psycho-copulatory gaze are seen in relation to the hard wiring and soft wiring of the brain and mind in the context that they arise from the visible and invisible primal blueprint which ultimately leads to the generation and support of a cultural inevitability, ie. a structure which consistently forges, re-inforces and controls the male sex's reproductive strategies. They are discussed and analysed to construct the new model.

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<sup>18</sup> unconscious primitive instincts which seek gratification and are detached from social consequences (the id).

<sup>19</sup> Love and attachment are very old and primitive emotions - based on chemical changes in the brain. No human is an exception, it is a physiological phenomenon in the make up of every human. Love, resides " . . . in the emotional centres of the brain, . . . " Helen E. Fisher, *Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1992), 165.



## 2.4.2 A model of the copulatory gaze

Steven Mithen's hypothetical model in his book *The Prehistory of the Mind*<sup>20</sup> endeavours to show possible stages of the evolutionary development of the mind (see figure 2.2 and figure 2.3 on the following pages). As the book title suggests his sphere of interest lies in the conjunction of brain and mind, the psychological evolution as it relates to the development of social skills present in *homo erectus* and the early modern minds of *homo sapiens sapiens*.

### The Prehistory of the Modern Mind

Mithen argues that the architecture of the mind and the nature of modern humans have been constructed by natural, genetic evolution over millions of years. His deductions are based on a process of analysis of products made by humans and their development over time from the earliest to the present. Mithen suggests a hypothetical model which begins with the development of proto-humans (first appearing 6 to 8 million years ago) and draws conclusions made from comparisons between our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees, and modern children. He attempts a reconstruction of the prehistoric mind by identifying / defining separate areas of intelligence (mental modules) in relation to need. These 'modules', which are dedicated to particular areas of task / problem solving, endeavour to show how different modules might have come to connect, overlap and so relate over time. This emphasis on environmental imperatives for adaptation necessitating mind modules will be debated later,

Mithen suggests in his model that there are three phases of mental / cognitive development and describes the mind as a construct of single (and over-layering 'intelligence') modules with three major multipurpose areas. These initial adaptive areas of the mind, applied to an overall specific imperative for survival led eventually to the modern human mind, which comprises cognitive elements that operate / co-operate in an holistic manner. Mithen's hypothetical phases of the evolution of the mind are as follows:

**Phase 1.** No more than a general intelligence and two unconnected adjunct modules of basic social intelligence and natural history intelligence based on a process of "associative learning and trial and error learning"<sup>21</sup> and not suited to the complexity of problem solving such as design and making of tools to make tools.

**Phase 2.** A construction of a series of specialised intelligences (cognitive modules) underpinning, relating to and interacting with a general overarching intelligence: more specialised cognitive domains working (a suggested more elaborate social intelligence, the addition of an advancing technical intelligence and natural history intelligence with a possible linguistic intelligence) alongside but separated from each other, where integration seemed incomplete.

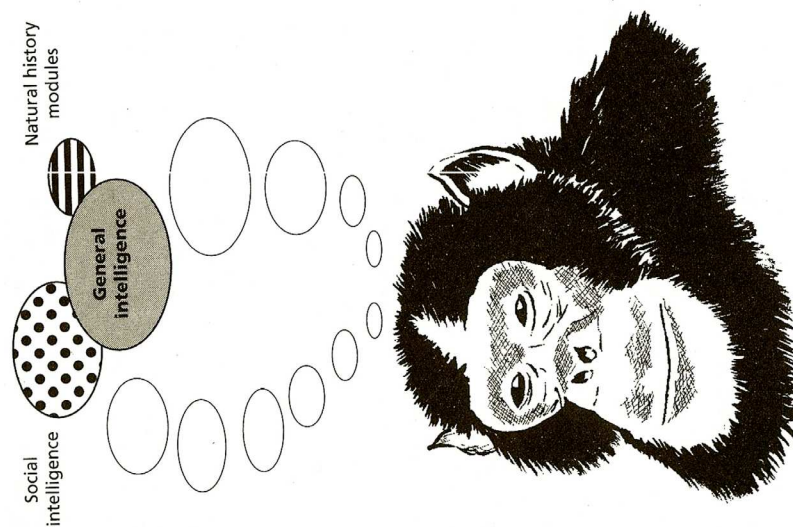
**Phase 3** where identified intelligences are overseen / operated by a supra-intelligence which

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<sup>20</sup> Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A search for the origins of art, religion and science* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1996), 14, 67, 89, 109, 113, 143, 145, 153, 181.

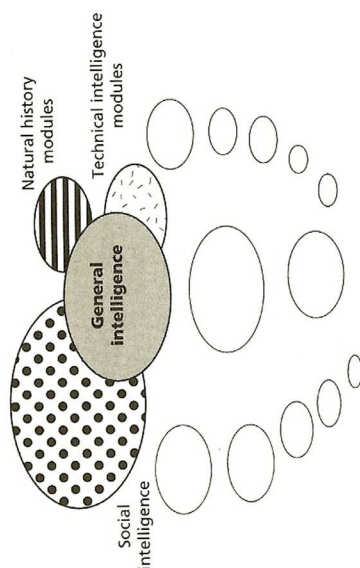
<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 46.





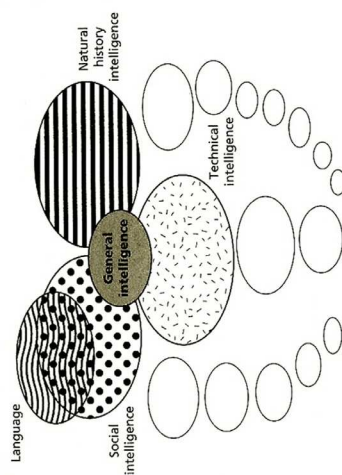
Phase 1

The chimpanzee mind  
Has similar architecture to that  
of our own ancestor of 6 million years ago



Phase 2

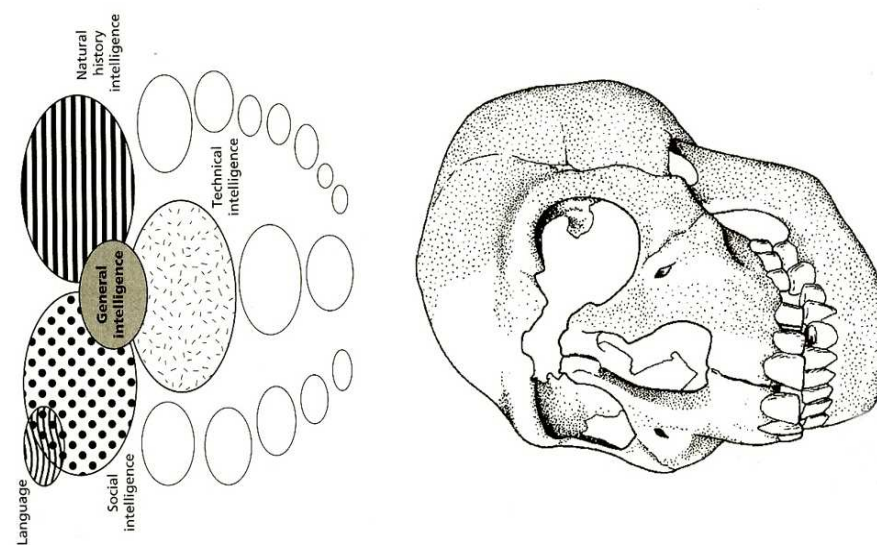
Early Homo Habilis mind 1.9 million years ago  
Showing an expanding social intelligence



Phase 2

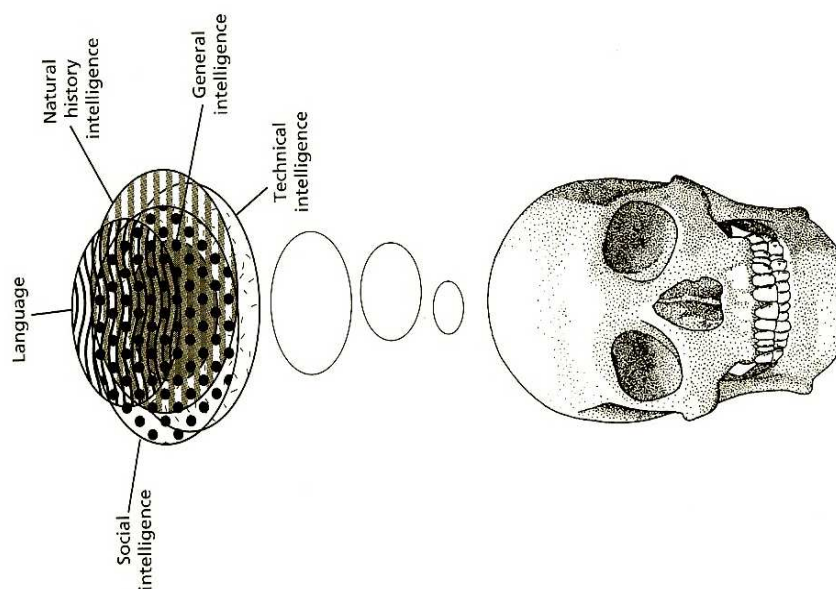
The Neanderthal mind  
Also applicable to archaic H.Sapiens  
after c 200,000 years ago. Mithen uses a reference to the  
Neanderthal mind because it closely resembles the level  
between H.Habilis and H.Erectus. Showing advancing  
technical intelligence, social history intelligence  
and language intelligence. However retaining a  
behavioural simplicity with no consciousness of self

Figure 2.2 Steven Mithin's hypothetical models



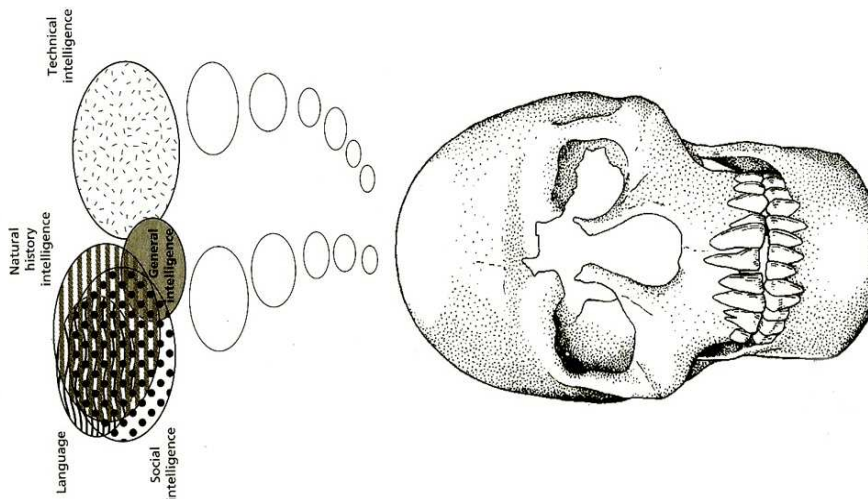
Phase 2

Homo Erectus mind of 1.6 million years ago describes the generic early human mind. Mithen argues that the lack of cognitive connections between the social and technical intelligence is evidenced by the non-existence of artifacts for use as body decoration.



Phase 3

Modern hunter-gatherer mind shows the move from independent cognitive domains to an interactive cognitive fluidity, showing that major changes to the restructuring/redesign of the mind. It closely resembles Early modern mind structures.



Phase 3

Early modern mind. 100,000 years ago. Homo Sapiens sapiens by 40,000 - 30,000 years ago show a gradual evolution of capacity for personal decoration, art as symbolisation. The diagram shows cognitive processes now functioning in harmony resulting in cognitive connections such as visual

Figure 2.3 Steven Mithen's hypothetical models

has direct access between the specialised intelligences and general intelligence – a sorting / processing pool which draws upon and harmonises the previously isolated modules.

Mithen argues that as in the case of the chimpanzee and the proto humans pre 1.8 million years ago, and the developing child (see figure 2.2 above), ‘the general intelligence Phase 1’, initially remained separate with no access to the others. However of significance to the context of this thesis is that his account of natural history intelligence should exclude reproductive imperatives or sexual intelligence as they operate socially. He limits his mental maps to hunting behaviour and tool / weapon use.

## Discussion

All of the major component modules identified in the hypothetical model are generally accepted by other experts in the field, who tend to suggest genetic constructs for the evolution of the mind, addressing most areas of imperatives except for sexual intelligence, the constituents of which are, it would seem, fundamental to the inception / development intelligence / consciousness domains of all creatures, human, animal or insect.

Mithen’s proposition is attractive because his suite of mental areas indicate where initially separated modular input systems start to interconnect gradually over several million years. Gathering complexity as human evolution progresses they develop an overlaying / interactive embodiment of intelligences which may connect and be overseen by a central processing system, a supra-modular structure which has evolved, like any other biological organism, as a result of natural selection or environmental adaptation responses for survival (where sexual reproduction is taken for granted).

Although Mithen claims that the first stage of inter-connectedness did not start to take place until 1.8 million years ago and did not become fully operational until a major step change in the level of artistic creativity with the *Homo sapiens sapiens* 40,000 years ago, it could be argued that the mind (intelligence) choice in sexual reproduction had already been integrated well before 1.8 million years. He constructs his argument by focussing on the evolution of tool making as a guide for the analysis of the development of intelligences, followed by hunting skills and social behaviour and their gradual inter-connectedness as activities and roles evolve. Sexual imperatives are not mentioned as he argues for “intuitive biological knowledge . . . Of all lifestyles, that of hunting and gathering required the most detailed knowledge of the natural world.”<sup>22</sup>

It will be argued throughout this research that the sexual imperative formed social behaviour in advance of, for example, co-operative group activity such as hunting. Sexual intelligence is treated as already in position prior to the development of general intelligence and as leading to its emergence. Sexual intelligence has driven all other developments of consciousness / intelligence and hence all other divisions / domains, in the progressing phases of the mind. It can be evidenced that we still reference and relate to this database of sexual intelligence today. As will be seen later research has evidenced that this process can be seen operating in the past and in the present in insects, animals and humans. The interpretation / application of sensory inputs provided by the brain feed into a central processing system operated by parallel

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<sup>22</sup>

Ibid. 52, 54

## Male Copulatory Gaze

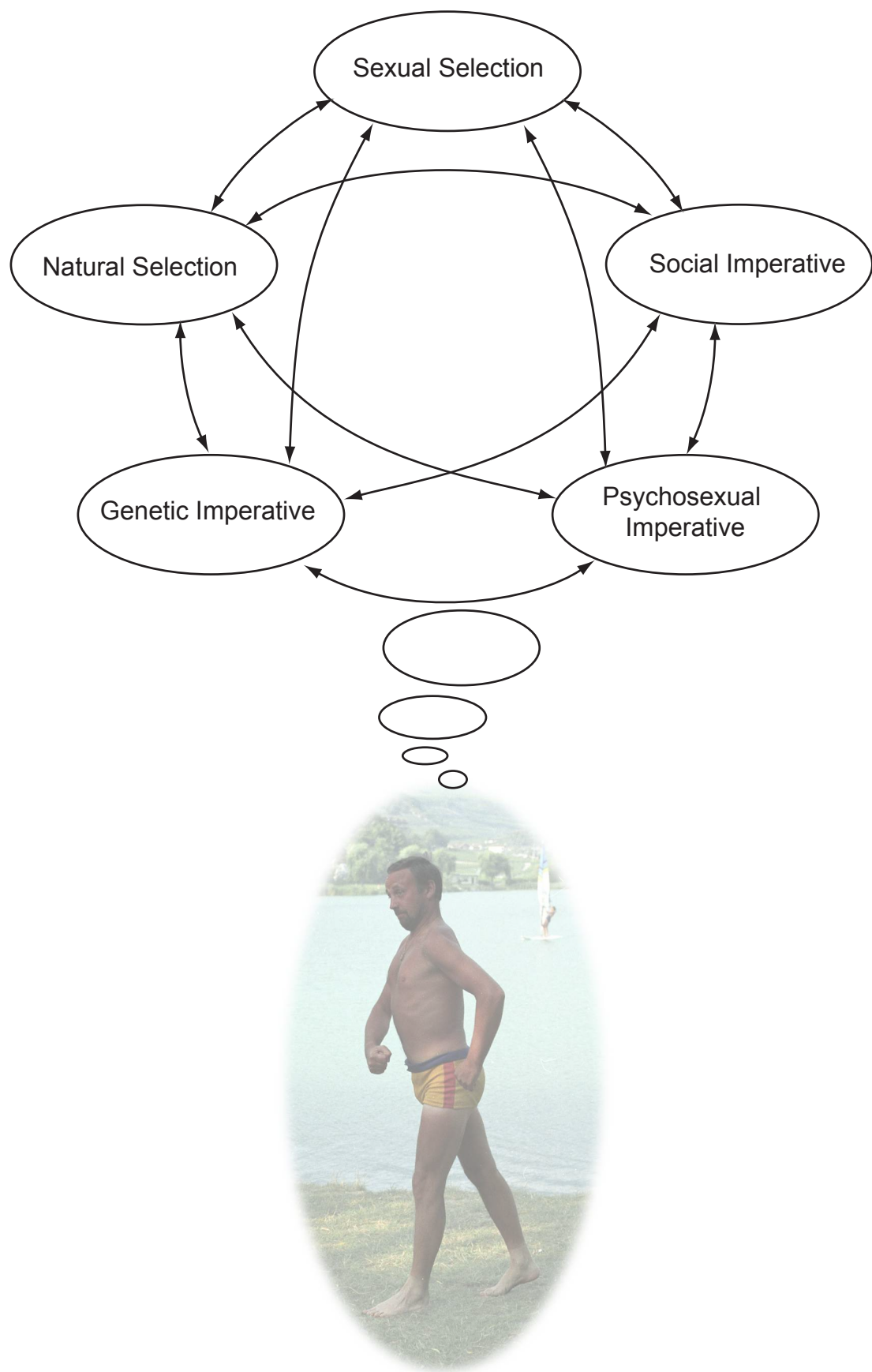


Figure 2.4 Components of the male copulatory gaze



developing minds <sup>23</sup> which in turn become connected / applied to such areas as social, natural, language as Mithen and his colleagues propose.

Whilst Mithen's claims that the first interface between the first phase and the second phase was in relation to social intelligence is generally acceptable, in developing an improved or progressed model using Mithen's basic hypothetical model, adjustment needs to be made to the hypothetical framework to accommodate an additional overarching component: sexual / reproductive intelligence (as in figure. 2.4 showing components of the copulatory gaze). Placing sexual intelligence as a prime module shows, in the arguments that follow, not only how the possible links between chimpanzee, protohuman and modern human occur but also demonstrates that it is the primary part of an interactive development of the evolution of intelligences that Cosmides, Tooby and Mithen consider in their discussion of the establishment / development of mental modules and the cognitive processes that may take place as a result.

In bringing verbal language creation to the fore as an intelligence module what seems to be missing is the former visual language intelligence, which responds to sign, and its impact upon the expansion of the mind. Perhaps because of this, in one of Mithen's hypotheses he describes bafflement at the enlargement of the brain capacity especially in the language section, when it is arguable whether humans could speak at that point. It might have been the case, for example, that other modules of intelligence either were capable of adaptation or were themselves in evolutionary mode or that all modules as defined were, in the totality of the continuum of evolution, temporary and mutable at the direction of some dominant intelligence or imperative.

This thesis proposes that the sexual imperative and its representation has played its part in evolution over millions of years. It is the most primal and has had the longest history in the development of human nature and intelligence. It is vital to the universal survival of the human species and therefore culture will not and cannot erase it. Mithen cites Cosmides and Tooby's lists of modules "the types of problems that our prehistoric hunter-gatherers had regularly to face and solve". <sup>24</sup> But Mithen's usage of these is misleading, leaving out the sexual-attraction module that Cosmides and Tooby have included. However Cosmides' and Tooby's and Mithen's lists could both be considered incomplete in that Mithen totally ignores the subject of the sexual imperative and Cosmides and Tooby give it little or no prominence.

### 2.4.3 Brain and mind

Development of brain capacity and cognitive skills in relation to the thesis topic have been

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<sup>23</sup> For more indepth reading see: Howard Gardner, Intelligence reframed: multiple intelligences for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> "A face recognition module, a spatial relations module, a rigid objects mechanics module, a tool-use module, a fear module, a social-exchange module, an emotion-perception module, a kin orientated motivation module, an effort allocation and recalibration module, a child care module, a social inference module, a friendship module, [sic should read as "a sexual attraction module"], a semantic-interface module, a friendship module, a grammar acquisition module, a communication-pragmatics module, a theory of mind module and so on! . . ." Steven Mithen, The Prehistory of the Mind: A search for the origins of art, religion and science, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd. 1996), 45.

See Cosmides and Tooby's correct version in: John Tooby and Leda Cosmides chap. 1: "The Evolutionary and Psychological Foundations of The Social Sciences", in section 1. "The Psychological Foundations of Culture". in The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture, ed. Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 113.

overlooked in current theories of human evolutionary development. The thesis argument here is predicated on the premise that sexual intelligence may well be imperative in relation to the application of cognitive skills, in the development not only of visual language, but the reading of body signals and symbols salient to survival.

For example, at the level of our very basic understanding of ‘difference’, it could be between those with a penis and those without, and the understanding of an erect penis is only a small step away from the understanding of the phallic symbol. In the world of non-verbal communication, bodies provide us with 80% percent of our information, the universal language of the body is far more innate than its verbal counterpart, we understand it through so many more intricate sensory and mental perceptions and sensory indicators.

#### 2.4.4 Social imperatives

As changes in sexual strategies evolved, ie., serial monogamy, living in social groups and divisions of sexuality based roles in society, the how and why of the deliberate and conscious use of body concepts of beauty as a mode of communication in establishing a male dominated sexual culture must be rooted in the procreation imperative. Contemporary jewellery and its ancestor adornment came to be a significant factor within a complex structure for the construction and control of women’s femininity and sexual fetishisation. Economic and social existence within the political systems and power structures of hierarchy, later perceived as patriarchy (male led society), in societies reflected and reinforced this *via* sublimation.

The identification of sado-sublimation (the displacement or transference of male anxieties onto women) through their body adornment is a process of being made socially acceptable in a patriarchy through the rationale of a supposed or actual natural state of women, most forcefully espoused in, by and through mythology and mythologising. The contemporary motivational levels of consciousness in society relative to this early evolutionary trait are expressed by Mulvey, Barthes and Berger and, it will be argued later, with the support of psychoanalytic theory,

... the sexualised image of women says little or nothing about woman’s reality, but is symptomatic of male fantasy and anxiety that are projected on to the female image. In this sense the image of women that had circulated as signifier of sexuality could be detached from reality, from referring to actual women, and become attached to a new referent, the male unconscious. The direction of the gaze shifted, satisfyingly, from women as spectacle to the psyche that had need of such a spectacle. ... Myth flourishes at the point where social and psychoanalytic overlap, redolent of fascination and anxiety and generating both creative energy (stories, images) and the ‘taming and binding’ process through which collective contact with the unconscious is masked.<sup>25</sup>

Semiology has taught us that myth has a task of giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal. ...

What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality. ... Men do not have with myth a relationship based on truth but on use: they depoliticize according to their needs.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Great Britain: The Macmillan Press Ltd. 1989), xiii, 166.

<sup>26</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans, Jonathan Cape Ltd. (Great Britain: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1972), 142,

The mirror was often used as a symbol of the vanity of women. The moralizing, however, was mostly hypocritical.

You painted a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her, you put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting Vanity, thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had depicted for your own pleasure.

The real function of the mirror was otherwise. It was to make the woman connive in treating herself as, first and foremost, a sight. . . . This unequal relationship is so deeply embedded in our culture that it still structures the consciousness of many women. They do to themselves what men do to them. They survey, like men, their own femininity.<sup>27</sup>

The relevance of these issues is discussed later in the case study in Chapter 7, and the image based research in Chapters 9 and the case studies in Chapter 10 relative to jewellery objects. However if the sexual imperative is underpinning the mind modules of intelligence in the way suggested previously, the question then raised relative to patriarchy or any other gender dominance discussion is perhaps not so much, ‘is it consequential upon nature (natural) or nurture (a conditioned construct)?’, but ‘is change driven adaptation responsive to imbalance over long periods?’ In other words how does the sexual imperative transfer to cultural constructs which, if committed in favour of a single sex, enable adaptation in favour of the opposite sex as needed. (This is further explained in Chapter 3).

## 2.5 Cultural genes.

In reviewing relevant literature and visual material and in undertaking empirical work, it has become apparent that there are several recurring core ideas and concepts employed in the critical analysis. These core ideas have direct bearing on and therefore prescribe the sequence and layout of visual maps, images and case studies which underpin texts and / or are utilised in the presentation of the previous analysis.

These core ideas in the evolution of psychological factors governing human creative expression, reconciling nature and nurture, act to assist interpretation of perspectives pertinent to a complex culture resulting from the biological cognitive development of body / brain / mind. The body and mind, seen as separate entities at an earlier stage of theorisation, have for some time required either a unifying overall theory or some kind of bridging theory. The bridging theory argued for has emerged from lateral connections formulated within interdisciplinary discourses in the area of bio-genetics and neurosciences. Whereas in former periods only the notions of evolution espoused by Darwin impacted on the separate discourses, in the late twentieth century lateral interdisciplinary links began to become necessary since individual specialist research fields of investigation could not provide holistic explanations. As illustrated below (Figure 2.5 The integrated human / self ) recent discoveries and technical advances in studies of both brain and the genome allow us to investigate knowledge, using those discoveries as a bridge between the disconnected specific enquiries.

## Integrated Model

*The missing connections between*

Biological evolution as espoused by Darwin and Behavioural psychology (which excludes involvement of the mind in response to behaviour and the social sciences

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<sup>27</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Great Britain: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books Ltd., 1972; reprint, British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books Ltd. 1987), 51, 63. (page references are to reprint edition).



'blank slate' dogma).

*are bridged by*

evolutionary biology, cognitive psychology and neuro sciences, reinforced by the emergent field of genetics thus integrating social / cultural evolution and anthropology

*resulting in*

evolutionary psychology; (which consolidates the missing connections thus providing an holistic research base). Evolutionary psychology sees the contemporary mind and resultant human psychology as a product of the evolutionary process of natural selection, which enabled our hominid ancestors to respond, resolve and hence adapt to specific survival and reproductive problems faced in their environment

*reinforcing bio-imperatives and subsequently providing*

an integrated evolutionary cycle of human species identity

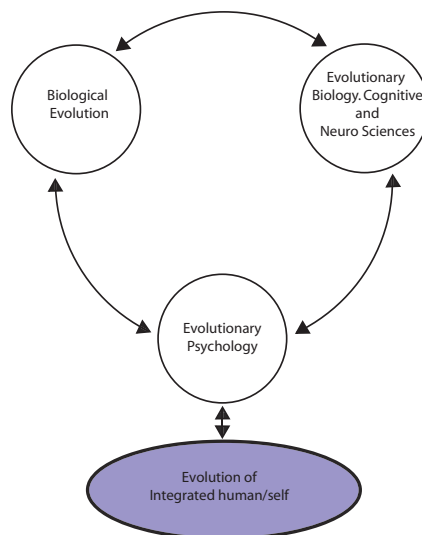


Figure 2.5 The integrated human self

Lumsden and Wilson argued that the sensory receptors and particular cognitive processes determine thought and behavioural response. The sensory perception triggers and selects appropriate 'thought patterns' and / or connected networks, which activate physical / metaphysical brain centres for a variety of responses. Analysis of this process might establish the mechanism that gave rise to the developmental shift from genes to culture and identify elements of genetic evolution with patterns of cultural evolution.<sup>28</sup> They argue also that the sensory mechanisms operate both ways, and that something (the mind) internally triggers actions according to a momentum based on memory / experience and / or accumulated knowledge specific to each individual. If this is correct, it is possible to speculate that future analyses of data collected as a result of research from many associated disciplines concerned with behaviour might establish the precise mechanism that gave rise to the shift inhibiting the genetic imperatives in favour of culture. In determining the identification of patterns of genetic evolution matched with or mirroring patterns of cultural evolution some research has argued

<sup>28</sup> Charles J. Lumsden and Edward. O Wilson. Genes, Mind and Culture: The Coevolutionary Process. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 7.

a linking mechanism based in the mimetic action of meme-transmission.<sup>29</sup> The partnership of genetic and cultural evolution, 'gene culture', can be viewed as a process, a 'co-evolution', where the co-operation of mental and behavioural 'progression' incorporates the biogenetic, mind and culture as a holistic process of transmission, (previously defined by Wilson and Lumsden as the 'culturgen'<sup>30</sup>, the word meme has now taken over as the accepted nomenclature).

In the ensuing chicken and egg debate there are those who suggest that the genetic imprint was responsible for the evolution of memes. Others suggest that the gene created the brain and the independent evolving mind fostered meme transfer. In other words the brain's hard wiring, based in genetic imprinting rather than psychological forces, results in meme transfer and the transmission mechanism is bio-chemical and therefore probably an innate biological imperative. This thesis argues from this other position. In support of this Steve Jones reasons that it is the influence of genetics and how and why sex evolved and how it works which discloses elements in our evolution which have influenced the formation of social and cultural structures.

Genetics is the key to the past. Every gene must have an ancestor. This means that patterns of inherited variation can be used to piece together a picture of history more complete than from any other source. Each gene is a message from our forebears and together they contain the whole story of human evolution. Everyone is a living fossil, carrying within themselves a record which goes back to the beginnings of humanity and far beyond.<sup>31</sup>

This reasoning is enlightening inasmuch as it links patterns of genetic and biological development to patterns of social development but also shows how humans' past can still influence their present. In his book 'The Selfish Gene' Dawkins further suggests that:

... the best way to look at evolution is in terms of selection occurring at the lowest level of all. ... the fundamental unit of selection, and therefore of self-interest, is not the species, nor the group, nor even, strictly, the individual. It is the gene, the unit of heredity. ... The argument takes time to develop, and we must begin at the beginning, with the very origin of life itself.<sup>32</sup>

Dawkins suggests that the Darwinian approach is a key component in its application to the analysis of human behavioural patterns in relation to cultural patterns. "Cultural transmission is analogous to genetic transmission in that, although basically conservative, it can give rise to a form of evolution, ..."<sup>33</sup> Taken more literally this concept, that cultural transmission has arisen and is formed by genetic and biological factors, is supported by other arguments.

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<sup>29</sup> Elements of culture that are transmitted person to person via non-genetic means like imitation. For more indepth reading on the theory of the meme see: Susan Blackmore, The Meme Machine, with a Foreword by Richard Dawkins (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999).

<sup>30</sup> "... an array of transmissible behaviours, mentifacts, and artefacts, which we propose to call *culturgens* (from. L. *cultur(a)*. Culture, +L. *gen(o)*, ...". Charles J. Lumsden and Edward. O Wilson. Genes, Mind and Culture: The Coevolutionary Process (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 7.

<sup>31</sup> Steve Jones The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future, 2d ed., (London: Flamingo, 1994), 3.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; new ed. , Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989) , 11. (Page references are to new edition).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

Steven Mithen points out that leading evolutionary psychologists Leda Cosmides and John Tooby,

... argue that we can only understand the nature of the modern mind by viewing it as a product of biological evolution. The starting point for this argument is that the mind is a complex, functional structure that could not have arisen by chance. If we are willing to ignore the possibility of divine intervention, the only known process by which such complexity can have arisen is evolution by natural selection<sup>34</sup>

According to Cosmides and Tooby, the mind evolved during the Pleistocene era as the hunter-gatherers adapting to specific environments. Cosmides and Tooby believe that human minds are still programmed to this prehistoric kind of life.

The most critical statement of all relative to the central argument in this thesis is that of Timothy Taylor who specifically draws attention to the chronic habit of the gross misrepresentation of women in the history of and discourse on evolution, in text and specifically images, the distortion between convention and reality.

... Man, not woman is seen as the key figure of evolution, even though it is woman's womb and pelvis that must accommodate each evolutionary novelty. The male slant is reflected in the titles of the books: *From Ape to Adam* is unambiguous, while *The Evolution of Early Man* includes women only by virtue of the supposition that the word *man* can imply both "men and women" and "men *not* women" without confusion. So familiar is the doublethink that it is sometimes hard to see what the problem is, but phrases like "early man typically breast-fed for five years" and "man's clitoris became much reduced" may serve as a useful reminder.<sup>35</sup>

Taylor is one of the first male evolutionary theorists to acknowledge formally the absurdity of the invisibility of women in history and point out how grossly misleading this is and that it has had such a detrimental impact on the translation of the history of women and their contribution to and role in the development of culture and social structure.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, Taylor highlights another very critical issue concerning misrepresentation: "Anatomically Modern Man is clearly [depicted as] white, [most are depicted as] . . . pale skinned; yet we know that human evolution took place in Africa, where people generally have dark skin."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A search for the origins of art, religion and science* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996), 42.

<sup>35</sup> Timothy Taylor, *The Prehistory of Sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture* (London: Fourth Estate Ltd., 1996; reprint, London: Fourth Estate Ltd., 1997), 22 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>36</sup> By acceptable is meant comfortable and digestible for women. For example, Dawkins too attempts to reconcile this anomaly when he states "I am distressed to find that some women friends (unfortunately not many) treat the use of the impersonal masculine pronoun as if it showed intention to exclude them. If there were any excluding to be done (happily there isn't) I think I would sooner exclude men, but when I once tentatively tried referring to my abstract reader as 'she', a feminist denounced me for patronising condescension: I ought to say 'he-or-she' and 'his-or-her'. That is easy to do if you don't care about language, but then if you don't care about language you don't deserve readers of either sex. Here, [in his book] I have returned to the normal conventions of English pronouns" he goes on to say he thinks more often than not of his readers as being female . . . "I'd hate to think that such considerations impinged on how I use my native language." Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watch Maker*. (Harlow: Longman 1986; reissued, London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000), xvii. (page reference to new issue).

But this is the very point where he shoots himself in the foot. In 'The Selfish Gene' he talks about how language is evolutionary and reflects progress. His kind of persistent and dogmatic use of language exposes exactly how women can deduce that things have not really moved on much further, the male centred vision has decided to remain in denial. No matter how well intentioned Dawkins' comment might be it is not convincing, it is flawed, for it comes across as being merely a token gesture, or his wish to be seen to be politically correct. Whilst Taylor, on the other hand, comfortably switches between references to men and women, to his or her's, or when appropriate uses the collective term humans. There is no misunderstanding, no confusion, women are a real part of his history.

<sup>37</sup> Timothy Taylor, *The Prehistory of Sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture* (London: Fourth Estate Ltd., 1996; reprint, London: Fourth Estate Ltd., 1997), 22.

## 2.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed how evolutionary theory provides an effective contextual framework for this research. The discussion shows how errors in previous studies arising from the misguided perspectives of the social sciences and behavioural psychology have seriously inhibited progress towards a more holistic understanding of humanity. The combination of the sciences of evolutionary biology and cognitive psychology has formed the discipline of evolutionary psychology where the academic approach to research is based on the theory that body, brain and mind and the resultant human cultural intelligences have developed as an integrated and interrelated expression through the medium of natural selection.

These theorists argue that the mind is composed of many specialist domains – modules which evolved to deal with the task of resolving specific adaptive problems confronted in the hostile and insecure environment of our early ancestors. Modules considered to be dominant content-specific mind modules in relation to adaptive problem solving mechanisms have been identified and listed under areas of importance, as described by Cosmides, Tooby and Mithen in this chapter (note 24.) In identifying such mechanisms it has been accepted that one could apply these theories to explore and identify the evolved psychological mechanisms which are to be found, expressed subliminally in the outside world, in the concrete form of cultural behaviours, activities and artefacts.

However in progressing this research it has been found that current evolutionary theorists have made little reference to the idea of a sexual intelligence. It is suggested that, as a result, these theorists have seriously underestimated the significance of the role of sexual intelligence in its contribution to the formation of cognitive skills, and the ensuing construction of social and cultural phenomena and their elaborate and rapid multidimensional expansion.

The critical framework is based on the concept of a sexual intelligence as the most significant driver of the development of this specific cultural intelligence. This framework provides a categorisation for the purpose of analysis into specific stages: genetic imperative, natural selection, sexual selection; aesthetic imperative; control imperatives; bio-social / psycho-sexual sublimation imperatives. This in turn facilitates the identification of the resultant bio-psychosexual mechanisms within the various developmental phases of the human mind and the various levels of consciousness, and allows us to unravel the complexities of understanding ourselves.

In the context of this thesis it is a highly significant point that if human evolution took place in Africa, then so did that of the origins and language of body adornment, which in turn must have made an evolutionary migration to the other continents. Also if, as Jones argues, humans' past can influence their present then it might follow that human creativity (as exemplified by the adornment of the body relative to jewellery) and the documented interpretations of its history are also often male, white and confined to Western Europeanised Culture, delivering to us a biased view of adornment which negates the evidence.

The context within which differentiations takes place is of importance. Darwin again gives us clues relating to external pressures such as climatic and environmental condition changes which would impact upon the bio-genetics of any given species.

In developing the argument at this stage, however, it is important to retrace the evolutionary process of human development, highlighting the formative aspects of the human psyche reflecting the embedded biological and sexual imperatives (refer to matrix 11.1 and diagram figures 11.2a and 11.2b). Relative to the evolution of body adornment and jewellery making, the developing model of interrelating aspects indicated in this chapter will be further overlaid with the emerging factors which also expose the criteria used in the construct of image identity artefacts reflecting the evolution of the 'human psyche' from its biological origins.

## CHAPTER 3

### The battle of the sexes begins: conflicts of interest and agendas

#### 3.0 Introduction

Chapters 1 and 2 have presented the argument and proposed hypotheses / propositions and a methodology, for establishing a critical analysis and evaluation of imperative impacts in the evolutionary history of body adornment and jewellery. Chapters 3 to 10 establish, through a revised critical framework, a new model for research and a relevant platform for discourse. Additionally an argument is proposed for the increasing levels of consciousness described within each area of discourse in each chapter, demonstrating an incremental accumulation in capacity as each chapter leads into the next. To reflect the changing level of status of the hypotheses and propositions these levels are formulated at the beginning and end of each chapter, and are delineated on the hypotheses / proposition tables and on the Matrix and Critical Frame.

**Please refer to:**

**The hypotheses tables: at the end of chapters 3-10**

**The matrix figure 11.1 page 341**

**The critical frame figures 11.2a and design trajectory 11.2b page 342**

**The evolutionary pathway figure A.1 page 352 (for time scale).**

**The trajectory of human evolution figures A.2 page 353 and A.3 page 355 (for time and contextual reference, physical and social).**

**Chapter Three. Base Order and Level 1.**

**Key concepts:**

**Primordial life. Primitive replication. Bilateral symmetry / sexual fitness. Sexual differentiation. Unconscious behaviour patterns. 3 - 3.2). Genetic selection. Natural selection. Sexual selection. Aesthetic perception / interpretation. Subliminal. Reproductive fitness. Copulatory gaze. The phenotype extended. (3.3 - 3.5.5)**

**Cognitive benchmarks:**

**Protohuman tool making: no evidence found at this stage but believed to be similar to that of the chimpanzee.**

“Our primordial heritage sets the blueprint. Behaviour patterns are governed by reproductive survival mechanisms of gene propagation. This establishes the principal base order for all future development of human activity” (see top of critical frame figure 11.2a page no 342)

In this chapter, traits traced from life’s origins use the concept of the laws of nature to identify the critical evidence to support the various key levels within the hypotheses and propositions which determine the content and context of the thesis argument as it develops.

Level One starts with the first glimmers of human evolution. It examines the first step in the ensuing incremental effect of the mechanisms' ie., genetic selection, natural selection, sexual selection, impact upon the incremental development of protohumans' primitive perception skills, patterns of thought driving patterns of behavioural adaptation. Identifying and understanding their inter-connectedness as being of critical influence is of vital importance to the understanding of the later process of transition as humans shift from biological / instinctive beings to conscious beings, to active participants in societal and cultural structures.

The previous chapter critically reviewed the issue of the omission or lack of realisation of significance of the sexual imperative using Mithen's model and argued four propositions (see Chapter 2.1) that in the ensuing discourse offered up an alternative or complementary model. This chapter continues to develop the argument from biological reproduction to bio-reflective socio-cultural constructs by tracing the origins of the sexes' visual differentiation relative to sexual differentiation, evidencing also recent biological research illuminating the interconnectedness of the sexual and the cultural.

For a span of 2,200 years philosophers of art, beauty and aesthetics have maintained that artists in their creative processes have a set of unwritten criteria other than those disclosed which have their origins in the biological imperative and which are still at work in contemporary culture. This perception is reviewed in the context of a model or critical framework with which to evaluate the bio-imperative and its impact upon creative processes. This will be applied later to the case studies.

### **3.1 Sexual competitiveness leads to conflicting interests in identity and has implications for subsequent social and cultural evolution**

In the context of the discussion and this analysis of evidence, it has been suggested that there are several interrelated factors involved in an extended biological process or imperative relative to human evolution which form a 'first order base' upon which the nature of creativity and representation are built (proposition a) Chapter. 2.1 to 2.2.4) This section discusses the 'first order' imperatives (genetic and natural selection: origins of life and sexual difference) and then the 'second extended order' of imperatives, (sexual selection and an analysis of 'beauty') both of which similarly have an impact on human actions and parallels the former and supports further the propositions (b, c and d, Chapter 2.1). Chapter 2.2.5 and 2.2.6 discusses gene pool protection and sublimation as the outcomes of pressure arising from socialisation.

When and where those humans 'most fit for purpose' first emerged and what the struggle to differentiate between the sexes was based upon in terms of fundamental traits as aspects of our biology is of considerable importance to our understanding of our collective selves. Some human actions should not therefore be thought of as conscious strategies but rather unconscious behaviour patterns governed by reproductive survival mechanisms such as gene propagation etc.,

One of the most striking properties of survival-machine behaviour is its apparent purposiveness. . . . I am talking about a closer analogy to human purposeful behaviour. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; new ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 50. (Page references are to new edition).



This apparently purposive bio-imperative is so closely simulated by sub-conscious human social behaviour as to suggest that it might also have influenced the sexes' differentiated sexual development which led to "a property we call 'consciousness'." <sup>2</sup> where the biological drive set in place the mechanisms of the incremental consolidation of the biological with the psychological,

The law of the "survival-machine" is one of brutal combat, a calculating and callous exploitation based on self interest, whether in competition with others of the species for access to the most desirable of the opposite sex or for precious resources of food and shelter to sustain life. Relative to the former it might be presumed that because both sexes have a vested interest in the perpetuation of the species and both are needed to accomplish this objective there might be an exception to the laws of the survival machine in respect of inter-sexual relations. Far from it since, whilst there are common interests, the objectives and hazards of copulation are different for each of the sexes and therefore their relations are not without conflicts.

This being the case what is the drive behind the so called 'battle of the sexes', what is its purpose and what, in an individual, social / cultural context, are the significances of it? Although theories on the origins of primordial life are still a matter of speculation, informed hypotheses have been put forward by scientists, the most plausible and generally accepted of which is based on the theory that life arose from what is called a 'primeval organic soup'. The origins of this battle may well already have become established within this soup from which all early life originated and remain present throughout development of the human species.

### **3.2 From soup to cell: Theories on the origins of life on early earth; the rise of organisms from inorganic materials**

The world's age<sup>3</sup> has been estimated as approximately 4.6 to 5 billion years. As an incandescent molten mass early earth began a gradual cooling process whereupon (approximately 3 to 4 billion years ago) it is possible that life may have originated with some form of primitive replication. Compounds combined and interacted which resulted in the clustering of microscopic organic molecules: (coacervates). From here chance combinations probably arose, stabilising and adjusting to earth's instability (as it cooled to form a crust and sea), resulting in the best adapted physical elements developing similar traits of true organisms in the context of searching out sustenance and its conversion to energy <sup>4</sup> (such as purple bacteria that can metabolise oxygen). It is believed that the primeval seas may have been loaded with vast concentrations of multi-variant organic molecules. <sup>5</sup>

The animal family tree tracks its origins back some 600 million years to microscopic single-celled organisms existing in the sea. some of which had genes that produced proteins that led

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix figure A.1 first stage, provides an evolutionary trajectory in a chronology which contextualises this section).

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Hotton III, The Evidence of Evolution. (USA: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1968; reprint England: Penguin Books Ltd. 1973), 24-28 (page references are to reprint edition)

<sup>5</sup> Note. Organic molecules have automatically structured themselves when subjected to simulated conditions in the laboratory. Scientists' experimental research has produced amino acids and primitive protein amalgamates which may support the idea that life could have been generated from non-living matter.

to multicellular creatures. <sup>6</sup> The appearance of the first fossil ‘organisms’ which provide evidence of life are recorded from approximately 550 million years ago. However this does not provide absolute evidence that this form of life arose at this time, it may have been earlier. It only indicates a time when organisms evolved solid enough material forms to survive degradation in sedimentary deposits. In the context of this thesis (and to be further discussed at a later point) it is important to note, as Gould has in his study of the Burgess Shale, that the most common factor of these early forms is that they are bilaterally symmetrical and structured in replications or patterns. <sup>7</sup>

It has been established that all living matter shares a common genetic system and therefore in the evolution of organisms from the most simple to the most complex, it would seem that all plants and animals, including humans, share a common primitive ancestor.

Significance might be drawn from early evolution relative to the ‘battle of the sexes’ inasmuch as the ever present symmetry and structures of replications or patterns seem to be a necessary factor in the balance of formative elements. The replicated order is held together at a nuclear level by a dynamic force which is magnetic. This oscillating force is in a constant state of equilibrium, simultaneously attracting and repelling. This fundamental physical aspect of nature seems to inhabit all its manifestations including human beings. These important elements of evolution which may be contributory to human nature are used later in this thesis to inform the discussion of humans’ inherent creative and artistic empathy with nature and natural forms, and their resultant aesthetic perception and interpretation of these.

Although it is not the remit of this thesis to detail the vast and complex studies which collectively address evolution as a field of enquiry, certain fundamental evolutionary elements are contributory to the full understanding of the formation of human nature and the psychology of the two sexes.

### **3.2.1 Origins of sexual difference and bio-gender**

If at one time organisms were successfully self replicating or self reproductive why did humans’ elementary progenitors evolve a reproductive strategy which required a division into two separate sexes, with only one giving birth, and, when and why did the need for this arise?

Many primitive, microscopic organisms such as the amoeba, algae, some bacilli, bacteria, and protozoa seem to be able to self replicate in a stable environment. However there are times when unpredictable conditions seem to prompt the organism to adopt a change in behavioural patterns. In these organisms there is no distinguishable sexual difference, all seem to be of a single sex, called isogametes. Some have several mating types where at times, rather than self replicate, one cell will conjugate to exchange cell substance (genetic material) with another. This process is considered pregametic (a presexual process). However there are examples such as the case of a blue-green algae where conjoining is limited to two types. As their gender designate cannot be discerned, identity is assigned as + to one and - to the other in recognition

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<sup>6</sup> See Carl Zimmer “A Fin is a Limb is a Wing *National Geographic* vol. 210. no 5. (November 2006), 118, where scientists study choanoflagellates perhaps today’s “closest living one-celled relatives of animals.”

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (Great Britain: Hutchinson Radius 1990; reprint, London Vintage, 2000), 142. See also illustrations. (page references are to reprint edition).

that some primitive form of sex selection has occurred.<sup>8</sup>

The above type of cell conjugation is called isogamy and a cell's fusion is usually based on an equally shared union of cell ingredients, including sustenance. However, of particular significance to the hypothesis of this thesis is that in the case of single-celled gametes (or germ cells, the reproductive cells of sperm and egg) gamete cells are different in that they do not share a system of equal exchange. Some gametes, under the pressure to survive and efficiently select of that most fit for purpose, turned into opportunist gametes which evolved a profitable 'cheating' system. Particular gametes, rather than be encumbered by carrying their fair share of nutrients, abandoned this part of the cell contents in favour of power, mobility and speed evolving into the male (sperm) cell.

The complementary cell to the sperm (male cell) had to evolve extra provision to sustain the 'cheating' male cell. The more mobile, cheating cells searched out the most plump and nourishment laden cells, the egg (the female cell). A large inactive egg could better sustain an embryo whilst the opportunist, active sperm had the survival advantage over the non-cheaters. An extrapolation of this theory is recognised as the parasitism hypothesis where the sperm stripped of all its other encumbrances except its DNA material selects its host cell.

The sexes arose in the same fashion that modern viruses parasitize host cells: the virus incorporates its own DNA into the host cell; then, as the host cell reproduces itself, it replicates the DNA of the virus too. Thus the precursors of males were tiny gametes that parasitized larger female gametes.<sup>9</sup>

It is this single basic variance between the sexes which makes it possible to establish and deduce all other gender identity.

This evolutionary bias / oscillation effect sustained and gathered momentum in the perpetuation of the winners and in the same context the elimination of the losers. Whilst natural selection favoured and refined this arrangement, it simultaneously set in motion the unstoppable and relentless exploitation of the female of the species. From primeval soup to natural selection and sexual selection through to social order and male dominated culture, the opportunity for exploitation was part of every aspect of the female's life. As male and female were destined to partake forever in nature's complex choreography of the sexual *pas de deux* the conflicts of the reproductive agenda grew ever more complex.

Sex has a dramatic influence on how biological and cultural life is constructed, experienced and lived. The advent of sexual reproduction had enormous implications for the human female for, as she struggled up the evolutionary pathway, the emphasis on and ramifications of differentiation continually increased her burden.

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<sup>8</sup> Although contemporary organisms may differ from primeval microbes, observation of the behavioural patterns of some of these organisms may indicate how the phenomena of males and females arose. Evidence seems to suggest that there is a primordial and evolutionary symbiosis or intermediate stage between plant and animal cells and bacteria). Helen Fisher, Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1992), 59, 60, 317 note no 6, cites main theorists and their relevant research.

See also: Encyclopaedia Britannica. P.C. ed., 1999, s.v. "Cyanobacteria."

<sup>9</sup> Helen E. Fisher, Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1992), 317 note no 6. See also: Steve Jones, The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future. (Great Britain: Harper Collins Publishers 1993; London: Flamingo, 1994), 103.

The impact of sexual reproduction on female development and how it influenced the development of culture has been grossly underestimated. The female body and mind had to accommodate significant physical changes as it evolved to prepare to perform the tasks of being impregnated and fertilised, and of conception, foetal incubation, birth, breast feeding and long term nurturing, many of which can be life threatening at any stage. The male, by contrast, can walk away after the sexual act at any time since his part in the biological process is concluded.

### 3.2.2 Why sexual reproduction?

Sex in its enactment produces an individual who carries genes from two separate lines of descent which recombine. Asexual production makes an exact copy from generation to generation. Important to this thesis is that sex is a replication strategy which through evolution has determined that sexual replication is more variable because of its adaptive flexibility in permutation. As Sparks points out.

The potential of the sexual process for creativity is mind boggling. For example, it has been calculated that a human couple, given an eternity of breeding, is capable of producing five octillion (5,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) genetically different children.<sup>10</sup>

Why sex? Jones answers this succinctly:

Sex reshuffles life's cards: . . . Sex is a convenient way of bringing together the best (some of which may even be better than what went before) and purging the worst. It separates the fate of genes from that of those who carry them. Sex is a kind of redemption, which, each generation, reverses biological decay. In some ways, sex is the key to immortality. It is the fountain of eternal youth - not for the individuals who indulge in it, but for the genes they carry. Sex speeds up the evolution because each generation consists of new and unique mixtures of genes, rather than thousands of copies of the same one. Instead of always drawing the same hand in life's card game (which might be successful in one encounter but which is unlikely to be so in all), every fertilised egg has a new deal and a new chance to win in the struggle for existence.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2.3 Sex Differentiation: Biological factors

Having understood the need for the genetic difference between male and female relative to sexual reproduction, the resulting social and cultural implications which influence the sexes to elaborate and broadcast their biological differences through various modes of representation must be taken into account. Humans developed from sexual intercourse to incorporate a social intercourse, extending to a complex system of social interaction and dependency, in the context of the existent inequality in bio-sexual difference. Differentiation between genders is both biological and cultural and therefore also psychological.

Current research<sup>12</sup> has led to increased understanding of the realities of the 'difference' between the sexes, in terms of biology as well as culture. Dealing first with the biological will show how

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<sup>10</sup> John Sparks, *Battle of the Sexes in the Animal World* (London: BBC Worldwide Ltd., 1999), 196.

<sup>11</sup> Steve Jones, *The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future* 2d ed. (Great Britain: Flamingo, 1994), 101-102.

Note: the "*kind of redemption*" that Jones discusses has been described by Michod as the genetic repair theory. See R. E. Michod, and B. R. Levin, eds. (Sunderland, Mass *The Evolution of Sex: An Examination of Current Ideas*, Sinauer. 1987) or Helen Fisher 1992. 317.

<sup>12</sup> John Nicholson, *Men and Women: How different are they?* 2n ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Ann Moir and David Jessel, *Brain Sex: The Real Difference Between Men and Women*. (London: Penguin Group, 1989).

the connection between ‘biological’, ‘cultural’ and ‘psychological’ occurred. The following presents the argument that difference is rooted in sameness. Adaptive strategy then created difference, resulting in differentiated behaviour and the development of gender behaviour characteristics which in turn fostered social and cultural evolution. This may finally re-impact upon sexual behaviour, resulting in a further biological mutation in the future.

Biologically what makes a person male or female is determined by the father’s sperm, for whilst the mother’s egg contains only an X sex chromosome, the father’s sperm can carry either an X or a Y chromosome. Thus if an X chromosome carrying sperm fertilizes the X chromosome egg, the XX chromosomes will combine to develop as female. However if a sperm carrying a Y chromosome fertilizes the egg, then the XY chromosomes combine to develop as male.

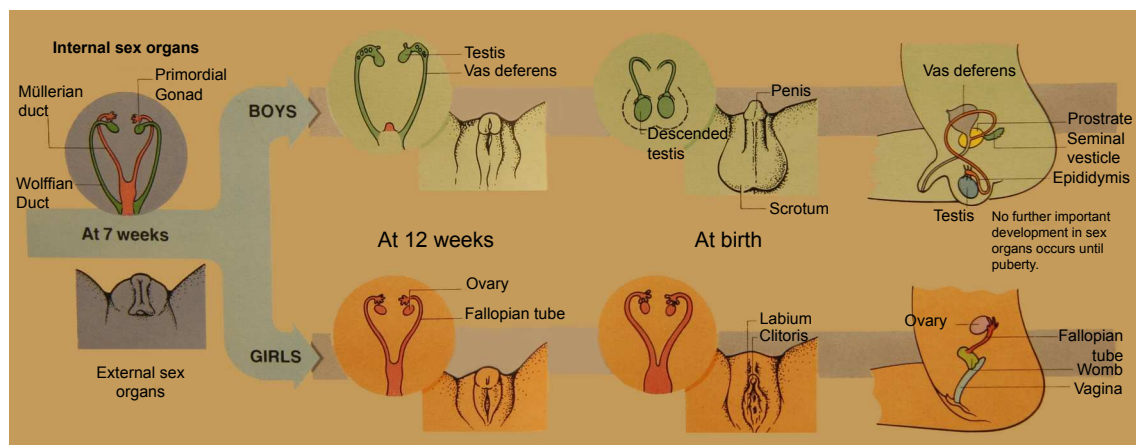


Figure 3.1 From identical to opposite

Of significance here also is embryonic gestation and the anomalies it suggests (see figure 3.1 above and figure 3.2 below). Of equal importance is another curious phenomenon which should also be given serious consideration: both sexes of human embryos at seven weeks gestation are identical in structure. It is not until the Y chromosome of the male embryo gives a prompt to develop the testes, and they in turn develop the male hormone that the two sexes begin to differentiate.<sup>13</sup>

Embryos of both sexes contain tissue which will eventually develop into either male gonads (testes) or female gonads (ovaries). They also have a genital tubercle which will become either a penis and scrotum or a clitoris and labia, and two sets of ducts, one of which will turn into whichever internal reproductive structures are appropriate to the sex of the particular embryo.<sup>14</sup>

The sex of an embryo meaning here the ‘genetic sex’ ie the chromosome pair XY as male and the XX pair as female. This evidence further supports the generally accepted theory that humans were once self reproductive and some would claim that it is clear proof that the divergence of the sexes is an evolutionary progression. The advent of sexual reproduction had enormous impact on specific complexities associated with how communication and interaction between the two separate sexes of the human species would evolve.

<sup>13</sup> Note. Not before five months can one clearly recognise by outward appearance the difference between male and female.

<sup>14</sup> John Nicholson, *Men and Women: How different are they?* 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14.



After five months into gestation, outward appearance begins to differentiate between male and female whereby the boys penis takes on its recognisable form. The opening below will close to form the scrotal sac, whilst in the girl the labia are formed.

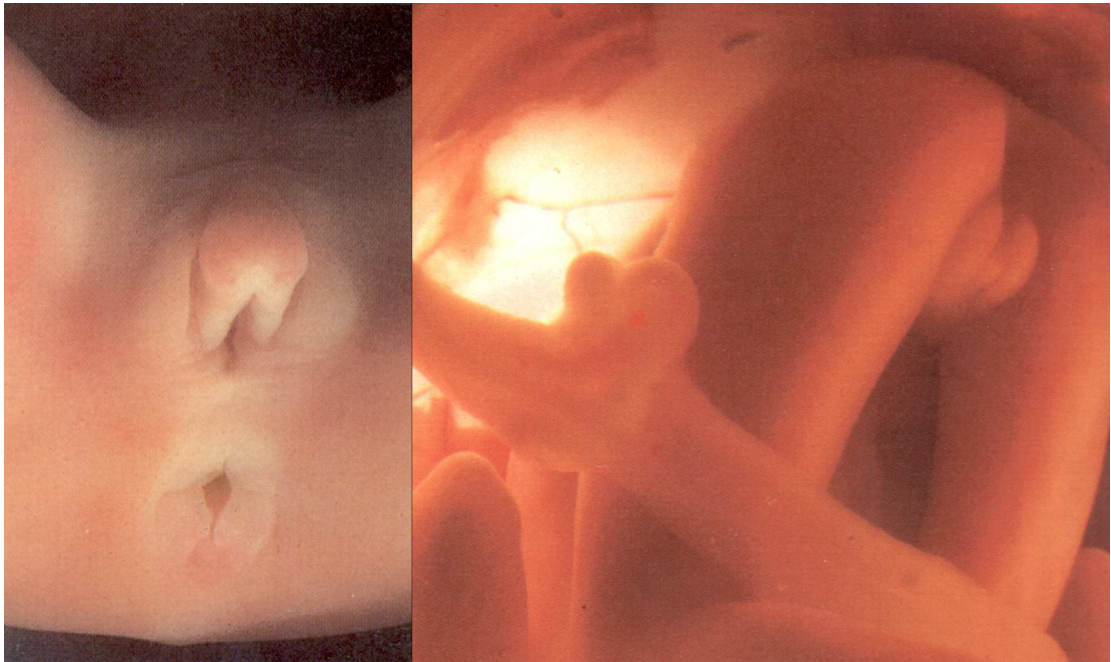


Figure 3.2 Developing sex organs. (Left image boy right image girl)

### 3.3 Natural selection: Genetic imperative

With the previous discussion in mind it seems that the biological structures of men and women<sup>15</sup> are closer to each other than their culturally constructed genders. Once differentiated the sexes become symbiotic, and it is self-evident that there is a necessary communication system for selection for sexual interaction (copulation). Although there is no definitive explanation as to what formulates the forces which attract or repel there are some indications. The first and most obvious element in the physical attractiveness of a woman is that she is not a man. (which might be thought of as the realisation of otherness in the same, or sameness in the other). As psychologist H. J. Eysenck points out,

... what it really means is physical attraction is based on the differences between the sexes. The points of maximum difference between men's and women's bodies are the most attractive and arousing, and the more exaggerated are those differences, within reason, the more sexually attractive they will be.<sup>16</sup>

Opposites do attract! If biology determines the sex of a person then physical differences between men and women are further reinforced in the consequent social and cultural structures they create. Nature in its biological processes seems to have established the basic structure as one of struggle and humans seem set on promoting this through their reproductive behaviour. This is emphasised in resultant self-representations within a developing culture and is dependant upon the biological model of attraction between man or woman transposed through

<sup>15</sup> Male: produces gametes, 'spermatozoa' which fertilise female gametes (ova) and female: produces gametes (ova) which are fertilised by male gametes (spermatozoa). Note: even at this point the male is active and the female passive.

<sup>16</sup> H. J. Eysenck and Glenn Wilson, *The Psychology of Sex*. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1979), 100.

individual psychology into related behaviour in male or female. It is therefore suggested that human attraction to difference facilitates the genetic and biological reproductive imperative and, as will be seen later, is further reinforced by its own cultural constructs which reflect its nature.

Attraction to difference as an imperative is likely to be imprinted on the brain / mind as sexual intelligence or psychosexual logic. That being the case it is both urgent and immediately recognised. This urgency may well relate to stabilising the shifts in sexual difference and sameness. The mechanics of the shift of sexual difference to maleness is a fragile one. Many disturbances can tip the balance (as seen in recent research indicating that certain contaminants, especially some water pollutants, are the cause of a tendency toward sexual reversion to femaleness as identified in fish, frogs and humans).

Another important question is, what is it that draws the male and female towards each other? It would seem that there are biological undercurrents influencing human mate selection. Originally it was assumed that the concept of beauty and attractiveness could not be assessed on its common collective basis. However recently developed research methodologies can now be used to put various theories to the test. Behavioural ecologists like Randy Thornhill and his colleagues discovered that there are indeed fundamental rules for attractiveness and that these apply to all humans.

. . . two genders were inevitably born out of the inherent rivalry that exists between living things, and from this basic differentiation between primitive mating types stem the strife, the deception and the manoeuvring for advantage that characterise the relationship between the sexes.<sup>17</sup>

Differentiated sexes are also differentiated in the roles they perform. One sex evolved to bear the eggs, the other dispatched the sperm. One sex evolved to give birth, the other did not. As Sparks points out,<sup>18</sup> physical and emotional stress between the sexes is fuelled by a conflict of strategies and agendas which emerged as a result of the distinctive characteristics of their gametes. For the human species, especially the female, this development of sexual reproduction in furthering asymmetric power had a profound influence on how her sexual development would evolve both physically and mentally.

Existence is, it seems, essentially female and masculinity just a modification of the feminine experience. . . This theory suggests that males are just parasites on females, individuals who have the pleasures of reproduction (and of passing on their maleness gene) with few pains.<sup>19</sup>

As noted earlier there is an innate compulsion to replicate the self and default back to femaleness. This occurs at various levels of development, from foetus to puberty. It is enough to note that the biological urge to revert to the asexual female is always there. Could humans have an innate fear of such reversion? Some sort of primordial physical awareness seems to be embedded into the nature of both sexes. This differentiation creates another competitive tension but simultaneously creates a biological equilibrium between the two sexes.

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<sup>17</sup> John Sparks, *Battle of the Sexes in the animal world* (London: BBC Worldwide Ltd., 1999), 203.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 203

<sup>19</sup> Steve Jones, *The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future* 2d ed., (Great Britain: Flamingo, 1994), 103 - 104.



### 3.3.1 Natural selection: The brain

As Fisher points out “This mating dance - our basic human “reproductive strategy” – began long, long ago when the world was young and our primordial ancestors evolved into two sexes.”<sup>20</sup>

Research has evidenced that the brain is composed of a collection of components for information processing and problem solving which operates on a biological level through electro-chemical synaptic actions. The brain responds to changing environmental situations and reacts through sensory input of stimulus and processes the information to effect a behavioural reaction.

The brain itself evolved to solve adaptive problems, and its particular systems of organisation were selected for because they physically carried out information-processing procedures that led to the adaptive regulation of behaviour and physiology.<sup>21</sup>

This process had an enormous impact on each of the sexes’ differentiation in reproductive development and strategies. Specific components of the brain evolved to cope with and structure further sexual differentiation. The differential survival strategies of the separate sexes led to the development of differing physical developments in relation to reproductive agendas and *modus operandi*.

Research is evidencing that the brain of each sex may develop different aspects of their abilities,<sup>22</sup> so that parts of the brain could differ in its responses between the two sexes because of the differing characteristics / type of stimulus received.

### 3.3.2 Natural selection: The mind

The mind may be considered as an evolved instrument which, having been subjected to specific selective pressures over the course of human history, responded and customised itself to particular situations and conditions. It would be reasonable to suppose that this in turn would have had survival advantages for both sexes especially in the sexual selection process.

If behaviour can be credibly explained in the Darwinian context ie., that behaviour is adaptive and therefore genetically structured into the brain and mind, then sexual behaviour would have a high priority since successful reproduction is imperative to the survival of any species. Therefore any gene not capable of supporting the agenda of reproduction would presumably have been eliminated. As genetic evolution ran in parallel to the development of human sexual behaviour / culture the development of the sexes’ separate physical, mental and behavioural patterns as emergent processes must be taken into account.

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<sup>20</sup> Helen E. Fisher, Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1992), 59.

<sup>21</sup> Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Toby, note 4. in: “The Psychological Foundations of Culture” eds., The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 123.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Moir & David Jessel, Brain Sex: The Real Difference Between Men and Women (London: Penguin Group, 1989). See also John Nicholson, Men and Women: How different are they? 2d ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

As mentioned earlier Lumsden and Wilson have pointed out the connection between sensory receptors and particular cognitive processes which come into operation to process and select appropriate ‘thought patterns’. This process, it is argued, may have established the mechanism which prompted progression to the point where genes and culture worked in partnership as a mechanism towards a ‘primary goal’<sup>23</sup>

As Cosmides points out, The research of

Bowlby, Daly and Wilson, Ekman, Fernald, Marks, Buss and Symons leads to the conclusion that the human mind contains evolved emotional and motivational mechanisms that are specifically targeted to address adaptative problems involved in parenting, emotional communication with infants and adults, kinship, mate choice, sexual attraction, aggression, the avoidance of danger, mate guarding, effort allocation in child care, and so on.<sup>24</sup>

Dr Campbell also points out that,

... while culture may grow and evolve at a rate independent of that for biological evolution, its growth and form are not independent of biological processes. Culture is very much a product of the human brain, whose learning processes, like our senses, are shaped and constrained by evolutionary pressures. A full understanding of ourselves therefore cannot exclude our evolutionary history.<sup>25</sup>

The responses to this idea, particularly by social scientists, have been to disregard the evolutionary impact that must have taken place on the development of sex roles. This blinkered attitude has denied us a full understanding of human nature.

### 3.4 Natural connections: Natural selection imperatives

At this point it is important to stress a shift in emphasis in the research, which considers Dawkins’ approach in the context of genetic science where the specific rudimentary evolution of molecules is linked to the general theory of evolution. “This is where Darwin’s theory, in its most general form, comes to the rescue. Darwin’s theory takes over from where the slow building up of molecules leaves off.”<sup>26</sup>

Of the many thousands of separate species, including humans, which arose from a single living entity in existence millions of years ago, separate identification characteristics evolved, differentiating one from the other according to a variety of situations and circumstances. In order to understand our species it is necessary to theorise about the origins of humans, relative to the responses and motivations which allowed them to develop the patterns of thought which drive or moderate behaviour. We also need to understand how the subliminal sexual / biological imperatives shaped the human body.

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<sup>23</sup> Charles J. Lumsden and Edward. O Wilson. Genes, Mind and Culture. (Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>24</sup> John Toby and Leda Cosmides, chap. 1: “The Psychological Foundations of Culture,” ed., Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Toby. The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 99.

<sup>25</sup> Dr Anne Campbell, The Opposite Sex (London: Ebury Press, 1989),139.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; new ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989) , 14 (page references are to new ed.).

Natural selection is generally accepted as a mechanism of an evolutionary process of survival and reproduction of that most fit for the purpose, especially in coping with an unstable environment. These qualities 'most fit' in the struggle for survival will be passed through the genes to the next generation. The mechanism of natural selection operates two ways, firstly reshuffling genetic combinations into an improved assemblage, possibly upgrading quality and progress in the next generation. Secondly the natural selection mechanism also takes advantage of the best of random mutations. (Possibly also reflected in human culture by the deviant, eccentric or non-conformist). Thus those with the most favourable characteristics evolve as the dominant type whilst those with less favourable characteristics submit to eventual extinction.

It is now possible to progress to a more holistic understanding of how molecules, genes, brain and mind and the resultant cultural outcomes are intricately interrelated. As Dawkins points out, genes <sup>27</sup> which have created humans, bodies and minds have come a long way, "Once upon a time, natural selection consisted of the differential survival of replicators floating free in the primeval soup. Now natural selection favours replicators that are good at building survival machines, genes that are skilled in the art of controlling embryonic development." <sup>28</sup>

It has therefore been noted that there is an inherent self centeredness in any basic unit of the process of natural selection and the gene is no exception. If Dawkins is correct the gene seems to exemplify a characteristic which is clearly paralleled in much of our human behaviour, especially where sexual self-emulation or gratification is concerned. The reproductive process in mammals required one sex, the female, to be responsible for internal gestation, placental and live birth and the suckling and rearing of their slow developing young. The competitive process between the sexes to acquire reproductive superiority manifests itself in various forms.

It is important to remember that all of this relates also to that part of the brain which processes creative responses and is the centre for emotion. Therefore a cross-reference to the analysis is needed linking brain to mind behaviour and to the resultant creative output ie: the designed object. This occurs relative to natural connections relating behaviour to genetics and mimetic transmission in the evolution of the human species. At a later stage, however, it will be necessary to mention the philosophical implications since they better explain the connection between the creative processes expressing themselves through sublimation of the sexual imperative (see Chapter 8. Sublimation as 'Mentifact')

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<sup>27</sup> Gene: "The definition I want to use comes from G.C. Williams \*A gene is defined as any portion of chromosomal material that potentially lasts long enough generations to serve as a unit of natural selection. . . . a gene is a replicator with high copying-fidelity". Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; new ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989) , 28. (Page reference is to 2nd ed).

<sup>28</sup> Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; new ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989), 24. (Page reference is to new ed).

## 3.5 Natural Connections: Sexual Selection

### 3.5.1 Beauty: The essentials of sexual selection: sexual imperatives of beauty and aesthetic perception

Whilst arguing that natural selection directs competitiveness involving both sexes as an entity,<sup>29</sup> Charles Darwin recognised that besides natural selection there was a further level of selection which he identified as sexual selection.<sup>30</sup> ie. preferential selection of specific characteristics displayed by the opposite sex.

Darwin recognised that certain physical attributes were highly prized by the opposite sex and therefore individuals thus endowed had a sexual advantage. This theory embodied the competition between the same sex for mates from the other sex and the selection of the most desirable depending on the success of the competitor. Therefore, the reproduction and sexual selection stakes depended on members of the same sex competing against each other through their physical attributes to be the most sexually alluring, for the prize of being chosen by an 'alpha' mate. Here beauty is a serious contender as part of the sexual imperative in the reproductive agenda. But what is beauty? What lies behind the evaluation of it and what is it for? Throughout art's development philosophers and artists have sought for the most aesthetically pleasing formulas either intuitively or more formally. However, academic authority for the phenomenon of beauty and the sensations of pleasure which accompany it may be more easily found in our biology rather than in a set of mathematical rules.

Research is now evidencing that the perception of 'beauty' is not so much acquired through the 'formal' analysis of aesthetics ie. according to academic rules and a critical analysis of form but is more a case simply of being that which articulates survival and fitness qualities and reproductive abilities as embodied in the natural world. As research progresses, various interconnected levels and comparative areas of analysis converge to reveal humans' evolutionary sexual development, their complementary behaviour and activities. Collectively, research is beginning to make sense of, and to map out, how humans' biology, consciousness, and culture may be knitted together.

As humans evolved, sexual imperatives forged the aesthetic gaze. Their evolved interconnectedness with the body enabled the brain and / or mind to perform complex evaluations. In a microsecond, it scans, applies and co-ordinates thousands of years of intuitive knowledge, data and criteria to establish and evaluate relevance to superior reproductive fitness. The copulatory gaze is supported / reinforced / linked through the cognitive process to the aesthetic gaze, which is the discernor and refiner of the accumulated knowledge and experiences stored in the mind and genetic imprint.

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<sup>29</sup> [ie those individuals whose qualities are most fit for the purpose of survival and reproduction, which includes adaptability and design modification in response to environment and resultant production of offspring carrying those characteristics forward to the next generation] and also as summarised by: John Tooby and Leda Cosmides in section 1. "The Psychological Foundations of Culture", chap. 1: "Reproduction, Feedback, and the Construction of Organic Design", in The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture, ed. Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, (New York: Oxford University Press 1995), 51-53.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species ed., Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996), 73. (This edition follows Darwin's second edition published by Murray on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1860 six weeks after the first edition). See also: Dawkins, Richard Dawkins, The Blind Watchmaker (Harlow: Longman 1986; reissued, London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000), 245-6 (reference to new issue).

Beauty appears to be a consequence of biological adaptation of the body built up over thousands of years of sexually driven natural selection, an evolutionary process which has ensured the reproductive success and survival of the aesthetically astute. Linking the copulatory gaze into a reservoir of multi-sensory assurances is part of a structure for accumulating capital for future reproductive fitness / survival. Placing the notion of beauty in this context requires a revision of all previous discussion on the subject. It also means that an entirely new perspective is gained in the evaluation of the creative process and its outputs relative to adornment. The aesthetic framework seems to be structured by sets of criteria for the 'physical fitness' of what we call beauty. The pleasure sensations of emotion arising from the perception of beauty, as secret seducer, the surge of physical attraction, sexual appeal, is an experience common to us all. In fact, not to register such a phenomenon is a sign of clinical depression.

A deconstruction of this framework, identification and analysis, conducted from a biological perspective, provides persuasive evidence that our experience of physical beauty is far from passive. Sexual attraction and why humans are affected by it are very understandable when subjected to analysis. Researchers like Symons, using the evolutionary approach to the perception of human attractiveness, hypothesise that humans seem to hold in the mind's eye an evolved 'template' of an idealised version of physical beauty based on an innate composite of criteria. If this is so, it would seem reasonable to argue that humans may use their intuitive response (tacit knowledge augmented by genetic 'partner' selection) as a reference to appraise everything that is looked at. As will be evidenced later in this thesis it has been the artists and artist designers who seem to have a heightened sensitivity to or awareness of the significance of the mechanism of the biological imperative and seem able to represent it.

In the past, geneticists were not convinced that sexual preferences could be based on genetics. To them the phenomenon of sexual allure was probably culturally learned, random and in the eye of the beholder: Many are reconsidering this opinion as recent research is beginning to reveal evidence of a co-evolution of sex, beauty and culture.

### **3.5.2 Beauty: A structure of clandestine seducers**

One key element of beauty seems to be bilateral symmetry. It was Thornhill's empirical research on Japanese scorpionflies <sup>31</sup>, which first evidenced the connection between symmetry and sexual selection. Female preference for specific males showed there was a correlation, the higher on the symmetrical scale the more attractive males were to females. Several experiments have evidenced that females' preference for symmetrical males could be influenced by the quest for genetically driven benefits ie., genetically superior survival and reproductive material. Not only were males genetically sexually superior, they were superior in foraging and food production. The higher the scores in symmetry the more enhanced were the males' pheromones. These males not only attracted females who vied for their attention, their high levels of pheromones also intimidated other competing males. Such males sired superior offspring and as these advantages were passed on to offspring who were also displaying bilateral symmetry, they

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<sup>31</sup> Randy Thornhill, "Female preference for the pheromone of males with low fluctuating asymmetry in the Japanese scorpionfly (*Panorpa japonica*: Mecoptera)," *Behavioral Ecology* vol 3, no 3 (1992): 277-283. This was one of the first studies of its kind. ie. on the relationship between fluctuating asymmetry and sexual selection. Traits evolved by mate choice. This research opened up many new avenues when the hypothesis that humans could have corresponding traits was applied and investigated.

also became superior material compared to the less successful asymmetrical mate. Bilaterally symmetrical males equate to superiority, as mate attractive material, in competition and selection availability, right down to details such as superior display abilities and ability to make superior pre-copulatory gifts.

Further research concerning sexual selection and mate preference has revealed similar traits in other sexually reproducing animals <sup>32</sup> including humans, and especially in the female sex in relation to the male copulatory gaze. Here parallel research outcomes are continuously being discovered, proving the perception of mate attractiveness to have its basis more in the biologically adaptive process than solely as a conveyance of cultural learning. A parallel could be made with Chomsky's theory<sup>33</sup> that each human's language and grammar capacity is innate, and in place at birth.<sup>34</sup> Could the 'sexually denotative, visual perception' be governed by an equivalent visual language and grammar where each sexually reproductive creature, including humans, is born with its own innate knowledge of that 'sexual selective grammar'?

### 3.5.3 Beauty: Seductive symmetry

Evidence suggests that, taking into account cultural and historical differences, the aesthetic balance of facial and bodily features are universally recognised <sup>35</sup> as one of the most basic criteria for beauty and physical attractiveness. Symmetry somehow makes sexual sense. Humans may not consciously register symmetrical development, especially on less obvious parts of the body, but research by various experts like Randy Thornhill and Steven Gangstead<sup>36</sup> has evidenced that symmetry is one of the most important ingredients amongst the subversive seducers of the copulatory gaze. If a female has evenly spaced and aligned eyes and ears, an aligned nose and a centred mouth and these as a whole are well proportioned, then she will start to excite male sexual interest. She will start to be advantaged in the female to female competition and males' choice of mating partner.

Thornhill et al. have put forward convincing evidence that symmetrical bodies seem to activate the aesthetic senses for very valid reasons. What is recognised as beauty is dictated by the genes of each and the perception of their quality by others. This is perceived by us as pleasure sensations as it activates all sorts of physical responses. Beauty is an intuitive recognition and a physical registering through the copulatory gaze shortly followed by sensations of infatuation and compulsion. Symmetrical bodies, it seems, have 'superior genes'.

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<sup>32</sup> For extensive research into mate selection of birds' and insects' patterns of sexual asymmetry in ornamentation and weapons, in relation to mate selection. See A. P. Møller. Many of his publications are listed in the references of the Thornhill and Gangstead journal publication cited in this theses footnote number 66, along with other important listed contributors' research in this field.

<sup>33</sup> See: Noam Chomsky Language and Mind, 3d ed., New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> This theory has been expanded upon by contemporary linguistic psychologist Steven Pinker who argues in his book 'The Language Instinct' that language ability evolved as a biological trait which was advantageous and was favoured by natural selection. Steven Pinker, The Language Instinct (USA: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1994; Great Britain: Penguin Books, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> M. Cunningham, A. Roberts, A. Barbee, P. Druen and Cheng-Huan Wu, "Their Ideas of Beauty Are, on the Whole, the Same as Ours": Consistency and Variability in the Cross-Cultural Perception of Female Physical Attractiveness" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 68, no. 2 (1995) 261-279.

<sup>36</sup> R. Thornhill and S. Gangstead, "Human Facial Beauty: Averageness, Symmetry, and Parasite Resistance," Human Nature vol 4, no 3 (1993) : 237-269. See also: R. Thornhill and S. Gangstead, "Human Fluctuating Asymmetry and Sexual Behaviour" Psychological Science vol 5, no 5 (September 1994) 297-302.



As summarised by Etcoff, research has provided evidence that there are several determining factors related to symmetrical bodies: “Stressors, including inbreeding, parasites, and exposure to radiation, pollutants, extreme temperatures, or marginal habitats can interfere with the precise expression of developmental design during growth of symmetrical traits such as horns, antlers, petals, tails, wings, ankles, feet, faces or whole bodies”.<sup>37</sup>

The critical appraisals of facial and bodily attractiveness are not whimsical “they reflect preference for individuals whose developmental adaptations can create somatic and facial symmetry despite environmental perturbations during ontogeny that interfere with the development of bilateral symmetry”.<sup>38</sup> As demonstrated in figure 3.3 below.

The face can be vertically divided into halves as seen by line A which is the midline. Vertical lines can then be drawn from the pupil of the eye to the corners of the mouth (line B). The face can also be horizontally divided into thirds as seen by line C. The lower third of the face can be further subdivided into:  $\frac{1}{3}$  distance from the base of the nose to where the lips meet (line D);  $\frac{2}{3}$  from where the lips meet to the bottom of the chin. . . . This face also meets the ancient Greek criteria of the perfect face width, which is five times the thickness of the width of one eye (line E).<sup>39</sup>

Symmetry is indicative of balanced, biological development, evidence of an organism’s fitness and health and ability to sustain a balanced growth within the fluctuations of environment, diet etc. The genes’ reaction is determined by the growth conditions of the developing body, especially well balanced hormones. Asymmetry or lopsidedness is associated with poor nutrition, poor immunity, illness, poor reproductive inheritance, poor health, weaknesses etc. For humans, the positive reaction to facial features which conform to a geometric balance seems to be universal and unconscious. The evolutionary purpose behind our response to aesthetics seems to have been hard wired into the brain as it evolved. There is evidence that babies and infants seem to be preprogrammed with the ability to discern and have a preference for beauty.<sup>40</sup>

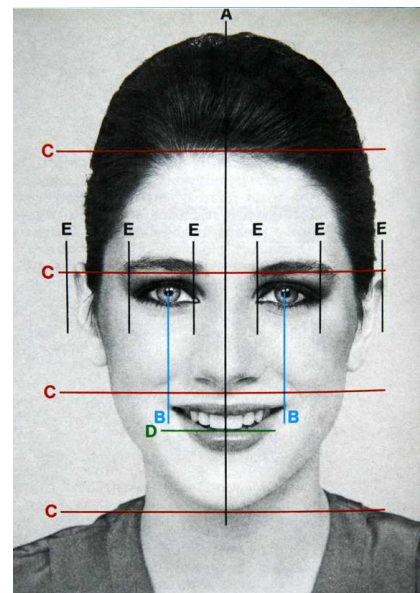


Figure 3.3 Facial symmetry.

Other researchers following leads by Thornhill, (Gangstead, Cunningham, Barbee etc.) have experimented with computer composites, faces superimposed recurring themes of beauty where the most common attractive features were filtered and retained to produce a singular ideal face. As a consequence the face was strikingly beautiful. Further research using facial composites, which delineated a range of presentations from unattractive to attractive and beautiful to most attractive, were used for the identification of choice of selective

<sup>37</sup> Nancy Etcoff, *Survival of the Prettiest* (Great Britain: Little, Brown and Company, 1999; reprint, Great Britain: Abacus, 2000), 196.

<sup>38</sup> R. Thornhill and S. Gangstead, “Human Facial Beauty: Averageness, Symmetry, and Parasite Resistance,” *Human Nature* vol 4, no 3 (1993) : 253.

<sup>39</sup> Ronald E. Goldstein, *Change Your Smile*, 2d ed., (Chicago: Quintessence Publishing Co., Inc., 1988), 24.

<sup>40</sup> Judith H. Langlois, Jean M. Ritter, Lori A. Roggeman, and Lesley S. Vaughn, “Facial Diversity and Infant Preferences for Attractive Faces” *Developmental Psychology*, Vol, 27, no.1 (1991) 79-84.



criteria. Surprisingly, faces chosen to be the most appealing or attractive were those with 'symmetrical, but average features'. It seems that an added criteria for beauty as exception is the 'absence of extremes'.<sup>41</sup>

Facial bilateral symmetry is hypothesized to affect positive beauty judgements because symmetry is a certification of overall phenotypic quality and developmental health, which may be importantly influenced by parasites.<sup>42</sup>

Secondary traits, which are other beauty criteria, are also echoed by facial bilateral symmetry. Facial attractiveness co-relates to sound hormone production which presents further sex related traits. In the male, testosterone and complementary sex hormones thicken the neck, widen and enlarge the jaw, broaden the chin, produce facial hair. Add to this an imposing brow with thickened eyebrows, a deepened voice and one has the idealised sexually attractive male.<sup>43</sup> In the female, estrogen and complementary hormones kick in during puberty to feminise the body: prominent secondary traits such as higher cheek bone structure, small chin, shorter and narrower jaw, clear skin, glossy hair, plumper lips, facial and body hairlessness, fairness of skin, pert breasts etc. All point to normal hormone production at puberty and are indicative of youth and fertility: prominent features of many idealised beauties such as fashion models and film stars. These women do have the pick of alpha males, however, other criteria do come into their biological shopping list such as the male's social standing, income, intelligence, and evidence of his ability to support and provide for a partner.<sup>44</sup>

Empirical research has evidenced measurable support for a correlation between parasitic infection and asymmetrical development. In contrast to the unparasitised, parasites are often responsible for high mortality and also inhibit balanced growth and development. Studies across societies by Livshits and Kobylansky<sup>45</sup> have demonstrated the link between infections during mothers' pregnancies and their producing infants with asymmetrical body development. For example it was discovered by Bailit et al. that asymmetrical teeth in humans has a definite co-relation with proneness to parasitical infestation.<sup>46</sup> A women's beauty is therefore greatly enhanced and favoured by her wide smile and perfect even white teeth.

Sexual selection produces veritability and variability which can outwit parasitical invasion and reduces risk of rapidly adapting host viability. Veritability means a recombination of genetic material which presents barriers to the sequence of re-adaptation for the parasite and a less viable target for parasitical host selection. Sex, and sexual selection and the resultant reshuffling

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<sup>41</sup> One such programme can be accessed on line at: [www.beautyanalysis.com](http://www.beautyanalysis.com) Here one can assess one's personal facial proportions and others.

<sup>42</sup> R. Thornhill and S. Gangstead, "Human Facial Beauty: Averageness, Symmetry, and Parasite Resistance," *Human Nature* vol 4, no 3 (1993) : 237.

<sup>43</sup> For further in-depth research analysis the following is highly informative. Michael R. Cunningham, Anita P. Barbee and Carolyn L. Pike, "What Do Women Want? Facialmetric of Multiple Motives in the Perception of Male Physical Attractiveness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* vol 59 No 1, (1990) : 61-72.

<sup>44</sup> See newspaper article showing top model Ines Sastre, the face of Lancome and TAG Heuer, and her list of 10 millionaire suitors. Richard Simpson and Nicole Lampert. "Golfer's new girlfriend has had a wealth of well-heeled lovers." *Daily Mail*, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2004. 3.

<sup>45</sup> As cited in: R. Thornhill and S. Gangstead, "Human Facial Beauty: Averageness, Symmetry, and Parasite Resistance," *Human Nature* vol 4, no 3 (1993) : 247. Reference: Livshits, G, and E. Kobylansky 1991 Fluctuating Asymmetry as a Possible Measure of Development Homeo-stasis in Humans. A Review. *Human Biology* 63: 441-466

<sup>46</sup> As cited in: Ibid . 253. Reference: Bailit, H. L., P. L. Workman, J. D. Niswander, and J. C. Maclean 1970 "Dental Asymmetry as an Indicator of Genetic and Environmental Conditions in Human Populations." *Human Biology* 42: 626-638.

of genetic combination outwits viability for parasitic infestation or can temporarily circumvent it. A mate who expresses 'heritable resistance' to parasites, whose genes are not host friendly, would be favoured in the sexual selection stakes as having components which collectively are indicators of offspring fitness in making certain traits 'species adaptive'. It stands to biological reason that where evidence of parasite degradation is apparent the natural preference would be for a healthy beautiful mate. Beauty makes biological sense, it is nature's honest advertising of quality material. The conclusion is that "Because symmetry may reflect phenotypic and genetic quality (eg., heterozygosity,) we hypothesize that symmetry per se will be associated with human attractiveness judgements"<sup>47</sup>

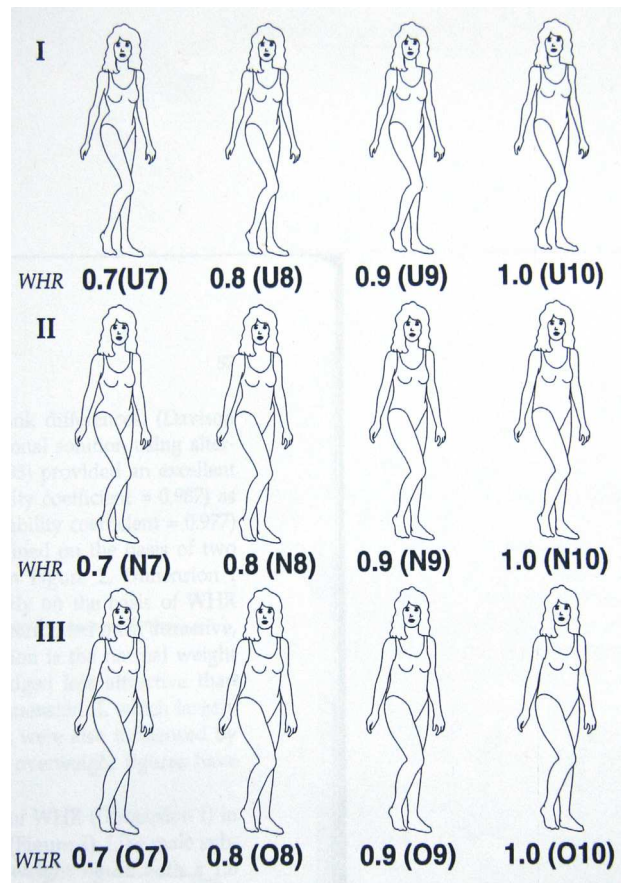


Fig 3.4 Singh's waist-to-hip ratio

One other important element in relation to the female's attractiveness is her hip to waist ratio, the ideal woman's shape. Research by Singh and Luis on Indonesian, Afro-American, and U.S. Caucasian male and female subjects "suggests that various cultural groups have similar criteria for judging the ideal woman's shape."<sup>48</sup> A wider hip to waist ratio is evidenced to be strongly co-related to fecundity, hormone and reproductive status and health (see fig 3.4). Using a table of various hip to waist ratios (WHR) indicates that "The anatomical distribution of female

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 253.

<sup>48</sup> Devendra Singh and Suwardi Luis, "Ethnic and Gender Consensus for the effect of waist-to-hip ratio on judgement of women's attractiveness," *Human Nature* vol, 6, no 1, (1995): 51- 65.

body fat as measured by the ratio of waist to hip circumference.”<sup>49</sup> The stereotypical hour glass figure makes biological sense and is a significant feature of female sexual attractiveness and femininity. Research was based on twelve line drawings showing a range of WHRs. The most prevalent in rankings of attractiveness were female figures presenting a WHR of 0.7-10 (the most desirable) followed by 0.8, 0.9 and 1-10. Normal weight figures with poor WHR were still favoured over the underweight figure with a similar low WHR and were judged to be more healthy.

Research has proved that the blueprint that humans seem to possess when assessing each other's bodies is an adaptive “species typical” set of selection criteria where specific traits are favoured. Thornhill proposes that “this adaption guides human decisions about nepotism and reciprocity in relation to attractiveness.”<sup>50</sup> Originally it was assumed that the concept of beauty and attractiveness could not be assessed on its common collective basis. Recent research methodologies have now put various theories to the test and have proved that there are indeed fundamental rules for attractiveness and that these are shared by all humans, and that there are specific rules that humans follow in the assessment of one another. Research by behavioural scientists, ecologists and psychologists has evidenced that when humans from whatever part of the world, select a potential mate they subconsciously apply a visual criterion which depends on a biological dictate. ‘Attractiveness’ certifies many aspects of biological quality and / or further underlying imperatives as will be evidenced as the thesis argument develops.

### 3.5.4 As nature intended

As DNA forms the building blocks of the human's biological make-up so body decoration and jewellery may be seen as the elements which form the DNA of culture. If one can imagine body decoration to have evolved like human genes, then an interesting analogy can be made, “Genetics is itself a language, a set of inherited instructions passed from generation to generation. It has a vocabulary - the genes themselves - a grammar, the way in which the inherited information is arranged, and a literature, the thousands of instructions needed to make a human being.”<sup>51</sup> Just as the X and Y chromosome determine the development of biological sex, the ‘cultural’ X and Y of body adornment can be seen to determine the development of socio-cultural sexuality.

In exploring the evolution of body decoration and jewellery one can trace a genealogy based on common ancestors and identify its mutations, detect relationships and establish connections. This research focuses on the how and why of the deliberate and conscious use of body adornment, the concept of beauty as a mode of communication in the establishment of sexual culture, and how jewellery came to be a significant factor within a complex structure for the construction and control of women's femininity and sexual, economic and social existence within the political systems and power structures of patriarchal societies.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>50</sup> R. Thornhill and S. Gangstead, “Human Facial Beauty: Averageness, Symmetry, and Parasite Resistance,” *Human Nature* vol 4, no 3 (1993) : 238.

<sup>51</sup> Steve Jones, *The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future* 2d ed. (Great Britain: Flamingo, 1994), xii.

These ideas and objects can be identified as ‘cultural genes’, (after Wilson and Lumsden), defined as a specialised area within the concept and workings of material culture. The creation and making of these artifacts, or ‘mentifacts’. “the material representation of abstract ideas”<sup>52</sup> and their practical use as cultural tools, are imperatives passed on from generation to generation. This concept has recently been labelled and defined as memesis<sup>53</sup> (as yet a controversial topic) and in the context of this thesis is seen where biological / organic evolution, the mind and cultural elevation, transect and develop as a reciprocal progression. Dawkins builds on this theory when he defines an earlier evolutionary stage with his hypothesis of “accumulative selection” and his idea of the “extended phenotype”<sup>54</sup> a process described by his hypothetical story of the beaver and dam building<sup>55</sup> which, explains how the process of genetic assimilation mimics Lamarckian inheritance.<sup>56</sup>

This research, however, originates a theory for the first evidence of genetic assimilation to be human sexual selection in relation to the evolution of humans’ natural body modifications in response to imperatives dictating sexual attraction such as: loss of body hair etc, as investigated in Chapter 4. This development is considered as the first stage of the extended phenotype.

The second stage of the concept of the extended phenotype is perhaps more easily understood if Dawkins’ theory is presented in a more familiar setting, the male biased traditional understanding, as follows: Man has not been equipped by nature with natural fighting tools ie. claws, fangs, antlers or horns etc. Man’s vulnerability, due to the lack of these natural weapons,

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<sup>52</sup> “By converting ideas, products of the mind (mentifacts), into material objects ‘out-there’, we give them relative permanence, and in that permanent material form we can subject them to technical operations which are beyond the capacity of the mind acting by itself.” Edmund Leach, Culture and Communication: The logic by which symbols are connected (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; reprint, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 37 (page references are made to reprint edition).

<sup>53</sup> “Memes are ideas, skills, habits, stories or inventions that are passed from person to person by imitation. Like genes their competition is for space in our memories. . . Just as genes have created our bodies, so memes have created our minds and our cultures”. Susan Blackmore, “The forget meme not theory.” The Times Higher, February 26<sup>th</sup> 1999.

<sup>54</sup> “Genotype. The genetic constitution of an individual, as deduced from ancestry or breeding performance, in contrast to its phenotype, the characteristics which are manifested in the individual. The distinction is important because it is the genotype, not the phenotype, which is reproduced and can be transmitted to future generations. Alan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass and Stephen Trombley eds., The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, 2d ed., (London: Fontana Press 1988), s.v. “Genotype.”

<sup>55</sup> ‘extended phenotype’: Dawkins’ hypothetical theory describes how a mutant gene in the developing beaver’s brain can lead to changes in the beaver’s behaviour and in how it builds its dam.

“It causes the beaver to hold its head higher in the water while swimming with a log in its jaws. Higher, that is, than a beaver without the mutation. This makes it a little less likely that mud, attached to the log, will wash off during the journey. This increases the stickiness of the log, which in turn means that, when the beaver thrusts it into the dam, the log is more likely to stay there. This will tend to apply to all the logs placed by any beaver bearing this particular mutation. The increased stickiness of the logs is a consequence, again a very indirect consequence, of an alteration in the DNA text.

The increased stickiness of the logs makes the dam a sounder structure, less likely to break up. This in turn increases the size of the lake created by the dam, which makes the lodge in the centre of the lake more secure against predators. This tends to increase the number of offspring successfully reared by the beaver. If we look at the whole population of beavers, those that possess the mutated gene will, on average, tend therefore to rear more offspring than those not possessing the mutated gene. Those offspring will tend to inherit archive copies of the self-same altered gene from their parents. Therefore, in the population, this form of the gene will become more numerous as the generations go by. Eventually it will become the norm, and will no longer deserve the title ‘mutant’. Beaver dams in general will have improved another notch.”

Richard Dawkins, The Blind Watchmaker. (London: 1986; London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000), 168. Note: The ramifications of this theory are expanded upon in his book The Extended Phenotype (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1982).

<sup>56</sup> “Genetic assimilation. Term coined by C.H. Waddington, 1953, for a process which mimics Lamarckian inheritance without involving directed MUTATION. If those members of a population which respond to an environmental STIMULUS in a particular way are selected, naturally or artificially, this will result in the accumulation of GENES which favour the response, until the response appears without the environmental stimulus.” Alan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass and Stephen Trombley, eds. The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought. 2d ed., (London: Fontana Press, 1988), s.v. “Genetic assimilation,” by J. Maynard Smith.

has been compensated for by his inventiveness in the production of objects which have proved to be so highly effective as fighting and hunting tools that they have led to his increase in brain size and immeasurable success in the survival, reproduction and power stakes and the development of culture. Certain brain cells have connected up with each other during man's development and have had an influence on his behaviour eg. creative problem solving. The effective application of this as a survival tool effectively enhanced fitness, and would hence be an important element in the natural selection stakes, his sexual attraction to the opposite sex and increase his chances for the successful reproduction of his genes.

However this does not explain how and why the prehistoric, naked body, (naturally selected in the genetic assimilation sense), in itself came to be viewed and used as a material object. A possible explanation may emerge from consideration of a development equivalent to this tool making stage and the application of a similar hypothesis to women. When viewed through their practice of body adornment, a whole parallel and hitherto invisible world may come into view. It has been previously established that human creative facilities have evolved from the earliest agents of aesthetic consciousness. Investigating, translating, defining and analysing connections between past and present from prehistory onwards may identify what agency did develop the 'cultural mind set' in the context of the cultural sexuality and construction of gender through jewellery and related artifacts and their role in the evolution of technical (mental and practical) advancement. Identifying the impact and influence this process had on the development of societal structure and cultural frameworks may throw light on the various stages of the development of jewellery.

Having dealt with the biological sex and gender differences between men and women in the previous section of the research (the natural or biological history of humans), this part of the thesis deals with the development of humans in the context of inventions, as conscious beings needing to increase further and enhance their fitness, and their control over nature and other humans. Recent discoveries make it reasonable to suppose that humans invented modes of body decoration (using pigments and dyes) as a constituent of representation well before the conscious creation of clothing. Evidence suggests that clothing evolved as a logical progression from body adornment and jewellery.

### **3.5.5. The phenotype extended**

The research thus far is evidencing that the key to beauty, 'sexual attractiveness', especially of the face, is the extent to which the left and right sides match each other ('bilateral symmetry'), and how they are balanced holistically (relation between parts and the whole) over the whole face. Additional factors are the degree of perfection with which paired elements of the body such as eyes, ears, breasts, hands, feet etc match each other. Asymmetry, lopsidedness or deformity of the body indicate lower quality reproductive material. Symmetrical males and females have sex earlier, have more dates, have a greater succession of sexual partners, are more fertile. Besides having attractive, symmetrical faces and bodies they are advantaged and favoured over their peers in many more ways, not only physically, (and this often includes athletically), but also psychologically and socially. All this has a profound effect on how the sexes relate to each other.



This provides the basis for two interesting hypotheses.

**(1) That the innate desire for symmetry is the driving force in the refashioning of the natural body and thus of the design process.**

This will be argued below and expanded upon later where the deconstruction of contemporary jewellery offers evidence in support of the hypothesis. It also relates to other formalist concerns which artists have always identified in relation to the imperative of physical balance and harmony and which are now discussed in relation to symmetry. This thesis argues that the Graeco-Roman ideal to which so many artists have subscribed is the manifestation of the evolutionary copulatory gaze.

**(2) When women decorate their bodies in particular ways they apply the symmetry criteria required to seduce the copulatory gaze of the opposing sex in their competition for the alpha male.**

As the popular Sun Calendar Girl (Figure 3.5) evidences: it is common knowledge that make-up disguises imperfections and makes amendments to any asymmetrical elements of the face.

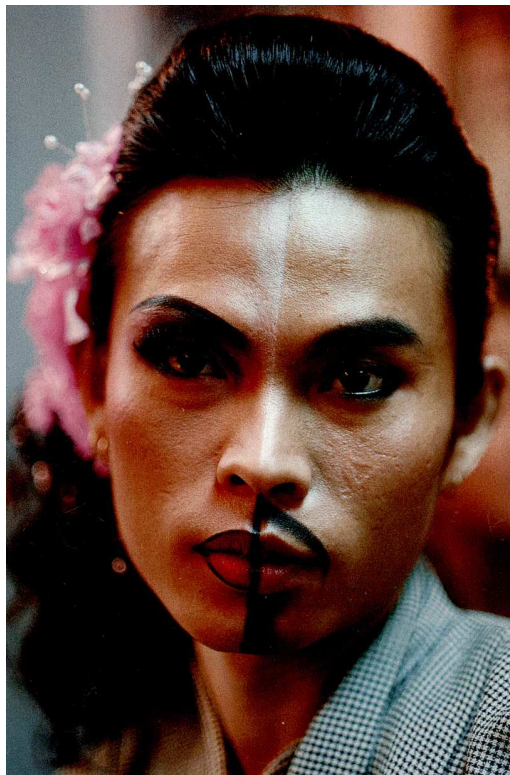


*Fig 3.5 Sun calendar girl*



Additionally Page 3 girls, though seldom photographed in clothes, are seldom photographed without their jewellery. The reason being that the wearing of identical earrings on either side of the face enforces symmetry as would a necklace resting on or between the breasts and, though it sounds contradictory, the wearing of jewellery also adjusts the symmetry of an asymmetrical face: jewellery and makeup adds to the overall illusion of perfection and balance, thus responding to that which is required by the primal shopping list.

As Nicholson points out, further research has shown that humans judge the sex of a person by “their appearance and behaviour, and not their sex chromosomes.”<sup>57</sup> Of course they cannot do on the spot genetic tests. Ordinary humans have to make a judgement literally on face value. They depend on visual shorthand signals to cut down time wasted in the mate selection process. The natural impulse is to take it for granted that these visual signals highlight humans’ natural characteristics and behaviour and redefine biological sex. In the West it is the sanctioned social norm that make-up should be used by women, (the sex object) and not normally by men, to flag up one’s sexual allegiance.



*Fig 3.6 Two faced values*

Like genes which have biologically constructed male or female, practices in body adornment socially and culturally fashion the human into man or woman (gender). They are the building blocks upon which humans form interactions between each other, the structure of societies and the development of organised civilisations. Humans have learned to create illusions in the business of attracting a mate. The art of make-up is a good example and, according to the symmetry theory a perfect face normally indicates the rest of the body’s reproductive viability. Illustration ( Figure 3.6 “two-faced values” ) demonstrates graphically how the face can be more fully feminised by makeup. Initially one can feel a disturbance as one tries to establish the gender identity of the person in the image. Looking at the left hand side of the illustration,

<sup>57</sup>

John Nicholson, *Men and Women: How different are they?* 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993),

note how skin defects have been evened out to give a soft silky texture. The skin has been made paler, blusher not only suggests a mild flush of sexual excitement but also narrows the cheeks and indicates a finer bone structure. Blusher continues upwards and directs attention towards the eyes which have been widened and deepened by applying artificial lashes and eyeliner, giving the impression of wide-eyed child-like innocence. This is further framed by the pencilling in of a narrow arching eyebrow, which at the same time slims the nose. Moist deep red lipstick eroticises the lips, defines their delicacy. The whole impression is emphasised by a splash of pink flower behind the ear.

What is presented here is an image of larger than life femaleness. It is in effect a caricature, an amplification of the female's natural characteristics. The illustration demonstrates that not all humans wish to identify with their biological sex and will use body decoration to cover up and disguise the biological characterisation of their sex.<sup>58</sup> A graphic example of this is given in the film, *The Crying Game*.<sup>59</sup> Though men know that what they see is largely artificial and illusory, their biological programming, their evolutionary psychology of mate selection overrides logic and will still trick them into emotional response. The 'she side' of this illustration is disturbingly and dangerously inviting. Taken at its most basic level, biological differences and a culture's definition of differentiation work hand in hand in that both nature and nurture reinforce a biological need. Gender difference at its most basic serves a valuable purpose if only to find out if one is relating to a male or female and if one should proceed to follow up with the next sexual strategy.

The 'cultural' end products of beauty such as grooming and body enhancement need to be seen in the context of the origins of these activities and the basics of their role. Grooming, for example, is an extension of a much earlier evolutionary survival device. The universality of physical 'self grooming' amongst insects, mammals and preening in birds is essential to survival. The fact that it is genetically inherited and in place at birth shows that natural selection chose those who had a predisposition for self-cleaning behaviour. Grooming is of great significance for maintenance of both hygiene and health, in the unmatting of hair, removing of flakes of skin, dirt and parasites from the coat, and the cleaning of scratches, wounds and scabs, activities which help keep the individual healthy and fit.

Within the primate family,

A lemur scratches itself like a dog and washes itself like a cat; furthermore the lemur's dental comb acts as a substitute for the combing action of the cat's rough tongue. . . . using the dental comb [A special tooth for grooming which is serrated like a fine comb] to free any matted hairs. . . . It is significant the prosimians, the primates with the least dextrous hands, have evolved two supplementary aids - the tooth comb and the toilet claw - to help them in the essential task of keeping their fur clean and comfortable.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Note. It is realised here that biological sex is an over simplification. As Nicholson explains 'there are also exceptions, approximately one in a hundred. Ibid., 15.

<sup>59</sup> *The Crying Game*, directed (and written) by Neil Jordan, 112 min., British Screen Production. For more information see: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104036/>

<sup>60</sup> J.R. and P.H. Napier, *The natural history of the primates* (London: British Museum (Natural History) Cambridge University Press, 1985), 78.

'Tooth comb', lemurs have a special tooth for grooming which is serrated like a fine comb. I would like to thank Marie Whatmough, Small Mammals' Department, London Zoo for this information.

In humans the application of oils and pigments to the face and body is not only one of the oldest forms of body enhancement but this activity also came out of the primary act of body maintenance and hygiene, where fats on the body kept the skin supple and application of muds stopped insect bites and sunburn. In all primate societies (not least the contemporary human) after self grooming, mutual or social grooming is of great significance and has developed into several related functions. Grooming moves into the ritual of behaviour and display. From the precopulatory ritual of grooming to development of mate bonding, the cohesion of family groups (the basic unit of human society), and the ranking of individuals within these, all require forms of social behaviour, its representation and display, to control and structure order and promote social influence. Here one has an example of a co-evolutionary process that (Lumsden and Wilson have proposed <sup>61</sup> and is discussed at the beginning of this thesis (see Chapter 2.5) where the partnership of genetic and cultural evolution, ‘gene culture’, is a process, a ‘co-evolution’ and where the co-operation of mental and behavioural ‘progression’ incorporates the biogenetic, mind and culture as a holistic process of transmission, defined by Wilson as the ‘culturgen’.

Dawkins also proposes something similar with his theory of the ‘extended phenotype’.

The phenotype effects of a gene are normally seen as all the effects that it has on the body in which it sits. . . . the phenotypic effects of a gene are the tools by which it levers itself into the next generation. . . . [Dawkins’ theory proposes] . . . that the tools may reach outside the body wall. [to have an] . . . effect on the world outside. . . It is as if the genes reached outside their ‘own’ body and manipulated the world outside. <sup>62</sup>

Dawkins gives examples such as the cuckoo adaptations which manipulate host parents to bring up cuckoo fledglings as their own, artefacts such as the caddis fly’s cylindrical house building, or the beaver gene’s phenotypic behaviour, which builds dams and makes lakes. All behaviour evolved by way of Darwinian selection which has an effect and influence on other phenotypes. As natural selection created brain and mind to support these genetic goals, one could conclude that ‘culture’ is not so much a process in its own right as a further manifestation of evolutionary development, predestined by natural selection and further advanced through brain and mind construction.

### 3.6 Summary

In setting out the evolutionary process this thesis has identified crucial issues which are related to the mechanics of sexual differentiation and its impact upon interaction and responses. The extent to which adaptive physical characteristics, in their difference, shape the opposite sex and / or intermesh with the behavioural visual responses have been exposed.

The evolutionary body / brain / mind formulation shows that the division between nature and nurture seems to be artificial inasmuch as nature always seems to drive and nurture the mental response and the mimetic process in accumulated memory. If based on the reproductive imperative it will inevitably be reflected in the sexual imperative and copulatory gaze and be externalised as a responsive consequence of it.

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<sup>61</sup> Charles J. Lumsden and Edward O. Wilson, *Genes, Mind and Culture: The Coevolutionary Process* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 7.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; new ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989), 238, 242. (Page references are to new ed).

The transposition of the biological imperatives into the realm of the metaphysical opens the way to further discussion in level of consciousness in respect of the evolution of conceptual thought and its relation to symbolic orders derived from a realisation of 'self' distinct from the physical but shaped by it. These investigations lead us to the next stage of the thesis argument, and the elevation of consciousness into Level 2.

At this point the natural or biological history of humans, leading to the gradual awakening of specific behaviours (the phenotype extended and the accompanying copulatory gaze) promoted, as an extension of earlier survival / fitness devices, specific survival awarenesses and the development from pre-conscious to conscious applications / innovations in re-presentation and self display. These in turn enhanced fitness suitability and so influenced sexual attraction, leading to the partnership (co-evolution) of nature and nurture.

These ideas are further developed in the next chapter which considers the development of brain, mind and consciousness in relation to self representation.

LEVEL 1 PROTOHUMAN HOMINID ANCESTORS 8-6 MILLION YEARS AGO - CHAPTER 3

| Biological Imperatives |  | Sociological Imperatives    |                                 | Psychosexual Imperatives |   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative                               | Sexual Selection Imperative | Aesthetic Imperative            | Control Imperative       | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |
| 1                      | Physical body fitness defines reproductive fitness defines |                             | Body aesthetics                 | Pair bonding             | Primitive self awareness                                  |
| 2                      | Primitive instinctive existence / responses                |                             | Sex differentiation             | Behavioural changes      | Moderated behaviour                                       |
| 3                      | ← Innate / primitive perceptual skills →                   |                             | Primitive notions of beauty     |                          | Primitive self awareness                                  |
| 4                      | ← Common body sign/representation →                        |                             | Primitive social emotions       |                          |   |
| 5                      | ← Copulatory gaze seeks aesthetic perfection →             |                             | Idealised gender representation |                          |   |
| 6                      | ← Gender differentiation →                                 |                             | Sexual attractiveness           | Primitive theory of mind |   |
| 7                      | ← Natural body signs signify reproductive fitness →        |                             | Selection or rejection          |                          | Reproductive viability                                    |

( PAGES 34 - 36 )  
HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES

Figure 3.7 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 1

## CHAPTER 4

### Secondary levels of sexual imperative: Progression of the copulatory gaze

#### Chapter Four. Level 2.

##### Key concepts:

**Fully Bipedal. Serial monogamy. Social interaction. Sexual strategies. Incipient sex contract. Division of labour. New social circumstances. Behavioural changes / rituals. Display signals advertising viability. Physiological changes. Role differentiation. Representational forms. Symbolism. Perception and interpretation. Consciousness. Brain / mind interrelationships.**

##### Cognitive benchmarks:

##### **Evidence of first use / manufacture of rudimentary tools**

Base Level and Level One covered a vast period of time during which primate / hominid development augmented body, brain and mind to the next level of protohuman evolution. Level One is integrated with and is overlayed by Level 2. During the progression from Level One to Level Two hominids had undergone significant modifications of evolving biological / physiological / sexual intelligence perception in their changing mating behavioural needs and strategies. This would determine the nature and structure of humans' social development. In Level Two further profound physiological changes and emergent psychological effects take place. Hominids / *Australopithecus afarensis* begin to expand on their already existent mate selection critique and rules. This resulted in the augmentation / amplification of their natural body signs, in the re-representation of such things as 'gender' identity, differentiation and display etc, and in the gradual formation of a signalling system which extended the biological. Body enhancement and behavioural processes are transmuted into activities as a form of advanced and organised communication which initiates value systems and codes of conduct between the sexes and awakening awareness in relation to self and other and forms a bridge between the social and the sexual.

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter continues to identify the impact of biological changes in the evolution of the species upon the development of social behaviour which, in its early form, set the boundaries of what is now considered as consciousness and awareness of self.

The first section explores the emergence of self consciousness, differentiating each sex in relation to body representation in the context of developing serial monogamy and the idea that pre-societal, pre-agricultural, structured life comprised two separate evolving 'sex cultures'. one male and the other female, where each developed side by side, leading their separate lives



within small social groups, separately scavenging for meat and foraging edible plants. A slow process of selection based on searching out the optimal individual with whom to form an alliance began to develop, with each following this evolutionary agenda but not quite keeping to the exact same pathway during the course of evolution. The sexes developed symbiotic / complementary physical and mental behavioural differences, the combination of which accomplished the intended purpose: the survival of the fittest.

The second section therefore explores signals as a communication which transforms sexual interaction into social interaction through symbolic representation in an evolving serial monogamy, posing the question of what precipitates the creation of representations in a symbolic order and thereby the tools with which to construct the manifestation. As in order to do this there must also be a discussion of consciousness and its origins, section three presents the argument that “consciousness is not just an epiphenomenon, a strange concomitant of our neural activity that we project onto physical reality”<sup>1</sup>. The emergence of the concept of the ‘mentifact’, opens up the potential for secondary usage outside monogamous social interaction. The re-use of the social ‘mentifact’ by others transforms sexual / social interaction into collective social interaction and thence opens up the potential for cultural development, altering conscious behaviour.

The chapter goes on to consider the implications of these proceeds as manifested in the anatomy of ornament but also attempts to clarify the evolutionary extensions of the sexual / social to the cultural in a complexity of objectifications, detaching consciousness from the natural to the supra-natural.

## 4.1 The incipient sex contract: Changes in sexual strategies

It has been established that early hominids<sup>2</sup> branched off from the primate line of great apes (Gorillas, Orangutangs and the Chimpanzees) approximately 8 to 6 million years ago. By about 2 to 3.5 million years ago fossil evidence suggests that hominids had undergone a number of significant evolutionary changes which were to have a profound effect on their nature and future social development.

At some point, “bipedal human ancestors lost the opposable big toes of chimpanzees and other apes, which baby chimps use to grip their mothers with four limbs. [Thus providing the mother with mobility and the freedom of her hands when foraging, travelling or escaping from danger, whilst the baby remained firmly attached. It is thought that *Australopithecus afarensis* babies lacked opposable big toes and as with the babies of today may have depended on their mothers to carry them (as in this artist’s impression figure 4.1) and therefore *A. afarensis*] . . . mothers may have had to rely on others for food and protection while tending their babies.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness* (Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) Chap. 2. *Consciousness and the Physical World*, section, Life and Mind in the Universe, by George Wald, 71.

<sup>2</sup> “Hominids are the animals on the human family tree – ourselves and all the ancestors or close relatives since we diverged from apes . . .” Mauve Leakey, “The Dawn of Humans: The Farthest Horizon,” *National Geographic* vol.188, no.3 (Sept 1995): 40.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher P. Sloan, “Origin of Childhood” *National Geographic* vol. 210, no. 5 (November 2006): 156.



Figure 4.1 *A. afarensis* mother and baby

One of the most significant changes to develop was that the male and female started to bond as a sexual partnership. According to Donald Johanson monogamy may have been evolving more than three million years ago and with it a different mating strategy.<sup>4</sup> Johanson's statement is based on *Australopithecus afarensis* fossil findings which, though showing teeth with roots similar to the male great apes, had smaller crowns protruding beyond the gum margins. This led him to conclude that *afarensis* (our human predecessor)

... didn't need those teeth as much as his great ape cousins do. [His hypothesis for this is that]: Male gorillas keep harems and use their canines in combat with other males to establish dominance or to compete for females in oestrus. Perhaps *afarensis* had evolved a different mating strategy. Owen Lovejoy, a palaeanthropologist at Kent State University, suggests that smaller canines mean that there was much less competition for females among *afarensis* – an indication that monogamy may have been evolving more than three million years ago.<sup>5</sup>

However this theory could be challenged by the hypothesis that the eye teeth could have started to disappear as the use of weapons began to be the norm.<sup>6</sup> It is most likely to be somewhere in between, at the point when use of tools assisted cutting and eating of food as well.

<sup>4</sup> Donald C. Johanson, "The Dawn of Humans: Face-to-Face With Lucy's Family," *National Geographic* vol. 189, no 3 (March 1996): 112.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 112

<sup>6</sup> See: David Weitzman and Richard Gross, ed., *The Human Experience* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974), chap. 4. *The Nature of Man*. 14: The Antiquity of Murder. 68-73. Research by Raymond Dart puts forward convincing evidence that australopithecines killed baboons and murdered their own kind using antelope humerus bones as the preferred weapon. See also: Timothy Taylor, *The Prehistory of Sex* (London: Fourth Estate Ltd., 1996), 40-41.

Not far into humans' evolutionary history (refer to Trajectory of Human Evolution, figure A.3 second stage in the Appendix for time spans and relevant changes) the female's sexual development had taken on a different tack. The human female, unlike any other species, is not bound by the automatic pilot of an oestrus cycle. Her sexuality has developed as a different and separate experience which is unique to the human race, she can be sexually receptive the whole time. Her interest is triggered not by a period of oestrus, but by presented mental and visual stimuli which then call into action the chemicals which make the physiological changes associated with arousal. She evolved an ability to choose whether she wished to be receptive or not; unlike the other animals where receptive behaviour is indicated by cycles of hormones which activate the brain, so that when in the physiological state of fertility, the animal is on 'automatic pilot' and the female animal has no control over the instinct to mate, and lets nothing hinder this urge. This ability to choose had profound implications for human development. It has been suggested that human society and culture could never have become established had they been disrupted by a seasonal frenzy of uncontrollable mating.

As previously stated, protohuman males and females had evolved as two separate sexual cultures, both separately scavenging meat and foraging plant foods and only coming together to mate. However in time both evolved a mode of behaviour that could make procreation more successful. A mode of existence based on a reciprocal arrangement gradually began to be established, the sharing of food, a home base, the male's hunting (meat) was supplemented by the female's gathering (fruit, nuts and roots). The male could provide the female with protection and high protein food, and she in exchange could provide nutritious food and sex, and devote attention to the incubation and care of his genes, a considerable investment for and benefit to each of the sexes. It is important to note that it is here that the inception of 'division of labour' began to take root and the asymmetry in power relationships was gradually further developed.

With the male and female slowly forming a kind of alliance, a 'sexual contract' as Fisher calls it, both sexes had something valuable to exchange in the context of reproduction and the survival of offspring. The emergent social context required communication between male and female to develop beyond their established 'selection' critique and rules to accommodate evolving complexities. In the context of representation, male and female needed to expand on their already existent 'selection' critique and rules. If biology determined the sex of an individual then the physical differences between man and woman made possible the mutual recognition of gender difference, gender alliance and willingness to form a bond. This set the scene for what was to follow in the emergent social context: the incorporation of critiques and rules to accommodate evolving complexities such as the establishment and evolution of social systems and cultural structures.

If biology determined the sex of an individual, then physical differences between each of the sexes, differentiation and recognition of criteria would be even more effective and easier to read with a more sophisticated tool that reinforced, emphasised, and amplified natural signs ('Supra signs' or as Dawkins would have it "supernormal stimulus"<sup>7</sup>). In a co-evolutionary context mutual recognition of gender differentiation and gender alliance and flagging up of a willingness

<sup>7</sup>

Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 2d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press 1989).

Richard Dawkins, *The Extended Phenotype: The Long Reach of the Gene*, with a Foreword by Daniel Dennett 2d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 69.

to form a bond evolved within the adaptation of behavioural changes. This set the scene for what was to follow, the overlay of a signalling system extending the biological through the incorporation of purposeful body enhancement activities.

Within this evolution of social systems and cultural structures humans were able to use the same standards of selection either on an individual or group basis *via* this more indicative advanced system. Body decoration would have emerged slowly out of these new social circumstances, not only to reinforce this 'natural gender' (the genital) and 'beauty' culture, but to assist in the dialogue concerning this sexual exchange. A kind of non-verbal bartering system evolved in the form of visual display signals and body language. Humans needed to 'present' themselves to their best advantage as part of the process of attracting and sustaining a mate of viable quality. Humans already recognised, through the criteria of body aesthetics, each other's potential to fulfil their biological role, ie., to create offspring aspiring to the ideals of hereditary perfection. Now an additional form of advertising was of pressing importance, the advertising of each of the sexes' viability.

Behavioural rituals would have begun to emerge which regularised and reinforced the needs and imperatives of sexual reproductive viability over and beyond the basic. Male and female began to develop their own equations relative to the proportional mix of critical factors. Clear shorthand messages in the form of signs, codes and symbols would be required for the following:

- Predisposition to sexual alliance.
- Quality of reproductive material.
- Sexual maturity.
- Sexual availability.
- Viability.
- Ability to keep a mate's interest.

The female would compete for the most competent and superior male to protect and provide for her whilst she was in the vulnerable state of incubating, nurturing and caring, and the male in turn would choose the most physically attractive and intelligent food gatherer. Each sex developed a set of quantifiable values and ratings of what was required from the other. Each of the sexes had to make every effort to broadcast the prowess of their functional role and to advertise their sexually attractive qualities and ability to hold a mate's interest. The implications of role differentiation brought about by a new social behaviour, although based on the same motivation, were to become ever more complex and subtle, requiring sensitive interpretation.

During this time additional physical changes occurred in the female, her rather large clitoris had diminished in size and ended up out of sight between her genital skin folds and now, with her upright walking position, the entrance to the vagina was also hidden from view. These factors necessitated a new visual reading of her body. With her disguised ovulation she could be sexually receptive the whole time, experience orgasms and enjoy sex. She could copulate through menstruation, pregnancy and shortly after birth. She could provide regular sex.

Reduction of body hair further encouraged and exposed erogenous zones, and areas of the body which could convey visual, physical changes during sexual excitement such as blushing of the skin and nipple erection. She developed localised densities of fat providing permanently swollen

breasts, plump buttocks and hips <sup>8</sup>. These do not present in any other primates and seem to have no significant survival value other than being sexually attractive and different from the male and to provide a further gender signal.



*Figure 4.2 Product of today's copulatory gaze*

Females with these characteristic qualities would have excited more male interest than those without and, though her qualities could initially have started as secondary sex characteristics, they developed as adaptive imperatives. Because males sought them out in preference to other females, these females successfully reproduced, passing on their advantageous qualities with each successive generation. Today (as in figure 4.2) a woman's body has become a highly evolved and wonderfully refined organism functioning and serving the same biological imperatives although, for reasons discussed later, it inhabits a changing social context, which brings with it its own complexities.

The female's actions in body enhancements / modifications were a consequence of the bio-imperatives and therefore undertaken to attract the male or to respond to his interest. As the human female's bio-evolutionary changes evolved she would have been able to make some choice about the nature of the presentation of her sexuality. For example, she could choose to signal availability or unavailability. These changes would have simultaneously required the adoption and development of a complex form of communication, codes of conduct and signals not only between the opposite sexes but also between those of the same sex, historically based on these primary criteria. Similarly, male display was directed towards other males, in addition to the female, in order to maintain position in the hierarchy.

A woman's mode of adornment followed the direction of emphasising her beauty and seductive prowess and showing off a more passive and vulnerable behaviour. Her 'sexual' purpose evolved to attract and invite intimacy. A woman came to assess her value by the quality of her relationships, this being the most important element in her life. Because she had the babies and was the incubator, it seemed natural that the focus should be on her body.

The man's mode of adornment has followed the direction of his prowess, authority and

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<sup>8</sup> If protohuman males were looking for the ideal incubator, one theory put forward is that males might have preferred a fatter woman because she may have been able to survive hunger periods better than thinner females. Research has now established that women who exercise too much or are under weight do not get periods and / or eventually become infertile.



dominance. His purpose is to display the masculine values of being a good provider for his family, his heroism, achievements and his hierarchical standing. A man established his position by these 'strength criteria'. The man needs to achieve compliance and acquiescence from other males. His focussing of attention on a relationship is relative to this and his success with females is, if not dependant on his actual dominance / high status then certainly upon the appearance of it.

## 4.2 Sexual signals: Evolution of visual symbols, origins of art and representation

In order to progress the analysis, it may be useful to explore the transposition of display extensions to the body as signals based upon the need for natural physical display for sexual attraction, beyond the early social formations. Statements about the first representational forms of art by archaeologists and art historians continue to refer to dates of approximately 35,000 to 45,000 years ago. Therefore it might be concluded that representational forms only became visible and / or highly sophisticated within 'modern' humans' (*homo sapiens sapiens*) time span, but we are looking at an end result of a very long period of development which has its roots reaching far back into the evolution of the brains and minds of the proto humans. Recent research and finds seems to support the theory that the *Homo habilis* brain / mind could have had *in situ* the early rudiments of the ability to communicate through the use of representational forms.

It is true that about 40,000 years ago there was a fairly abrupt surge of artistic energy never seen before, especially in relation to items of body ornamentation. Many surviving artefacts found in Europe comprise shells, teeth, bones and Venus figurines presumed to have symbolic content but it can be argued that all forms of body presentation are signifying the body's physical state, and therefore should be read and understood as having originated as creative behaviours and aesthetic formulations thousands of years earlier. Since the early development of human life when, either unconsciously or consciously, tools were starting to be used (and used to make tools) they could have been employed in another capacity, the abstract or symbolic).

Steven Mithen's paper collates theories proposed by leading archaeologists and theorists who have considered the subject of image making as to when and how the 'first' representational art or the idea of visual symbols and symbolism could have come about. Expert opinion seems to have reached a consensus concerning the: "Evolution of the ability to attribute meaning to visual images."<sup>9</sup> Mithen goes further to suggest that there is a survival value connected to visual symbols and provides examples of the link between behavioural representation, signs and symbols.

Mithen's paper presents several theories supporting his notion of what would have motivated the selection of a particular range of symbolic components. In reference to this, he attributes the possible context for this role to 'natural signs' in the context of hunting activities (essential to survival) where the reading of animal prints and spoor (natural signs) would provide humans with specific abstract references, ie. footprints, signifying the animals' movements, habits, direction and the time elapsed since the animal last made the prints. These would all be

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<sup>9</sup> Herbert Donald and Graham Maschner, eds., *Darwinian Archaeologies* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996) chap. 11 *The Origin of Art: Natural Signs, Mental Modularity, and Visual Symbolism*, by Steven Mithen, 197. See also Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A search for the origins of art, religion and science* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).



indicative of specific conceptual associations, the theory being that ‘intelligence tests’ such as the accurate interpretation of footprints provided a heightened advantage in the survival stakes. However, this presupposes that hunting, although important for survival, is the most significant imperative for the development of abstract thought and its communication in a symbolic order.

He acknowledges that intentional communication such as vocal communication and instruction in tool usage are adaptations from the occurrence of ‘natural signs’ in the first instance. Thus, it can be argued that the fashioning of abstract thought occurred early in humans’ evolutionary development since it can be observed in the behaviour of monkeys and apes. He also raises the issue of kinship, which integrates these aspects beyond the boundaries of the immediate family group. Precipitant abstract thought relative to notions of kinship should be considered as a complex extension of personal behaviour. However monkeys do not achieve the follow up stage which would be the consolidation of understanding beyond association with survival, and therefore we cannot learn from them how mark making connects to communication and the classification of signs and what may have driven cognitive and making skills to develop to the point at which artefacts were produced. Consequently we require other or additional explanations.

Several theories have been put forward to shed light on issues concerning what could be understood as the ‘freezing’ or capture of a gesture, and the cognitive processes required for the interpretation or re-formation through intelligent translation into ‘mentifact’. Though Mithen recognises that the very nature of a symbol as a communicating entity has its origins in and depends on the mutual recognition and agreed understanding between at least two persons, it therefore seems less rational to support his further suggestion that, “we must look outside the social sphere for the evaluation of the capacity to create and read symbols,”<sup>10</sup> which is why he refers us to nature and natural signs. his theory suggests that the first representational phenomenon occurred naturally taking the form of animal footprints, noticed and considered by evolving humans’ intelligence in the context of hunting, and thereby, as a consequence of the survival imperative, the seeds of abstract thinking were germinated.

It is however consistent with the objectives of this thesis to argue that there might be several coinciding forces or imperatives for survival which may or may not have a sequence order depending upon conditions which are pertinent to the stages of evolution. Whether or not one subscribes to this or that theory, the basic imperatives of sexual reproductive interests, which amongst humans always involves interaction with an ‘other’, requires appropriate signals one to the other which in turn require interpretation, and thereby higher levels of thought. The one vital element of human visual symbolism, the ability to attribute meaning to ‘visual signs’, inanimate or abstract (those not immediately connected with the referent, ie., the perception and interpretation of ‘secondary’ connotations or associations) has only occurred as a natural development in the human primate. Mithen concludes that its development must have emerged later in the course of ‘human’ development, about two million years after humans branched off from apes.<sup>11</sup> However, this may not be the case.

Several issues arise when evaluating the theories of Mithen and (several of other referenced academics who persistently hold similar one sided views):

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<sup>10</sup> Herbert Donald and Graham Maschner, eds., *Darwinian Archaeologies* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), chap. 11, *The Origin of Art: Natural Signs, Mental Modularity, and Visual Symbolism*, by Steven Mithen, 201.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 203

(1) In the first place it is disturbing that evolutionary reference presupposes the male biased hypotheses evidencing the traditional stereotyped hunting scenario and have as a consequence avoided consideration of several alternative possibilities, not least that species evolution may be sexually differentiated and at the same time symbiotic and / or reactive.

(2) Where do women fit into the scheme of things, what role have they had? If women do not hunt what was their contribution and what were they doing to develop their intelligence in the meantime?

(3) The hypothesis that the necessity for signs and symbols as communication ‘equipment’ would only arise or be precipitated by events outside of social interaction obfuscates the basic level of the selection process which precedes copulation.

Mithen argues that “Non social intelligence is the ability to solve problems concerning inanimate objects or other species, . . .”<sup>12</sup> This argument is confusing if one takes issue with the view that initially nothing could have been cognitively processed in isolation from social intelligence, since awareness of awareness depends on the dynamic of response between the individual and the other or others in a social group. As explained in the next section in relation to the evolution of consciousness, ‘self’ and ‘other’ interaction and engagement is the key to the development of intelligence (since it precedes any conscious notions of problem solving). An object<sup>13</sup> exists immediately it registers its presence in the human mind, whether before or after it is given form by human hands makes no difference. As Mary Douglas points out, for humans, “Nature must be expressed in symbols; nature is known through symbols which are themselves a construction upon experience, a product of mind, an artifice or conventional product, therefore the reverse of the natural.”<sup>14</sup> In this case a simple example would be the love bite. It is a natural product, a print sometimes made on the neck during intimate sexual contact. This can also be used as a deliberately planted sign of ownership, or display of recent impregnation which may ward off or inform other hopeful suitors. Based on experience and association, it is understood by both sexes in the same way and consequently imprinted on the human psyche. Its understanding and interpretation depends on the ability to re-imagine and re-experience, decode through problem solving, complete an equation, and hence constitutes the vital bridge to creativity. This is by definition a social interactive engagement manifesting intelligence in an internal interpretation to ask the question ‘what does this mark mean?’ It is therefore a result of a thought process arising from socio-sexual situations and requiring responses which reflect, as previously discussed, basic responses such as for example attraction or rejection.

The marking or equivalent signing of the body through the attachment of objects to it is in every sense a mode of problem solving related to the social (albeit *via* the sexual). Particular body marks are just as explicit as footprints (non-social), equivalent to a kind of ‘body map’, (a social sign), a kind of tracking device of identifiable signs which can be read and capitalised on later as information reflecting intelligence levels in the social sphere precipitated by the need to respond to the reproductive imperative. Whilst the need to comprehend the implications of an animal footprint go on to a rendezvous with a possible supply of nourishment or source of personal

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 203

<sup>13</sup> origin, the Latin *objectum* ‘thing presented to the mind’

<sup>14</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1970; reprint, London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1973), 11. (Page reference is to repeat edition)

injury the representation or re-invention of body signs and signals, associative of resolutions of these and other problematic situations, operates in the social sphere precipitated by the reproductive imperative.

Whether this takes place intentionally (social intelligence problem solving) or naturally (non-social) is of no consequence, since an 'object' draws no such distinction but has a relationship only to the individual and is therefore mutable. However, a sign is an imperative driven response requiring a communication problem to be solved. Occurring on the human form these signs and signals acting as the bridge, the missing link and the natural progression between nature and nurture, are similarly acts of creativity and the beginning of culture. Since male and female are separate entities, communication between the two must have developed out of responsiveness to each other and thereby minds must have developed in symbiosis. Therefore the objects, natural or otherwise, must have had a shared social significance and problematic to be resolved.

Mithen's theories disregard the possibility that cognitive advance in human evolution must have happened well before hunting was a habitual occurrence since the fact of communication, essential also in hunting, is in and of itself problem solving. He raises interesting issues of creativity which may have implications relative to precipitant imperatives. He states that "... at least by the Middle Palaeolithic the four cognitive / physical processes involved in making and "reading" symbols were present - mark making, intentional communication, classification, and attribution of meaning."<sup>15</sup> He then infers that the process of 'attribution of meaning' a prerequisite of for the origins of art, was dependant on the previous three being in place before art could happen. This implies a holistic definition of art as though it came into being at a specific moment in time. His argument only makes sense if one does not consider that cognitive elements (1) evolved as reciprocal constituents of learning, understanding and doing, including the act of creativity, and (2) were not present before that moment (inferring rejection of the idea that body re-presentation and tool making should be considered as an art or a highly cognitive process).

It is argued in this thesis that these cognitive elements were present and coincidental from a much earlier period, and further, that tools and body re-presentation should be regarded as acts of creativity and artefacts. Only at a point of intentional communication does he infer attribution of meaning. The reason / understanding he acknowledges is however, pertinent motivation for what is communicated as being of significance and, as a prerequisite, that nothing is made without a purpose or imperatives, seems not so important to him. If, as is argued in this thesis, sexual imperatives underpin or drive cognitive evolution then they must always be present.

Sex and sexual representation, the very foundations of social interaction, are fundamental to personal and public existence and a necessity for the continuance and perpetuation of the human species. Not to acknowledge this is a regrettable, albeit unintentional, oversight which seriously skews understanding, is misleading and hampers the possibility for a more balanced interpretation. It is pertinent here to ask: where in human history is it possible to identify the beginnings of (nature and nurture) culture as both psychological and concrete. In other words if social intelligence is the prerequisite for cognitive evolution and the beginnings of art where does individual psychology germinate and what impels its emergence as a contributory factor in creativity? The following discussion could be used as a hypothesis for development addressing the questions raised.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Donald and Graham Maschner, eds., *Darwinian Archaeologies*. (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), chap. 11, *The Origin of Art: Natural Signs, Mental Modularity, and Visual Symbolism*, by Steven Mithen, 206-207.

As mentioned earlier, all animal species use a body language, gestures and physical signals which will disclose a female's imminent fertility, mood and interest in sex. However, this only comes into action with oestrus or, in layman's terms, being on heat. There is one exception, the human female. The following observations may hold some clues. Primatologists and zoologists have long observed that some species of primates, most notably the baboons, some macaques, talapoin, geladas and chimpanzees display oestrus signals where the rump surrounding the genitalia changes in size and colour. As the authors of 'The Natural History of Primates' describe it.

The swelling consists of a marked distention of the tissues with fluid; the skin becomes brightly coloured, shiny and convoluted. . . . Geladas (*Theropithecus*) bear an hourglass-shaped patch of naked pink skin on the chest. In females this is edged with bead-like blisters, [and this seems in their opinion to echo the rump]. At oestrus the vesicles become fluid-filled and prominent. . . . [The Napiers put forward the theory that] Geladas spend a lot of time in the sitting position while feeding, moving short distances by shuffling along on their bottoms. Thus the chest region is more exposed than the rump and, in females, acts as a visual signal of their reproductive condition.<sup>16</sup> [These signals peak in intensity with ovulation.]

In relation to similar observations in his 'The Naked Ape',<sup>17</sup> Desmond Morris goes on to argue human comparisons in the context that bipedalism encouraged early humans to make the transition from mating *via* the rear approach to the frontal approach. Humans also spend much of their time in the upright position, walking as well as sitting and thus concealing the female genital area, and as Morris suggests, like the Galada developed a form of sexual self mimicry of their 'primary' genital display. With human mating taking place 'primarily' from the frontal position. Morris argues that despite the novelty of other positions "Face-to-face sex is 'personalised sex' [and]. . . . face-to-face copulation is basic to our species".<sup>18</sup>

When considering pre-copulatory signals "Virtually all sexual signals and erogenous zones are on the front of the body – facial expressions, the lips, the beard, the nipples, the areolar signals, the breasts of the female, the pubic hair, the genitals themselves, the major blushing areas, and the major sexual flush areas."<sup>19</sup> Additionally through natural selection the clitoris and vagina moved forward, suggesting that frontal copulation had evolved to be the most prevalent form.<sup>20</sup> Could this also be why throughout the history of human body enhancement activities the female back is, more often than not, left undecorated?

The 'hard wiring processes' of the male copulatory gaze would have taken root from the beginning of human sexual relations and therefore evolved, and would have in place a highly primed response to specific genital sexual signals. The visual and tactile mimicry or echoing of these signals would psychosexually excite and reinforce the male's primal gaze. Breasts mimic

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<sup>16</sup> J. R and P. H. Napier, The Natural History of Primates (London: British Museum (Natural History) Cambridge University Press, 1985), 30-31.

<sup>17</sup> Desmond Morris, The Naked Ape, 2d ed., (Herts Triad/Mayflower Books, 1977), 63, 66-67.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 65, 66.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 65.

Note: For more readings on Morris's theories see. Desmond Morris, Bodywatching: A Field Guide to the Human Species (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1985). Also Manwatching: A Field Guide to Human Behaviour (Great Britain: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1977; reprint ed, London: Triad/Granada 1980). A natural follow up to this reading would be Nancy Etcoff, Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty (Great Britain: Little, Brown and Company, 1999; reprint, London: Abacus 2000).

<sup>20</sup> See: Helen. E. Fisher, The Sex Contract: The Evolution of Human Behaviour (Herts: Granada Publishing Ltd., 1983), 59

the rounded buttocks. Sexual arousal alters the lips and the labia which co-ordinate in shape and texture and, as vasco-congestion takes place, undergo a swelling and intensifying of colour from pink to red and glisten with moisture. Ear lobes echo the labia and / or the nipples and co-ordinate in complementary changes, becoming sensitive to touch, stiffened and enlarged during sexual arousal. By now the owner of the highly charged male copulatory gaze would find the experience of sex greatly enhanced, find it more gratifying, find a female with these attributes more attractive and find pair formation more rewarding, thus galvanising sexual dynamics and making pair bonding more sustainable.

Ideas or pleasurable experiences can be imprinted, can be recalled, can be triggered by an external stimulus, which precedes re-enactment and may even subliminate action. This will be discussed further since it is as significant a psychological factor in differentiation between individual sexes of the same species as it was in the divergence of the human species from the proto-humans. A subconscious response is formed in connection to the object / actual experiences, by which is meant any experience of the physical world whether of inanimate nature or animate inter-species contact. These experiences can be re-imagined in the human mind to take new forms which can now be understood as psycho-sexual responses. These responses can be re-created evoked and embedded into artefacts such as fetish objects *via* feelings and / or human emotions.

Whilst the female's breasts, buttocks and sexual anatomy changed to please the male copulatory gaze, female preference also influenced the evolution of specific adaptive characteristics in their male partners. A significant example is the way in which the male protohuman lost his penis bone. To date many mammals possess a penis bone called the *baculum* or *os penis* and all primates except humans possess this bone. That it is present among both mammals and non-human primates would suggest it to be an early development in the evolution of mammals.<sup>21</sup> Like the male preference for buttocks and breasts etc, the protohuman female found some changes in the penis structure more pleasurable and therefore preferable. Size does matter, not directly for reproductive reasons but width, length and diameter of the shaft, the shape, texture and softness of the glans make a difference to her sexual pleasure in providing pressure, tension and stimulation and a resultant orgasm during copulation. Without its bone for hardness and support, the male penis needed to develop a highly complex set of hydraulics where engorgement of tissue would provide the right stiffness for erection and successful penetration.

As a result of this adaptation the human male genitals are much larger than those of other primates who possess a smaller thinner organ and, whilst the primate penis is hardly discernible in its flaccid state, the human penis is an average of four inches long, one and a quarter inches wide and with a circumference of three and a half inches and the male pendulous genitals are highly discernible. Its size, colour and form is clearly profiled before its framing backdrop of pubic hair. Its size has evolved not so much for reproductive purposes, as other primates clearly have no problem with their reproduction functions, but for two purposes (1) female pleasure which encourages bonding and fidelity etc, (2) male to male competition including the intimidation of rivals. Male genital presentation, flaccid or erect, clearly flags up elements of: gender status, superiority and power, just one step away from the phallic symbol and all its accompanying connotations and representations. Additionally a solid erection (without its supportive bone) is normally a test for or a sign of a genetically and physically healthy virile

<sup>21</sup> baculum. Encyclopaedia Britannica 1994-1999 file://C:\Program Files\Britannica\BCD\Cache\\_5\_ArticleRil.htm "The baculum is one of several heterotropic skeletal elements ie., bones dissociated from the rest of the body skeleton."



male and would therefore count as an element in the female's choices. The female had now to be extra sexually attractive to excite male erection and she would need a repertoire of strategies to hold and stimulate her chosen mate's interest.

The love bite developed into the tattoo. Clitoris and nipples were recreated through cicatrisation (skin scarring), signs of arousal were recreated through body and face painting and application of glistening oils, distinct body sections and shapes were created. The copulatory gaze had a new added dimension, which both impacted upon the complexity of behaviour but also, through extension, affected evolution of the species itself. Selective breeding of the human species was determined by environment and reproductive fitness and the copulatory gaze was further augmented by behavioural and creative activity representing the natural, giving added complexity to what was perceived and thereby what was selected.

Early evolutionary sexual display attributes underpin today's hybridisation of body enhancements and the interplay of sexual connotations collectively recognised and extensively used in contemporary material culture and cannot be fully understood without acknowledgement of the sequences of sexual imperatives which result in representation at any stage. Sexual, genital and gender re-presentations are echoed throughout all activities of personal body enhancement through, pigments, tattoos, scarifications, through body adornments such as jewellery and clothing and now cosmetic augmentation through surgery.

In comprehending these long established codes of conduct one can now make a case for how other codes and concepts could be exchanged and understandings be reciprocated and how other more subtle concepts began to take hold and filter through to translate human intelligence into culture. Before continuing down this avenue of enquiry there is a need to investigate how human response awareness may have given rise to 'consciousness' relative to the already identified complexity of sexual imperatives.

### **4.3 Consciousness**

The ability to be able to be in control of the decision to engage in sexual activity may have been the cause of or have given rise to self-awareness, which separates, differentiates, defines or determines the nature of sexual interaction in the context of the group as opposed to the former act of signifying the activity itself. Social organisation of a group requires more than responses and the consequences of organisation impact upon reception and representation of social acts within the group. These aspects are dependant upon states of mind which are either consequent upon responses to new complexity in evolution or a result of a physical trigger as in the case of the lost penis bone previously discussed.

The properties and function of the brain's physical actuality not only process and direct human capacities and capabilities but also house what we call the mind and thereby the mental state. Understanding of human mentality or consciousness is still extremely complex and it is not the purpose of this thesis to extend that enquiry, however the emergence in evolution of consciousness of self may be connected to the sexual imperative.

How can one argue the idea that awareness of the ability to be in control of the exchange of



sex may have been the cause and effect of culture? Culture being defined as “The system of information that codes the manner in which the people in an organized group, society or nation interact with their social and physical [and psychological] environment”<sup>22</sup>. Culture is also about a structuring of knowledge in which human activities and behaviour are regulated through the mode of both psychological and material exchange. Or, to put it another way, how did the idea arise that objects could hold and signify ‘power values’, could communicate abstract connective thoughts from one person to another, could make the communication of an emotional experience visible, tangible, exchangeable, recordable? This thought / object phenomenon may have been the very thing which predestined humans towards the creation of psychological / material culture. But how did the common experience of the phenomena of human awareness arise in the first place?

Despite the accumulating, wide and varied scientific data on the properties and function of the brain, and of human mental capacities, an understanding of human consciousness seems still to elude us. The properties of mentality or consciousness if individually differentiated are subjective and therefore, until now, have not been as amenable to scientific scrutiny as have other aspects of physical being. As the biochemist George Wald points out, traditionally metaphysical aspects in science have been given little attention.<sup>23</sup> Although in the absence of scientific data insightful progress has been made through interpretations coming from contemporary psychologists whose philosophical and theoretical proposals are mapping out a fresh approach to understanding, to date science (measured by facts) and psychology (being interpretive and speculative) sit uncomfortably together. However new evidence from science and psychology suggesting consciousness to be highly significant as a ‘causal agent’ in brain role and purpose may be establishing a more compatible relationship through confirmation of contemporary theory. As Wald summarises the position “. . . consciousness is not just an epiphenomenon, a strange concomitant of our neural activity that we project onto physical reality. On the contrary, all that we know, including all our science, is in our consciousness. It is part, not of the superstructure, but of the foundations. No consciousness, no science, public or private. Perhaps, indeed no consciousness, no reality – . . .”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, putting science and matter in this context, there is no material world, no physical reality, without the mind.

Today several other eminent researchers, in the fields of physics, science, biology and genetics are beginning, like Wald, to accept that there is an affinity between genetic evolution and cultural evolution. In other words, that the evolution of culture is driven by and is the result of the needs of genetic evolution, a process which took place during the long process of evolutionary bonding which took humans from organic soup, to cells from which living entities emerged and developed to take all sorts of divergent routes. Some theorists will go as far as to suggest that this drive seems to be the expression of a form of cosmic consciousness which foreshadowed the beginning of life and yet embeds itself into individual physical elements. Its

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<sup>22</sup> Arthur S. Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin Group, 1985), s.v. “Culture”.

<sup>23</sup> “Consciousness is not part of that universe of space and time, of observable and measurable quantities, that is amenable to scientific investigation. For a scientist, it would be a relief to dismiss it as unreal or irrelevant. I have heard distinguished scientists do both. In a discussion with the physicist P. W. Bridgman some years ago, he spoke of consciousness as ‘just a way of talking.’ His thesis was that only terms that can be defined operationally have meaning; and there are no operations that define consciousness. In the same discussion the psychologist B. F. Skinner dismissed consciousness as irrelevant to science, since confined to a private world, not accessible to others.” John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness* (Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) Chap. 2. *Consciousness and the Physical World*, section, Life and Mind in the Universe, by George Wald, 71.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

origins and relentless drive forward may well have been determined by a primal holistic and resolute generative force from within the cosmic scheme, a form of primordial consciousness embodying all matter from the smallest inorganic particle to the organic, to the most complex of organisms like the human, to material culture. This idea, called the anthropic principle, is further supported by several theorists such as Bohm and David Peat who, as Pickering and Skinner point out, “. . . develop the idea of implicate order by suggesting that all forms of organisation whether inanimate, living or experimental, originate in a generate level of order within the universe. This level of order they identify with active conscious intelligence.”<sup>25</sup> George Wald expands on this by proposing that human “consciousness is [and also], in some sense, [fulfills] the *purpose* [and role] of the physical universe.”<sup>26</sup> If this is correct, consciousness might be regarded as the inner motivation or drive previously mentioned relative to individual response to the sexual imperative and thereby a consequence of it.

If one accommodates evolutionary context and developments in contemporary psychological theory, (as proposed previously), then one can construct a theory of how consciousness may have come into existence as a mental construct of human ‘being and knowingness’. Imperative acts are discussed later in the case studies as sublimation in the creative process but there still remains the issue of the mechanics of the mind and how it evolved levels of consciousness. There is now a growing acceptance amongst evolutionary theorists that consciousness was not a sudden awakening of human intellect, but that it was rather a slow process. As Pinker points out in his book “How the Mind Works”, the intellectual tradition of SSSM<sup>27</sup> had also established a kind of moral authority and was therefore initially difficult to challenge. Several theorists now accept that the bio-genetic, the physical, the metaphysical, the psychological and socio-cultural are part of one and the same generative agenda and recognise culture as an extension of reproductive promotion through another agent. As well as a biological organisation it could equally be possible that there are modes (where actions are taken in response to mental processes) of psychological organisation. This form of somatic organisation could have resulted in consciousness. As all phases of evolution are a continuous and integrated process, each reaching a level of organisation before its transformation and ascent into the next, then consciousness may well have progressed to address further new and different evolutionary needs. Identifying these needs as the bridge to the development of consciousness leads one on from the previous findings and theories expressed in the thesis thus far. Having examined the previous multifaceted body of knowledge from other disciplines it is now possible to build further upon and establish a research focus and theoretical framework as a reference for the emergence of awareness, social experience, its exchange and its structure.

The fabric which would have constructed human consciousness is an exceptional composite of biological, physical and socio-cultural interaction within an evolutionary process and context: the journey from the awakening of consciousness of self to the interaction and exchange between self and other. Conscious experience and the accompanying emotional expressions would have evolved out of the following conditions: emotions are a reflex to a response, mental

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<sup>25</sup> John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness* (Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) Chap. 2. *Consciousness and the Physical World*, section, Science, Order and Creativity, by John Pickering and Martin Skinner, 66.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>27</sup> For a good potted history of what SSSM (Standard Social Science Model) proposes and how sociobiologists were criticised on when they initially began to suggest it, see: Steven Pinker *How the Mind Works* (London: Penguin Group, 1997), 44-47.

conditions are the feedback from what the body responds to and interacts with, internally and externally and *vice versa*. In turn mental conditions affect one's physical being. Emotional body signals and the organisation of thought processes transformed these single elements of understanding (natural symbols) and the exchange and command of awareness with self and others' equivalent intelligence. Symbols could then be strung together and some form of communal dialogue could begin to take place. This evolutionary process continues through natural selection, elaborating on new phenomena extending, exploiting, inventing, superseding and replacing: gaining ever higher and more complex levels, driving new elements, new potentials and opening up new opportunities for the mind both to generate and comprehend. Thus the cognitive processes of consciousness keep pace with consistently evolving developmental phenomena.

The higher an organism ascends the evolutionary ladder the more developed its mental capacities. As brain / mind interrelationships evolved they developed an hierarchy of variant complexities with the humans at the top. <sup>28</sup> If an active component of life's structure evolved through natural selection it must have a survival purpose beneficial, advantageous and complementary to the biological imperatives. Here, conscious intelligence is highly significant and would have been adaptive and one could conclude that the human is unique from all other organisms in its mental ability to encompass visual awareness and visual analysis, to construct a sense of its own being, incorporate and objectify itself through thoughts, to construct the organisation of thought processes and to give them form through the verbal and visual language of signs, codes and symbols and the physical dexterity to construct 'mental' objects, 'mentifacts', as part of that dialogue.

## 4.4 Consciousness and the mind function

How the mind works also gives us insights which support the thesis inasmuch as there is ongoing speculation and debate. Currently the most popular hypothesis amongst evolutionary theorists is that the mind is composed of different components, each dealing with specific brain functions responding to particular incoming information, for example, sight, touch, sound, taste, body co-ordination, spatial awareness etc. These components are referred to as modules. Consciousness is identified as a function which occurs as an 'interactive pattern' created when the labyrinth of relevant subsystems are connected. <sup>29</sup>

Consciousness can be seen as the holistic response to the integration of specific components' feedback, and thus consciousness might be identified as a psychological function, a function which might in itself be considered a module. For example, the Buddhist idea of mind /

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<sup>28</sup> Some researchers such as Donald Griffin find this arguable, claiming that animals have developed different awarenesses according to different environmental, evolutionary needs and functions such as the honey bee's, the homing pigeon's, and the bat's differing navigation capacities. However there is a common consensus that the human's specific development of awareness has accelerated such extraordinary conscious and subconscious patterns through the invention of verbal language, so that here the human stands apart from other animals. John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness*. (Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) Chap.3. *An Evolutionary Perspective*. section, The Question of Animal Awareness, by D. R. Griffin, 90-101.

<sup>29</sup> Note: analogies have changed as technology evolved. The workings of the mind has been compared with a telephone exchange, a circuit board and the computer. The latest proposal by Tooby and Cosmides is: the Swiss army knife comprised of different tools (modules) for specific jobs, they propose however that there are thousands of these modules in the mind, a concept which is given the term "massive modularity".

consciousness being another sense, the sixth sense, which suggests tangibility related to the unconscious and underpins the rational and connects with the spiritual. However, the type of energy which powers the mind is still unidentified. Some conclude that the mind is driven by a form of energy yet undiscovered. Some theorists like Popper and Eccles conceive the driving mechanism to be a process, not an energy but a “flow of information.” Here they redefine its emergence:

... recall that a molecule in many respects is the master of its inner atoms and electrons. The latter are hauled and forced about in chemical interactions by the overall configurational properties of the whole molecule. At the same time, if our given molecule is itself part of a single-celled organism such as paramecium, it in turn is obliged, with all its parts and its partners, to follow along a trail of events in time and space determined largely by the extrinsic overall dynamics of *Paramecium caudatum*. When it comes to brains, remember that the simpler electric, atomic, molecular, and cellular forces and laws, though still present and operating, have been superseded by the configurational forces of higher-level mechanisms. At the top, in the human brain, these include the powers of perception, cognition, reason, judgement, and the like, the operational, causal effects and forces of which are equally or more potent in brain dynamics than are the outclassed inner chemical forces.<sup>30</sup>

The integrative performance of the human mind where consciousness emerges or is resultant from brain events, and its evolutionary history of patterns of consciousness is in harmony with the laws of nature, but up to now has been problematic as it is not recognised as part of a material state. Mentifacts, (mental products) like aesthetics, representation, symbols, myths, the art and design process which causes the realisation of artefacts, music, etc., the nature and physical properties of ‘their’ matter and energy, cannot be scientifically quantified. For example, the orchestration of particular responses could be directed into one area, ie the visual perception, and the reflective response to physical beauty, a collation of the physical, chemical and psychological phenomena, culminating in feelings which in turn are derived from the generative “implicate” order and hence reinterpreted by the creative artistic human spirit.

Eccles looks at it in another way:

A key component of the hypothesis of brain–mind interaction is that the unity of conscious experience is provided by the self-conscious mind and not the neuronal mechanism of the neocortex. Hitherto it has been impossible to develop any theory of brain function that would explain how the immense diversity of brain events comes to be synthesized so that there is a unity of conscious experience.<sup>31</sup>

Neuropsychologist E. R. John expands on this theory by suggesting that “. . . Consciousness about an experience is defined as information about the information in the system, that is, consciousness itself is a representational system. . . .”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> I am grateful to Roger Sperry for this quote which he has taken from K. R. Popper and J. C. Eccles *The Self and its Brain* (New York: Springer, 1977) quoted in John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness* (Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), Chap.4. *The Neuropsychology of Consciousness*, section, Mind-Brain Interaction, by Roger Sperry, 146.

<sup>31</sup> John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness*. (Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) Chap.4. *The Neuropsychology of Consciousness*, section, Self Consciousness and the Human Person, John Eccles, 141.

<sup>32</sup> I am grateful to D. R. Griffin for this quote: John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness*. (Great Britain: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) Chap.3. *An Evolutionary Perspective*, section, The Question of Animal Awareness, by D. R. Griffin, 92.

Following on from this, the human ability to reflect on awareness of the conscious experience and to be able to fix it and to process it is already quite extraordinary, but humans also have the ability to process this in such a way that objects, experiences and ideas can be discussed and understood in other human minds through the construction of representation and representational dialogue.

Through evolution the brain developed further the elaboration and intricacy of mental arrangement which opened new pathways leading in turn to increased complexity and further levels of cognitive processing impacting upon the consciousness levels in the mind. Awareness and complexities of ‘awareness of self’ developed alongside the growing complexities of the brain thereby allowing the emergence of human perception. This created a whole new vision of the world, one constructed by the human mind, where cognisance and rational thought escalated the evolution of comprehension and the ensuing social / cultural construction. A new form in the evolutionary pattern arose, the exchange of common experience which could be organised and customised as social patterns resulted in the human capacity for interference in, manipulation of and attempts to control natural and sexual selection. The new operative biological infrastructure of the brain consolidated natural selection and sexual selection with all aspects of the mental and ethereal, resulting in a reaction of forces of incalculable dimensions. Human life had invented for itself a different level of evolution. One could say that the conscious human mind with its capacity for psychological processing is the most significant of evolutionary byproducts ever presented in / by nature.

The development of this awareness opened the floodgates for adaptive opportunity where superiority of ability took hold and escalated. The capacity for reflective response to the bio-physical and metaphysical developed specific mental capacities for the construction and deciphering of signals, signs, codes and symbols, and the control / manipulation of behavioural interactions. As human family groups formed social groups, conscious awareness and ability to communicate, predict behaviour and act and interact accordingly, determined one’s place in the hierarchy. Lacking this specific ability would severely handicap and disadvantage individuals thereby inhibiting or alienating them from participating and having a serious influence upon the developing culture.

Culture is also about a structuring of knowledge in which human activities and behaviour are regulated through the mode of both psychological and material exchange and it is therefore a prerequisite of collective consciousness. Out of this collective consciousness came the idea that objects could hold and signify ‘power values’ communicated abstractly by associated proximity to individuals and connect one person to another by communication of an emotional experience making it visible, tangible, exchangeable, recordable. What follows therefore builds on the first discussion relative to the introduction of material forms, natural or made for practical, social or psychological purposes which were either carried on or in some way attached to the body.

## **4.5 Summary**

Chapter Three identified determining bio-genetic factors which seem to hold the key to our sense of aesthetics and understanding of the rudimentary motives impacting on and forging the evolving copulatory gaze and resultant response behaviours. Chapter Four has extended the discussion and put forward a new research model based on the argument that human



developments in levels of consciousness are overlayed to develop in complexity throughout their evolutionary history.

In this context the chapter sets out to establish the next level of consciousness by exploring and contextualising cognitive content and mechanisms in relation to the mental and physical co-dependent shifts of progression and linking processes from one level of consciousness to another.

It has been argued that a major causal factor in the expansion of early humans' intelligence was the overriding impact of humans' shift in mating strategies from individual opportunism to evolving serial monogamy.

This transition in sexual behaviour not only required revision in application of previous behavioural intelligence but required specific acquisition of knowledge / cognitive shifts to take place in order to accommodate the resultant emergence of adaptive adjustments to specific communicative signals and / or symbolic ordering within humans' new found situation and emerging social context.

In reviewing research carried out to date, an attempt is made to identify formations of modes of emergent intelligences which put in place the physical / mental operant mechanisms to enable transitions from individual interaction to social interaction / intercommunication to cultural change.

This review has led to the conclusion that current research has serious shortcomings in that established hypotheses seem to promote: firstly, the idea that the human brain / mind evolved separate compartments to deal with specific problem solving challenges and only at a very late stage of evolution began fully to integrate; secondly, that it has seriously underestimated the significant contribution of the impact of the overarching sexual imperative as precipitator to and perpetrator of all evolved levels of physical and mental consciousness and resultant cognitive skills and mechanisms (leading to communication through symbolic representation and common expression through material culture).

Based on the sexual imperative theory and supported by other relevant areas of research, the established revised framework enables this research to continue to reaffirm its position and provide further ground upon which the analysis can proceed to reinvestigate the eventual emergence of awareness, acquired social awareness and ensuing command of multi-variant and highly complex communication skills.

It is argued that the emergence of consciousness should be understood as the product of an assimilatory organ of interactive, interrelated and interconnective intelligences, emerging from one level and extending to another level of the sexual imperative. Hence the profound ability to connect the unconscious to the conscious and to merge / connect our biological being to the metaphysical form of being.

At Level Two, the awakening of some change in intellectual processing occurred whereby the pathway to conscious intelligence emerged. Self awareness of the sexual self determined the interaction between the self and others allowing a space for communal dialogue to take place, opening up new opportunities and setting the scene for the emergence of actual consciousness. Simultaneously the Level Two phenomena identified and their configurable causal effects



initiated an enforced re-evaluation of humans' aesthetic criteria, codes and rules. The copulatory gaze shifted to a new form of operational criteria, one which could now assign higher levels of meaning to visual images through the thought process. This broadened the genetic scope and fuelled further development of the copulatory gaze and the ensuing response behaviours. Thus in Level Two co-evolving phenomena provided a new vision of the world, opening up new pathways which fundamentally influenced evolutionary patterns and embracing the extension from natural to metaphysical.

This relocates the research within a theoretical frame which reinforces and advances Chapter Three's findings in identifying selective pressures which may have been the source for and instigator of the use of appropriate tools as operants for 'socio-sexual selection' signals. This enables further progression of investigation of humans' resultant creation, use and production of objects as symbolisation, the creation of mentifacts as intelligent dialogue and in the exploration of the abstract, metaphysical and psychological. These aspects of human behaviour are discussed in the following chapter.

# LEVEL 2- AUSTRALOPITHECUS AFARENSIS 4-2.5 MILLION YEARS AGO - CHAPTER 4

| Biological Imperatives |  | Sociological Imperatives    |                                | Psychosexual Imperatives |   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative                     | Sexual Selection Imperative | Aesthetic Imperative           | Control Imperative       | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |
| 1                      | Sexual strategies impact on changes in physique  |                             | Gender alignment               | Serial monogamy          | Socio-sexual self   |
| 2                      | ← Revision of aesthetic criteria →               |                             | Role differentiation           | Revised display signals  |   |
| 3                      | Biological/physiological changes.                | Sexual intelligence         | Status role differentiation    | Long term bonds          | Gender alliance   |
| 4                      | Amplification/augmentation of natural body signs |                             | Common value systems and codes | Organised communication  | Codes of conduct  |
| 5                      | ← Revision of copulatory gaze requirements →     |                             | Incipient sex contract         | Self value               |   |
| 6                      | ← Display signals/advertising viability →        |                             | Critical perception            | Division of labour       | Gender identity   |
| 7                      | ← Competative presentation / sexual attraction → |                             | Critical evaluation            | Selection or rejection   | Relationship between self/others                          |

( PAGES 34 - 36 )  
HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES

Figure 4.3 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 2

## CHAPTER 5

### **I adorn therefore I am: The dawn of self awareness, abstract thought, analogies and symbolism**

Chapter Five. Level 3.

**Key concepts:**

**Abstract thinking. Concept formation. Symbolic perception and representation. Communal signalling systems. Objectification of thought. Mind to mind communication. Concepts rendered in material form. Cognitive devices. The mentifact. Complexity of semiotic dialogue. Inception of ritual and control mechanisms. Material culture.**

**Cognitive benchmarks:**

**Purposeful manufacture of tools / first indications of human culture and personal possessions.**

Level Two opened the way for Level Three where the connection of the natural to metaphysical could now take place. As elements of consciousness emerge a shift to a different level of evolution occurred i.e., a genetic agenda supported by emergent interconnective cognitive intelligences and paralleled in the early structuring of social life and social patterns.

In level Three the co-ordinated workings of a symbiotic bio-sexual / social intelligence evolves into a new level of configurable causal effects. The practice of self-enhancing behaviour extends not only to the external display of genetic / reproductive viability but reaches out beyond the physical to the transcendental. This significant factor is further augmented by the evolving human ability to connect the unconscious to the conscious, the psychological to the metaphysical, in other words, to connect the interior world to the exterior *via* cognitive formulations (such as abstract thought, attachment of mental content to the object as symbolisation and concept formation, analogies and symbolisation). This is rendered in material form such as body display artifacts which can encapsulate specific notions for objectification and hence prepares the ground for the emergence of material culture.

### **5.0 Introduction**

The previous chapter continued to build upon the new model framework which enabled us to identify and define emerging changes in humans' sexual strategies to serial monogamy and the resultant impact this had on the separate sexes' physical / mental requirements and behaviour patterns.

Discussed are humans' required adaptation / augmentation to their communicative signalling systems to accommodate the sexes now more synergistic situation, and the consequent necessity for the restructuring of intelligence configuration to cope with and operate one of the most

significant events in new levels of consciousness, that of awareness of our own and others' consciousness.

Based on the anthropic principle the research theorises and provides a rationale for how this unique step in human evolution could have taken place.

This chapter sets out to establish how levels of consciousness connect and interact one to another to form humans' unique ability to articulate / communicate through abstract thinking, concept formation, symbolic perception and representation.

## **5.1 A cognitive shift: Conscious thought processing**

Awareness of one's environment, self-awareness in relation to environment, awareness of one's inner world and the awareness of that awareness, of knowing that one knows, are all levels of consciousness which define the cognizant human as: 'being' and 'knowing'.

The independence from mere existence, from purely reflexive responses to a changing environment, to awareness of awareness and the transposition of reflexive response through intermediary stages of consciousness to representation of awareness, led humans to the exploration of the materiality of personal objectification / representation and the creation of the mentifact. As an essential constituent of higher consciousness, objective thought requires awareness of self, permitting objectification of the art of thought outside of the self. This is a significant factor in the argument of this thesis that in the differing evolutionary stages of human capacity and the associated sexual imperative, different response requirements brought about different cognitive problems and resolutions.

Farrell's statement that "... beauty and success may be defined differently but as in almost all countries, the sex object (female) and the success object (male) are each other's first choice."<sup>1</sup> is proposed in the context of contemporary gender discourses and therefore has a specific intent. However, it is also useful here as it raises questions and issues about evolutionary origin and underlying imperatives. Whilst this statement has appeal in its broadest sense, in the specific context of cognitive and social evolution it is a relatively modern interpretation of behaviour and its visual expressions and / or perception. Sexual differentiation relative to success in early social evolution was probably linked to more obvious signs of fertility / reproductive capacity in the female (observed by the male) since success for the male was offspring or reproduction of self. At what stage did the 'copulatory gaze' become aware of an abstract vision of beauty and able to respond reflectively to representation or body adornment signifying empathy and allure? Here perhaps the mechanism of memory and recollection, the idea of the mind-to-mind communication, may have been present well before verbal language and have a role to play in perpetuating the sexual imperative within a social context. However the making of things requires abstract thought and this is only possible if there are present several of the levels of consciousness discussed, not to mention those needed to appreciate them.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren Farrell, *The Myth of Male Power: Why men are the disposable sex*, 2d ed., (London: Forth Estate Limited, 1994), xi.

Lois Sherr Dubin claims that beads were

... among the earliest evidence of abstract thinking. They could not kill an animal or provide warmth, but they could render in material form concepts of prestige, prowess, protection, and beauty. Beads were a conscious effort to self-beautification, reflecting on modern man's ability to visualise himself and enhance his appearance through the creation of relatively uniform, valued, and displayable forms.<sup>2</sup>

As an expert on the history of beads she claims that the wearing of beads as symbols corresponds with the emergence of Neanderthals (between 70,000 and 40,000 years ago) and suggests that their burst of creative activity is positive proof of their mental capacity for ritualisation and personal expression.

Beads may indeed be among the first 'surviving' artefacts to be manufactured for the sole purpose of personal decoration, but the human capacity for abstract thought can be perceived at a much earlier period of the evolutionary calendar. Approximately 2 million years ago, there occurred a sudden advance in the design and manufacture of sophisticated tools and weaponry in parallel, according to the archaeological record, with an enlargement and reorganisation of the brain and physiognomy of humans. Historical interpretation has taken for granted that the original, real and most meaningful motivation for self-presentation originates with the concept of the male as the aggressive 'success object', as 'warrior hunter' as highlighted by Farrell. The main objection to this theory is that once again historical interpretation has taken for granted that the original, real and most meaningful motivation for self-presentation originates with the concept of the male as the aggressive 'successful alpha', the 'warrior hunter'.

The Victoria and Albert Museum's teacher's handbook on Jewellery and Adornment continues to promote this view when it states:

One theory [for the origin of beads] is that early people indicated hunting ability by the wearing of beads, demonstrating control over the spirit of the animal by wearing its bone, ivory, teeth and other parts. [It goes on to say] Beads made of found materials such as stone, seeds, berries, coal, shells, fossils and minerals are also common.<sup>3</sup>

But here we see a distinction being made between the display of residual food material and the deliberately selected / created objects to be strung around the person. Although it is suggested that materials other than animal residue may be worn, the handbook fails to explain why and offers no possibility for an alternative theory involving the female in the activity.

The proposal that spiritual awareness and abstract thought evolved solely out of male activities, and in particular man's aggressive appetite for killing, is misleading and overlooks the survival and sexual imperatives as already having developed the sexuo-social group behaviour patterns leading to abstract thought. The marginalisation of the other 50% of the human race by dismissing their contribution to cognitive development with its associated making of mentifacts overlooks their contribution to history and is both inexcusable and unrealistic.

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<sup>2</sup> Lois Sherr Dubin, The History of Beads: from 30,000 BC. to the Present (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1987), 26.

<sup>3</sup> A booklet by the V&A stating that it: "provides ways for teachers to use the Victoria and Albert Museum's collections to study jewellery and adornment. The activities are designed to encourage pupils to consider body adornment in broader terms than jewellery and fashion, and to think about related social and cultural issues." Colin Mulberg with contributions from Liz Cosslet and Julia Manheim. Jewellery and Adornment: Information and Ideas for Teachers (London: Victoria and Albert Education publication, 1996), 5.

The male's main motive for hunting was just as likely to have been his wish to gain a female's favours and approval and to push aside his rivals. It is unlikely that the male would have worn cumbersome beads whilst hunting. They would catch on bushes, rattle and make noise whilst stalking. He would have worn camouflage. Besides, hunting for meat is not necessarily essential for sustenance. This can be provided by efficient foraging and scavenging. It is more likely that hunting ensures the survival of the fittest and is a test of male bravery and intelligence. The male would have had to rely on the female's contribution when hunts were unsuccessful. It is more likely that he would display his trophies of his hunting success in order to persuade her of his superior abilities, to gain her sexual favours, and to ward off possible rivals in the process of selecting a mate.

Bonding is essential: in many living species the sharing of responsibilities takes place in order to ensure the survival of offspring. In humans the cognitive development associated with social evolution was externalised by the wearing of animal bones, teeth etc. and is more important as evidence of the human's early social interaction with other humans in structures supporting survival. Woman's contribution to the development of abstract thought in the context of hunting is especially speculative and can only be deduced by analogy with anthropological studies of similar groups in the present day. However studies of modern hunter gatherers suggest that in all probability the forerunner to the bead would have been the wearing of flowers and gathered fruits or nuts, (this would have run parallel to the development of basic tool making).

The earliest evidence of abstract thinking relative to bonding through external display of empathy or allure as evocation of recollected memory could have been related to the significance of carrying food on or about the body. In primates and early humans carrying anything other than offspring must have had considerable significance. For those members of a group who were neither mothers or subordinate males, other differentiating roles of status or function must have developed. Females in the group who were no longer fertile adopted a role of surrogate mother to share the nurturing of young. Females not yet mated may have played a more permanent role in food gathering than the nursing mother, particularly in the context of preparation, food storage, maintaining reserves and surplus or feeding others of the group whilst the males hunted. The ability to source the food essential for survival must have played a part in the selection of sexual partners. Good providers make good partners inasmuch as they ensure nourishment of the offspring guaranteeing survival and genetic perpetuation. The personal and individual display of food on or about the body acted as a sign with several associated cognitive significances for the unmated female not with child: availability, capability and, through memory, reliability, all of which must have been related to individual cognitive formulations of fertility recognition, invitation, erotic memory or sexual identity and status. This practice can still be observed in non technological societies such as the Brazilian forest or Papua New Guinea as these Finschafen girls in the illustration figure 5.1 below.

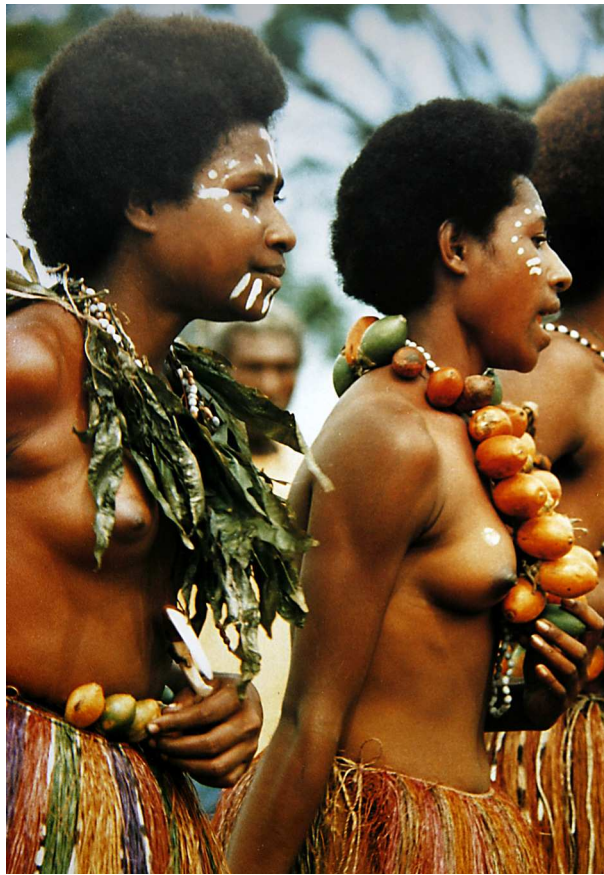
Dressed in a colourful grass skirt the girl on the right wears a string of large betel nuts. These neck decorations "are important in costal areas as gifts to welcome visitors to a feast or as indications of sexual interest."<sup>4</sup>

The application to the body of flowers, fruits and nuts was, it is suggested, a conscious effort towards self beautification / enhancement for the female, reflecting / amplifying her best attributes hardwired in the male mind and thus also an early inspiration for the phenomenon of

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Strathern, *Faces of Papua New Guinea* (Australia: Emperor Publishing, 1990), 26.





*Figure 5.1 Finschafen girls from Papua New Guinea*

abstract thinking. These enhancements to her body rendered in material form concepts of the erotic, the power of beauty and fertility, things the male could re-imagine in her absence just as the display of the kill was for the male a reciprocal gesture. Behaviour to ensure self-reflection on the best attributes of the female in the male's mind is still indicative of the modern woman's validating ability to visualise herself through his copulatory gaze, and enhance her appearance accordingly. (see modes of body enhancement Chapter 9.1)

As pointed out earlier, survival for the human species depended on sex: male and female evolved as two separate entities, the success object and the sex object. Nature's investment in woman and man's compulsive drive to be competitive provided a basis for the successful rearing of offspring. The associated need for pair bonding, perhaps a simple shift in evolution but profound in its implications for human development in that it required a cognitive step change (albeit still propelled by primal sexual imperatives), and prepared the ground for social evolution. This was often a brutal drama resulting in the kind of distressing conflicts of interest which Paglia discusses in her book: 'Sex and Violence or Nature and Art'<sup>5</sup>. This will be more fully explored in relation to the embedded sexual perceptions described in the contemporary jewellery case studies later in Chapter Ten. However the guiding principles and key points are worth considering separately.

Sexual gratification is arguably a more potent driver of cognitive development than the gratification of hunger or thirst, therefore sexuality would be a high priority. If, as suggested, meat and weapons are generally thought to be representative of man as protector and provider (success object), then fruit and flowers may be just as valid for the representation of woman

<sup>5</sup>

Camille Paglia, *Sex and Violence, or Nature and Art* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995).

as sexual and erotic object. The extended symbolic use of these visual signifiers in abstract thinking might have sown the seeds of ritual. Their use in display / greeting could be applied to a situation where the hunter needed reassurance of a successful kill and return leading to the necessity for some form of pre-hunt ritual to seek (as quoted above note 3) “control over the spirit of the animal”. This theory is usually put forward to explain the single evolutionary aspect which precipitated abstract thought. However, as proposed here, there is a symbiosis in sexual imperatives in transposition which balances the innovatory conscious mind. From this position it is possible to discuss not only differentiated sexual impact equalised in a balanced, ritualised exchange but also to examine specific sexual perspectives impacting upon behaviour in the formation of the humans’ more complex social relations.

To explore ideas of body representation as indicative of abstract and conscious thought it is helpful to clarify the context. Therefore it is necessary to describe how the origins of ornament might have developed from situational responses to a formal system of social communication constructed in the realm of the visual.

## **5.2 The origins of ornament**

It seems that the making of tools and weapons could have been followed by the fashioning of rudimentary accessories of a practical nature. Basic equipment needed to be attached to the body in order for its owner to go about the everyday business of living. The primeval hunter / gatherer would have attached tools and foods to the body by way of a grass or natural fibre fastened to the waist or neck in order to free the hands for picking food, carrying a baby, or so that in the case of combat or flight all would not be lost.

As rudimentary accessories became more sophisticated it was realised that things which embellished the body could announce and project human intentions, and could (by association) easily be recognised as conveying messages to others where the message in what was being worn took precedence over practical / physical purposes. Accessories developed into ornament as an object for representation and thus, at a later stage, into clothing as humans moved to colder climates: girdles developed into skirts, shoulder coverings into cloaks with various forms of fastening etc,. As the grammar of signs, codes and symbols took hold in the human mind, humans were empowered with a new tool, an additional faculty, they could equip themselves with a complexity of wordless dialogue.

It is here, where visual vocabulary began to take intellectual shape, that humans began to connect the image of the object with its role, and to bring both together in the mind in abstract form. Images could be illuminated by recalled experiences and their associated emotions, and these associations could be used for the communication of thoughts from one person to another, which led through repetition to communal acknowledgement of those experiences. It is possible to speculate that this form of dialogue took place long before humans could speak. The origin of verbal speech is estimated by linguistic specialists to have taken place approximately 50,000 years ago and therefore about 35,000 years before the development of writing, proof that humans

thought processes were more sophisticated than could be articulated verbally <sup>6</sup> and supporting the implication that other communication methods were long established, commensurate with a sophisticated level of cognitive capability.

As the precursor to speech, the self conscious act of attachment to the body as ornamentation / embellishment gave rise to an ever increasing complexity of visual dialogue which would further develop under the influence of belief in magic (the dawn of magic, fetish as transference related to the concept of the talisman brought about by sublimation is discussed later within the context of decorative artefacts), the inexplicable phenomena and the spiritual or supernatural, much of which relates to sexual psychology. These forms of representation embedded themselves at an early stage, including that form of self-consciousness which culminates in what has been misinterpreted as vanity, and which in its contemporary usage is pejorative. In the context of this thesis a human urge based on biological need, procreation and pair bonding, the survival of the fittest fuelled the will to power. This phenomenon created a space for itself within the future structure of cultural developments as a concrete form of the perception of self which, when communicated to others, enabled humans to read each other in the varying contexts of their lives.

### 5.3 The ‘art’ of seduction: Sexual psychology, self awareness and self consciousness

The origins of vanity are, like other aspects of self-adornment, linked to sexual imperatives in human evolution and, it is argued, detectable in the beginnings of abstract thought possibly as long as two million years ago. This was at the time when *Homo habilis* Lucy 2, lived, some one and a half million years after Lucy. <sup>7</sup> These early humans (thought to be ancestor to all ‘Homo’ species including modern humans) were already demonstrating an increase in brain capacity and that they had the intelligence and hand-mind-eye co-ordination required to create implements (Oldowan tools) from as early as two and a half million years ago. Although rudimentary in their workings Johanson confirms that these tools may be representative of the first glimmers of human culture and of personal possessions. <sup>8</sup> These tools demonstrate that cognitive processing was evolving. However, as argued later, living in larger groups may have been just as much of an intellectual challenge

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<sup>6</sup> The date of the origins of language is far from certain. There is much speculation, and although most estimate it to be around 50,000 years ago, some say earlier, perhaps as much as 100,000 years ago. Could Neanderthals speak? Neanderthals’ voice boxes were underdeveloped but they could probably have made basic vocal sounds, though possibly more deliberate and less refined than modern humans. For a concise account see: Helen E Fisher, *The Sex Contract: The Evolution of Human Behaviour* (London: Granada Publishing, 1982), 102-113. See also Rod Caird, *Ape Man: The Story of Human Evolution* (Great Britain: Boxtree Limited, 1994), 97 where it is proposed that ability to speak could date as far back as one and three quarter million years ago.

<sup>7</sup> The first Lucy was “the most famous specimen of *Australopithecus afarensis*.— believed to be the common ancestor of all later hominids, including modern humans”. Donald C. Johanson, “ The Dawn of Humans:Face-to-Face With Lucy’s Family,” *National Geographic* vol. 189, no 3 (March 1996): 96. Lucy’s name was inspired by the Beatles song ‘Lucy in the sky with diamonds’.

Lucy 2, a *Homo habilis* mature female, believed to be 1.8 million years old. Officially named OH 62, for Olduvai Hominid, “Lucy’s child”, by Johanson, was Johanson’s second significant find to make a major impact on the history of our origins. Found in the same area as the first Lucy, Lucy 2, as referred to in this thesis, had a body like Lucy but is presumed to have had a brain endowed with much more cognitive potential / cerebral capacity. Donald Johanson and James Shreeve, *Lucy’s Child: The Discovery of a Human Ancestor* (USA: William Morrow and Co. Inc. 1989; reprint, London: Penguin Group, 1991), (reference to reprint edition). See also: Donald C. Johanson and others, “New partial skeleton of *Homo Habilis* from Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania.” *Nature* vol. 327 (21<sup>st</sup> May 1987): 205-209.

<sup>8</sup> Donald Johanson and Blake Edgar, *From Lucy to Language* (London: George Weidenfield & Nicolson Ltd.,1996), 250.

and significant in generating evolutionary pressure for the expansion of the brain (see figure 5.2 Illustration of Oldowan tools of a spheroid, scraper, two choppers, digging stick and bone point)



*Fig 5.2 Oldowan tools*

Experts in diverse fields of enquiry are divided as to the date of the first occurrence of cognitive development relative to abstract thought but, although no direct dating is possible, there are indications from different sources which can be discussed in relation to the thesis propositions. When humans first emerged, the earth's flowers and plants had already evolved to a point of great sophistication in beauty, form and colour. Humans walked in a world surrounded by their vibrant splendour. Could Lucy 2, at the dawning of her consciousness two million years ago, foraging for food in the Olduvai Gorge, have stopped to pick a flower, contemplate its fragrance, beauty and symmetry whilst the fruit assuaged her hunger? If Lucy 2 did not then one of her cousins certainly did. Would she have recognised that here was another season, that summer would come, flowers would develop into fruits and their seeds would ripen and bring forth new life? Would she have recognised her own body's cycles in relation to nature's? <sup>9</sup> Would she have experienced a sense of empathy, as analogous with 'self', or as an extension of 'self'?

Observations of the behaviour of other primates show an external appearance of similarity with our own and in this respect we might suppose a similar causal motivation or intellectual process. *Homo habilis*'s (Lucy 2's) intellectual capacity could have resolved the problem of fruit gathering when faced with the same situation as that of the chimpanzee in figure 5.3. Here the chimpanzee is picking fruit off a tree. It can only hold one fruit in its hand and one in its mouth, the other hand has to be used to pick the fruit. It seems that the chimpanzee, limited by this, can only eat the fruit on the spot or carry a maximum of three fruits to a specific spot.

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<sup>9</sup> The Yanomama Indians, a present day stone age society, count their duration of pregnancy by moon cycles. Kenneth Good and David Chanoff, *Into the Heart: An Amazonian Love Story* (Great Britain: Hamish Hamilton, 1991; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1992), 184 (page references are to reprint edition).





*Figure 5.3 Chimpanzee picking fruit*

In pursuing this argument there is a presumption that contemporary consciousness, of which we know a considerable amount, is a consequence of millions of years of cumulative overlay of responses to change but that the basic building blocks remain the same in terms of the physical characteristics of the evolved brain. Therefore a specific aspect of the brain should have been capable of eliciting specific responses which subsequently became an added level of conscious response leading to the conscious application of responses to equivalent subsequent experiences.

## 5.4 The first beads

Putting Lucy 2 in a hypothetically similar situation, could she have used a thorn a fish bone (or even a bone point as illustrated in figure 5.2 ) to pierce a hole in a fruit and passed a fibre, elephant hair, or sinew through the fruit and carried it for a while away from the feeding site? Subsequent repetition of this act may have led to multiple fruits on a single string being placed around the neck. Wearing or carrying things around the neck is a more efficient way to carry larger quantities whilst freeing the hands for other tasks such as carrying infants, foraging, grooming or other forms of social interaction,<sup>10</sup> at the same time ensuring possession of bounty during a chase.

Perhaps not all the fruit was eaten, leaving the soft part to fall away, the seed to harden on the string. One can only speculate, for any evidence has long since disappeared, lost, like Lucy 2's thoughts and feelings. Such responses have their origins in the mists of time and our only key to interpreting them is observation of either our close primate relatives such as the chimpanzee or representatives of pre-industrial societies such as rain forest dwellers whose way of life since the beginning of their evolution is based on responses to nature and devoid of contemporary contact. We can only infer that *H. habilis* was capable of creative problem solving by the perceived developments of their brain and the concrete evidence that they could make tools to make tools to solve problems.

<sup>10</sup> Some theorists like Ehrenberg propose the upright walk evolved to enable 'hairless hominids' to carry infants. Margaret Ehrenberg, *Women in Prehistory* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1989), 42.

## Flowers and fruit: possibly the first decorative objects.

Flowers are the most awe inspiring natural ornaments. Their beauty, their symmetry, variety of hues, densities of colour and delicate tones provide contemporary cultures with a spiritually uplifting experience which in our evolutionary past must have seemed magical.<sup>11</sup> A flower's heady fragrance transforms it into an object which, for some, evokes an emotional response or mystical aura. In most contemporary cultures threading flowers to form a chain has a long and well documented history, particularly where they are to be found in profusion. That Lucy 2 is thought to have had the intellectual and physical capacity to perform this task suggests that she might have threaded and worn them consciously attached to the body. The repetition or ritualisation of such activity, leading to the creation of an object relates perhaps to the reinforcement of memory as an essential element in consciousness.

Recollection, a function which brings back from memory to the here and now that which was previously experienced, is not just the preserve of the visual / tactile evocation. Memory can be stimulated to re-present our past experiences by virtue of smell.

“Can smells influence us biologically? Absolutely. [says Diane Ackerman] As to why floral smells should excite us, well, flowers have a robust and energetic sex life: A flower's fragrance declares to all the world that it is fertile, available, and desirable, its sex organs oozing with nectar. Its smell reminds us of vestigial ways of fertility, vigour, life-force, all the optimism, expectancy, and passionate bloom of youth. We inhale its ardent aroma and, no matter what our ages, we feel young and nubile in a world aflame with desire.”<sup>12</sup>

Max Lake describes this as: “the reproductive odour signals,”<sup>13</sup> the texture, colour, flavour and smell are sexy, intimate and irresistible.

The analogies of woman with flowers and fruits as images of fertility are innumerable throughout history: in literature, poetry and song breasts are synonymous with ripe round fruit, there is talk about ‘forbidden fruit’ and young virgins being de-flowered. All of these are delineations of the initial event as proposed, manifest in differing time zones relative to differing levels of evolved sophistication. Again we can imagine Lucy 2 at the most receptive point of her menstrual cycle in a location enhanced by flowers of a specific scent and level of intoxication. Should her male partner or one she hopes to mate with appear and copulation ensue then they are both in a situation where the memory package of experience is imprinted, recollected in relation to an associative context. The way is clear for it to happen again in which case it is repeated and becomes ritual reinforcing memory. Would Lucy 2, adorned in flowers, have intoxicated and inspired the male with her beauty, mesmerised him, evoked erotic notions as she appeared swathed in textures and smells? What a heady cocktail! Was this the beginning of self

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<sup>11</sup> Since according to colour psychology the majority of flowers are a cheerful and positive colour one's senses associate them with feelings of joy, passion, celebration and triumph and alongside this a whole order of other associations and allegoric comparisons.

Note. Today modern technology can reproduce any desired colour, this is taken for granted and few realise or appreciate that this is a very recent phenomenon. Humankind has only recently been able to reproduce nature's colours. Barely two hundred years ago choice was still limited to only a few natural organic dyes and pigments. The reproduction of colours up to that time did not go beyond various densities of black, yellow, brown, red, white, green, with blue and purple being the last.

<sup>12</sup> Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses* (London: Chapman's Publishers Ltd., 1990), 12-13.

<sup>13</sup> Max Lake, *Scents and Sensuality: The Essence of Excitement* (Great Britain: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1989; reprint, London: Futura Publications, 1991), 55 (Page references are to reprint edition).



awareness in Lucy 2 and her daughters? <sup>14</sup>

Though Lucy 2's features may not have resembled those of the young beauty in Figure 5.4. her mode of adornment could have been very similar and represents a former, perhaps more natural iconic ideal of beauty for erotic evocation. Would Lucy's transformation have drawn a whistle from the lips of her admirers, if a form of speech to express such subtleties had evolved? If Lucy blushed in response did this mean she was capable of feeling self-conscious? <sup>15</sup> Had woman found her sexual identity in her control of or influence over the male copulatory gaze? Had she found a 'self' capable of objectification?



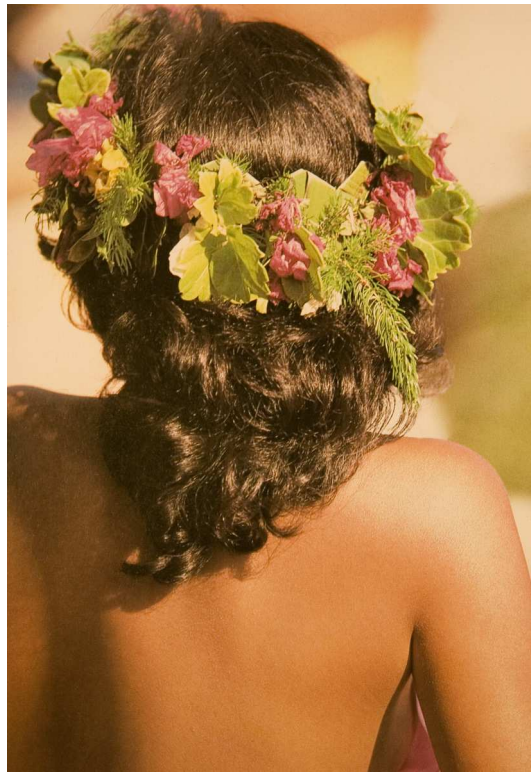
*Figure 5.4 Polynesian girl adorned with flowers*

Further developments of the garland after Lucy 2 may have evolved from additional practicalities. Further applications, for example (when placed on the head) may have been to keep hair out of the eyes or shade the head or eyes from the sun. Flowers drew attention to a head of glossy hair (long shiny hair is an indication of good health). It also enlarged the head, therefore giving the female childlike proportions, a psychological advantage in that it draws out the protective instinct in her mate. Therefore flowers in this form, such as the garland on a bride, are imbued with a wealth of symbolism: virginity, fecundity, fidelity and joy, the celebration of

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<sup>14</sup> "There is an interesting factor called 'odour homogamy', when men and women are drawn to each other because of their odour configuration, which is a comfortable sum of a person's skin, hair, food and workplace odours. Julia Grice, What Makes a Woman Sexy (London: Judy Piatkus (Publishers) Ltd., 1988), 41.

<sup>15</sup> (1) "The Life of the mind begins with perception" says Caleb Gattegno and (2) Self awareness is what Gattegno describes as 'the awareness of awareness'. Caleb Gattegno, The Science of Education. Part 1: Theoretical Considerations (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1987), 38-82. "There exists a self capable of objectivation" Ibid. 86. (3) Self-consciousness, self awareness and the realisation that others are applying their critical appraisal to one's assessment of self. Arthur S. Reber, The Dictionary of Psychology (London: Penguin Group, 1985), s.v. "Self-consciousness."



*Figure 5.5 Girl adorned with garland*

spring and the magic of new life<sup>16</sup> (as in Figure 5.5).

Consciousness of self may have developed from Lucy 2 and her simple flower but from her legacy has grown a whole panoply of cognitive devices and discourses transposing actuality, recording and recollection into symbolism, phenomenology of associations and allegory and leading to entrenchment in fundamental cultural rituals which we take for granted such as pair bonding and what is today termed marriage. It would seem that Lucy's invention of 'transformation' would have influenced the earliest of rituals and thus a range of associated socio-cultural practices. Pair bonding and the expression of unity and fidelity are probably the oldest and most universal of still-existing rituals, rites of passage to adulthood and the establishment of a family unit which are consequences of optimised sensory configurations in the formation of memory and consciousness. Vestiges of symbolic meaning in the bride's adornment and accompanying rituals can still be identified. In a world where the written word did not yet exist, visual imagery and objects would have been depended on to represent the sanctity of the nuptial rite (see illustration of Gypsy Wedding in Chapter 6 figure 6.3).

From a simple head ornament the garland evolved to work as a socio-political tool taking on other significances relative to the development of social structures; the bridal garland developed into the wreath for men as a sign of victory. In Buddhist consciousness the garland was later to be considered a representation of higher emotions and virtues, token of joy and gladness. Flowers, whilst retaining their original significances, were later to be copied into metal<sup>17</sup> to give more permanence: to form diadems and from the diadem evolved the tiara, from the tiara evolved the crown. Similarly perfumes originated

<sup>16</sup> Orange blossom is most prevalent in east European countries. Its flowering time between April and June links it to other fertility rites. For further information on bridal flowers and meanings see: Drusilla Beyfus, *The Bride's Book* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981), 150, 151.

<sup>17</sup> "... the generic Egyptain word for 'jewellery' appears to refer to imitation plants and flowers." Cyril Aldred, *Jewels of the Pharaohs: Egyptian Jewellery of the Dynastic Period* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1971), 17.

as an attempt to replicate the evocative fragrance of flowers and musk. As humans' social structures became more complex modes of adornment likewise reflected changes and came to be controlled by legislation in relation to gender, role etc. which gave the practice of re-presentation further significance.

The value inherent in a piece of crafted metal and in other precious materials such as shells, stones, ivory etc., was sufficiently significant in both its rarity, durability and beauty / symbolic meaning to reflect an actual legal framework designating the order or hierarchy of society. Before discussing social structure and the role of transformation it is necessary to clarify how symbolism and body decoration formed as a concept in early consciousness as described in the following.

## **5.5 The cognitive processing of abstract and conceptual thinking**

Somewhere in the humans' distant past an awareness of the understanding of their senses, feelings, and emotions occurred. Now understood as perception this ability linked to memory allows for the possibility of transposition, that is to say recall applied to a new or different situation. In certain situations this gives rise to new thought, in others to new responses or actions. In a situation where nature is the dominant environmental force its individual elements are encountered again and again in the cycle. Re-encounter with the flower is perceived as a portent of fruitfulness to follow. The flower as cyclical sign or symbol must in its regular and repetitive encounters have precipitated or triggered perceptions or recollections in the mind additional to the singular notion of fruit by accidental associations residing in the memory. As humans internalised their experiences, a realisation must have come that they could isolate particular sensations and discriminate and experience separately. The flower must surely have played a significant role in this.

Whilst existing in a world kaleidoscopic with sensations, humans must have stumbled on the skill of being able to focus on a particular area of sensation as a key to a cognitive tool of sequencing, rather like listening to distinguish a particular instrument in the orchestra. Humans must have become aware of their reaction to particular recurrent experiences, one being that certain visual perceptions could give rise to emotional sensations that could somehow be internalised to nurture the body and soul. If recalled at a later date, this sensation could be re-experienced. Throughout the course of human evolution the memory of accumulated experience had to be reapplied to new and unfamiliar situations. Survival required the adaptation of old information in a new situation and the consequent relatively rapid cognitive development along the lines discussed precipitated a further cognitive shift reliant upon recognition of similarity. Therefore, that which is similar substitutes for the original in order to trigger the response, thereby assimilating the new experience into the accumulation of experiences.

In order to understand how an early human such as Lucy 2 could have formed concepts and processed thoughts to this cognitive level one would have to refer to the environment which she inhabited and imagine a plausible situation which she might have encountered, using the illustration of the flower (figure 5.6). At face value the flower remains a simple thing, which may in Lucy 2's mind be associated with a particular type of fruit. It may be the taste she likes or anticipation of a taste or perhaps something else. Her anticipation *via* recollection of similar events has afforded an opportunity to transpose the flower: to a fruit; to a taste; to a feeling; to a cognitive sequence, consigned to memory and actuality and with several meanings. In other words, the starting point of the process is an object and the ending is an idea or concept.



Figure 5.6 Flower Power lips

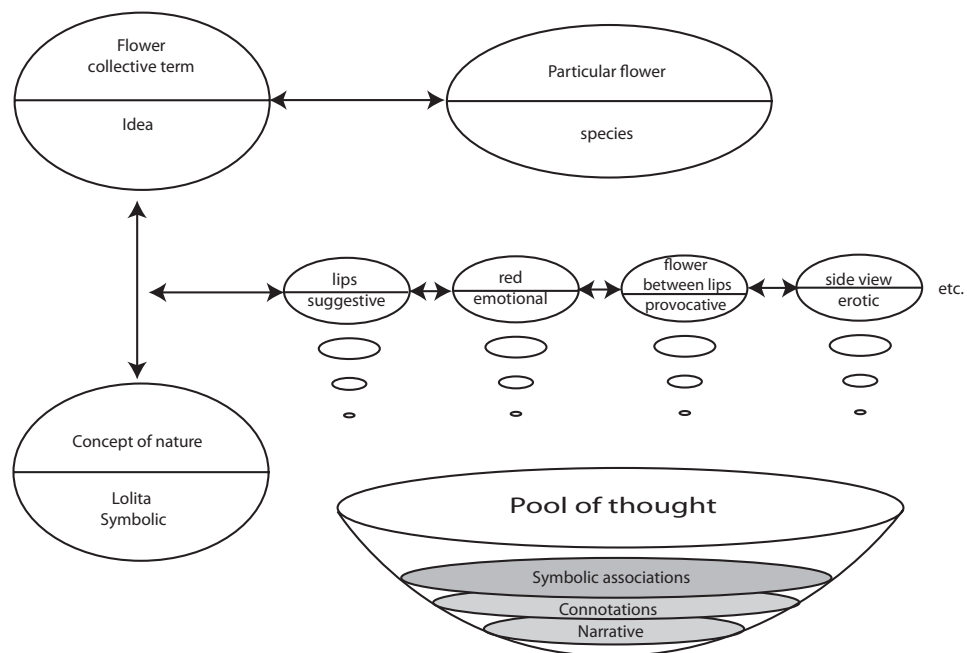


Figure 5.7 Concept formation

The journey from actuality to consignment is a cognitive process developing intellect. Illustration figure 5.6 and supporting diagram figure 5.7 below are used to demonstrate the process. The following suggests how a sequence of mental stages and mechanisms take place which show how objects suggest ideas and how these ideas are strung together to form a concept, how concepts are strung together to form a conceptual narrative which forms a new symbol removed to a new and abstract level.

## 5.6 What is a concept?

This requires the reader to journey through the following reconstruction of our hypothetical version of Lucy 2, focussing in on a flower and the ensuing cognitive processes which may have taken place in her mind and cause her to name it Lolita (here it may also help to refer to the accompanying diagram figure 5.7).

The illustration is of an object known under the collective term of flower. Lucy has chosen to pick this flower because its particular vibrancy attracted her attention. At face value the

flower remains a simple idea, a 'flower'. But suppose Lucy gives it a name and calls the flower 'Lolita'. From this simple idea 'Lolita' calls into existence a whole range of ideas and emotions. Something more than just a mere memory of an image is evoked. A host of associations start to combine. The image now takes the form of a pair of luscious lips. Red lips are a sign of a healthy female, emotions respond to red, red stimulates excitement. The symbol is suggestive in that it has a flower between the lips indicating the 'come on look', it is provocative. Turn the illustration on its side and one is confronted by a further set of interrelated ideas, the innocent flower becomes erotic, bordering on the pornographic.<sup>18</sup>

An image is what is retained in the mind's eye after it has been perceived. It is a visual memory, an idea of the object just looked at. When the 'idea' or memory is 'named' or given a 'sign' it is a concept. When

... a symbol is substituted for the mental image, so that the symbol may be used instead of the image, whether or not the image is present to the mind – or, indeed, whether or not any equivalent image admits of being formed at all. Consequently, the mind is now enabled to deal with symbols of ideas without requiring to call up the ideas themselves as memories of perceptions. Consequently, also, the mind is thus enabled to quit the sphere of sense and rise to that of what is called abstraction; furnished with the wings of language, human thought can soar far beyond the possibilities of any ideas which could be suggested by merely sensuous experience.

It will be further observed that the psychological condition to thus naming ideas, so as intentionally to treat the names as symbols of the ideas – the psychological condition required for this is the presence of what is called Self-consciousness.<sup>19</sup>

It is this ability to engage in dialogue with oneself, (as described in Chapter 1.2.1), which raises abstract thought to a different level of complexity and shifts thinking into the paradigm of conceptualisation.

There is evidence that this could have taken place two million years ago. Fossils of skulls show that the cortex had started to develop. This means that humans may well have been capable of abstract thought and emotions (normally linked to rudimentary speech by researchers). Another theory is that this happened with the development of tool making. It is just as plausible to argue that thought processing and self-decoration with signs, codes and images as a communication system stimulated an increase of use of specific areas in the brain, before complex speech evolved.

As self consciousness began to expand so too did the communicative powers of symbolism. These eventually grew to control a vast sphere, an invisible academy of language, of the mental vision of collective clues which combine into emotive meanings and are beyond the grasp of verbal articulation. The mechanism can be described as follows: the assimilation of information of physical elements triggers a form of intelligence calculations *via* the symbiotic workings of senses, brain and mind, creating the causal effect where separate elements and their mental connotations connect, are linked, consolidate and morph into symbols.

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If the bits of matter that constitute a symbol are arranged to bump into the bits of matter

<sup>18</sup> It is not surprising that Amazon Indians make an aphrodisiac from this flower's roots. Species of *Psychotria* (*Cephaelis*) "The generous lips of the flower are the clue to the use of its roots as an aphrodisiac, a superb example of the doctrine of signatures." See: Ghilleen T. Prance, *Out of the Amazon* (London: HMSO Publications, 1992), 84, 88.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Lock and Eunice Fisher, eds., *Language Development* (Great Britain: Croom Helm Ltd. in association with The Open University, 1984), 26-27.



constituting another symbol in just the right way, the symbols corresponding to one belief can give rise to new symbols corresponding to another belief logically related to it, which can give rise to symbols corresponding to other beliefs and so on.<sup>20</sup>

Our metaphysical world is transformed into meaning , ‘menti-factured’ to provide the physical and psychic substance of our lives. The flower transforms into a mentifact as well as an aesthetic experience. The appreciation of the aesthetic could be considered as the embarkation point for a true and meaningful human consciousness, deeply seated in every being and in every culture. It is interwoven through all our activities. Humans’ sense of aesthetics could be considered as the measure of their sophistication.

## 5.7 Summary

This chapter set out to establish how the gradual formation of self-awareness took place by examining the process of ‘theory of mind’ and humans’ mental ability to relate, encode and link perception to object identity with corresponding emotional cues.

It sought to establish, by way of revisiting the copulatory gaze, how humans’ levels of consciousness could have evolved the intelligence operations to rationalise and act upon this phenomenon in such a way as to create a form of communication that could rely on objects’, conceptualised cognitive content, to express and represent the internal /external world of self to others and *vice versa*.

By applying the logic of evolutionary theory the research could clearly evidence and determine that humans had the brain and mental capacity to experience, recognise and simulate ‘experience projection’ through visual symbolisation, leading to awareness of selfhood, personal objectification and exploration of materiality as a mode of re-presentation of self in a new context.

Attracting mates through the creation of mentifactured enhancement through exaggeration and artifice (of the phenotype as now extended) honed and championed intelligence mechanisms in several directions and determined this phenomenon as a key component in the organisation and structuring of social life. The genetic development of the extended bio-psychosexual imperatives now ensured survival not only of the fittest and the aesthetically astute but also the ‘smartest’.

### Level 3 leads into Level 4.

Through a growing complexity of thought processing and the raised level of accumulated, sophisticated symbolic perceptions, a platform was established where the expression of psychosexual responses could be sublimated and presented within the copulatory gaze. With the ability to visualise oneself and others through the copulatory gaze, self-emulation by manipulative, artificial means, inception of ritual and control mechanisms, in relation to specific body representation / display rules resulted in an ever-increasing capacity for creative expression. Empowered by this new tool, humans could now enter into a more complex semiotic dialogue. These phenomena created a space for themselves within the future structure of human socio-cultural developments and the formation of material culture. This is discussed in the following chapter.

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<sup>20</sup> Steven Pinker, How the Mind Works (USA: W. W. Norton, 1997; reprint, London: Penguin Group, 1999), 25 (page reference are to reprint edition).



LEVEL 3- HOMO HABILIS 2.3 - 1.6 MILLION YEARS AGO - CHAPTER 5

| Biological Imperatives |  | Sociological Imperatives    |                              | Psychosexual Imperatives                        |   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative                                   | Sexual Selection Imperative | Aesthetic Imperative         | Control Imperative                              | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |
| 1                      | Body enhancement: beyond the natural body                      |                             |                              | Mind to mind communication<br>sexual psychology |   |
| 2                      | Self emulation by artificial means                             |                             | Cognitive<br>significances   | Inception of<br>ritual                          | Common empathy  |
| 3                      | Attachment of mental content to object as symbol               |                             | Reinforced<br>attractiveness | Artefact as<br>socio-political tool             | Psycho-sexual<br>sublimates                               |
| 4                      | Objects as communication systems                               |                             | Concept formation            | Cognitive devices                               | Abstract<br>representations                               |
| 5                      | The extended copulatory gaze                                   |                             | Sociological<br>requirements | Communal signaling/communication                |   |
| 6                      | Objects of representation<br>Concepts rendered in natural form |                             | Sociological<br>context      | Early material<br>culture                       | Gendered<br>objectification                               |
| 7                      | The socially acceptable body                                   |                             | Cognitive<br>formulation     | Social relations                                | Psychosexual<br>anxieties                                 |

HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES ( PAGES 34 - 36 )

Figure 5.8 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 3

## CHAPTER 6

### The anatomy of ornament, display and sexual identity: The genesis of culture.

#### Chapter 6 Level 4

##### Key concepts:

**Subjective self to objective self. Symbolic exchange. Socio-sex contract. Relationship between self and object. Schematic order to activities. Cognitive breakthroughs. Signified a contractual relationship. Symbolic tokens as tangible evidence. Tokens of commitment. Instrumental values. Sociological self.**

##### Cognitive benchmarks:

**Acheulean tools: used as a tool or measuring instrument to ascertain proof of the cognitive capacity in the skill of contractual relationships, collective co-operation and the art of strategic political manoeuvres.**

As Level Four develops, the previous accumulative overlay of co-evolving stages in progression facilitates the way to the formulation of new levels of consciousness and resultant behavioural patterns.

The acquisition of symbolic socio-sexual interaction impels the unfolding awareness of connections between subjective self and objective self and the way in which the symbolic relationship between self and object (the objectification of self through ornamentation) can operate. Connecting the sexual psyche of the private self to the public self, facilitates a further exploration of notions of and uses for objectification. Collective experiences generate such processes as the assignation of object value ie., objects acting as concrete symbols for mutual exchange of abstract reality values, as tangible tokens for exchange. This significant innovation is further utilised /exploited as a tool in the projection of schematic order into the structure and maintenance of social life.

## 6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has explored how the origins of self awareness, processes of conceptual thinking, the perception of symbols and of simple analogies could have taken shape in the human mind. It describes how humans could have realised that through the adornment of the body they could take a step beyond their natural state of existence and give tangible shape to the concept of idealised self through body re-presentation. As Ernst Fuchs put in his preface to Karl Gröning's book, *Decorated Skin*.

Countless thousands of years ago human beings stepped outside their ready made nature to refashion themselves as works of art in their own world. They became non-natural beings in order to give physical form to a supra-nature that could give expression to their concept of themselves . . .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Gröning, *Decorated Skin: A World Survey of Body Art*, with a Preface by Ernst Fuchs, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1997), 9.

As hypothesised in the previous chapter it is possible that this shift from the subjective self to the objective self could have occurred approximately two million years ago.<sup>2</sup> This section seeks to extend these previous enquiries to examine the concept of objectification in order to demonstrate (1) how the realisation and acknowledgement of particular ‘abstract forms’ of understanding are given tangibility through the object of ornamentation, (object here meaning device), and the idea of re-presentation and (2) how the discovery of this phenomenon made it possible for humans to take their first steps towards the fashioning of social and cultural order.

Most significantly this line of reasoning provides a counter-argument to Levi-Strauss’s incest taboo theory, ‘the exchange of women’. It does not dispute that symbolic exchange and its connected thought processes have their origins in sexual needs, but it challenges the theory that the exchange of women should be the basis of human exchange and hence the basis of symbolic thought and the beginning of culture. This thesis suggests that it was the socially evolving ‘sex contract’ and the need for body re-presentation that created culture, that culture evolved in the need for a one-to-one interaction between the two sexes, as two separate cultures interacting with each other, with each making a planned exchange of equal value, both interested in mutual exchange, mutual interests, mutual trust. Levi-Strauss addressed social and collective exchange, something which happened, according to the evidence presented in this thesis, after the seeds of culture had already been sown.<sup>3</sup>

The exploration of objectification here will be confined within the context of the awareness of self-awareness, self value (in itself a form of objectification), and the realisation and registering of sexual value. This is followed by a description of one way in which these qualities are projected to others through the mode of body ornamentation. Objectification will also be used to illustrate how this phenomenon expands to encompass and influence other aspects of human existence. Note: this aspect is picked up and followed in the next chapter by an exploration of the way in which humans discover and perceive ‘sex’ identity through the identity of ‘self’ and ‘otherness’, and discusses the formation of ‘sexual’ identity through the mode of body difference. The question of how the defining of that difference is made manifest for each sex, is taken up in the examination of the development of gender identity, its idealisation, and the means by which the resultant hierarchies of status are signalled.

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<sup>2</sup> For a notably explicit and simple to understand illustrated chart of the hominid family tree see: Rick Gore “The Dawn of Humans: The First Steps,” National Geographic vol.191, no.2 (Feb 1997): page spread, 85, 86,87. See also “Stepping-stones to change”, Ibid. 91.

Also, for an excellent diagram on the evolution of “The Enlarging Brain” see, Steve Parker, The Dawn of Man (New York: Crescent Books 1992), 112, 113

<sup>3</sup> “. . . individuals communicate with one another by ‘exchange’; they exchange words they exchange gifts. These words and gifts communicate information because they are signs, not because they are things in themselves. When an employer pays out wages to an employee, the action *signifies* the relative status of the parties to the transactions. But, according to Levi-Strauss (. . . if I understand him correctly), the ultimate basic symbolic exchange which provides the model for all the others is sexual. The incest taboo (which Levi-Strauss erroneously claims to be ‘universal’) implies a capacity to distinguish between women who are permitted and women who are forbidden and thus generates a distinction between women of the category *wife* and women of the category *sister*. The *basis* of human exchange, and hence the basis of symbolic thought and the beginning of culture, lies in the uniquely human phenomenon that a man is able to establish relationship with another man by means of an exchange of women.” Edmund Leach, Lévi-Strauss, ed., Frank Kermode (London: Fontana 1970; reprint, London: Fontana 1982), 44 (page references are to reprint edition).

## 6.1 Objectification

Objectivity, according to Simmel's explanation, as translated by Guy Oakes, is, "... the independence of things from the conditions of their subjective or psychological genesis ..."<sup>4</sup>

The meaning of an 'object' as defined by the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, is

Most broadly anything. Within the study of perception and cognition, an aspect of environment of which one is aware ... In psychoanalytic theory, [an object can be], a person, a part of a person, or a symbol representative of either, towards which behaviours, thoughts and desires are orientated. In the classical model, an object is required for one to obtain satisfaction of instincts. [It goes on to explain] ... that these meanings run quite a gamut from the physical to the perceptual, the conceptual and the symbolic as well as from the inanimate to the personal.<sup>5</sup>

It is here that the human intellect has created a unique and intricate relationship between the self and the object as defined above.<sup>6</sup>

The ornament, hitherto overlooked, has formidable significance here in that it is probably the only artefact which is capable of linking all of the above-mentioned components. Not only that, it is capable of bringing a schematic order to activities which would otherwise manifest as a chaotic jumble of human social interactions. Body ornamentation operates as the intermediary between soma,<sup>7</sup> private self, public self and social order as stated by Fuchs, "to give form to a supra-nature."<sup>8</sup> As pointed out by Gattegno, in the earlier discussions in the thesis (about consciousness and Lucy 2's activities, (Chapter 5 footnote 15) it is evident that, "... there exists a self capable of objectification, ..."<sup>9</sup> Humans are the only known creatures who can consciously recognise the self and hence their own bodies. As the skin separates the inside self from the outside world it takes the place of the intermediary between these two worlds.<sup>10</sup>

By discerning the human motivations behind the objectification of self through ornamentation it may be possible to see how meanings are realised and how this phenomenon has been instrumental in the development and systematisation of human social interaction as well as the way in which it is an essential ingredient in the maintenance of culture. By proposing the following simple rationale it may be possible to show how this concept of objectification may have originated.

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<sup>4</sup> Guy Oakes, introduction to *Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love* by Georg Simmel trans. Guy Oakes. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984) 3. Oakes goes on to say that: according to Simmel the discovery of the condition of objectivity "... was the greatest achievement in the cultural history of the West. Plato discovered the objectivity of the mind, Roman law the objectivity of justice, and Roman Catholicism the objectivity of religion. (Simmel 1967, p 42-43) It was left to a complex and remarkably heterogeneous German tradition in philosophy and the sociological sciences – from Herder and Kant through Hegel and Schleiermacher to Marx and Dilthey, and perhaps ultimately consummated in the work of Max Weber – to discover the sense in which culture itself is a condition for objectivity." Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur S. Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin Group, 1985), s.v. "Object."

<sup>6</sup> Until recently motives behind this activity were not fully understood. A brilliant analysis of the subject is provided by Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood who were among the first to put forward an idea, based on anthropological and psychological analysis, that the relationship of human to object to objectivity is part of an intricate and complex 'Information System'. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (USA: Basic Books, Inc., 1978; reprint, Great Britain: Penguin Education, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> Soma: The body taken as a whole and represented as distinct from the mind. Arthur S. Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin Group, 1985), s.v. "Soma."

<sup>8</sup> Karl Gröning, *Decorated Skin: A World Survey of Body Art*, with a Preface by Ernst Fuchs, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1997), 9.

<sup>9</sup> Caleb Gattegno, *The Science of Education. Part 1: Theoretical Considerations* (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1987), 86.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Gröning, *Decorated Skin: A World Survey of Body Art*, with a Foreword by Elizabeth Reichel-Dolmatoff, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1997), 12.

## 6.2 Ornaments: Symbols of exchange and social order

As has been established in Chapter 5.3 levels of evolving cognitive ability can be measured against the levels of technical challenges and abilities evidenced in the creation of their tools and making skills at each stage of evolution. See example Figure 5.2

The first stone tools, known as Oldowan tools, emerged 2.5 million years ago with early *H. habilis* whose increase in brain size showed that cognitive processing was evolving. As Mithen points out,

Just hitting a nodule in a random fashion is either unlikely to make any impact at all, or it will shatter the rock into many tiny pieces. To detach the type of flakes one finds in the sites of Olduvai Gorge, one needs to recognise acute angles on the nodules, to select so-called striking platforms and to employ good hand-eye co-ordination to strike the nodule in the correct place, in the right direction and with the appropriate amount of force. . . . They could indeed locate appropriate angles and adjust force and direction of their striking actions.<sup>11</sup>

This also means that *H. habilis* could identify the correct materials, memorise and apply appropriate skills to form the required object, accurately repeat the process when needed, and teach it to others. This signifies the start of a sequence of cognitive breakthroughs. As we follow the progression of tool technology and its application we can likewise discern and hypothesise about the progression of cognitive abilities, levels of intelligence, consciousness and the evolving cultural consequences.

The earliest Acheulean artefacts date back 1.4 million years and are first found in South and East Africa. In Europe Acheulean tools emerge 500,000 years back. See examples below Figures 6.1, and 6.2 in flint. As Leakey suggests, [these tools] “introduce an element of symmetry and a sense of purpose that previously was absent.”<sup>12</sup> The delicacy of its worked edge, its elegant, symmetrical form demonstrates sophisticated manipulative skills, planning and foresight, and a behavioural repertoire which must have been passed from one generation to the next. Acheulean hominids, “employed in their stone knapping the infra-logical operations of whole part relations, qualitative displacement, spatio-temporal substitution and symmetry”,<sup>13</sup> selection and understanding of the physical properties of stone: internal flaws in a flint pebble can be detected through tapping. A perfect stone should ring, a flawed stone sounds dull and should be discarded. Acheulean hand axe makers: “had brains wired like our own, potentially capable of dreaming up such uniquely human constructs as family trees, myths, language and art.”<sup>14</sup>

Acheulean hand axes are proof of a dawning awareness. The execution of standard forms points to an ability to make a systematic enquiry based on logic and reasoning. It points to the making

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<sup>11</sup> Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A search for the origins of art, religion and science* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1996), 96.

<sup>12</sup> Richard E. Leakey, *The Making of Mankind* (London: Michael Joseph Limited, 1981), 134-135. Note: pages 134 to 141 provide an interesting discussion under the headings ‘The link between tools and language’ and ‘Language and art’.

<sup>13</sup> Anthropologist Thomas Wynn, as quoted by Pitts and Roberts, *Fairweather Eden: Life in Britain half a million years ago as revealed by the excavations at Boxgrove* (London: Century Books Limited 1997), 186.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.





Figure 6.1 Acheulean hand axe 1. 29 cms long



Figure 6.2 Acheulean hand axe 2. 23 cms long

of discriminatory and informed judgements about materials and design, ie. problem solving, concepts based on deduction. It points to the ability to identify the form in the mind's eye and consistently achieve its realisation through the skilful co-ordination of hand, mind and eye, proving that these early 'craftsmen' using flaking and knapping techniques were an amalgam of scientist, technologist, artist and mathematician.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> If fossil evidence, as mentioned in the previous chapter when discussing Lucy, indicates correctly that hominids have been confidently bipedal (walking upright) since nearly 4 million years ago, it would mean that this stage of human development would predate earliest evidence of the making of stone tools by over a million years. Parker states that "wear patterns suggesting a diet with appreciable amounts of meat do not appear until nearer 2 million years ago (around the time of the first tools)." [and coinciding with the making of tools to make tools]. Steve Parker, *The Dawn of Man*, consultant ed., Michael Day (New York: Crescent Books, 1992), 57, 58. See also the Laetoli hominid footsteps dated approximately three-and-three-quarter million years ago. Ibid., 61 and discussion supported by illustrations on the expansion of the brain from chimpanzee to Australopithecines to modern humans. Ibid., 112. These two topics are also discussed in Leakey's book 'Richard E. Leakey, *The Making of Mankind* (Great Britain: Michael Joseph Limited. 1981) 40,131,133.

A recent find has shown fresh evidence that humans were already designing and making sophisticated wooden tools as far back as 400,000 years ago. It is obvious that to date no surviving tools have been found because their organic substance would have caused them to disintegrate. This find backs up this thesis's theory that organic materials for personal decoration were in all probability being used at a similar time. Hartmut Thieme discovered spears with stone tools and the butchered remains of more than 10 horses in an open cast coal mine at Schöningen 100 Km east of Hanover. Reporting in *Nature Magazine*, he said "... the spears strongly suggest that systematic hunting, involving foresight, planning and the use of technology, was part of the behavioural repertoire of pre-modern hominids. [This find] ... may mean that many current theories on early human behaviour and culture must be revised." Hartmut Thieme, "Lower Palaeolithic hunting spears from Germany," *Nature* vol 385 (27 February 1997): 807-810.

As Leakey argues: "As with much of archaeology, the objects available for study are those that survive through time. The Australian Aborigines, for instance, weave a colourful and complex symbolism using wood, feather, ochre, blood, body incisions, sand-drawings, songs, dances and so on, none of which are readily preserved and so have little chance of entering the fossil record. What one sees in the records must therefore be an impoverished representation of what actually occurred in the past. The samples of ochre that turn up in a number of sites throughout Europe, which are 200,000 years old or more, certainly suggest ritual adornment of people and their artefacts." Richard E. Leakey, *The Making of Mankind* (Great Britain: Michael Joseph Limited. 1981), 137, 138.



If one takes into consideration the above abilities it is plausible to conclude that if humans had sufficiently developed in consciousness and rationality to exploit tool technology and to plan a hunt they would have been equally capable of applying the same intelligence to working out the strategic manoeuvres required for the selection of a suitable mate. Discovering a communication system based on representation and objectification of one's conscious and physical self enabled humans to invent the appropriate instruments for communication and negotiation required in their complex socio-sexual relationships. Like the fashioning of tools (products dependant on organised thought, reflection, reasoning, and 'sizing up') the male and female could similarly have devised the concept of a contract between one another which would formalise the mode of sexual co-operation (as discussed in the previous chapter). Giving form to an abstract notion might have been symbolised and upheld by the exchange of objects as gifts which would be carefully selected to balance each other in value. This notional contract might well have turned into public display whereby objects on the body signified a contractual relationship. However slight, this communication, neither spoken nor written, might well have been the foundation upon which ritual was built.

To place the above in a less speculative context, it is useful to reiterate points made earlier: dental changes indicated changes in sexual strategies, suggesting a bias towards serial monogamy.<sup>16</sup> If this theory is correct it would mean that the male protohuman would have had to persuade the female to abandon her propensity for living, with her infants, within the safety of an all female clan. For the male this meant convincing her that the break from the harem system was more advantageous and could be sustained. In order to do this he would have had to use several devices communicated in gesture, display or positive acts. Such enticements or lures, which persuade and reassure by consistent repetition, form a ritual which in turn requires an accompaniment of tokens or tangible evidence. In the first instance the ritual might have been founded upon provision of better quality food, shelter and protection offered to his prospective mate. The female in response to these sexual strategies discarded oestrous cycles, and with it nature's accompanying bodily signals resulting in sexual receptivity / fertility for most of the time.

Becoming receptive the whole time would have many implications, one being, perhaps, that sex may for the first time have been more under the female's control. In effect she could make herself the prize and hence claim the most competent male. However, in order to express these sexual interests she would now have had to devise means for the attraction of a suitable mate. The signalling of availability or of unavailability would have been the female's first step towards manipulating the nature of interaction, not in the material or biological sense but rather in the control of the circumstances within which copulation might take place. The manipulation of responses therefore reciprocates the ritual offerings of the male in a tentative continuous negotiation of exchanges which safeguards continuity in relationship. We now understand that nervous or emotional tensions which arise from bond sustaining bind humans to one another and from their earliest cognitive beginnings have informed all human sexual and social relations and actions in systems-related materiality. (As examined later in Chapter 9).

As discussed previously (in Chapter 5), the first body decoration could have appeared in the guise of any object, for example, tools, fruit or flowers. Any object, whether found in a

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<sup>16</sup>

See previous Chapter 4.1 In thesis. The sex contract: Changes in sexual strategies.

natural state or a made artefact, has a primary role as, for example, the physical value of the aforementioned objects is in their role of providing sustenance. Their secondary value is what they signify, (though in some circumstances this rank order might be reversed),<sup>17</sup> the objects' non-tangible, supplementary exchange, associative, contextual or substitution values (previously mentioned in Chapter 4 pages 85-87 and 4.2 in relation to display of individual ability) which are understood here in the context of mating ritual.

Courtship and engagement for humans occurs in its most fundamental form, "Like pairing birds . . . often indulge in courtship feeding, exchanging morsels of food and those specialised human courtship gifts – boxes of chocolates."<sup>18</sup> Two million years ago, humans interested in forming a coupling would perhaps have exchanged a string of fruit for meat and offered other enticements as tokens of ability to sustain and provide for each other and their possible offspring, what Morris calls pseudo-infantile and pseudo-parental examples. Later these symbolic tokens were superseded by the animal's teeth, claws, feathers etc as substitute role symbols. This was in fact the testing the ground for intelligence, proof of femininity or masculinity, ability to provide. In biological terms providing a female with high protein food increases her fertility and provides nourishment to sustain pregnancy. Remnants of this instinct can be identified today. The ritual of taking a woman for a meal, to a dance, in intimate surroundings - he provides, she displays - can often be based on the premise that it will lead to sex in exchange. However the establishment of a relationship requires longer term commitment on both sides and therefore the token of exchange is necessarily of a different order, type or associated form, at one remove from copulation.

The origin of the exchange of food and feeding is a testing ground for a partner's parental and nurturing skills. In addition the quality and value of food gifts signified the level of cunning used in obtaining them.<sup>19</sup> Another facet of this binary process is that as ideas of exchange expanded the type of gifts offered and exchanged began to contain and reflect sexual, identities, divisions and values. Diversity and differentiation of exchange tokens, occurring at first according to regional availability, later extended by inter-group trading, continues – in an ever more varied overlay of meanings, purposes and significances – to the present day.

Thus negotiations and strategies in relation to the 'social' sex contract began to involve the recognition of specific values. At some point tokens of commitment became imbued with exchange values independent of the original intent and were desired in and of themselves, symbolic not of what they originally were but rather as symbols of wealth and power, guilt and greed, envy and jealousy, substitution and gratification. This, previously discussed in the context of subliminal contributions to abstract thought, is referenced here in terms of additional

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<sup>17</sup> For further reading see: Stuart Hall, ed., Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (London: SAGE. Publications Ltd., 1997).

<sup>18</sup> Desmond Morris, Manwatching: A Field Guide to Human Behaviour (Great Britain: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1977; reprint, London: Triad/Grenada, 1980), 185 (page reference are to reprint edition).

<sup>19</sup> John Sparks in his book 'The Discovery of Animal Behaviour', discusses the nature and nurture of learning and why some animals have a greater ability to learn than others. He points out that animals who inherit only genetic behaviour patterns can make a response solely to predetermined situations. "Although natural selection has endowed creatures with inborn 'strategies' for obtaining food, procuring mates, and for avoiding predators, those species which are faced with problems which need to be solved quickly have open areas in their genetic instructions which are filled in by learning. . . . hunters, such as dogs and cats, whose prey can present themselves, and attempt to escape, in innumerable different ways, must 'learn' from experience in order to operate well. On any scale of 'intelligence' such animals perform well, [in preference to others] as do higher primates [including humans] and dolphins, which, like social hunters, need to acquire the skill of collaboration." John Sparkes, The Discovery of Animal Behaviour (London: William Collins & Co Ltd., 1982), 176-177.

considerations in the proliferation of the materiality of the token.

As an essential part of the sex contract the exchange of values needs to be measured and displayed, especially if discussed in terms of multiplicity or proliferation. Many of these values in contemporary material culture carry with them not only the biological sexual reproductive copulatory values or imperatives of earlier times but also the progressed or evolved psychological / emotional values further overlaid with the trade / economic issues and all packaged in abstract symbolic or camouflaged form. In their secondary role the values used in exchange systems give physical expression to the intensity of the other's desire, especially when attached to the body for display, ie the objects become symbolic of the measure of value one person sets on another when given or exchanged.

To put it another way, this indicates the lengths to which one human will go to obtain sexual favours from another. One can begin to see how these abstract values enable the authentic object to transcend itself and raise it to a new level of symbolic meaning. The function of such an artefact represents in itself the abstract notion of the acknowledgement and conferment of status. Guy Oakes suggests that "Actions and artefacts that have this property . . . [could be described as having], instrumental cultural values, . . . Because instrumental values appear to preempt or replace authentic values, there seems to be a sense in which means are transposed into ends." <sup>20</sup>

What is conferred upon a person in the form of a gift or possession provides a value measure of self worth and, by extension, the possession and giving of objects / artefacts offers a value based reference system within which to frame the transformation raising humans from a mere existence based instinctual, reactive animal, to one capable of evolving culture. Objects / artefacts were the utensils for the formation of a structure built on behavioural and cultural selectivity, the instruments which sanctioned social and cultural status. Evolutionary conceptual variations have had myriad resonances for humanity, not least the fetishistic side of contemporary commercialism.

Gamman and Makinen acknowledge the insight of cultural critic Judith Williamson who writes about the link between semiotics and ideology, when she describes

how diamonds are marketed by likening them to eternal love, creating a symbolism whereby the mineral means something not on its own terms, as a rock, but in human terms as a sign. Here, she [Williamson] is identifying how advertising fetishises commodities. . . . how people become identified with objects . . . 'they [advertisers] are selling us ourselves.' <sup>21</sup>

Thus negotiations and strategies leading up to the sex contract (as described on the previous three pages above) and the subsequent development of subliminal abstract thought, later to be formed into a complex pattern of human interactivity. Until recently, for most cultures this pattern followed a strict socially ritualised formula of courtship and engagement, leading to

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<sup>20</sup> Guy Oakes, introduction to Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love, by Georg Simmel trans. Guy Oakes. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 13.

<sup>21</sup> Lorraine Gamman and Merja Makinen, Female Fetishism: A New Look (London: Lawrence & Wishart. Limited, 1994), 33.

See also Deyan Sudjic's book. "Cult Objects" which deconstructs cult objects and sees them more as the birth of personalities in their own right rather than the product of commercial coercion. It looks at products as a form of tribal identity. Deyan Sudjic, Cult Objects, (London: Paladan Books. Granada Publishing Ltd., 1985).

marriage.<sup>22</sup> The contemporary social ‘tying up’ of individuals sanctioned by institutionalised rituals and contracts as a socio-cultural pre-requisite parallels, at one remove, the notion of commitment as the norm of the sexual imperative.

“At a Gypsy wedding, Ramiz Bajramov leads his bride, Meri Ali Mirvet, by his belt, touching her head to the four walls of her new home. The flour sifter on her head and bread under her arms are to ensure a fertile union.”<sup>23</sup>



Figure 6.3 Macedonian gypsy wedding

No matter how seemingly benign these rituals are, they still clearly depict the traditional concept of woman’s social and personal role. The ritual automatically imposes its will no matter how sub-consciously this is internalised.

It is therefore significant in the context of the thesis argument to acknowledge that what at first appeared to be simple signals which indicated bonding on a one-to-one basis later extended to become gender prescriptive for social and tribal bonding systems of ever-increasing complexity, extending beyond the couple, beyond the limits of family units / groups to become cultural institutions. Remnants of this (as in the image above) can still be identified in the formalised rites and rituals of bonded couples, in each kind of marriage and in every culture.

<sup>22</sup> Marriage: is a social habit the origins of which are rooted in nature’s laws, it sets in place the conditions for family life. Once a social group is established, marriage becomes one of the most significant rites within the repertoire of its activities. As the International European Exhibition on Love and Marriage, (Musée de la Vie Wallonne, Liege, 1975), demonstrated through its exhibits of symbolic gifts and tokens, this form of liaison is a collective concern, “. . . not only does it join two people, one to another, but also two families, two economical and social, often also religious, entities. Without forgetting that it is also an alliance with the forbears of the respective partners and a preparation towards becoming oneself a forbear by the fulfilment of the historical destiny considered most normal.”, argues the introduction to the book accompanying the exhibition. To ritualise marriage controls breeding and other far reaching effects a pair bonding may have on the community. Main author listed as, Musée de la Vie Wallonne (Liege, Belgium) *Love and Marriage: Aspects of Folk-Life in Europe* (Liège: Musée de la Vie Wallonne, 1975).

See also Alfred C. Kinsey and others, eds., *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (New York: W. B. Saunders 1953; reprint, New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1966), 347, (page reference is to reprint edition).

Marriage as a means of regulating procreation and its rituals has evolved and been institutionalised independently worldwide. Scott in his book concerning sex and marriage provides a good summary of why marriage in societies came about and how it was implemented, through various modes of indirect coercion. Georg Ryley Scott, *Curious Customs of Sex and Marriage* (London Torchstream Books 1953; reprint, London: Senate, 1995).

<sup>23</sup> Priit J. Vesilind, “Macedonia” *National Geographic* vol. 189, no 3 (March 1996) 136, 137.

## 6.3 Summary

This chapter has discussed how levels of consciousness and cognitive transitional shifts developed from the natural 'self' based on bio-copulatory imperative values such as beauty, to the subjective / objective self to the fully integrated sociological self. These shifts in cognitive abilities and overlaying of intelligences, it is argued, have been genetically forged, over countless thousands of years and are inherent as a result of a co-evolutionary development now manifested in specific form in the arena of the phenotype extended.

The development of serial monogamy and the resultant need for a form of socio-sex contract required specific adjustments to, and impacted upon, human behavioural needs. This formed the mechanism and driver for the resultant development of the various mental and practical skills required / acquired in the ability reflectively to evaluate the value of self and others and others reflected valuations of one's self.

This emergent human capacity can be evidenced, analysed and measured, in parallel, against levels of skill demonstrated in early hominids stone tool technology, and therefore establishes that this human capacity is a fact which can be dated to about 2 million years ago. From here onwards human cognitive shifts can be observed as a logical progression punctuated by innovative application of symbiotic 'intelligence' discoveries which are correlated to their output in terms of practical skills.

If, as has been previously argued, humans had at this point in time already grasped a basic understanding that objects had both a material form and a conceptual symbolic form and could be associated with and embody specific values contained in their material form (material culture), then we can deduce that the ability to associate with and use objects as representations of ideas signs and concepts would have been the next logical development.

Activities such as the exchange of gifts / material objects as symbolic measures of each other's values and in expectation of reciprocation are the instruments of a careful balance in the maintenance of relationships. In this context we have been able to deduce how the gradual accumulation of overlaying of levels of awarenesses, self awareness and self consciousness as a compounded component of intelligence awareness leads to the ability to undertake a 'conscious' objectification and enhancement of self and the parallel realisation that this could be achieved through the application to the body by astute selection of appropriate symbolic mentifacts.

As these mentifacts' symbolic content accumulated in complexity and sophistication relative to their specific values in an evolving social structure, the relentless process of condensation / compression of symbolic content continuously re-formed and re-framed content and context to be re-embodied in new / replacement artefacts.

This constant revision in the mentifacure of objects facilitated the flow of higher levels of cognitive shifts and their expression in the form of concrete representation of re-modified concepts and systems. This in turn enabled humans in the individual and the collective to make a structured response to the complexities of their evolving social order.

At the same time artefacts in their specialisation became increasingly abstracted / removed from their origins, becoming progressively independent as symbolic hybrids in their own right and evolving independently as items of desirability. Thus providing humans with the ability to be ever more selective and creative in their need for specific expression in the re-presentation of self as an object for status evaluation within an evolving social framework and context.

To Summarise, in level 4, the biological, though remaining the critical driving force, came to be progressively absorbed in the physical expression of humans' expanding psychological / psychosexual emotional responses and values. The causal effects of the evolving complexities of the sex contract prompted the need for specific body / psycho-sexual representation. The emotional consequence of the socialisation process was to open up the pathway to sublimation of repressed desires and needs giving rise to new patterns of complexity in human interactivity which had socio-cultural consequences.

At this point the next stage of the thesis research progresses in two parallel directions, one (in level 5 chapter 7) is related to the activity of objectification / sublimation as a response to needs and desires, the other (in level 6 chapter 8) to the evolution of the mentifact. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with these consecutively, as separate levels of consciousness, but show how they are interdependent in the explanation of why and how these processes of sublimation and mentifacting are interconnected.



LEVEL 4 - HOMO ERECTUS 1.9 MILLION - 300,000 YEARS AGO - CHAPTER 6

| Biological Imperatives |  | Sociological Imperatives    |                              | Psychosexual Imperatives                       |   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative                     | Sexual Selection Imperative | Aesthetic Imperative         | Control Imperative                             | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |
| 1                      | ← The bio-social body →                          |                             |                              | Social organisation                            | Psychosexual sublimation                                  |
| 2                      | Abstract self expression through artefacts       |                             | Cognitive perceptual devices | Ritualised practices<br>The socio-sex contract | Biosocial sublimation                                     |
| 3                      | → Perceptual skills                              |                             | Perceptual interpretation    | Artefact as socio-political tool               | Psycho-sexual sublimates                                  |
| 4                      | → Relationships between self/object/others       |                             |                              | Artefact as symbolic exchange values           | Expression of self value                                  |
| 5                      | → Subjective self/objective self                 |                             |                              | Schematic order to activities                  | Subjective/objective sublimation                          |
| 6                      | → Communal cohesion through wearing of artefacts |                             |                              | Fashioning social order                        | Private self to public self                               |
| 7                      | → Representation of social-self                  |                             |                              | Social alliance                                | Socio/sexual self   |

HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES ( PAGES 34 - 36 )

Figure 6.4 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 4

## CHAPTER 7

### **Awareness of self / otherness and differentiation: Collective perception arising from compulsive comparison.**

Chapter Seven. Level 5.

**Key concepts:**

**Compulsive comparison. Differentiation. Binary system. Self-perception. Collective perception. Social status designation.**

**Cognitive benchmarks:**

**Sexual identity. Reading representation. Subliminal self. Knowledge transfer.**

**This Chapter contains Case Study 1 a ‘Hairy Legged Woman’. The Research Interview Schedule 1 can be found on page 358, followed by the statistical data Appendix pages 359 - 366.**

The previous discussion centred on the causal effects and patterns of the developing elaboration of the socialisation process and the co-evolving complexity of sublimatory expression required to sustain it. Taking this into account this (Chapter 7 level 5) enters a new phase in the socio-cultural patterns of human cognition and behaviour. Level 5 explores a further shift in cognitive development ie., the perception of other in relation to self. *Via* a ‘compulsive comparison’ process a differentiation awareness occurs which facilitates the cognitive ability to evaluate and define the perception of self. At this point the research uses information collated from the case study to illustrate how this universal primal imperative process operates in the present. This indicates how it may have operated in the past.

### **7.0 Introduction**

“To be conscious that we are perceiving or thinking is to be conscious of our own existence.”  
Aristotle. <sup>1</sup>

This chapter discusses the application of evolving intelligence as it impacts upon perception of the actuality and representation of the other in relation to the female competitive gaze formed in response to the male copulatory gaze. The compulsive comparative process focussed upon is that of the self as seen by the other, the female scrutinising a perplexing image (see figure 7.1 page 139) of an indeterminate female and seeking a resolution. In this context differentiation awareness is discussed under the following headings:

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<sup>1</sup> John Rennie “Mysteries of the Mind,” Scientific American Special Issue: vol. 7, no. 1, (June 1997): 3.

## Differentiation Awareness Personal / Social

Self / Otherness (compulsive comparison) = binary system

Difference and diversity (stereotype) = suitability for purpose = topological system

Perception and presentation (display) = communication system

Preference and choice (rejection or selection) = evaluation system

### 7.1. Self / Otherness (compulsive comparison) = binary system

It has been suggested that the continuous evolution of necessary inter-sex relations began a bonding process which sowed the seeds of social development. This prolonged interaction and its effects precipitated a paradigm shift in self awareness in its direct, intuitive, experimental response to the other's self-awareness. The shift was towards an association based on continual observation, which both defined and affected the self and the other resulting in the development of the higher faculties of consciousness and self consciousness. Consciousness allows the responses to be controlled, mediated, committed to memory, resulting in knowingness, rationalisation and a perceptual capability leading to a conceptual facility.

For those who developed these higher faculties the chances of survival would have been substantially increased as the ability to rationalise and make appropriate responses in relation to circumstances meant that humans with these abilities would be better equipped for survival. The challenges of living within a changing or inhospitable environment in diverse or unpredictable social circumstances required adaptability and quick responses relative to interaction and communication with others.

The search for solutions to difficult situations required reservoirs of recalled knowledge and experience which could be reapplied to similar occurrences. Applications of accumulated knowledge born out of experiential learning could then be observed, learned and applied by others, resulting in shared knowledge. This form of learning preceded any formal teaching, occurring through observation followed by emulation (which is a response-based act). These reciprocal behaviours fuelled curiosity, interest and awareness of the other at the same time as they produced shared experience. This application for the benefit of the other or to anticipate others' future actions is an intermediate stage between genetic requirements and the generation of culture. Therefore, the hunger for knowledge or "the need to know", as Gattegno puts it,<sup>2</sup> became a genetic advantage. Survival came to mean not only of the fittest in physical terms but also the fittest in cerebral development.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Caleb Gattegno, *The Science of Education. Part 1: Theoretical Considerations* (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1987), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Kohn puts forward a good example, The handaxe "... indicates fitness ... since it requires a combination of highly adaptive qualities: good physical condition, motor skills, eyesight, spatial perception, and above all, the ability to conceive and realise a plan." Therefore handaxes could have dictated a female's mate choice preference thus further facilitating mental capacities through sexual selection. Marek Kohn, *As We Know It: Coming to Terms with an Evolved Mind* (London Granta Books, 1999; reprint, Granta Books, 2000), 139-141 (page references are to reprint edition). See also Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A search for origins of art, religion and science* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1996), 203, 204.

Note. This expression, often attributed to Charles Darwin, is in fact attributable to Herbert Spencer. 1820-1903. [Principles of Biology, 111. Ch. 12, 'Indirect Equilibrium', 165.] See also Steve Jones, *The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future* 2d ed., Great Britain: Flamingo, 1994), 6, 7.

Contemporary research into human perception would seem to indicate that humans have an innate urge to create patterns or organisation based on identification and grouping together of the similar. This suggests that they may apply an equivalent imperative to the resolution of problems based on knowledge both individual and collective. A plausible explanation for this is that the human desire for order (as seen in Chapter 3.5.1 - 3.5.3) is merely a replication of the sub-structural process on which the creation of the natural universe has been designed. The genetic advantage of the 'need to know' formulated in natural processes was sufficient in the early stages of human evolution to solve simple problems and also to allow an aggregation of knowledges from which to develop responses to more complex issues. The selection of which knowledges to utilise in responding to a specific problem required some dexterity in differentiating knowledges.

Differentiation could be said to have taken place when consciousness began to transcend basic instinctual responses and achieved independence through awareness of self. In contemporary terms this awareness is presented as the ego or conscious thinking which relates to the former Id or instinctual impulses of the individual and the super ego which polices or maintains the balance between the two. This in turn leads humans from the subjective to the objective realm and the exploration of this through to the art of personal objectification (see Chapter 8).

It is suggested that the making of axes, which is estimated as having reached a level of some sophistication some 1,400,000 years ago in Africa, is testimony to the emergence of the conscious discriminating selection and application of knowledges. To be able to relate to the external world meant finding a way in which individuals could register an experience and then communicate it to others. Humans began to organise their world in a way which connected the self to the instinctual, to the environmental and hence the group / social and eventually the cultural. Their mastery was an extraordinary achievement but the question is how and where did they begin to tackle such an undertaking. Abstract notions which led humans to understand such phenomena as reification are discussed later. Of significance here, however, is the proposition that nothing existed in this context until implemented. Ultimately this sequence led through repetition and accumulation towards the development of a body of 'teachable things' which could be systematically transmitted to the next generation.

As Gattegno points out. because of a lack of formal record, the extraordinary achievements and inventions accomplished over thousands of years have been taken for granted. Whoever really stops to examine "the necessary temporal hierarchies required"<sup>4</sup> for conception and invention? Simple inventions which nonetheless have transformed humans' mode of existence such as the use of stones as tools, deliberately forming particular stones into tools (flaking and knapping), making fire, the sewing needle, the forming of metals, the designing and making of chain, thread, the comb, the use of oils and pigments to enhance the body, buttons, the hair grip, the safety pin, all have evolved from cognitive processes in driving and developing skills of a high order. Higher order thinking manifested in objects illustrated a multiplicity of interaction between the physical and the intellectual, the mind, hand and eye co-ordination etc. emanating from the earliest reproductive imperatives.

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<sup>4</sup> Caleb Gattegno, *The Science of Education. Part 1: Theoretical Considerations*. (New York: Educational Solutions, Inc., 1987), 4.

What Aristotle and Gattegno are describing is known in contemporary philosophical terms as metaphysics; “the philosophy of being and knowing; [which are] the theoretical principles forming the basis of any particular science; the philosophy of mind.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, the springboard for all other developing sciences is but an extension of the application of the binary system<sup>6</sup>, which is a primal imperative. As we shall see in the following sections, modern science, in which invention is a significant factor, is founded in the human intellectual capability to differentiate and integrate the physical with the cognitive. As physics and metaphysics this binary opposition reflects the self / otherness of compulsive comparison transposed into an objective process for conceptualisation removed from but related to the instinctual.

## 7.2 Résumé

In other words, the springboard for all other developing sciences is simply an extension of the application of the binary system, which is a primal imperative. Self-awareness and different levels of consciousness in the context of otherness therefore offer a basis for the construction of representational dialogue through objects and their making. The representation of individual and collective events through the exchange of thoughts, ideas and concepts would be a valuable skill and therefore highly adaptive for transmission through both natural and sexual selection in the form of an accumulative generative acceleration of psycho-social development. To move from subjectivity to the notion of objectivity through self-representation and re-presentation and the reflective mechanism of feeding back information into the self awareness of self leads to specific psycho emotional / behavioural patterns and activities.

As Lock points out:

*Self-awareness is a socio-cultural product.* To be self-aware is, by definition, to be able to conceive of one's individual existence in an objective, as opposed to subjective, manner. In G. H. Mead's (1934) terms, one must view oneself from 'the perspective of the other'. Such a level of psychological functioning is only made possible by the attainment of a symbolic mode of representing the world. Again, this mode of mental life is generally agreed to be dependant upon the existence of a cultural level of social organisation. We thus come to a fundamental, though apparently tautologous point: that the existence of self-awareness is predicated upon that of self awareness; and that the existence of self awareness is predicated upon that of culture. In the same way as in the course of evolution the structure of the brain is seen as being in a positive-feedback relationship with the nature of the individual's environment, so it is with culture and self-awareness: the self is constituted by culture which itself constitutes the self.<sup>7</sup>

## 7.3 Difference and diversity (stereotypes) = suitability for purpose = topological system

Differentiation as described by Piaget is generally understood in the context of what he calls the 'I' and the 'object' concept, which is the recognition and understanding of the relationship between the 'I' and the 'object' or the phenomenon of 'individuation'. According to Bower

<sup>5</sup> Cassell Concise English Dictionary, 1994 ed., s.v. “metaphysics.”

<sup>6</sup> Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication: The logic by which symbols are connected* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; reprint, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 49-75 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>7</sup> John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols Readings on Consciousness* (United Kingdom: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990). Section. 8. *Universals in Human Conception*, by Andrew Lock, 220.

and Patterson, individuation develops in infancy, from the time of birth to 18 months.<sup>8</sup> John and Elizabeth Newson elaborate on this theme by proposing that the gaining of knowledge is a consequence of interactions not only between the subject and the object but also between human beings (the mother object / child subject) and the external or material world.<sup>9</sup> Bower and Patterson consider that Piaget underestimated the significance of transference from the first object, normally the mother, to an object such as, perhaps, a comforter.

According to psychoanalysts, self knowledge is based on particular points of reference and the repeated identification of specific information conceiving the self in relation to the object (disappearance and reappearance, separation and reconciliation, desire and gratification). In this case the human carer, normally the mother, forms binary oppositions linking actions / objects to emotional responses. A repetition of these interactions induces a sense of separateness in the infant's mind. At the same time a sense of identity takes hold, through the realisation that the infant has an effect on what happens through its actions, the 'me' and the 'I', the I being the conscious self as subject and the 'me' the recognised self as object, or the empirical self, and 'the conception of self' developed in the Erving Goffman sense.<sup>10</sup> However as Gamman and Makinen point out, these abilities also develop within a specific symbolic order, that of gender with reference to the phallus,<sup>11</sup> where humans begin to assume their identity within this vernacular context, as discussed earlier.

The 'me' and 'I' relative to the self and object open the way for the next stage in development for the child, which is to establish an identity through individuation over time. The realisation in infancy that, as might have been the case in early humans, the other is another me, as in a mirror or a pool of water, is differentiation in action. However, the realisation that the other is like or similar to me but not me is individuation in action and evokes other emotions and cognitive mechanisms.

Rousseau's thesis, as elaborated by Lévi Strauss, is that Man can only become self-conscious — aware of himself as a member of a we-group — when he becomes capable of employing metaphor as an instrument of contrast and comparison.<sup>12</sup>

Rudolph Allers argues that despite one's individuality, humans are all members of the same species, share a common universe, a community, participate in human interaction and experience: fear of the unknown, the spiritual and are mystified by the hyper-physical or supernatural, no one exists in isolation. By searching out the familiar and similar one is able to grasp at fundamental traits by the identification of differences and samenesses.<sup>13</sup> Irrespective of one's separate identity, commonality and community are ever present and are ultimately an overriding factor in the subjugation of the individual and in forming identity.

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<sup>8</sup> John Oates, ed., *Early Cognitive Development* (London: Croom Helm Ltd in association with The Open University Press, 1979), 170.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 276, 277.

<sup>10</sup> See: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (U.S.A: Archer Books, 1959; reprint, Great Britain: Pelican Books 1987) (reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>11</sup> Lorraine Gamman & Merja Makinen, *Female Fetishism: a New Look* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Limited, 1994), 100.

<sup>12</sup> Edmund Leach, *Lévi-Strauss*, ed., Frank Kermode (London: Fontana 1970; reprint, London: Fontana, 1982), 38 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>13</sup> Rudolph Allers, *Psychology of Character*, trans. E. B. Strauss (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd., 1931) reprint, London: Unicorn, 1939), 11,12 (page references are to reprint edition).



This being the case, emulation of the other as an aspect of identity formation is significant since it raises the issue of metaphor and the communication of metaphoric references. Piaget and his followers theorise that the science of being and knowing (metaphysics) seems to have evolved from a simple and universal principle, the principle of contrast and comparison and from there on to the identification and categorisation of difference (first through analogies and then metaphors). When something cannot be described either because of the limitations of language or because it is not fully understood in the realm of the metaphysical, a description can be developed through the use of metaphoric similarity but also of mythology in order to rationalise that which we cannot know.

Mythologies help to illustrate that compulsive comparative cognition motivated by the search for identity and understanding (new knowledges or knowingness) is one propellant of social and cultural evolution. Early myths, variously verified, give credence to this cognitive process as underpinning our earliest development. Mythologies indicate that many generations have already reflected on the subject of creation and existence. The first formally recorded discourses on the subject provide a useful clue. These can be found in the religious hieroglyphic texts in the tombs of the Egyptians, dating from approximately 3200BC onwards where philosophical narratives on the walls of tombs interpret the creation of the world. They clearly define how humans must have grappled with the organisation of thoughts within the chaos of incoming information. The Egyptians frequently grouped four distinct areas together and saw them as the,

“The four centres of instruction.  
How to describe the indescribable?  
How to show the unshowable?  
How to express the unutterable?  
How to seize the ungraspable instant?

Before any opposition, any yes and no, positive and negative; before there was any complementary, high and low, light and shadow; before there was presence or absence, life or death, heaven or earth: . . . the passage from the invisible into the visible, to be realised . . . from the incomprehensible . . . The first impulse is a projection of the inner desire . . . to know himself, to realise his own consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

One identifies oneself by comparison with or in relation to ‘self and other’. Something cannot exist without its opposite for comparison.

However, as Rudolph Allers points out when discussing character, when it comes to self identity, though an individual, every human has certain characteristics, some of which are common, similar or variations on the same theme <sup>15</sup> and this also applies to physical characteristics. In his book ‘Self and Others’ Lang argues that “All ‘identities’ require an other: some other in and through a relationship [with another] with whom self-identity is actualised . . . ” <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Lucie Lamy, *Egyptian Mysteries: New light on ancient knowledge* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 8. Note: Lamy states “This vision of the original unity was common to every initiatory centre – Heliopolis, Memphis, Hermopolis and Thebes.”

<sup>15</sup> Rudolph Allers, *Psychology of Character*, trans. E. B. Strauss (London: Sheed and Ward Ltd., 1931) reprint, London: Unicorn 1939), 11,12 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>16</sup> R. D. Lang *Self and Others* (London: Tavistock Publications. 1961; reprint, London Harmondsworth. Penguin Books, 1971) quoted in Ken Baynes, *Art in Society* (London: Lund Humphries Publishers Ltd., 1975), 31.

The role of analogy is indispensable when defining the phenomenon of being and knowing as a process of thinking derived from doing.

Metaphors and similes are of great value, insofar as they explain an unknown relation by a known one . . . The growth of ideas rests, at bottom, upon similes; because ideas arise by a process of combining the similarities and neglecting the differences between things . . . , Schopenhauer, *On Some Forms of Literature*.<sup>17</sup>

However, it is metaphors and analogy in a different context which become a tool for making sense of the abstract where the world defining contrast and comparison become more complex, as in the sense of reification. It was Saussure who identified that groupings of such differences were organised in sets to encode specific information and formed a structural mechanism which contained specific messages, codes, signs and symbols. In literature this is contained in speech, but it occurs in all forms of communication, transmission and reception.

In 'The Second Sex' Simone de Beauvoir recognises that, "The category of Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. . . ." its origins are not necessarily based on the recognition of the division between the sexes. She quotes Levi Strauss, "Passage from the state of Nature to the state of Culture is marked by man's ability to view biological relations as a series of contrasts; duality, alternation, opposition and symmetry, . . ." <sup>18</sup>

## 7.4 Résumé

The original 'self and other' relationship is a way of making sense of the world. Its multiple separations and differentiation in the individual mind based upon individual experience and perceptions eventually becomes, by extension to the collective, a categorisation of multiple other types and othernesses understood by all, for example, the mother, father, mate who are family related, then later the leader, the common enemy / friend and so on. The types or categories of other in the case of identity are now discussed as stereotypes relative to humans and archetype <sup>19</sup> references. But stereotype is especially relevant in the context of the following discussion and case study.

## 7.5 Perception and presentation: Display, identification and response, subversion of competitive communication: What does she look like? A case study of a 'Hairy Legged Woman'

Starting with the question: "What does she look like?" this case study deconstructs the female biological competitive gaze. Exploring the underlying structures from a basis in compulsive

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<sup>17</sup> V. Vale and Andrea Juno, eds., *Modern Primitives: An Investigation of Contemporary Adornment and Ritual* (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1989), 201.

<sup>18</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans and ed. by H. M. Parshley (London: Jonathan Cape 1953; reprint London: Pan Books Ltd., 1988), 16, 17. (page references are to reprint edition) Beauvoir's quote comes from C. Lévi Strauss, *les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*. (no page number provided)

<sup>19</sup> "In Jungian psychology, an inherited pattern of thought or symbolic imagery derived from the past collective experience and present in the individual unconscious. . . . One that is regarded as embodying or conforming to a set image or type". [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com). 2006 s.v. "Archetype." "Although he [Jung] hypothesized the existence of many archetypes, several were presumed to have evolved sufficiently to be treated as distinct systems [for example the] anima, animus, persona, self, shadow." Arthur. S. Reber, *Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin Group, 1985), s.v. "Archetype."

comparison showing the selection of groupings within the language and critique of woman's bodily display. Viewing one another's bodies exposes some of the most obvious examples of how this mechanism operates and is one way to an understanding of and the ability to define identity.

As noted in the previous chapter, male and female identify each other in terms of gender. Identifying the complementary opposite seems to reinforce the tension between the sexual self and the sexual other. The sexual / biological, gaze therefore, is that of the male viewing the female and the female viewing the male with a prospect of copulation and reproduction. Sexual selection, involves competition between members of the same sex where the most successful competitor is chosen as a mate by the opposite alpha sex partner. Sexual identity is critical in other facets of life as humans use these criteria to relate to, address and value each other. As Baynes points out, these identifications are influenced and refined by many different perceptions and alternative interpretations. "This function is biologically determined at one level, and a matter of highly individualised choice at the other extreme. Complementarity is more or less formalised, culturally conditioned. It is often discussed under the heading, role."<sup>20</sup> In attempting to disentangle biological dictate from socio-cultural dictate or norms, the first step is to identify where these two connect and discuss the logic behind this connection. The anomalous borders of perception often hold the clues which indicate underlying motivations as the 'inner witness' part of the self operates its screening process of recognition by sifting out and assembling groupings of comparisons, similarities, differences and conclusions. The objective analysis of these responses can reveal how each individual identifies and defines, in the case of this illustration, the female's sex and the way in which responses are in accordance with prior 'programming' or established expectations.

The illustration used as a starting point for this discussion (Figure 7.1 'Hirsutes you, sir?') is taken from the magazine 'Bizarre'<sup>21</sup> and has been selected to show how this process might work in practice, particularly where there is a possibility of ambiguity. Confronted by any image a brief glance is normally sufficient to establish whether one is looking at the same sex as oneself or not. We recognise / diagnose with accuracy and speed because it is important to do so for survival of the species. In most instances, once a decision about identity has been made and an appropriate conclusion drawn it is committed to the subconscious for future comparative use. However, when the brain is confronted with an image such as this, a recognition response interruption occurs, compelling a second processing attempt. In this event it is possible that the biological instincts have reacted before the mind has had time to interpret the relevant messages and apply the analysis according to logic. Eventually the brain / mind reconciliation restores harmony in the bio-complexity of sexual identification.

If, as psychoanalysts theorise, self knowledge is based on particular points of reference and the criteria for this are based on specific forms of categorisation, then this image upsets the natural flow of this process. The illustration demonstrates how the cognitive processes can be wrong-footed in the struggle to achieve interpretation. Observed as a whole, the image sends out a host of conflicting messages and so the eye and mind cannot agree or make immediate sense of the incoming information. Subsequently one is drawn further in as the responses continue to oscillate. Conclusions are continuously dislodged, readjusted and disturbed again.

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<sup>20</sup> R. D. Lang *Self and Others* (London: Tavistock Publications. 1961; reprint, London Harmondsworth. Penguin Books, 1971), quoted in Ken Baynes, *Art in Society*. (London: Lund Humphries Publishers Ltd., 1975), 31.

<sup>21</sup> Unknown author, "Hirsutes you, sir?" *Bizarre* (May/June 1997) : 6.



*Figure 7.1 Hirsutes you sir ?*

The image has to be seen several times before one is able to prise apart the different layers of meaning transmitted in order to form an acceptable understanding. This written account makes the process seem tedious and cumbersome compared to the instantaneousness of visual interpretation. This reconciliation of contradictory or confabulated information takes place in different areas of the mind. What happens in an instant loses its impact, but if it is explained in detail using Barthes' rationale that verbal dissection improves accuracy in interpretation it is possible to illuminate the complexity of the cognitive processes of perceptual response.

### **7.5.1. Subversion of competitive communication**

#### **Case Study 1. The 'Hairy Legged Woman'. Figure 7.1**

In the context of the above and at this point of the research study, the following case study was conducted. This gave an opportunity for investigations, analysis, interpretations and substantiations to support this part of the research and further affirm the hypotheses / propositions presented in Chapter 1.3.2 page 21 and Chapter 2.1 to 2.2.6. A copy of the questionnaire and statistical data is located in the appendix pages 358 - 366.

#### **Question 1**

**What are the first things / words which come to mind when you glance this image?**

*93% of the participants had an adverse response to the female in the image.*

“Strange, unusual, fixated; repulsive; horrible, unnatural, unpleasant; quite yuck, grotesque; weird; unattractive; strange phenomenon; bizarre, unnerving and confusing; is it a man or is it a woman?; transvestite or transsexual, I’m genderly confused; I guess I’m intrigued in a kind of way; incongruous.”

Using the principle of free association<sup>22</sup> the above participant responses reveal how human’s instinctual impulses are linked to their primal programming. It evidences the hard wiring of humans as an organism whereby our genetic needs define the base level order of our pre- and sub-consciousnesses which in turn define behaviour patterns which are governed by the reproductive survival mechanisms of gene propagation. The genes’ criteria detector within us utilises the emotion of recoil, the internal alarm system is triggered, the warning is given, “this is not the most viable mate for the successful reproduction of your genes.” An innate impulse compels us to reject, instinctively recoil, from what we see. Yet another seemingly irrational impulse compels us to look again, the copulatory gaze is held, fixated, in some way intrigued.

The following participant responses describe the impulse of compulsive looking. These go on to evidence how that which lures us back to the image connects us to the compulsive comparison mechanism part of the copulatory gaze, and shows how it is through this mechanism that the process of the identification of the sexual self and sexual otherness is achieved and defined. This part of the research shows how the human mind performs its screening process of recognition, its sifting out and assembling groupings of comparisons, similarities, differences and how conclusions are drawn. It demonstrates how our dependence on the quest for affirmation of sexual identity of self in relation to others is hugely important as to how we conduct our sexual and social interaction. Whether the subject is representational or real when viewing the other as object, the initial reception and cognitive processing of the image still operates consistent with bio-sociological needs and the perceptual response as programmed in the copulatory gaze.

Participants’ responses evidence how the compulsive comparison operates and show the interaction / interconnection between our genes, brain and mind defines the biological, sociological and the psychological part of us, which in turn defines our personal and cultural psyche.

## **Question 2**

***Do you find the image compulsive to look at? Yes / No please state your reasons why.***

*73 % of the participants found that they did.*

“Initially I looked at the picture as a whole . . . then all of a sudden I found that my eyes were literally flicking from the bottom to the top and I was very much focussing on her face, her armpits and then straight back down to her bottom half, . . . because it’s just fascinating . . .”

“Yes I do find it compulsive and there is so much about it, it’s shifting back and forth from male to female, female to male. Every time I look at a different part of the body I’m changing my

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<sup>22</sup> Free association in the practice of psychology: “Any unconstrained association made between ideas, words, thoughts etc. In a free association test the subject is given a word [in this instance an image] and asked to reply with the first word which comes to mind. It mostly serves as a projective device to explore the client’s unconsciousness.” The Dictionary of Psychology. Arthur S. Ruber, Dictionary of Psychology (London: Penguin Group, 1985), s.v. “association, free”



mind. . . every part of it is making me shift back and forwards, this idea whether it's a male or female and suddenly I'm noticing strange things like that I hadn't noticed at all before . . ."

" . . . there are lots of mixed messages, because of she and non-she, it's transgender."

"Yes, I am searching, one thing I'm just noticing is she doesn't have a moustache . . . which is unusual when she is so hirsute . . . I think that as a woman you always look at those things and compare yourself and you put yourself in her place."

" . . . I'm a very hairy person so I've spent a lot of time, you know where you do that thing I've also got a really big nose and its not a good shape, so I'm forever looking at people in the tube, going 'worse than mine!', comparison all the time . . . I've spent a lot of time looking at whether people are hairy or not, but I've never in real life seen somebody anywhere near as hairy as this, and you know, universally, you are watching [*comparing such things as*] each other's backsides etc., and talking about it exhaustively."

*Having completed their first broad scanning and their rationale for compulsive looking, participants began to describe further their reactions. All began to recognise that the top half of the image did not correlate to the bottom half, thus causing emotional disturbance and confusion to their discerning gaze. Incoming data did not add up to the hard wiring of their blueprint criteria. Where sex cannot be clearly defined a further screening is required.*

### **Question 3**

***Can you describe the sensations, ideas, thoughts or feelings when you take time to look more carefully? Can you break down the image into components and analyse what you see?***

*93 % of participants divided the top half from the bottom as part of their screening process.*

*Here participants made a natural transition from Question 2, intuitively extending their response into the next part (Question 3) before being asked. This happened as the participants started to engage on a more focused level with the image and, by applying the compulsive comparison to a further level of viewing, began to establish / define further elements of relevance to gender identity.*

*The first impression established that the top half did not seem to equate with the bottom half, the conclusion being that the top half was female and the bottom half male. The face was scrutinised first, followed by a detailed consideration and assessment of all the natural and familiar signs of biological gender and sex differentiation.*

" . . . I am looking at a top half female and I am looking at a bottom half male."

"Yeah, well the top part as I said that is definitely womanly, but when you come further down, and over the thighs, this is more manly, . . ."

"No, the top half is slightly different because you do occasionally see women that don't shave their arms or don't shave their arms well. . . . I'm actually looking at her face very often, I keep looking at the armpits and then I'm straight back down."



[*The unfamiliar adds to the confusion*] “Yes actually, . . . it’s different, you don’t normally see things like that, and you cannot convince yourself. You are just looking for clues as to whether you are looking at a male or female, so you are constantly analysing everything . . .”

“It’s a very good looking pretty face, it does look like a woman, I’m just trying to look at the hands and legs to see if they’re bigger because a man would have a bigger body frame compared to a normal woman and she is quite petite.”

*In an attempt to sort out confusion we try to find points of reference for evaluation and confirmation. In order to assess gender we formulate gender equations. When gender cannot be clearly defined we try to discover for which side there is most ‘evidence’ and hence reach our conclusion.*

*The intuitive binary system of similarities and opposites engages with the primal imperative, groupings of differences and samenesses, facilitating identifications within which can be defined the idealised (in this case the sex of an individual) which in turn can be measured against the individual person. The touchstone: contrast and comparison, and from then on to identification and categorisation, conclusion and confirmation.*

“ . . . if I look from the middle down. . . . I would say it is a man, . . . I have seen women who have hair on their legs, but I’ve never seen anyone who has so much hair . . .”

“She’s male because she’s got hairy legs, she’s female because she’s got a waist and stomach. The hair is the male aspect and the shape of the body is the female aspect. The lack of a penis, well, visible penis, no testicles! That’s the telling thing! . . .”

“This sounds really bizarre but . . . looking at the knickers, . . . I’m expecting to see a bulge of a penis . . . I’m still almost looking [*to see*] if this is a transvestite.”

*The search continues for the detection and forming of conclusions to bring about some form of resolution.*

“ . . . maybe it’s her skin texture, the lack of Adam’s apple, I don’t know why I just, . . . it didn’t lead me to think it was transvestite or transsexual. I’ve always thought this picture was of a girl who just happens to have exceptionally hairy legs.”

“It looks like a female top and from the midriff down it’s a man. Well the upper arms, and the neck and the chest, not the bosoms as such, they look a bit flat. Apart from the under arms it could be a woman. The abdomen down it looks like a man. . . . the top is definitely a woman, . . . there is no willy so it can’t be a man.”

“I guess this upper part is quite feminine, . . . she is wearing a bikini, her face is very feminine, . . . the lower part of her body is definitely very masculine, the hairiness and so on.”

“You see, I’m thinking is this an image of a transgender person? And of course that did not occur to me at all because to me this person looks incredibly female, like the bone structure and things, tiny little rib cage, nipped in waist, so it never occurred to me for a minute to think that this was a chap.”

“Erm, difficult to answer, it’s not one thing I’m questioning, there’s so many elements . . . immediately you look at one thing you’re looking back at her face, you’re always being drawn back to the seemingly feminine. Her face, well actually the only feminine aspect is her face, there’s no bulge, she’s got breasts you know, probably my size, still very, very small but they are there and I’m female.”

#### **Question 4**

##### ***Do you find her attractive or unattractive?***

*60% found her face to be attractive, whilst 87% found the rest of her to be unattractive.*

*Of the 60% who said she was attractive / pretty. Her attractiveness was gauged by her face, normally one of the ‘first impression’ reference points. The pale pretty face smiles out at the world presenting symmetrical and thereby biologically desirable features. Symmetrical teeth and full lips well positioned on the face further compound the identification with the requisite female characteristics discussed in Chapter 3.5.3 pages 68 and 72. Few seemed to register consciously that her attractive face was artificially enhanced. Whilst she had plucked her eyebrows and maybe got rid of facial hair, applied lipstick and makeup, her face was seen as natural / normal, pretty, whilst the honest presentation of her hairy legs (reflecting her true biological status) was described as abnormal / unnatural. This demonstrates how the social imperative has transcended the biological imperative. Part of us has been so conditioned, so entrenched into our way of perceiving and thinking that we see the artificial as more normal than the natural.*

“I’m not an image person, I’m quite happy to accept people, however unusual they want to be. . . . I’ve been brought up to accept people for what they want to be. I would think it’s unusual and I would want to ask her why she doesn’t feel she has to conform. The more I look the less I find her unattractive.”

“As a woman I find her completely repulsive. . . . there is nothing wrong with her face, I’d say she was on the attractive side.”

“She’s a pretty girl and she’s got a good figure and she is nice to look at but your eyes are drawn, . . . to her legs in particular,

Attractive? I suppose I find her attractive. . . . I think she’s got a lovely face, she looks confident, she’s got a nice body, if I saw her in the flesh I would find those legs very hard to deal with. . . . I would find her totally acceptable from the waist up, . . . [Asked what would she would think if she saw her on the beach?] I would not be able to keep my eyes off her, I’d be absolutely fascinated. . . . it’s an unusual level of hairiness on someone who appears to be quite comfortable with it.” [any additional attraction seems to be linked to her confidence which is further evidenced in the response to question 10]

“Well part of her is attractive. From the neck up, but the rest is not attractive at all.”

“If I were to break it up I would say I think her face is certainly attractive, she’s got all her things in the right places, an attractive face but really as a woman in a man’s body, that half is actually quite abnormal, it’s really, . . . God I wouldn’t say that was attractive . . .” [pointing to her legs]

“Face wise I think she is attractive, I like her hair, if she wouldn’t be so hairy she would be just quite an attractive lady, whether she is my type, no!”

“I think she is a very pretty lady. [*even despite the hair?*] Well you see it’s an interesting one, you see maybe here I’m fighting with what I, my initial response would be, eh, what I think I should think because I actually have very strong feelings about this because . . . as a child I had horrendous asthma . . . and so I was on really fierce steroids from the age of eight, . . . I started to grow body hair, I had a lot and it’s not something that bothers me particularly now but I was laughed at when I was a teenager and I’ve been laughed<sup>23</sup> at by trainee beauticians in a beauty school, gathering everybody else in the college around to see how hairy my legs were because I was so hairy, you know, so I guess looking at this it’s like bringing up all those memories of being a teenager and being an incredibly hairy person and being terribly uncomfortable with it and now, I don’t give a shit!”

### Question 5

*If you are female would you want to look like this? Can you state your reasons.*

*If you are male would you want / not want your girlfriend or partner to look like this? Can you state your reasons.*

*100% of the participants responded with a resounding ‘no’.*

*The responses evidenced why and how social pressure forces us to conform.*

“I wouldn’t want to look like it only because I am not happy with drawing attention to myself . . . because in the current cultural climate people would find it surprising that people would not want to get their hair removed. You know people go to the extreme of going to hospital, having their hair removed. . . . generations of mothers have brought up their daughters to shave and be clean and all the media shows people, [*to be without body hair*] so people believe that being clean shaven is the norm, to be without hair is normal or if you’re not it equates to being abnormal, if you’re abnormal you would have to have a lot of confidence to say I don’t want to do it.”

“Definitely not . . . I don’t feel I could choose that. . . . I think people would think I was a man . . . get mixed up gender wise and also they’d think it was ugly, not feminine.” [*the importance of portraying the exact gender was a priority.*]

“It’s very important I think, . . . it’s part of my identity, a very fixed part of my identity, I think I’d feel very odd if people did not take that as *per se*. Once I was mistaken for a man by an Italian child . . . it struck me to the core. I hated it and I really realised how important it is not to be confused.”

“No . . . I like perfect specimens . . .”

“No. . . because it’s not natural. Well if it was a man I would not like it dressed in these clothes, and if it’s a woman its very unnatural and unattractive and unfeminine and unpleasing to look at

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<sup>23</sup> As in nature the primitive animal instinct of mobbing (a biological imperative which in human nature is now reinforced by the sociological imperative) anything that is different is persecuted. This comes in various forms from being laughed at, teased, bullied, ridiculed to being ostracised and excluded from the ‘normal’ group.

. . . Only the face is natural and the arms if it's a woman, and if it's a man I still don't think it's attractive, there is something horrible about the legs and the position as well."

*The above evidences how the public display of the personal requires / dictates the need to adhere to the collectively agreed and prescribed gender behaviour and attire appropriate to gender and its representation. These ideas continue to be expanded on below and through into Question 6.*

"No . . because it would be a problem. You'd have to erm, I mean the armpits would be easy enough to do, a bit of wax would sort out the belly, it would be a practical problem. The legs would be a constant upkeep and I'd never put up with that hair. You would have to make that decision and in order to look like that, you would have to be very confident, you would have to deal with people's negative reaction, as people's fascination . . ."

"No I would not want to look like this, . . because I think of myself as being entirely female, well of being female in form to look at and this is not entirely female to look at so I would not like to look like that because I like being female."

"Definitely no, I would not want to look like that. [*would you be worried what others might think?*] Oh definitely, because if I was a woman and if I thought I looked like that I'd be more like a man, . . if you're a woman you would want to be known as a woman, at least I would. If you're a man I'd presume he would rather be a man than look like a woman."

"I would definitely not want to look like this. I would not want to display this sort of hairiness because I feel that it would not conform to society and I fear that it would make me feel uncomfortable."

"Would I trade the excellent figure, the very pretty face for the hairiness? I don't know, I mean I have spent a lifetime on hair removal, I've tried everything so I guess I'd select this structure as great but if I was that hairy I would definitely be taking a razor blade to that."

### **Question 6**

***If it were you would you be worried about what others might think? Yes / No. Please state your reasons.***

*93% said they would be worried.*

"I think that a lot of people, male and female, would be shocked, and would think it was wrong and you ought to do something about it. They would think women shouldn't look like that and that you had a duty . . not to present yourself in that way. I suppose it's too sexual, it's too much about the body, we are too much about the body, we are used to seeing sanitised versions, and this is too, it's a tragedy, a tragedy."

"If I looked like that definitely. Well to have so much hair it would never go, there would always be a shadow there, I think people would think I was a man, get mixed up gender-wise and also they'd think it was ugly, not feminine."

“... even if I was into women I’d still find it rather disturbing because I’m used to a certain stereotype of a woman.”

“Yes, I definitely would be, in my mind definitely.”

“Erm. I don’t know that face looks very welcoming but ... there’s embarrassment behind her eyes and I think although she’s looking like a very confident person, she must be to sit there looking like that. Yeah, I would be [*worried*] if I were her, but it’s very difficult to tell if she cares you know, if she’s putting herself out there and semi-naked, so I question whether she cares and if I were that person maybe it’s not about what people think, maybe she has been bullied all her life, she’s probably reached that stage where she’s thought ‘you know what, I don’t care, accept me as I am!’ ”

### **Question 7**

***If you were female would you remove the hair from your body? If so from where and why?***

*100% of the participants said they would.*

*Collective and inner experience as related to the previous question evokes specific reactions and emotions, the fear of rejection or being subjected to ridicule etc. leads to a redefinition of self in the public sphere. Fear of rejection is displaced through sublimation (an activity undertaken by an individual in order to divert or modify painful emotions). The act of removing the offending aspect of self and representing the self as re-formed displaces fear and rejection, through sublimation, into the more socially acceptable. Negative emotions are transformed into positive through the art of augmentation / re-presentation as the biologically augmented / socially redefined / restored and healed representation of the self as the idealised.*

“I do do my legs because quite often if you don’t do your legs people make comments about it, from husbands to girl friends, to complete strangers. ... I shave under my arms and the bikini line if I’m going on holiday and I am going to go swimming and then I do feel that I have to because people would stare if you didn’t.”

“Oh my God, of course, under arms, legs, in the summer, bikini line, going to the beach, just because it’s conditioning you know and I accept conditioning, ... I feel I’m fitting into the expected norm which is more helpful for others and for me and it’s like I say, like brushing my hair or brushing my teeth, I feel I’ve done the job. Groomed!”

“Yes I would, because that would make me feel part of a group. It’s the same thing if you are a gay man you do certain things to get that group of people to recognise you. It’s not only if you are a gay man it’s also if you’re a woman.”

“Yes all of the body hair ... it would make it look better, much more attractive and more feminine and less grotesque really.”

“Yes I shave my armpits, I shave my legs, the armpits it’s partly convention but it’s largely, it’s just more hygienic and it doesn’t smell, I don’t like that so, ... it’s just socially unacceptable, I suppose and I want to be attractive in the conventional way.”

“If I had the option of staying like that or removing the hair I would remove it, because if I were supposed to be female I would want to look and feel female.”

“Looking at that I don’t think it would be a possibility to remove the hair from the body. I mean you could shave but I don’t think it would make a lot of difference, it would still be there. So I don’t honestly know how you would go about it.”

“Yes for me it would simply be because I feel it does not look attractive. So for that reason I would go to quite some lengths to become less hairy if that’s how I was born. But then if you were born like that perhaps you would get used to that. I don’t know. From where I am at the moment I would definitely try and remove that hair. I do feel it would be impossible to meet the public, so it would be on the beach.”

“... women are meant to be the kind of stereotype which society wants, ... like I say it’s about society, this is the way it is, they [*women*] are required [*to shave*].”

“... I’ve actually been having a bit of laser hair treatment recently and its amazing and its like a pure practicality thing because I’m not very good, I’d like to look nice but my intellectual world is much more important, than what I’m looking like in the morning, so I’m rubbish, ... I’d much rather be reading a good book, ... but recently I’ve had a few goes at the laser hair removal because its just incredible and you don’t have to think, ‘if I’m going to a wedding next week where would I wax my legs?’ or if I’m going swimming tomorrow, ‘shit I haven’t shaved my legs and they will be really hairy so what if I bump into somebody in the swimming pool?’ So it’s, you know, I guess, I would say I would definitely be removing it from the legs and the armpits.”

### **Question 8**

***What does her hairiness suggest to you? Do you know what the reasons might be for such hairiness?***

*47 % thought the condition to be genetic or hormonal, the rest of the participants did not know.*

“Well there is a condition, a genetic condition, well I suppose we all have the disposition, we’re all created to have a certain amount of hairiness and some people’s bodies overstimulated to create hair in various places.”

“Hormone imbalance, that’s the only thing that comes to mind, that there’s something wrong hormonally.”

“Well it could be something either heredity or something to do with genetics. ... I don’t think its something deliberate she set out to achieve, I can’t see someone taking pills to make themselves look like that. I think its got to be something in the genes, somewhere along the line.”

“I would imagine its some genetic thing, you know its obviously for some reason, some people are born like more hairy than others and I can only assume that that’s the case here because you don’t get a sense of any maleness in any other way in turn, the hips and the body shape and the facial shape is so modern, ... gender has got slightly mixed up.”



“Women have been obsessed with removing body hair for a long time but I quite hanker after the days . . . where you could be just hairy, earthy and people didn’t look.”

“She looks very feminine, I’d probably associate it with hormonal disease where you have a lot more testosterone.”

*According to the gene pool imperative it could be argued that the response to Question Eight justifies the response to Question One which is based on a genetically justifiable natural instinct. However our socialisation has now embraced the concept that we should control and override our basic instincts if we are to live in a civilised society.*

*Empathy should overrule our primal instincts. Some form of understanding can usually be gauged if one is asked to align oneself with the other person’s situation.*

### **Question 9**

***Put yourself in her physical position, how would you feel?***

*80 % felt a sense of anxiety, shame or embarrassment, however they felt that if emotionally they had as much confidence as this female they could cope with it socially in some way.*

“Oh I’d have to get it all removed because I would not want attention, I could not live with that.”

“She looks quite happy actually, she looks quite comfortable in her pose with this body and actually that’s the thing that makes me desensitised quite quickly, that fact that she is quite comfortable with it makes me comfortable with looking.”

“Um, I personally, or I can’t put myself in her position because I’m not her. I don’t live like that.”

“I would feel very uncomfortable, every way and any way. If I had those legs then I suppose I would feel a sense of shame and embarrassment and think I would need to do something about it. But if I was as beautiful as her in other ways, then I might be able to do as bold as her, and to be confident about it and she’s obviously, its obviously working for her.”

“Cover myself up and hope for the best. . . . where she looks [*top bit*] womanly Ok, I’d cover the rest of me up.”

“I do feel it would be impossible to meet the public, . . .”

*One male’s response reversed the situation: “If I were to be shaven I’d look weird!”*

“It’s an interesting one, because this is stuff you can do nothing about, there is stuff that you can change and having fought a lifetime battle against being a very hairy girl, I know that at times, I know that however you look, logistically or practically speaking there will be times when it’s very depressing and you think, oh why me, why am I singled out to be carrying this affliction that makes me visible or makes you different, turns guys off, makes people stare? And so I

guess I know pragmatically speaking it is a cause for upset, but you know if she was missing an arm there is absolutely nothing you can do about that whereas body hair, there are ways and means.”

*Even when the true condition (of the female in the image) was revealed at this point and at the end of the participant response interview sympathy was in short supply. The answers revealed the continued judgmental disapproval of her behaviour and her mode of presentation.*

“She’s not trying to disguise the fact that she has a lot of hair. Sympathy would not be part of what I feel for her.”

“Well I feel sorry for what I said now, and I feel sorry for her and I hope there is a treatment. But I think she is being exploited, that’s even worse. . . . I feel slightly less sorry for her if she gets some sort of kick out of something like that, then I feel quite pleased for her really.”

“Oh, poor soul! It would give me sympathy for the condition, it doesn’t change my attitude to the provocative pose, which is still unpleasant.”

“Well it’s not that I dislike her as that, as I said I would not have the brass neck to do that, if I had that problem I’d keep myself covered up. Erm the fact that she can, or the fact that she didn’t suggests she’s either very adjusted with herself or she doesn’t give a damn one way or the other.”

Erm, it makes me, like I’m proud of her, I think good on her for having had an illness which has got this rather unpleasant side effects and what you can you tell from the picture, well, she looks like she’s pretty well on top of it.”

*This last response echoed several sentiments that despite the disapproval many women celebrated her confidence that, despite everything that was set against her this was a female who could hold her own in a seemingly socially hostile environment. This was particularly evidenced in the participants’ response to the following question.*

#### **Question 10**

***What does her form of display communicate to you? How would you interpret her pose and her attire? Who do you think she might be attractive to? ( 2nd part of question see below).***

*80 % said she displayed / communicated a strong sense of self confidence.*

I would say she is super confident that she’s sticking two fingers up at people saying ‘I don’t care, this is me, accept me as I am’, or she has decided it is something lucrative, it may make her money and therefore she is quite accepting to use it. I mean also it is something she can choose, or not choose to do. She can be hairy like this one day or tomorrow she decides, ‘I’ve had enough of this!’ She could shave it, I mean.”

“Ok, from her expression on her face she seems to be very confident. So she actually seems to be getting pleasure out of this.”

“She is comfortable. She’s chosen it, she likes it, she feels sexy.”

“I’m a little confused, because yes . . . the pose is quite divisive . . . but it doesn’t achieve what it tells me she is trying to achieve, because yes. Amazingly . . . sometimes when you see people they have gone a long way to make themselves look different. You get this sense they are desperately trying to attract your attention. I don’t get that from her, she looks quite at ease with herself. There is nothing there where she sees herself as a freak.”

“I suppose that she / he wants to make a statement. That s/he is not abnormal, or if she is, some people might find that attractive.”

“Erm vulnerable, because its unclothed and its very inviting, you know you’re putting yourself up as being sexually provocative and you want to attract a certain response from whoever looks at it.”

“I think she’s very sexual, it’s very sexual and it’s an invitation to men for sex to consider her as a sexual object.”

“I could say that she is trying to be sexually provocative, I find it unpleasant.”

“Well I would say it’s very provocative for a start, you would have to be very confident to be able to do that, she doesn’t display any discomfort with her looks if she can sit like that: [*posing in her underwear*] . . . that could be because there is a sort of pornographic element in it I would imagine, otherwise you don’t get photographed like that really.”

“The pose that she’s adopting, to me suggests absolute confidence, erm it’s quite a vulnerable pose to be striking erm and body hair or no body hair, I don’t know if many of my contemporaries would be comfortable about posing in a picture like that so. She comes across as being a very confident girl indeed and I guess there are all kinds of guys who aren’t bothered about body hair would just love her confidence.”

*When asked, who do you think might find her attractive? 60% suggested a man who might have some form of deviant or perverse tendencies.*

“Voyeuristic men.”

“A very confident man or a sort of people who like to play with a stereotype gender or gender sort of switch overs definitely.”

“There is nothing there that sees herself as a freak.”

“She is exhibiting hair which is kind of borderline socially acceptable and she is exhibiting it with pride. Which is interesting and presumably this is a fairly sexual image and presumably there is a certain kind of man who likes this.”

“Erm well, people that would look like her, well I suppose or slightly perverted, or is perverted the wrong word?”

“Perverted men.” [ *or* ] “Those who would not conform to society.” [*ie deviants*]

“Some people, you know, like that kind of like hairiness, so I’m pretty sure . . . it’s a matter of finding the right partner who would just really get turned on by that. . . . and we all know that there is so many people who like different things, like you know, there are some guys who are very obsessed with feet, some are obsessed with hairy legs, or some people who are obsessed with being chubby, or there is the really skinny kind so we have different people with different likings.”

“I guess there are all kinds of guys who aren’t bothered about body hair would just love her confidence.”

“Some strange sexual niche of people who I don’t think many of us know.”

*In the ensuing analysis of participants’ responses a sense of relief emerges that this female does not pose much of a competitive threat. She is different from the norm. Her sexual viability is assessed to be on the margins of society. This concept is further reinforced by the idea that (as some participants suspected) she has been deliberately presented as some kind of humourous trick / deception.*

“I thought it was some sort of trick, then a joke and now I think I have become desensitised in the short time I have been looking at it, I’m quite accepting of the hairy legged woman with a problem, . . .”

“. . . it could be just a dress up, . . . it could be a guy, or you know maybe some kind of operation . . . sex change . . . that’s what’s always making me look and she is always looking back at you!”

“Well I’m guessing it might be somebody who is transsexual.”

“Its fascinating, like when we see an attractive woman, as in Photoshopped women who are perfect you know 24-7. I’m not saying I like looking at it but it’s a sort of comical curiosity . . . but its fascinating like ‘how is that feasible?’ It’s not, it’s not possible.”

“I thought it was a set up, not serious. I thought it was photoshopped with a man’s body and a female’s head.”

“I mean, unless she / it’s a man who has had drastic surgery you wouldn’t possibly be able to get that.”

“I don’t know, I’m trying to work out . . . its not graphic enough to be pornographic . . . is there an element, I don’t want to use the word freak show?”

*When, as indicated in the title of the magazine, Bizarre, and the caption by her image ‘Hirsutes you Sir’ is revealed / recalled, what was initially suspected has now been confirmed.*

*Relative to the competitive gaze of the female evaluating the other female in this image, the deception being revealed, the normal comparative process can establish that the hairy legged female is undesirable to the mainstream male and therefore the female in the image is not viable*

*as representing any serious competition to the female viewers. The female viewer is now not only aware that there is no problem but becomes desensitised to the experience of attempted deception as a potential competitive strategy.*

*The presented object of desire is accepted as or rationalised as some part of a cruel game that should be understood in the context of some kind of voyeurism, a joke or tease, or trick of sexual deception, as with the transvestite, transsexual or image manipulation, or that of some sort of surgery has been involved. However having been duped into viewing a further gradual realisation unfolds as participants are asked to consider the next question.*

### **Question 11**

***What do you feel is the context behind the image? What do you surmise from the title of the magazine 'Bizarre' in which the image appeared and the accompanying caption 'Hirsutes you Sir'?***

*67% said she was presenting herself as sexual and inviting.*

*Some participants had already answered this in the previous question (10) thus some overlapping occurred.*

*"Well it's voyeurism, I would have thought. Well it's terribly sexist but I would say men. I'm sorry I don't know why but it's just come straight to my head, I suppose everybody to a degree, people are fascinated with people who are different and we have become a terribly nosy culture and so I would say that its equivalent to the old freak show isn't it? But I'm glad it's not me but it is interesting."*

*"She is trying to be sexually provocative."*

*"Invitation and its an invitation to men for sex to consider her as a sexual object."*

*"There is a sort of pornographic element in it I would imagine, otherwise you don't get photographed like that really."*

*"She is sort of up for anyone who is interested in her as a person, she doesn't care if they're a man / women, transsexual whatever, it's a personal thing. I think it's a very confident pose, I don't think there are many that are transsexual and confident but there are probably a few that have arrived at some place that one will never know."*

### **Question 12**

***Do you know what Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome is?***

*Only 33% of the participants had an idea of what Polycystic Syndrome was and most had sympathy for her concerning the condition, however many (as previously stated by the respondents in the later part of question 9) felt unease or disapproval with her pose.*

In the context of responses to question 11 and 12, the female participant / viewer, in relation to her compulsive comparison of this male devised erotic image, is compelled to engage with the image once more from a new perspective. There is a realisation that the complexity of

this visual communication restates the sexual presentation as a subterfuge for erotic purposes and is a process of sublimation in a different category. The focus of attention is from a new perspective, a different domain is occupied by the object of desire. The gaze is coerced into an acceptance of sexual fantasy whereby subterfuge and the deliberate misunderstanding in its simplest form is in itself an expression of a determination to exercise preference and / or choice.

## **7.6 Preference and choice (confirmation and rejection) as an evaluation system within and without the self**

Based upon accumulated experience which in its turn leads to outward manifestations or reactions and inwardly (as empathy) to defined emotions, rejection leads to sublimation and displacement activity in the actual and actions. Fear of rejection is appeased or displaced through sublimation.

The need for differentiation leads to perceptual acuity in the male and female manifesting itself in preference and choice. Preference and choice reside within the individual level of acuity and are not problematic until confirmation is required of them by the other. The confirmation (or lack of it) becomes acceptance or rejection of that of which confirmation is sought. In the event, confirmation when linking into the inner consciousness leads to defined emotions (as does rejection, albeit differently). Confidence is a reflection of confirmation and lack of confidence one of rejection. Together they create empathy where the assumption is that the other self is much the same as the self. Also, when the defined emotions are coupled with compulsive comparison they become embedded, reliable and predictable, leading to a collective psychology, for predictable emotion defines us as human. These characteristics, as an inner response or experimental assimilation of confirmation and / or rejection have, by implication, an impact upon behaviour. This behaviour germinates in the inner consciousness and later manifests itself in external expression. Confirmation and rejection are two sides of the same coin inasmuch as rejection is in actuality non-confirmation. Although this might be considered a semantic point, in biological evolutionary terms this perspective is helpful to our understanding of sexual imperatives. Non-acceptance is the strongest force requiring action or impelling reaction of some kind, just as rejection of one person by another elicits the greatest complexity and most powerful emotional responses.

As positive or negative forces, acceptance or rejection either require responses or they do not. The decision whether or not is dependent upon the imperatives and time constraints in each case. Some things are urgent, some are not, some responses can be enacted now, others later, some can be responded to but others cannot. In the context of compulsive comparison it is the negative which causes the most difficulty and requires urgent strategies for the equally compulsive restoration of confident confirmation or augmentation, facilitating a kind of equilibrium and enabling a continuance of comparative momentum.

Rejection therefore demands urgent strategic actions which might be dependent upon complexity requiring a phased response if not a quick fix. Bearing this in mind, in returning to our image it is pertinent to investigate just what emotions does the 'other gaze' register with the self and *vice versa*, and what might be tangible or intangible responses to those emotions. In viewing this image a female viewer's natural inclination would suggest a willingness to conform or make an alliance with her own gender. This emotional response is not, however, feasible because to be covered with so much hair evokes a sense of horror in most females, therefore



natural alliance is in this case tempered by empathy becoming pity. Although it completely undermines the model's femininity this is to some extent a selfish emotional response which is founded upon a stark reminder of how nature can sabotage a woman's sense of self. Similarly the opposite of this same reactive response might be excitement, in that she is in a way demanding acceptance of her normal confirmation of her status as a biological and social ideal, however defiantly she breaks the rules of stereotype, by associative support of her own gender rather than competing with it. At the same time she is in control of her sexuality and confident in her identity. The modern female empathises with this image because she knows that perfection in achieving the stereotypical ideal is difficult and that any failure to do so has repercussions. Facing rejection, ridicule, and being marginalised in nature would lead to being outside the group and thereby outside its protection and nurturing. This awareness of the difference in otherness female-to-female, male-to-male, female to male, underpins behavioural differentiation and offers as alternatives confirmation mechanisms or sublimation.

Women who suffer from excessive hairiness usually have a condition called Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome which causes too much testosterone to be produced by the body. In the present day they are not greatly constrained since by their own actions they are able to re-present and thereby reconfirm / reconfirm by augmentation. For example drug therapy can now contain this form of masculinisation. Contemporary societies' unease at this condition of hairiness is deepened by the knowledge that if left untreated it can cause all sorts of gynaecological problems ie infertility and embryos developing in the fallopian tubes. It is, however, the hair which is considered the most 'abnormal' and therefore distressing. Re-confirmation of what is considered natural, normal, is biologically desirable, socially acceptable and restorative.

Relative to the biological imperative manifest in the copulatory gaze, residual hair in any substantial quantity equates to infertility because of excess testosterone causing masculinisation. Therefore its removal is essential in order to rehabilitate the body and thereby the self. Those who are forced for whatever reason out of the purview of the copulatory gaze undergo sublimation and thereby confirmation under the non-copulatory female gaze. In the context of this thesis, grooming is a displacement activity which over time leads to body modification. The evolution of this activity relative to adornment was discussed earlier in Chapter 4 pages 91 and 93 in relation to Gelada monkeys. See also Chapter 9.6-9.7.

Females have certainly been grooming, that is plucking out their hair, for several thousands of years. There are many examples of instruments and methods of depilation. Examples are housed at the Pitt Rivers Museum demonstrating that such things as small clams with hinge intact (like tweezers) have been used to pull out hairs. Another method is to roll a fine string over the hairs so it traps them and pulls them out, a method similar to waxing. There is also sugaring, a method used since Egyptian times, and many primitive tribes still use sharpened bamboo as a razor. To confirm this further one has only to note that all forms of representation of the female body, at every stage in history, have depicted it as being explicitly devoid of hair. From the onset of a girl's mental development, the idea that the ideal woman has smooth skin becomes embedded deep in the feminine subconscious. Programmed by compulsive comparison, an inner assessment based on ideas of sameness and difference, females try to match up things which can be identified, and assign them to a male or female archetype. The ungratified sexual gaze, as previously referenced, relates in this context to an inclination or impulse *via* compulsive comparison not only to sexual fantasy but also its associated displacement activities.

The removal of body hair has over time metamorphosed into the ritualistic underpinning of much female social interaction related to fantasy in response to the male copulatory gaze. The association of hairlessness with ideal beauty or as an erotic signifier is all-pervasive in the iconography of modern humans, suggesting that this biologically based behavioural phenomenon has become a contributory factor in cultural definition. This has served to entrench ideas which from the outset form part of a female's personal, mental and social developmental conditioning.

The archetypal female ideal based upon smooth skin is established in the feminine subconscious as a paradox of solidarity and competitiveness which is mediated into empathy. In relatively contemporary terms the ability cognitively to mediate opposing emotions or instinctual responses is to be able to direct compulsive comparison away from overt aggression and / or kinships as a mechanism to legitimise or mitigate the impact and implications of rejection for the benefit of the 'un-chosen' many. Programmed by compulsive comparison, an inner system of assessment based on ideas of sameness and difference, females try to match up things which can be identified, to categorise them as real / actual or unreal / imagined and / or intangible, each of which pairings are interdependent.

Something which does not fit the formula is incompatible, but it is this very difference which is significant and which can convey different messages or interpretations. As discussed, body hair demonstrates some of these significances as interpretations, appropriate to each of the opposite sex as perceptual (as opposed to actual physical response) but also as displacements of the biological imperatives brought about by rejection or the possibility of rejection. In the example, it is evident that if the hair were to be taken away there is immediately no doubt that the individual is feminine, the image creates no disturbance and is of mild interest and therefore, if not in other respects competitive, can be relegated to the non-threatening or perhaps identified as a possible future ally.

The disjuncture of confrontations, whether actual or representational, as in the image discussed, resulting in displacement actions such as hair removal also leads to a disjuncture between the actuality of the other female and subsequent relegation to non-threatening competitor but also relegates this competitive other to an other devoid of sexual threat. This eventually leads to cognitive re-imaging because displacement activity somehow stimulates the return of self-esteem as sublimation. The negation leading to acceptance of rejection, or non-perpetuation of rejection, requires a cognitive response which replaces loss with possibility. To be effective coping strategies displacement activities should result in something better than that which was lost, and therefore require ingenious solutions.

## **7.7 Summary**

As suggested earlier, humans judge the sex of a person by appearance and behaviour, as alternative to or complementing their own sex, as defined by biological references and their accompanying instincts based on compulsive comparison. Sensory signal detection of differences was once sufficient to determine the nature of the other, but the evolutionary process in objectification has resulted, it is argued, in a complex sequence of inter-relational perceptions and behavioural activities which have conditioned specific gender responses. These responses are a consequence of perceived criteria which are seemingly based upon ideal or abstract principles. Such criteria are based on a complex set of values, which go beyond the biological. We look at what is absent and what is present, what is familiar and what is unfamiliar, look at

what is common, look for what is visible to find out what is not visible, and form an opinion about how things should be and compare it with the person in the image. The ideal has been used as a touchstone in the cultural and biological drive to dictate behaviour.

. . . girls will learn very early that a key responsibility in having a female body is to present it as attractively as possible. This theme of decoration is not restricted to the West, although the yardstick of attractiveness will depend on the ideal in any particular culture. . . . But whatever the measure it is the woman's body which has the rateable value. . . . Our decorative potential is closely linked with our function as potential child bearers. We learn the dual importance of how our bodies should look and how our bodies should work. For maximum value they have to operate together - when women's bodies cease to have functional value with advancing years, they lose their decorative value as well. What do women look forward to in return? If we fulfill our decorative and functional roles, we anticipate acceptance, approval, admiration, love, security and a sense of power and importance. . . . A woman's body image becomes the most fundamental part of her self image. From menstruation to menopause, her self image will change as her body image changes, for better or for worse, depending on how she perceives the reaction of others. This parallel affects her all her life. If a woman's body is negated, she is negated, if her body is an object, she is an object; if her body is exploitable, she is exploitable, if her body is pleasing, she is pleasing; if her body has no value, she has no value.<sup>24</sup>

So in desperation woman learns, indeed is positively encouraged, to cheat the system. She gains approval by doing so, it is called good grooming, presentation, social acceptance and so on. It is argued that cheating the system or knowing the system and then using it to your own advantage to dupe the copulatory gaze requires a further stage in objectification, the production criteria for which embody pertinent imperatives.

The causal effect of the above defined phenomena resulted in a further re-configuration of intelligence to elevate it to another level, that of the art of conceptualisation. This widened the scope for exploration, organisation and application of further cognitive mechanisms, of distinctions, insights, realisations and conclusions of the real *versus* abstract notions.

The recognition and exchange of this knowledge, transmitted and accepted as a new form of social communication between humans, not only impacted upon the necessity for sublimation through the presentation / re-presentation of the physical self but also generated the need for the creation of artefacts which could not only further facilitate self realisation on a physical level but which would also communicate on a cognitive level. What follows therefore is a discussion aimed at exposing the bridging mechanisms between motivations for the sexual interaction, the emotions, social requirements and the object.

LEVEL 5 - EARLY HOMO SAPIENS 130,000 - 60,000 YEARS AGO - CHAPTER 7

| Biological Imperatives |  | Sociological Imperatives    |                      | Psychosexual Imperatives |   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative               | Sexual Selection Imperative | Aesthetic Imperative | Control Imperative       | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |
| 1                      | The objectified body                       |                             | Desirability         |                          | Repressed desires and needs                               |
| 2                      | Perception of difference and diversity     |                             | Social suitability   |                          | The personal/<br>social identity                          |
| 3                      | Psycho-emotional responses and values      |                             | Body neuroses        |                          |   |
| 4                      | Compulsive comparison                      |                             | The idealised        | Stereotype alignment     | Psychosexual<br>anxieties                                 |
| 5                      | Pandering to the copulatory gaze           |                             | The idealised        |                          | Body transformation                                       |
| 6                      | Body transformation behaviour              |                             | Gender alliance      |                          | Acceptance<br>anxieties                                   |
| 7                      | Representation of self as object of status |                             | Ranking of status    |                          | Status anxieties  |

HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES ( PAGES 34 - 36 )

Figure 7.2 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 5

## CHAPTER 8

### Products of the human mind: Sublimation as ‘Mentifact’

Chapter Eight. Level 6.

**Key concepts:**

**Decoding the image. Conceptual awareness. Psycho-sexual sublimation. Embodiment of emotional values in an object. Common symbolic values.**

**Cognitive benchmarks:**

**Collective recognition of symbolic values. Socio-cultural objects as vehicles for sublimation. The conceptualised art object.**

**This Chapter contains Case Study 2, ‘The Red Heart’. The Research Interview Schedule 1 Appendix page 367 and the statistical data can be found in the Appendix pages 359, 368 - 370**

The previous Chapter, level 5, defined a new level of consciousness in sublimatory behaviour which opened the door to the art of conceptual awareness. This new phenomenon provided the scope for creative possibilities and development of the mentifact level 6 as a new tool for sublimation and representation of the values and conditions of life requiring expression. This Chapter seeks to extend the previous discussion by examining the psychological link to physical needs and the creative expression of it through the artefact. This intellectual ability provides a critical gauge for the identification of one of the most significant steps in levels of consciousness, of cognitive ability in the human skill of linking visual perception with mental perception. This section seeks to extend the discussion by examining the identification and analysis of the bio-psychological processes involved in the phenomenon of the creation and reading of an artefact.

Case Study 2, ‘The Red Heart’ identifies the origins and evolution of signs, codes and symbols as a tool for sublimation and / or mental dialogue and shows how the process of concept formation takes place and how our primal past is linked in to the present.

### 8.0 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at compulsive comparison in the search for establishing meaning as part of the copulatory gaze mechanism. It discussed the use of binary opposites as critical evaluative references to define and actualise self-identity by comparison of difference between self and other, and how this was a process which could equally be applied to other areas of human experience in the understanding and expression of both our internal and external worlds.

In this context similes, analogies and metaphors are of great value in making sense of our world, especially in the realm of the abstract and the metaphysical, but are also very useful in the more complex context of the human need for reification and / or sublimation, and how products of the mind are articulated / manifested in concrete form to facilitate this development.

For this purpose the symbolisation of the human heart will be considered in detail. This chapter discusses how our cognitive and creative activities, and objects such as jewellery are used as tools for the human activity of displacement or sublimation. The heart, known as the symbol of love, will be deconstructed to show how it connects into the psychosexual sublimatory part of the copulatory gaze.

## 8.1 The heart of the matter

### **Study illustration 1 figure 8.1: a prehistoric bead and Study illustration 2 figure 8.2: a prehistoric bead necklace Case Study illustration 3 figure 8.3: “The Red Heart”**

The social conditioning which impacts upon individual psychology and natural behaviour results in an acculturated human individual. Sexual sublimation in this context is manifested in displacement activity such as the making of objects and / or imbuing an object with values and meanings. Jewellery as an object is a further sublimated activity when placed on the body in the sense that the body itself becomes something to be objectified. The designed object and its subject content representation is a measure of the complexity of the culture and / or the level of consciousness it represents as both an aesthetic experience and a recognition of the subliminal.

Therefore, inasmuch as bio-imperatives form the foundation of socio-cultural constructs it could be said that jewellery as a vehicle for displacement activity reflects specific cognitive levels. The notion of cognitive jewellery is discussed later (in Chapter 10), however its conceptual relevance is related at this point of the discussion to questions surrounding sexual instincts and desires. This chapter examines psycho-sexual behaviour motivations and the repercussions when these are transformed and operating as subliminal within the object as an aesthetic projection of social content and context evolved from the reproductive imperative ie., as a complexity of interrelated physiological, psychological and social impacts upon the individual. This biological, anthropological, psychological and social evolutionary sequence is reflected in the 19th century canon of literature <sup>1</sup> and is now pertinent to a revision of this discourse within contemporary evolutionary theory.

Darwin’s evolutionary findings and research into sexual selection inspired Freud’s extensive enquiry into the human’s ‘psychosexual development’. His theories on the importance of individuals’ early experiences of libidinal development such as the oral, anal, genital, latency, phallic stages and their relevance to object relations, and (as argued here), the maturing mind’s development of objects / mentifacts with analogous psychosexual conceptualised content. This is particularly relevant in relation to the following images of jewellery objects to be investigated

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview and historical context of the history of sexuality, see: Pat Caplan, ed., *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1987; reprint, London: Routledge, 1995), 1-25 (page references are to reprint edition).

“... the impact of Darwinism. Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* had already hinted at the applicability of the theory of natural selection to humans, With Darwin’s *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* another element was added: the claim that sexual selection (the struggle for partners) acted independently of natural selection (the struggle for existence) so that survival depended upon sexual selection, and the ultimate test of biological success lay in reproduction (Darwin, 1871). This led to a revival of interest in the sexual ‘origins’ of individual behaviour and a sustained effort to delineate the dynamics of sexual selection, the sexual impulse, and the differences between the sexes. Biology became the privileged road into the mysteries of nature, and its findings were backed up by evidence of natural history in all its wondrous peculiarity and order.” Ibid.33.

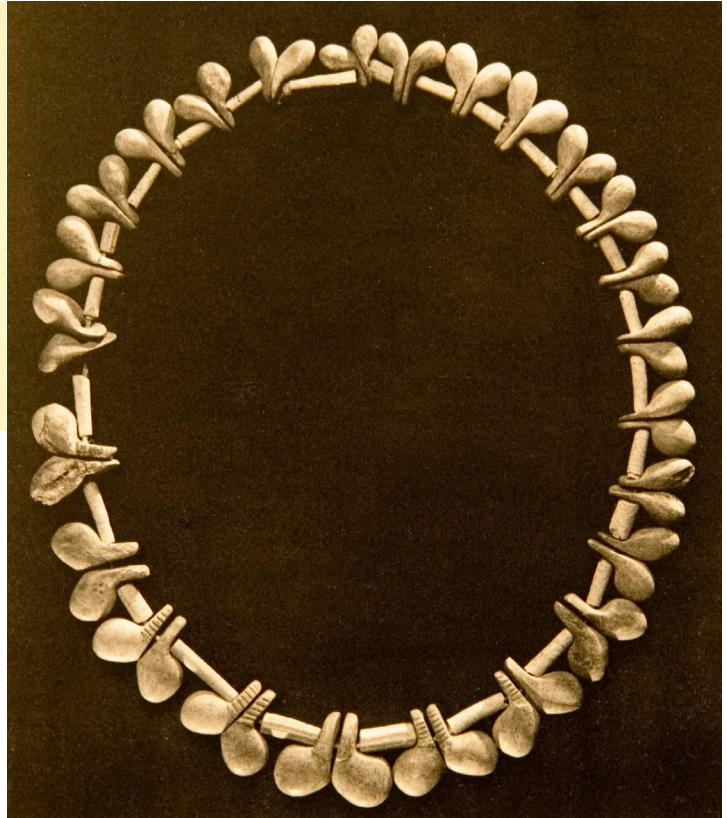


for analysis, whereby Freud's theories enable us to identify and understand these subsequent manifestations in appropriate contexts.

Taboo, it is argued, is the prime motivating factor of sublimation, which has come to obfuscate overt sexual reference in social discourse and object making. Where displacement of overt sexual expression became subversive sexual reference through supplanted representation, opportunities opened up for enquiry and experimentation which led to the development of new practices within the various branches of material culture, not least jewellery. This plurality in motivation is a key concept which is utilised during the later part of the discussion of the symbolic signifier as illustrated by contemporary jewellery and the iconic image of 'the heart' (figure 8.3).



*Figure 8.1 Ivory carved bead*



*Figure 8.2 Bone bead and mollusc necklace*

By evaluating the prehistoric images in figures 8.1 and 8.2, related and common factors in all three forms (figure 8.3) a contemporary piece can be discussed. If, as is suggested, these common basic factors hold true in representational forms, irrespective of the time gaps, they need to be framed within an account of human psychosexual formative origins. Visual analysis demonstrates how humans may have developed to the next stage of 'aesthetic' understanding and the production and use of art as mentifacts, and their role in contemporary society and culture. The analysis demonstrates how we may be seen to draw on our own physicality which has throughout evolutionary time provided reference points, relating to ideas and concepts, not only inspirational, but also in the creation of crafted forms. In their many and varied manifestations mentifacts have been drawn from the physical and the metaphysical actuality of all stages of human evolution and individual development.

Discussed in Chapter 5, is the recognition of flowers as analogies and their reference relevance when placed on the body. Here the heart in its stylised form can achieve symbolic relevance when placed on the body to act as a vehicle for sublimation of psychosexual instincts and desires. Freud had to admit that psychoanalysis only tries to tell scientifically the truths which

artists have somehow always been aware of. Artists can consolidate their seeing and knowing into one and mentally transform it into visual forms which have the power to evoke our deepest emotions.

The origins of the heart form are biological and the derivative representations are an abstraction of several related forms, distilled and stylised into one symbolic form. As seen today, its shape probably evolved and consolidated as sexualised culture evolved and became more complex over time. Traces of this can be found in many objects, the earliest identified made some 28,000 B.C, (see figure 8. 1, and figure 8.2 is another example from 10,000-8,000 B.C). Figure 8.1 is a photograph of an ivory carved bead, a single unit of several as part of a necklace. Found in Dolni Vestonice, Czechoslovakia it is thought to be one of the earliest known figurative representations in an art / jewellery object. Length, 3.2 cm.<sup>2</sup> In the context of the following discussion of figure 8.1 'figurative' is perhaps an understatement.

As previously established, we have seen how individual ideas translated into concepts which link together to form a narrative and then re-form again to form an overarching symbol. We have seen how the mind organises information and processes it as the translation from the signifier to the signified. In our innate, insatiable appetite for compulsive comparisons as reproductive imperative, our genes have designed our brain / mind with the mechanisms to sort out such things as self-recognition through self-reference, identity of objects and recognition of their symbolic relevance. We do this by groupings and clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and establishing complex relations between them. We do this in our art / jewellery making, where it is characterised as composition and design realisation.

In discussing the bead in figure 8.1, the material / symbolic unit of the bead, in phonic or visual form, conceptual or narrative is a concrete manifestation or reflection of those operations of the mind which define the structure of the unconscious voice relative to and interconnected with the discourse of consciousness. In the creation of this bead, one can see how the object becomes the discourse through which both are articulated as composites of mind and material / biological and sociological, which can no longer be detached from each other. Here metaphor provides, by example, a model of the unconscious and conscious dialogue operations of both viewer and maker. The composition of the carved form doubles as both a representation of a breast and the phallic symbol, and are a combined inner vision / evocation of fertility and maternity, coupled with a display of potency and power, falling into binary opposites, male / female, masculine / feminine, active / passive and so on. With neither one being dominant the one keeps re-positioning in relation to the other in its signifying chain of connections and identities.

The ingenuity of conceptual and visual organisation by the artist directly acknowledges / connects us to our innate preoccupation with sex which threatens, at times, to overwhelm us. The designed object oscillating between evocation and pacification keeps an interesting tension which for the viewer is both unresolved and yet resolved. This is also the case in figure 8.2. However, here the creator of the object has taken a slightly different approach in manufacture which is interesting to look at, for it further exemplifies the bio-imperative influence in creativity. Whilst both bead units in figures 8.1 and 8.2 show symmetry and balance, figure 8.1 reflects this as a deliberately contemplated crafted bead carved out of a piece of ivory. In figure

<sup>2</sup>  
1987), 22.

Lois Sherr Dubin, *The History of Beads: from 30,000 B.C. to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.,

8.2 it is almost as though something (like the rounded ends of wishbone) may have prompted the idea in the artist's mind's eye and then later s/he recreated the repetitive forms in a more deliberate manner and in a more substantial but similar material.

The neckpiece in figure 8.2<sup>3</sup> is formed and assembled rather differently from figure 8.1. Each breast / phallus unit of carved bone bead is a separate half unit making up a whole other unit. Each half unit is a mirror image of the other, and, when assembled together they merge to become the familiar heart shape form. Each bead has been carefully crafted in size so that each unit (of two half units) when assembled subtly scale down in successive stages to the back of the neck. Here the creator of the object has also deliberately attempted to collect and collate specific ready made / found mollusc shell spacers of equal size (to separate the carefully carved bone units) until the beautifully balanced form of the neckpiece brings everything together in harmony as a circle.

When looking at the mirrored units the mind merges them to read not only as breasts but also as male and female sexual anatomy. Simultaneously the beads also read as buttocks and if one turns a single unit sideways on, we have a side view of erect penises. These small units combine to form levels of symbolic presence (hinting at fertility and eroticism) to be superimposed and replaced by the appearance of new symbolic concepts which in turn provide new contexts and content according to need, to be built upon, as they and humans symbiotically evolve through time. Within these two selected objects can be seen an amalgam of the basic structure of how forms of language and visual representational systems are formed and utilised.

Freud understood that it was not easy to define the psychological phenomena of feelings towards the inanimate, especially those which seem at first to have no apparent connection with the emotions they engender. The object / subject relations nonetheless happen frequently enough for humans to recognise that specific forms can encapsulate a collective, unified vision of human experiences. This happens when disparate energies come together and is seen most often in visual forms, a primary example is the phallic symbol. One needs to explore the environment which may have given rise to it in order to establish a framework within which to deconstruct the image / object. Connections soon become identifiable, as in these following images.

Initially the heart form, so familiar to man, woman and child, is nothing like the true form of the biological heart that pumps blood round the body, however one's life depends on it and it is the first to respond to the emotional stresses connected with being in love and this is probably where the first analogy lies. The seemingly innocent heart form is, in fact, a Pandora's box packed with highly charged psychosexual content, as will be evidenced later.

## 8.2 Getting to the heart of the matter: Case study 2 'The Red Heart'

Before attempting to deconstruct or decode the image in figure 8.3 as exemplifying key factors and elements which prescribed the embodiments encapsulated in its unique and specific shape, the criteria to be applied or considered should first be established in the following discussion. As

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<sup>3</sup> An example of Neolithic bead jewellery made by the Natufians, inhabitants of the Jordan River valley 10,000 to 8,000 B.C. Length, 18 cm. Lois Sherr Dubin, *The History of Beads: from 30,000 B.C. to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1987), 31.



*Figure 8.3 The Red Heart*

previously discussed, our view of images in terms of recognition of ambiguity and analogy is not only confined to the body but also applies to created objects such as jewellery, the relevance of which to us is dependent upon our individual and shared experiences.

In attempting to explain by description, analysis and decoding of its significances it should be understood that the jewellery piece in figure 8.3 is a contemporary piece, a heart suspended in barbed wire, which was created as a reflective response to life's desires, needs, pleasures, pains and frustrations caused by the phenomenon and ambiguities of the biological trap, by what are determined notions of 'love / sex', representing the individual yet collective pulse that beats in every living soul. It also exemplifies a key set of bio-socially and emotionally based issues, the criteria from which have been specifically applied in its construction. It shows how these issues previously discussed may inform our view of images in terms of recognition.<sup>4</sup>

For example the heart in its operational physical form can stand defined in its own right or as a symbol of its vital role in maintaining human life. At the same time, however, it may also symbolise and encompass in its stylised form that large part of human nature which is experienced by most as an emotional condition which we define in contemporary terms as love

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<sup>4</sup> Featured outcome of collaborative materials research, 2000. Designed and made by the author, this twentieth century representation of the heart is hand sculpted from perspex. It is mounted in a silver wire structure representing barbed wire. The silver structure is made from a newly developed silver alloy, the unusual hardening properties of which allow for the uncanny oscillation of the perspex heart within its structure.



and may appear in all its various levels, intensities and manifestations. This raises the issue of whether the symbol of the heart, banished for a long time from the 'academic' design studio for its perceived Kitsch or sentimental connotations, has been incorrectly abandoned to dismissive or trite analysis since it persistently survives in all its variant forms and contexts. Applying a freshly informed analysis, it is argued, soon reveals that within this most ancient of symbols may lie the answers as to why, how and where innate erotic desires become enmeshed into our cultural objects.

If artists as creative intermediaries in evolving culture have been designated the responsibility to make manifest subliminal motivations then the images of the heart which they have proliferated in many forms are an explicit example useful for analysis. Therefore the connecting of the body, mind and social collective experiences through objects have been, it is suggested, a process of constant revision throughout evolution. The object which captures our emotions (our response to our environment), through analogies and similes, can be made discernible and the moment can be grasped.

### **Introduction to Case study 2 'The Red Heart'.**

Representations of the heart have come over time to embody in symbolic form that which we recognise emotionally as such intense emotions as love, desire, gratification, the strange conflicts of pleasure and pain and the turmoil of the anxieties they bring with them such as fear of rejection, denial and lack of fulfillment, separation and loss.

Love in the context of the research is defined as: an intense feeling or emotion for a specific thing, object or person. All manifestations of love ie., of self / other / partner/ objects are manifestations of innate primitive survival instincts. It is a state of being that influences our perceptions of and response to the person or thing which becomes the focus of that love. As a phenomenon common to all human experience it is this element that makes the subject so susceptible to suppression and hence sublimation. This was exemplified by the piece of contemporary conceptual jewellery selected for this case study, The Red Heart, whereby the interviewees' perceptions / personal experiences / emotions and backgrounds were collectively brought to the research.

The selected piece of conceptual jewellery and participants' interpretation / description of their psychological responses to it provided a route into the specific visual criteria debate. This supports the research argument as to the role of artifact and viewer as interactive / symbiotic participants in emotional disturbance through its displacement into sublimation.

The case study falls into two parts. The first two questions elicit individual accounts of participants' responses to the object as a conceptual / mental dialogue whereby the visual form (a composition of signifiers) triggers processes in the unconscious which can, when surfacing in the conscious mind as discourse, be articulated. Therefore this first part shows via participants' responses how the visual form provides a frame of reference wherein is compressed a convergence of ideas and emotions as meanings which consolidate to form an overarching narrative. Therefore the object creates a fusion with the emotional mind to crystallise as discourse and so facilitates its sublimation.

The second part of the case study (questions 3 and 4) asks participants to deconstruct the form of the heart into components. In doing so it is demonstrated how the sensuality of its physical form provides a reference to the subliminal undertow of the erotic / psychosexual *via* the connotations explicit to the sexualised body and the mindset of our psyche. In addition this part of the case study demonstrates how the mental processes of the bio-psychosexual imperative operates subversively outside the realm of an individual's awareness (question 5 and 6). It also shows how the artefact, as art, acts as an object for the sublimation / displacement of the drive of the bio-sexual imperative so that it can be realised / diffused through form and made palatable in its social context. The resultant findings can be evaluated against the hypotheses which are further reflected in the proposition's categories, the matrix (figure 11.1) / critical frame (figure 11.2a), and through the theory of the copulatory gaze.

The following presentation of the first part of the case study (questions 1 and 2) show how the visual image stimulated the recall of particular emotional ideas, situations or experiences associated with the complex, abstract, but nonetheless very real phenomenon of love. Participants' responses evidenced how there is not one kind of love but many.

The heart embodied in tangible form articulated an emotional state for participants as they related their own unique configuration / narrative of experiences. In turn this narrative was, as an object of digested, substantiated, objectivised emotional substance, sublimated / recycled to take on a revised meaning of its own.

## Case Study 2. 'The Red Heart'. Figure 8.3

### Question 1.

**What emotional content / context does the image communicate to you?**

*100 % of the participants recognised that the image communicated the pleasure and pain conflicts, turmoil and contradictions experienced when one is affected by the condition of love.*

"Well, conflict, it's a heart, it's a symbol of life, it's shiny, it's luscious, it's lively and it's wrapped in barbed wire. . . . I'm familiar with jewellery of this style, you know, that talks about these conflicts, those contrasts. Also I immediately think of the religious symbolism, Christ on the cross, the crown of thorns, the Madonna's heart, those sort of things, but, there is also a kind of offering of love here which is immediately conflicted by being surrounded by barbed wire, so a kind of insecurity of offering love in a relationship, . . ."

"Well the heart is for love and for life, you need a heart to live, and if you love somebody that means your heart's involved and their heart's involved and, I mean, that means the same if you have got children. It's love under any situation, unconditional love, regardless."

"I love heart shapes and the heart for me represents love, and secondary, I suppose, life. But that is sort of an image to me of somebody's heart in encased by the barbed wire, but it's almost encased quite gently because none of the barbed wire is impaling the heart. None of the spikes are going in, . . . it's almost like being caressed, but in a barricade. [*What would you normally associate barbed wire with?*] Pain, but I don't see this as pain because, if any of these had been in the heart then I would have probably said broken heart. But the way I can see this, it's



holding it. And this shape, and this is really bizarre, it reminds me of a champagne glass and I know that's just basic imagery or you could almost think of hands holding the heart. But there is a definite, it's a barrier. "Protect my heart. [*Protect it from it from what?*] I don't know, pain, I hurt you before you hurt me. It could be love me and you will be hurt, my heart is protected by a barrier, you would have to break through this barrier if you wanted to get to my heart."

"Right erm, it's, well it's various things but the main way I see it, it's like, the heart looks like the emotional aspect of the individual who's trying to protect himself or herself."

*67% of the participants sensed a binary relationship. For most this was more often than not occurring at a subconscious level where modes of perception were being prompted by the conceptual binary elements of the design. Though not clearly defined as such it was nonetheless evident that such processes were taking place as an intuitive mechanism and were being voiced through free association.*

"Love, hate. [*why?*] Because love, heart, symbol of heart, love, versus symbol of barbed wire, erm, Auschwitz, hatred of Jews or hatred of prisoners. Keeping them in with barbed wire, or it's a keeping in thing, and the heart's a very giving, welcoming thing so it's this contradiction between, love and hate. . . . Yeah inside and outside, you know the heart is inside the body and the barbed wire is outside. Prison or the camp or, you know, it is a very strange image in that regard, it's almost a go together. [*Here the participant sensed the binary mechanism and tried to explain it in the context of her interpretation when probed as to what she meant*] Oh the barbed wire is encapsulating the heart which is very strange. In the image, they're sort of going together, and you know you can't have one without the other with anything. The colour black doesn't exist unless you have white so likewise you can't have an extreme emotion without the other, they absolutely depend on each other and they become the same thing . . . so to me it's an image that's drawn together."

"Something like unhappiness, it's uncomfortable. . . . The barbed wire idea, like somebody's heart is being broken or damaged or a broken romance, or some terrible thing that's happened to somebody. [*For this participant the image evoked*] . . . no pleasure, not to me anyway but some people might get pleasure from pain."

"A strange combination, erm quite jagged, quite a mixture of emotional content, because it's violent and not violent, however quite aggressive as an image. [*asked to explain why it might be aggressive the respondent replied.*] Well the barbed wire, that instantly brings up no go areas, barbed wire it's about keeping people in, so it's erm, contradicting itself in terms of message. Also the barbed wire is making a heart which is a contradiction."

"Well I suppose it's just the traditional valentine-type image. Affection, love, and it's a warm colour so it's different it being a heart shape that's red, than a heart shape that was a different colour, so it's a red shape, a warm shape, so you are expecting it to be something that is approachable and touchable, you're not expecting it to be nasty but you come to the barbed wire which is instantly a nasty don't want to be touched!"

"Protect your heart at all costs, because it actually does look like barbed wire, and if your heart moved around too much it might get caught on one of the barbs."

“Erm someone who’s been hurt, erm someone who is holding your heart and can’t let go and it’s uncomfortable, it’s someone who’s got a big heart and it’s been broken . . . I think someone has obviously got hurt, or it’s going to get hurt because it looks like it [*the heart*] is ready to be popped by the wire. It’s a strange picture.”

“To me the very first thing to come into my head was love, there is never a love without pain, that’s just what it conjures up to me.”

“I guess, hearts in pain, tortured hearts that cannot fulfill either love or freedom but it’s restrained or not allowed to be free.”

“The heart, love, pain, for me a pain that not everybody knows.”

“Some sort of anger you know, you want something, you’re holding something that’s so precious but you’re not being allowed to be set free, like a trapped bird.”

*For some respondents it evoked parallel sentiments that had been stirred by similar work by other artists.*

“This image makes me think of a poem written by Margaret Atwood, a very short poem, might even be a haiku, I haven’t counted the syllables, and it’s about how difficult love can be and how dangerous, and it goes, ‘you fit into me like a hook into an eye, a fishhook into an open eye.’ I love that kind of twist it’s what it brings to mind for me.”

## **Question 2**

***In the context of question 1 does it evoke any past or present experiences which relate directly to you?***

*Only 27% acknowledged that the image evoked experiences directly related to them.*

“I really haven’t had my heart broken so because I haven’t had any terribly bad relationships, I wouldn’t say that. . . . I just see it as somebody’s heart that’s being held securely, in a peculiar way I find it quite a comforting image, . . . it’s like somebody has taken somebody’s heart and very gently protected it. . . I find that quite pleasing [*pointing to barbed wire bit*] because it’s a heart in itself, and it’s a heart within a heart.”

“Erm, love / hate, oh yes, definitely, every relationship which has broken up, you love them, you love them, you love them, and then within seconds you hate them, you hate them, you hate them. It’s exactly two sides of the same emotion, it’s strong emotions, . . . not recent but maybe my whole life, as being going out with men and this breaking up with men / boys and then being heartbroken, it’s that sort of, then the love turning to hate, . . .”

“I would interpret it as the loveliness that this heart is extending because he or she held her and she desired him. Erm maybe that’s because he has surrounded, or she has surrounded him or her heart with the barbed wire.”

“The barbed wire connection really disturbs me. It doesn’t remind me or make me think of anything in my life. [*She associated her emotions with*] Well war films, soldiers, they were

always trying to escape and trying to get over the barbed wire and being shot and hanging there, covered in blood. So I find it disturbing. I don't find it a pleasure at all to look at. *[so how would you connect the two separate symbols?]* Well just because the heart is feelings, and pain, just feelings and pain." *[this participant somehow seemed to connect war films with the pain experienced when somebody's loved one has been sent to war and the pain of them being in danger and the possibility of losing them in some horrible way and the anguish of even contemplating that.]*

"To be honest I don't like it as a piece of jewellery particularly. I find it engaging and I can talk about it for five minutes but it's not something I would want to look at or relate to for any long time. I suppose in some ways I find it a little shallow, . . ." *[This was an interesting retort as this respondent was studying at a time when the use of the heart in the academic studio was frowned upon and confirmed its rejection as something not worthy of academic consideration]*

"It makes you think of prison straight away and being kept out, or being kept in, so it could be either. . . . we are talking about relationships, so it's quite disturbing, you know, you're being kept out of a relationship or you're being kept in a relationship which could be either, which is both unpleasant."

*[For this respondent the image summed up all the hurt and utter betrayal of love by her loved ones.]* "Yes, when I got my divorce it felt as though my heart had been ripped out, and I knew it was still there and I was still ticking, but I felt I'd died. *[referring to her husband's walking out]* It was engineered so he could or not would have to answer any questions or anything like that. I found this the hardest, even not just him, but two of my children were involved, the two eldest ones, he had arranged for one to keep me occupied elsewhere from the house, so the other one could help him move out. The fact that I'd looked after him when he was ill and brought up our children the best way I could. That's what it suggests to me." *[pointing to the heart image, which had recalled and encapsulated for her all the trauma and hurt of that episode in her life]*

"I looked after mum, she had Alzheimer's . . . you couldn't do it out of duty . . . it's love, unconditional love. You might have that regarding your children, regarding your parents, your husband, or ex-husband or whatever, it's all different. It's all categorised under a different heading of love. I mean I loved my mum up until the day she died. I still do, but she wasn't my mum for at least two years of her four years I looked after her. I could get up in the morning go to her and she would be fine, I would not say she knew me, but I was familiar, but by the time I would go in with her breakfast, it was just as likely I'd get it thrown at me." *[Here was highlighted the pain and conflicts of emotions experienced when caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's. Witnessing their demise and disrobed of their personality, is an agonising and disorientating experience]*

"I would say so yes. Yes, I think any love really, it doesn't really matter what love it is, it's a little bit like you say to your children, I will always love you, but I might not always like you, and this really in some ways requires people to do things for love where the love is being tested, even we are testing the ones who love us. Our own love is being tested all the time in our own surroundings, I think that goes on all the time really." *[This last observation makes evolutionary sense in that it is highly probable that part of the pain and the pleasure we experience is nature's way of testing the strengths and weaknesses of a bond.]*

“It reminds me of Shaun Leane’s jewellery because he has got that heart collection for McQueen and all that stuff. So he has this motif of the heart and he has a hook going through the heart and it kind of makes me think of it straight away. Just because, it has a heart being suspended in barbed wire, the other is on a hook, you know its kind of like death, kind of like life, you know, its totally different obviously but along the same line. There are two hearts here, one which is the barbed wire and there is the other one which is a soft resin, so one is very much kind of like, happy, the other one is obviously representing that kind of tortured life, or a tortured love.”

“Of course you get pain from the years that have passed, you get pain for a person, a parent or child, you have pain for yourself, you get pain from other persons.”

*Another related a sense of* “being restricted, there being something in your life that however much you have everything going for you, there is something that you’re fighting against as though you have to conquer something but not quite being able to force your way out of it and there’s always a force stronger than the strength you are able to give it, . . .”

*A similar scenario was related by another participant indicating how stifling a mother’s unconditional love could be when establishing one’s independence.* “. . . and also we have all these stories, my mum always with the heart, she used to tell me this story about a mother who loved her son so much that when her son fell in love with an evil woman who asked, in order to marry him, she said that ‘I’ll marry you only if you get me your mother’s heart.’ So he went back to the house and killed his mother, took her heart out and as he was running back to his beloved he stumbled and fell, and the heart jumped up and it said ‘are you alright my son?’. She didn’t make this story up.”

“Someone in love with someone and they can’t get out of the relationship because they are going to get hurt even more. That’s what I think.”

Here ends the first part of the Case Study. Before discussing the findings of the second part of the case study it is necessary to define and describe the key characteristics of the heart image and the criteria to be employed in its analysis.

It is evident that the image of a heart has highly charged sexual significances which in its symbolic representation subjugates personal psychological or individual response to a social requirement. In other words a subliminal signal that natural behaviour is inappropriate is recognised and acknowledged as correct. The explanation of this resides in human evolution evidencing the dominance of the social being over the natural being. Classical psychology considered artists’, poets’ etc., creative output as manifestations of sublimation. The heart form is, in its artistic representational form as opposed to an anatomically correct depiction, an explicit example of analysis as a progression through time.

Sexual awareness developed, in an evolutionary context, alongside a social context, which began to be obscured once consciousness and socialisation developed. ‘Sexual desire’ began to be packaged in a fog of myths, totems and taboos, fears, ideas and religious dogma which permeated the human mind in their psychological forms. Sexual

desire became objectified.<sup>5</sup> In situations where we cannot act we must content ourselves with imagining or looking at others' actions. The earlier forms discussed related to looking for the best partner for copulation resulting in compulsive comparison. In the social context this kind of looking is more complex and deviant since it is much removed from physical behaviour.

There are many specific facets of sublimation which can be classified as either mechanisms, or resulting consequences. These are summarised below and discussed elsewhere in the thesis but also used in this analysis of the heart. The heart as an icon encapsulates in visual form and emotional responses four of Freud's hypotheses about the human condition, and are fused as the psycho-sexual embodiment of the object: (a) the pleasure principle; (b) sublimation; (c) voyeurism and (d) fetishism, underpinned by Freud's stages of psychoanalytic theory of psychosexual stages of development (as already mentioned on page 159), oral, anal, genital, latent and phallic.

### **Facets of sublimation.**

**a) Sublimation (discussed as containing b, c, and d):** the social mechanism which transforms need to want whereby psychological desires symbolise unrequited need.

**b) Pleasure** in physical bio-contact and pain for the male caused by forced withdrawal from the (mother) which, in relations with other females, re-emerges in the form of sadomasochistic responses / practice.

**c) Fetishism:** worship / obsession with an object, in this case body parts, symbolic / sublimated representation. (Freud identifies significant psychological areas such as the: **oral, anal, phallic, latency and the genital stages of sublimation as problematic** whereby any interruption to these stages of development can lead to fixation.

**d) Voyeurism:** the pleasure in secret compulsive comparison, the pain of the absence of the others' physical, sexual / interactive presence, and **scopophilia**, pleasure in looking and being looked at and the required physical presence of another to fulfill this need, the joy of exhibitionism. These criteria will be referred to if not directly then by inference and therefore it is important to keep them in mind but also to maintain awareness of those other bio-psycho-aesthetic criteria discussed earlier in the thesis.

Freud acknowledged that without beauty civilisation could not exist although he could find no valid rationale for this at the time. However, he understood that the appreciation of aesthetics was to do with what he described as curious sensations which felt mildly intoxicating.<sup>6</sup> What mysteries of sensual existence are encapsulated in this first objectification? A fetish in Freudian terms is normally associated with the displacement in an object of the male desire and fears. Freud could define the struggles with some of the deepest elements of the psyche, the primal, animalistic instincts (the Id) and the distress

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<sup>5</sup> The suppression of the natural impulses as part of social development has resulted in psycho-behavioural problems needing resolution in relation to the quest for sexual satisfaction or gratification. Freud discusses this in the context of the pleasure principle.

<sup>6</sup> "The enjoyment of beauty has a peculiar mildly intoxicating quality of feeling. Beauty has no obvious use; nor is there any clear cultural necessity for it. Yet civilisation could not do without it. The science of aesthetics investigates the conditions under which things are felt as beautiful, but it has been unable to give any explanation of the nature and origin of beauty, and, as usually happens, lack of success is concealed beneath a flood of resounding and empty words." Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works*, Volume 12, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1985; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 271 (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition).

experienced when gratification of libidinous energies is suppressed by the constraints of socialisation.

Freud points out that when the Id is denied expression, there are various routes humans take to satisfy the pleasure principle, among them religion, work, and art etc. The thesis wishes to restrict the debate to the context of the artist and the production of arti- / menti-facts which emanate from the primal imperatives of 'sexual desire'.<sup>7</sup> Freud proposed that primary instincts and the unconsciousness are responsible for emotions and are the driving force behind human life. Artists are able to represent these elements because they have cultivated a more heightened awareness of these aspects of life. All humans have the innate propensity to reinterpret emotion. Most humans do this by selecting readily available objects like flowers but artists have the ability to create their own forms of representation.

### **(a) Sublimation**

As Freud points out, surmounting such powerful impulses as the sexual instincts and the urges for gratification of sexual desire, demands unbearable restraint. A way of gratifying or releasing these unspent energies is through sublimation. "by deflecting the sexual instinctual forces away from their sexual aim to higher cultural aims, . . .<sup>8</sup> it is what makes it possible for higher physical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life."<sup>9</sup> Freud suggests this circumstance has been forced on human instincts entirely by civilisation, that is to say a civilising process built on the renunciation of instinct. However it could be argued here that the genetic bio-imperative, always the opportunist, rather than have unspent energy go to waste has engineered things in such a way whereby it is refocused / redirected to be spent by other productive means, activities such as the above which would further enhance and advance gene production and survival. Is sublimation therefore just an ingenious genetic ploy?

Freud goes on to say that an object becomes a fetish whereby the embodiments of desires and anxieties are determined by connections prompted by unconscious symbolic sexual thought.<sup>10</sup> Instinctual aims are shifted in such a manner that they cannot be blocked by social constraints. Freud determines that 'sublimation of the instincts' is fulfilled by ". . . an artist's joy in creating, in giving his phantasies body, or a scientist's in solving problems or discovering truths, has a special quality which we shall certainly one day be able to characterize in metapsychological terms."<sup>11</sup> The overt display of sexual prowess of the male or female in a social setting is inhibited, Freud suggests, by feelings of shame and guilt and fear of exposure, the origins

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<sup>7</sup> As highlighted earlier in the thesis, through analogies and similes, emotions (our response to our environment) can be made discernible, describable, visible: the unutterable and the instant can be grasped. Here Freud claimed that it was the artist or poet but all humans have this intuitive awareness. Just as they recognise a simple visual analogy so they can recognise emotional analogies for such emotions as desire and love.

<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works*, Volume 12, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1985; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 45 (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 286.

<sup>10</sup> Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: three essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, Volume 7, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1977; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 67 (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>11</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works*, Volume 12, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1985; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 267 (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page reference are to reprint edition).



of which, psychoanalysts suggest, “may be a defence against exhibitionism.”<sup>12</sup> Whatever the definition, it is a cause for other actions and objectification of the unacceptable act or the recognition or acknowledgement that it needs to be substituted for by something else.

The breast looked at or felt is an obvious example of the need for sublimation within this objectification process. The confusion of emotion-related physicality related to the separation of the male child from its mother’s breast forces it in a social context to substitute emotional imagination or transference for physical contact. In this context it could be proposed that the emotional symbolic heart takes the place of the actuality of the breast. For the infant the breast goes far beyond being a physical object providing nourishment. The whole of his being, instinctual desires, fears, frustrations, impulses, run the full gamut of emotions at a time when primal fantasies first take hold.<sup>13</sup>

For example, profound infantile sensations such as being at the breast are recalled. Likewise other similar sources for this sensation are embedded within the organs of the body and might be triggered by various stimuli. Primal fantasies may be recalled, such as suffering the anxiety of the available / unavailable love object: the mother, the breast, frustration / gratification.<sup>14</sup> Besides the breast there are echoes of other adult emotional contexts, not least the sexes’ genital anatomy and one’s responses to them, for example, the scrotum, the glans and the yoni. Freud’s theories of the awakening of sexual awareness and its stages from infancy to adulthood are common knowledge and can be useful in that a key aspect of his work deals with sexual desire and fantasy in a social context related to inherent bio-imperative retention in the natural child.

### **(b) Pain-Pleasure: Touching and Looking**

Touching is for human beings an essential part of interaction before copulation and all touching is preceded by looking since compulsive comparison as biological function is the evaluation process which determines whether or not action is required

Visual impressions remain the most frequent pathway along which libidinal excitation is aroused; indeed, natural selection counts upon the accessibility of this pathway – if such a teleological form of statement is permissible – when it encourages the development of beauty in the sexual object. The progressive concealment of the body which goes along with civilisation keeps sexual curiosity awake. This curiosity seeks to attain the sexual object by revealing its hidden parts. It can, however, be diverted (‘sublimated’) in the direction of art, if its interest can be shifted away from the genitals on to the shape of the body as a whole.<sup>15</sup>

As Freud pointed out ‘the pleasure principle’ is there simply to determine the purpose of life and has connections with all other aspects of the human psyche. This connective communication evaluation affects our decision as to whether something is safe / unsafe, good / bad and so on, what Freud calls ‘the reality principle’. Without the unpleasant one could not experience the

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Goldenson and Kenneth Anderson, eds. *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Sex* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1987; reprint, London: Wordsworth Editions, 1996), s.v. “Shame.” See also “Scopophobia” a morbid fear of being looked at.

<sup>13</sup> Melanie Klein, *Love, guilt, and reparation, and other works, 1921-1945*, with an introduction by R.E. Money-Kyrle (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 290-305.

<sup>14</sup> As exemplified by the Kleinian belief that infants harbour resentments towards the breast, feelings of anger and frustration, wishing in their fantasies to attack, to destroy, to devour the mother.

<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: three essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, Volume 7. trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1977; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 69 (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition).

pleasant, and these binary systems seem to apply in many facets of socially conditioned life

but also to the created products of this conditioned society. The creative expressions of love, for example, although presented in differing forms, carry or build upon the same underlying principles. Love is merely an emotional (psychological) host for biological triggers, easy to separate in cold logic. However, when animal instincts and consciousness become subliminally tangled up in the social structuring of sex it results in degrees of uncertainty leading to irrational and unpredictable behaviour by the individual in contravention of set social norms.

In the perversions which are directed towards looking and being looked at, . . . [the heart as symbolic representation of the location of the life force has become fetishised and become by extension the location of emotion] . . . in these perversions the sexual aim occurs in two forms, [in binary opposites such as positive and negative] an active and a passive one.<sup>16</sup>

In contemplating the use of the heart symbol as represented in the form presented in this case study the binary principle becomes apparent as the oppositional evocation of fear or anxiety and of comfort, of wholesomeness or voluptuousness.

The harmonisation of perfect symmetry and proportional balance in this piece of jewellery gratifies the aesthetic gaze with sensations of reassurance, calm and order. By appeasing any opposing forces which may cause disturbance, the emotions can now accommodate that mildly intoxicating element of pleasure / pain resolution. Whilst the heart form in this case study directly relates to the principles as previously discussed it is recognised that these principles are also further reinforced in a myriad of evolving cultural references particularly those which emanate from theology and are aesthetic references to passion.

Sublimation is the reduction in primacy of the basic instincts in a social context confirming primitive fears, erotic impulses and libidinous fantasies and therefore overt identification of them as significant becomes a transgression eliciting social condemnation or censorship. Desire represented, which is to say need and want transposed as imperatives, stimulates erotic fantasy and is regarded with disgust since the representations are non-sublimated and overt. In this context the overt object is usually graphic, too direct or closely associated to organs or with bodily functions and resultant emissions.

The heart in its abstract form and / or refined symbolic order elicits pleasurable responses, sublimating disgust and rendering acceptable the internal as distinct from external representation. Desire in this context is the unmediated copulatory gaze which offends society since it is a tacit acknowledgement of the primal instincts and imperatives which socialisation seeks to subjugate. However there is within each of us a level of recognition which is never completely sublimated, and the autoerotic is an ever present dangerous element which explains the *frisson* and undermines socialisation to the moral norm. 'Eroticism', balancing on this kind of knife edge, existing in the dynamic duality of the divine / hallowed and the sacrilegious / reviled, is a prerequisite of socio-psychology and a dichotomy for fertilisation of objects as compulsion turns to obsession.

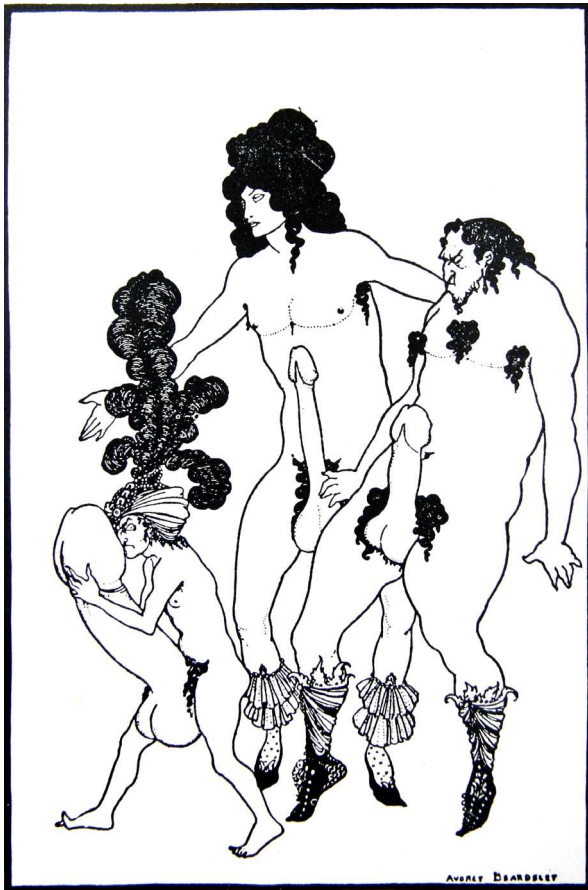


Figure 8.4 A. Beardsley



Figure 8.5 The breasts

### c) Fetish

Freud maintains “. . . that the choice of a fetish is an after-effect of some sexual impression, received as a rule in early childhood.”<sup>17</sup>

The symbolic representational form of the heart allows for the mind to evoke subtle suggestions which connect with primal aspects of the psyche. It draws on memory by means of visual and emotional analogies which the mind recognises and empathises with. Likewise, in the mind of the artist levels of abstraction, reconstruction, and recombination occur and, discarding irrelevant detail except the force of emotions, give flight to the imagination.

In its iconic appearance the heart form therefore represents an amalgam of sexual components referencing to parts of the human body, confined in a framework of social conditioning, which from infancy to adulthood condense elements which are intensely exciting and erotic, stimulating both the visual and tactile senses. Identified analogies within the heart form are the glans, the scrotum, the breasts, the pudenda, the buttocks and the lips (see figures 8.4 to 8.7). These are all interpreted, incorporated or recognised in the satisfying symmetrical form of the stylised heart shape. This hybridised representational form seems to stimulate a wide range of physical and metaphysical responses and is therefore ripe for fetishistic appropriation.

<sup>17</sup> Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: three essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, Volume 7, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1977; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 67. (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition).



Figure 8.6 Buttocks



Figure 8.7 Lips

Having defined and discussed the above criteria for the deconstruction / decoding of this particular artifact leads on to the second part of the case study.

Here the evaluation and analysis of interviewees' responses to questions 3,4 and 5 are recorded and examined as a research tool for identifying / exemplifying / evidencing particular evolutionary mechanisms and imperatives at work as embodied and operative in this piece of contemporary jewellery.

This part of the study is about how the influence / impact of our bio- psycho-sexual being and the psycho-social part of ourselves is reflected / embodied in the object whereby sexual desire is objectified / articulated in a form through which it can be safely removed from the carnally orientated physical behaviour which could be seen as socially unacceptable.

The following findings can be evaluated against the hypotheses which are further reflected in proposition's categories, matrix / new model, and the theory of the copulatory gaze. A copy of the questionnaire and statistical data is located in the appendix.

### Question 3

***Do you find the actual form / shape colour and texture of the heart evocative in any way? Yes / No. Please explain your reasons why.***

*73 % found elements of the form evocative.*

"The shape of the actual physical heart? . . . to me it's a smooth sort of feminine shaped representation of a heart, it's quite tactile. If it wasn't in the barbed wire. I would want to take it out and hold it. Why do I think it's feminine? I don't know, I suppose because heart shape objects seem to appeal to women. . . . I don't know, I just think, I always find the shape and the colour pleasing, it's just quite a soft smooth shape."

"Yes, I think it's quite a beautiful image actually, to be honest. Yes I think it looks quite contemporary and punchy because of the barbed wire. The heart is so cliché that on its own

without the barbed wire it would be sort of not very interesting at all, but I think the barbed wire gives it an added interest.”

“Yes, I do find, you know, it has all going for it, it’s red, it’s shiny its almost like something you could suck, like a sweetie, yes.”

“Well the heart is a warm colour.”

“Yes extremely provocative. I mean it’s a very traditional, conventional heart, however the heart is a very appealing form, that’s a very nice heart, it’s nice and bold, nice and fat and the fact that it’s shiny is attractive in that shade of red, I think the heart is a form that we are all drawn to.”

“Yes, the texture of it looks quite jelly-like because it’s reflective. I suppose it looks quite soft.”

“Well to me it looks like warm, but it also has an element of blood when I saw it, . . . because you get a sense of shininess, . . . I think red is a warm colour isn’t it? And it’s regularly associated with love.”

“Evocative ? You mean does it create an emotion or sensation? Yes of course it’s a very nice theme, whether it’s about love or anything but I do enjoy where there is a clash between the two opposites where you have got that pain and then that kind of love. I think if I related to let’s say jewellery it’s always good to have a clash, to bring two opposites together. You know, whether it’s soft with rough, or decay with growing and living, what this is saying here, you know, is a motif of the heart but one of them is represented as quite rough and tortured and the other one is, you know, maybe a little pop arty. You know you kind of, you know, you want to grab it, you want to touch it, while the outside one makes you not want to touch it at all.”

“Yes . . . you get a heart full of love, you’ve got a heart that’s waiting for something. A place maybe, it’s ready for something. You are one half [*dividing the heart vertically in two*] there is the other side you want to get, the side representing a response from someone else.” [*in other words the reciprocal side to make it a whole, a symmetrical, counter balanced or proportionally harmonious counterpart of a relationship, the other half*].

“Erm, I wouldn’t associate the heart with love. I would sort of associate it with bodily functions . . . and the heart as sort of circle of life and the trials and tribulations and conditions and then more so the breaking of the heart.”

[*The image elicited a sense of how*] “Some people have got a big heart, some people have a small heart. The small one has got too much wrapped up in pain.”

“I like the idea of it being resin . . . because resin has that kind of liquid quality which . . . when you first got it out it did really look like it had a liquid surface. . . .”

“You know its very 1980s the red heart, it’s very Athena.”

“Red isn’t a colour that I would say I ‘like,’ in inverted commas, erm but in this context I think it works, . . . I mean the heart couldn’t be any other colour. Pink, I think that’s for little girls. I think women only have red hearts, I mean its a kind of, you know, shiny lip stick, you know,



shiny nails, you know the kind of vampy kind of things, but it's also interesting?"

#### **Question 4.**

***In the context of question 3 do you think that any elements of the heart image refer / co-relate to any parts of the human body? If so, which ones and why?***

*At this stage participants were also given a wooden heart prototype to hold in order to experience its tactility. 93 % of the participants achieved the realisation that the heart form clearly co-related / mirrored sexual elements (as relating to the instincts and activities connected with the physical attraction or intimate physical contact between individuals.)<sup>18</sup> of the human body.*

"What, the overall shape? Erm, well I suppose with the domes, you've got a representation of the breasts, erm, that sort of shape you would get if you were in a dress, with the mounds rising above, or equally if you reverse the image it would be bottoms with a narrow waist. [*Can you see any co-relation to the male, rather than the female body?*] Erm, well taking the theme of mounds well I don't know, you would think of testicles or their bottoms or erm yes, but it would have to be reversed, [*turning the image down side up*] or turned upside down. So you would be talking about scrotum, testicles, erm yeah, but for me it would be breasts."

"Well no, the thing is I wouldn't mind handling that but what about this? Look how similar these two shapes are?" [*Holds the wooden prototype heart upside down against the image*] Oh Lord, you know the female looks so female but when you handle the sort of testicular heart then it's very definitely, testicular heart, you know because you get it shaped like a couple of testes and erm, it looks very phallic the whole thing, it's like the erect penis standing up above the testes, so testicles. But its also very pubic looking, . . . I just can't believe it's transported from one to the other, I'm not sure which way round to look, strange, look! . . . it's like a heart and at the most the bodice of a dress, so it's bodice, uplift bra and all the rest, but it's very feminine, I find it very feminine, I find it like breasts, and heart and you know, the house of the heart which you know is the behind."

"Yes, it's almost like an hour glass figure, when you look at it in this direction it almost looks, you know, like something you could handle. I could say number one the breasts, and number two the bottom, you see the reflection, and, if we take it away from the whole feminine thing it could be the testicles."

"Well bosoms and bottoms, . . . Yes its all definitely breasts and buttocks and the male body. [*pointing to the groin she would not say it at first*] Well, willy, it's part of the male genitalia without the main piece. [*indicating the glans without the shaft* ]. It's cushiony like a bottom would be or well [*laughing*] proper bottoms."

"Oh yes that's nice, well erm OK you put it in my hand where it fits very, very nicely and so you are offering me a very tactile object, and tactility here is introduced by the fact that it's surrounded by barbed wire, erm, and of course it relates to a heart and I've already referred to a kind of crown of thorns for the head, but yes, it is, it's something that you want to touch but



actually it's denying you the touch because of the barbed wire. . . . Well it looks like a torso, . . . I think of the kind of conventions of corseted woman, as being in the 18th century. [*when asked to turn the prototype upside down there was a pause and then a sudden realisation*] Eh, oh right I've got a pair of bollocks in my hand! Yes its extremely like erm, but that hadn't, I have to admit, crossed my mind apart from this although its red and rather shiny. Yes, OK, well that's interesting. Right, so it is that intimacy, isn't it? . . . Yes that's very interesting, yes it's interesting that we are all a kind of two sided thing aren't we, the duality and erm symmetrical."

"Feels nice. It's quite a sort of sensual shape partly because I know its not the shape of a real heart, but it's partly just the associations with the heart shape which is all about love and sensuality. [*When asked if it reminded her of the female body*] yes breasts [*she turned the image and prototype around where upon she exclaimed*] male! [*with a lot of giggling*] well I'd say male testicles . . . . now I'm getting embarrassed, uh yes, female sexual areas, [*meaning the yoni or pudenda*]"

"Oh two balls [*and then points to the breasts and buttocks*] see it's a long time since I saw them!"

"Well its probably how we see the heart as, but of course the heart does not look like that, but you know you could actually think, it could be breasts, it could also be buttocks. [*When asked what about the male?*] . . . the only thing I can refer to is really if we talked about testicles, but I have a little difficulty with that, it's the nearest I can get that has anything to do with the male shape apart from the buttocks but that's both male and female but otherwise it would be testicles really."

"This, well it doesn't remind me of a heart because we know a heart doesn't look like that. It kind of maybe looks like some breasts . . . this could be some testicles . . . . It looks also like the bum and the crack maybe and between, so erm you know that could be, I suppose, either male or female, . . ."

"I'd probably say men's balls. I'd say breasts and then also the texture simulates the breasts and the bottom obviously."

". . . . well you know they always say, don't they?, that the inverted heart is like a lady's bottom, I mean I wish that my bottom was like that, it's not, and I suppose that's erm quite vaginal, it's got a hint of the, eh, anus, the way that erm, I don't want to use the word crack, the way the lines come up . . . . breasts and gonads, a particularly favourite word!"

"Oh boobs or bums and oh male parts, yes, testicles and their bum it is the texture of skin as well."

*The image representation, in its biological sense, is not so much an imitation as such but an abstract projection of certain privileged parts that substitutes elements of human nature reaching deep into the bio-, socio-/ psycho-sexual functions of the human psyche.*

### **Question 5**

***How often would you come across the heart symbol in your day-to-day life, frequently or infrequently? Where would you see it?***

*73% of participants said that their encounter with the heart symbol happened frequently with comments such as: “. . . very frequently; very often; on a daily basis; everywhere; many times; little girls draw hearts all the time, everything, hearts on our rubbers, hearts on our exercise books and we have socks with little red hearts; hearts are overexposed, you could see them on Valentine and birthday cards, in florist’s shops, heart shaped balloons; jewellery shops, advertisements, in people’s homes etc.”*

*A minority of participants were dismissive and not interested and therefore they did not seem to have registered its presence.*

*“No I find it shallow because I’m familiar with this, it’s been done so many times by so many artists . . . it’s a very kind of current image, I don’t think it’s going to engage me, I don’t think it’s going to hold my interest very long.”*

This question was asked in order to establish evidence how much the heart symbol continues to percolate through our everyday life and therefore, for all the reasons established in the research, is necessary sustenance for our emotional life.

The heart form, therefore, in its role as pacifier and in all its guises throughout its evolutionary history, continues to be consumed because of its capacity to capture and displace the drives which haunt us and thereby fulfill and nourish the needs of our daily psycho-emotional lives.

The following response to the last Question, Six, at first presented somewhat of a contradiction. However following reconsideration it could be argued as making complete sense.

### **Question 6**

***Would you agree or disagree that the heart image or artefact says more about emotional experience than you could ever say?***

*60 % did not find that the image said more than they could verbalise, 40% did.*

At this point it was appropriate to examine / review the findings to assess what might be taking place.

In response to Questions One and Two participants provided sound, sensitive and intellectualised interpretations of emotional issues concerning the complexities of relationships and different kinds of love encountered in life.

What was interesting about responses to Question Two was that several participants either would not or could not admit / accept that any experiences aroused by the image recalled personal experience. Yet the previous very astute elicited renderings could not have been supplied without some direct form of empirical experience. What was interesting and perhaps an indicator of what was going on was how most participants who related experiences shifted their narrative to the third person, thus indicating that some form of displacement or transference was

already taking place whilst the emotional content of the object was being transcribed / reviewed. Were participants viewing their own objectivation<sup>19</sup> through others' eyes?

In response to Question Three, 73 % of participants had found elements of the form to be evocative and in many ways for them this had already been addressed in Questions One and Two wherein they had already described emotional content as context. However there was no real evidence of a realisation or awareness that the heart form etc may have related to parts of the body, though there were what could have been taken as some subconscious psychosexual hints 'between the text'.

With Question Four, 93 % of participants had (but only after their consciousness / awareness had been raised by the particular nature of the question) recognised or perceived the relationships / analogies, metaphorical connotations linking the physical form of the object and the human form. However, although they recognised the physical parallel they could not or would not acknowledge consciously all the psycho-sexual elements / content that accompanied the form and are embodied in it. These seemed to occur outside the realms of awareness. Yet the overwhelming response to Question Five, 73%, evidenced a persistent psycho-emotional dependence on this most ancient of symbolic archetypes.

In their response to Question Six, 60 %, of participants seemed to side step or could not answer the question. Most just repeated what had already been said in their previous responses. They did not manage to provide a succinct answer, probably because most presumed or believed that they had already provided all they knew at this point.

Only three participants provided some clue:

"... but then, do you want to think too much about the real thing? Because I had a friend who was given a heart for Valentine's Day. A gothic girl left a lamb's heart wrapped in newspaper on his doorstep, that made me think you know it's a good to have this sanitised version of the heart because I actually would not want the actual heart, I'd rather have the representation on a gift card." *[This may provide a glimpse of its possible origins. When we were hunter gatherers an animal's heart represented a token of love as a gift of food. In a modern industrial / Westernised society we are one removed from aspects of hunting, we have found it unpalatable. Presenting a heart in its original state would be seen as a macabre and rather grisly thing to do. Likewise the blatant realistic representation of all our primal and carnal instincts cannot be explicitly exposed or debated in public. As one participant remarked after the interview was over]* "you can't walk into a shop and say give me a pair of bums, tits and testicles, you would rather say a heart."

"Yes I agree. *[with Question Six]* Because hearts kind of express what you think, when you see this I think, you could analyse it if you could spend a lot more time. *[here the participant meant you are somehow aware of all these things subconsciously. It's only when you stop and deconstruct the image, and only then, that the various concepts begin to emerge and form and interconnect in the mind to bring the full narrative to the conscious mind so you see how it connects and interconnects with our biological psyche, sociological psyche and sexual psyche, the exposure of which can only fully emerge on an analyst's couch.]*"

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<sup>19</sup> Objectivation: The use of the defence mechanism of *projection* – with a "twist." It refers to the case in which one projects one's own feelings upon another who actually has those feelings. Arthur S. Reber. *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin Group 1985), s.v. "Objectification".

Here the evolutionary 'psycho-logic' of the heart form embodies such abstract phenomena as concrete evidence of its substantial significance to both the individual and the collective throughout historical time. As Durkheim puts it:

"It is a product of shared existence, of actions and reactions called into play between the [collective unconsciousnesses<sup>20</sup> and the] consciousnesses of individuals. If it is echoed in each one of them it is precisely by virtue of the special energy derived from its collective origins. If all hearts beat in unison, this is not as a consequence of a spontaneous, pre-established harmony; it is because one and the same force is propelling them in the same direction. Each one is borne along by the rest. . . . It embraces one single, well defined group of phenomena."<sup>21</sup>

Like other consumed phenomena the heart form will temporarily satisfy until the next emotional tide floods us where it will resurface with renewed vigour, its precise form to be determined by the *zeitgeist* of the evolving psyche and the culture within which it needs sublimatory expression.

The evolution and emergence of signs, codes and symbols, the understanding and use of the metaphorical as a tool for mental dialogue, is critical to the formation of social construction, the development of cultural frameworks and their sustenance. Visual language plays its part by processing the need to organise and put into a social context the emotions generated by sexual activities, giving tools to create artefacts which by their very presence mesmerise as they subliminally release that which must be suppressed. This aspect of the aesthetic experience opens up a new territory for humans to inhabit, the world of the mind, a space for collective mental activity and exploration.

The fusion of image in the sense of the hybrid forms referred to proffer analogies, messages and meanings, symmetry, emotion and aesthetics which are irresistible. Witness to this is the time before written language where the traditions of pictorial representations and storytelling traditions prevailed " . . word and image never separated as they did in the West and the invention of the alphabet. As in Egypt and China, writers needed to draw and artists wrote. Nature was everywhere." <sup>22</sup>

The view that "The critical point in the evolution of man - the change of state when wholly new properties emerged in evolving life - was when he acquired the use of verbal concepts and could organise his experience in a common pool." <sup>23</sup> This does not explain the persistence of the power of the visual object to induce in individuals a compulsion to transfer to the inanimate object or image commitment to the other as an actuality of otherness. Redirection and redefinition of energy in the symbolic form has transposed the socially unpalatable into the acceptable while acknowledging it as illicit. This primitive or primal force persists unacknowledged, emphasising obsession and its fetishisation of objects.

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<sup>20</sup> **Collective unconscious.** A Jungian term for the past experience of the human species which has been built into the inherited brain structure, and which manifests itself in the recurrent phenomena of the Archetypes. Jung argued that an individual's functioning is the product of this collective unconscious as well as of a personal unconscious whose contents are forgotten, repressed, subliminally perceived, thought, and felt matter of every kind, . . ." Alan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass and Stephen Trombley, eds *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* 2d ed., (London: Fontana Press, 1988), s.v. "Collective unconscious," by B. A. Farrel.

<sup>21</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The rules of Sociological method: And selected texts on sociology and its method*, trans. W. D. Halls.(London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982). 56.

<sup>22</sup> V. Vale Andrea Juno, eds., *Modern Primitives* (San Fransisco: Re / Search Publications, 1989), *A Fashion for Ecstasy: Ancient Maya Body Modifications* by Wes Christensen, 81.

<sup>23</sup> John Pickering and Martin Skinner, eds., *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness* (United Kingdom: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), Chapter 3, *An Evolutionary Perspective: Evolution in Action* by Julian Huxley, 86.

The stylised heart form in this instance is now the sexual consolation – the ratification, liberation of desire and pleasure. It gives the chaos of eroticism form and stability. Labelling it in visual and verbal form is the human's quest to give shape to nature's irrationalities. The glistening red colour of the heart form (as in figure 8.3) further fuels the emotions. This 'Red Heart' is sexual excitement in a distilled sense with all the non-pleasurable aspects weeded out. Its power is thus inert and palatable, safe to consume greedily and be fondled by all members of society. Publication allows personal and differentiated engagement.

As mentioned earlier (on page 172) infantile sensations such as being at the breast might likewise be perceived as embedded within the form of the object and since they are within the orbit of one's own bodily organs they would trigger various responses. Stimuli and evocation are related sensations, for example primal fantasies, recalled suffering, and the anxiety of the available / unavailable love object: the mother, the breast, and frustration / gratification.

'Beauty' and 'attraction' are originally attributes of the sexual object. It is worth remarking that the genitals themselves, the sight of which are always exciting, are nonetheless hardly ever judged to be beautiful; the quality of beauty seems, instead to attach to certain secondary sexual characters.<sup>24</sup>

Steeped in anxieties socially induced in order to inhibit individual desire in favour of stability / the common good, social control takes many forms such as folklore, myths, fairy tales, religious ideals and taboos. The psyche is too overwhelmed, pleasure in beauty is dampened or becomes perverse, desires often become transferred to objects as the most significant representation of suppressed pain or pleasure or a combination of both. Anxieties as a consequence of obsession, as repetitive recollection of sexual fears, of inhibitions, become the sexual aspect of the fetishisation of objects and hence tangible and manageable as an analogy of the sexual object. Anxieties and obsessions are based on personal experiences and therefore, as a result, fetish resides in the individual concerned.

The first experience of genitalia, whether visual or tactile, excites but the object of desire which carries these sensual and / or emotional associations often combines the pleasure of gratification with the disappointment of pain or rejection, repulsion or disgust, depending upon other encounters and perceptions related to bodily functions with which the organs in question come into contact or are associated. The plurality of organs as both functional and emotional underlies fetishisation, revealing the ambiguity of such physical things as urine, excreta, seminal fluid, menstrual blood and afterbirth. Both the paradox and confluence of pain and pleasure differ in manifestations or embodiment (the type of object or its appearance) according to which sex the encapsulated messages are addressed to. However, there are common elements uniting both sexes, therefore the qualities encapsulated can be coherent and individual as well as collective.

The image of the heart used here in its context expresses the pleasure pain principle in fetish form and this has been appropriated in many contexts over many generations for different socio-cultural control purposes. The agony and the ecstasy related to the theological sublime has obvious semantic connotations and has reinforced the potency of this image in that context.

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<sup>24</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works*, Volume 12, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1985; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 271 (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition).

In Gestalt fashion the pudenda<sup>25</sup> and the penis are as one. In the heart form the natural powers of the Yoni are merged with the phallus.<sup>26</sup> The phallus or phallic symbol is a set of meanings conferred upon the penis. The phallus is, as it were, a distinctive feature differentiating male from female (the castrated and the non-castrated) but which in its emotional connotations also suggests a possibility of 'castration' facilitating sameness. For the male the pain of losing the other with which there was once a union (the mother) is a motivation to regain the pleasure of the union. In the act of sexual union the penetrator and penetrated are merged. Stimulating the clitoris and penis to the point of orgasm, there is an ideal unification as the two beings are merged in mutual optimised sensuality.

Copulation, once public, now confined to the realm of the private in society, emits a raft of expressive bio-signalling and enforces constraints upon the natural selection process. This situation causes frustrations which humans learn to live with and which are manifested in or transposed into objects. The fetish object can be seen in this context as a transference of frustrations and / or pain and divinatory activity acting as comforter.

The heart form separates the non-pleasurable from the pleasurable, consolidates the internal with the external. But in this image its context also expresses the suppression of pain, thereby combining, containing and resolving both social and individual psychological needs, evoking by proxy the biological imperatives. The heart form absorbs and renders safe aspects of copulation, its sanitised form 'takes care of' the irrationality of sex. Sexual excitement in this distilled sense can be gratified in secret with all socially unacceptable pleasure pain conflicts resolved. Its symmetry and vibrant red colour rekindles innate desires, evocative of need, representing pleasures, leaving the mysteries of sensual and sexual existence snugly encapsulated. It gives the chaos of eroticism a new form and stabilises nature's irrationalities.

Socially unacceptable raw lust is re-labelled as love, symbol of the divine, showing how the expression of innate erotic desires can be reconciled with the cultural object. As mentioned earlier, to render the power inert and palatable the stylised heart in its distilled form means it is safe to consume its form greedily, even to fondle, even to be put in a child's nursery. However, the choice of context in this example of jewellery also contrasts this sublime with the rawness of the natural.

### 8.3 Summary

If, as Dawkins argues, we are the vehicles for genetic reproduction then everything within us is co-opted towards this purpose. We therefore are the incubators of elements of inherent genetic cognition, an inherent awareness, our bodies are a container with all its sensors primed. If the mind works as sweeper-up, as umbrella and sifter / co-ordinator of all established and incoming data we could, it is argued, have the capacity to draw on all that has ever been registered, recorded within us since life on earth began. We should be able to tap into an archive

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<sup>25</sup> Origin from the Latin *pudenda membra* 'parts to be ashamed of'. [Dictionary, WordPerfect 11, 2003.](#)

<sup>26</sup> As Freud describes how at the peak of the state of being in love. "... the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all evidence of his senses, a man in love declares that 'I' and 'you' are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact." Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: Group Psychology, Civilization and its Discontents and Other Works*, Volume 12, trans. James Strachey (London: Pelican Books, 1985; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1991), 253. (present volume edited by Albert Dickson, page references are to reprint edition).



of dynamic matter that can be activated at any moment. Selected knowledge / consciousnesses could be focussed on specific tasks, to dance out its own co-ordinated rhythm of creative procreation, seeking its own pathway to place in its environment where it fits and can be productive, in the form of an extended phenotype, in the form of sublimation.

Frustrated, unfulfilled imperatives are always ready to focus on another outlet if there is no flow of gratification (as nature initially intended). As speculated earlier, could 'sublimation' in its most basic form be another deliberate genetic ploy to direct activities which would make its human vehicle more efficient and productive, and even more sexually viable and attractive in the mating / survival stakes?

In Chapter 9, this theory is explored and developed further, whereby a wider examination of specific manifestations of sublimation and the analysis of its role evidences its significance as instrumental in the structuring of society.

Before proceeding to Chapter 9 it must be noted that the analysis findings in Chapters 7 and 8 which deal with the process of perceptual realisation and mentifact production are carried forward to provide support to the summary of hypotheses / propositions / arguments applied in Chapter 10, level 8, whereby it is demonstrated how abstract values which are too unpalatable or complex to be dealt with directly in public life require sublimation through an object which, when so loaded in content, in turn enables the authentic object to transcend itself, to be raised to a new level of symbolic meaning and to morph as a form in its own right.

LEVEL 6 - HOMO SAPIENS SAPIENS 45,000 YEARS AGO - CHAPTER 8

| Biological Imperatives |  | Sociological Imperatives    |                                      | Psychosexual Imperatives           |   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative                                       | Sexual Selection Imperative | Aesthetic Imperative                 | Control Imperative                 | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |
| 1                      | The emotional/psychosexual body                                    |                             | Artefact as power implement          | Displacement activity              |   |
| 2                      | Products of the mind are articulated / manifested in concrete form |                             | Cultural objectives                  | Psychosexual conflicts             |   |
| 3                      | Conceptual skills/cognitive interpretations                        |                             | Subversion of overt sexual reference | Psychosexual instincts and desires |   |
| 4                      | Jewellery composition/embodies common consciousness                |                             | Collective expression/suppression    | Collective sublimation             |   |
| 5                      | Gratification of copulatory gaze                                   |                             | Diffusing the undesirable            | Subliminal gratification           |   |
| 6                      | Components of the psychosexual embodied in the artefact            |                             | Displacement through artefact        | Unpalatable sanitised              |   |
| 7                      | Artefacts can evoke/passify the deepest emotions                   |                             | Patrolling emotions                  | Sublimation of taboo               |   |

HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES ( PAGES 34 - 36 )

Figure 8.8 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 6

## CHAPTER 9

### **Adornment as instruments of cohesion: Society, culture, civilisation**

Chapter Nine level 7.

**Key concepts:**

**Body adornment as: cultural significations; instruments of social structure / cohesion. Mechanisms for objective expression. Body transformation / sublimation as social communication. The copulatory gaze in bio-socio / psychological context**

**Cognitive benchmarks:**

**Body augmentation / adornment: a vehicle for social control / management. Sophistication of: making skills; dialogue through symbolisation; levels of conceptualisation in relation to social organisation.**

Chapter 7 defined self awareness / perception of self and conceptual processing as one of the most significant steps in the development of human intelligence. Chapter 8 extended the investigation to examine and analyse the driving source and establishment of socio-sexual representation and subliminal liberation through the medium of objects embodying and expressing conceptualised content. As a consequence the construction and application of an entirely new level of consciousness emerged to be utilised as a highly sophisticated tool in the social organisation of human life.

In Chapter 9, level 7, the discussion and analysis is focussed to show how the art of the mentifact is a critical tool to humans' formation of social construction and the development of their cultural frameworks and their sustenance. In this context the chapter discusses the role and practice of body augmentation and the wearing of artefacts. It defines how these practices are tools which are instrumental in the fashioning of bio-socio-cultural precedences and contributory to the processes of behavioural and cultural selectivity, in the quest to establish and confirm social and cultural status designation.

### **9.0 Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed sublimation as an individual response to social requirements and the effects of this conformity and conditioning is that externalised creative representations take a form other than that which might otherwise have naturally occurred. Compliance with social mores results in a change in the psyche of each individual member of the society and that which each member contributes or is prepared to contribute becomes the collective psyche or collective consciousness manifest in a multiplicity of social phenomena or cultural significations. In the context of the topic of this thesis, these

imperatives impact both explicitly in respect of social mores but also implicitly in respect of individual expression.

Chapter 4 discussed the origins of ‘consciousness’ (4.3), in Chapter 5 we discussed how the advent of self-consciousness and the awareness of awareness may have arisen to lead us to an awareness of others’ awareness of awareness. In Chapter 6 we have shown how it was possible for humans as a species, through the extension of their phenotype and evolved self-consciousness, to grasp and utilise abstract levels of thinking and subjective reflection. We now need to look at how the cognitive space occurred for humans to start using their bodies and artefacts as agents / instruments for sublimation in order to rise to an entirely new level of consciousness. We will also consider how this provided them with the skills to invent extraordinary mechanisms for objective expression which could construct, structure and control their social environment and which, as they evolved, would entirely transform the nature of human existence.

With humans’ symbiotic / reciprocal increase in ability to problem solve and the parallel development in brain capacity and the kind of artefacts produced (as illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6) we can hypothesise how transitional developments may have taken place through time from *homo habilis* to *homo erectus* through to *homo sapiens* and contemporary humans. This chapter therefore discusses body signs or modifications as representation and re-presentation of individual change relations between humans and the society within which they live, to show how humans in a tribal context exemplify early developments in their social structures which are culturally manifested in body decoration such as scarification.

## 9.1 Instruments and mechanisms

Cultural artefacts as mentifacts embody not only the social requirement but also the individual psychosexual consciousness of both the creator and the consumer and have a specific mechanism for coding the resultant representational forms. The extraordinary characteristic of human culture is that it is extrasomatic ie., takes place outside and beyond the biological body to encompass and manifest such things as the metaphysical.

**Self adornment and body enhancement** are about the conversion of the natural body to a perceived ideal and the objectification of self through a variety of media.

**Transformation** is achieved by applying various methods of body modification which enhance, re-form and re-define the physical appearance of the body, culminating in the representation of the idealised self.

Inherent in body transformation within the context of this Chapter are the following components:

**‘Embellishments’** such as those attached to the individual by adhesion, such as pigments, dyes, and oils for the body and face painting, (included with these is hair removal). These have two roles: either to enhance perfection or to conceal or camouflage perceived ‘imperfection’. Perfumes and deodorants may be included in this context.

‘**Scarification**’, ‘cicatrization’, ‘tattoo’ or ‘body sculpting’ (including circumcision). These are the more extreme elements of body enhancement as they involve permanent alteration affecting either the surface or form of the body.

‘**Ornaments**’, ‘artefacts’ applied to any part of the body. These may be squeezed / forced on, pierced into or placed on to adorn and / or re-form parts of the body.

The body is given attention from head to foot. There is no part of the body that has not been decorated, transformed or re-presented. The location of embellishments can also act to divide the body into zones.

As previously discussed, differentiation between the sexes is the key to an understanding of whatever is sublimated in the social context and this has a bearing upon the way that that which it is permissible to display is displayed.

What makes us men and women? A little chromosome, a spurt of chemical here and there, an idea, a hope, a holy terror. . . . You can look at bodies, at male bodies and female bodies, and see how different they are – and how much the same, how tiny and irrelevant are the things that separate us. Our bodies are combinations of extensions and folds and little more, . . . Why do folds and extensions matter so? Why has so much of human history been a history of sex – of uterine envy and castration fear and homicidal jealousy, taboos and sacrifice and obsessive symphonies of passion? . . . Gender isn’t genitals, hormones, or chromosomes; attraction and desire isn’t based simply on the shape of things. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Our understanding of embodiment through objectification is based upon establishing criteria for inherent representation: requirements relative to that which is sublimated and subsequently transmitted and socially permissible in and of objects of embellishment and jewellery itself. Some of the questions posed by Tisdale and listed here have been discussed in part earlier in the thesis in the context of the distinctions between the sexes which encompass differences between their biological imperatives. This differentiation in turn decides the relative social relations / social roles and the consequences in terms of social evolution and impact upon individual psychology. All of which, channelled through sublimation, have been manifest, in the first instance, by adornment of the body and subsequently in the design and making of jewellery and other objects as a displacement activity. In addition to arguing that displacement objects come about because of biological imperatives which are focussed through the copulatory gaze, which is to infer that they are extended phenotypes, the thesis also argues that these objects are the depository of that which is regarded as primitive or animalistic, deviant or vulgar in terms of what may, at any given time, be regarded as disruptive to social progress or evolution, towards privileging that which is regarded as human and of the soul as opposed to that which is sexual, related to the body and / or animal.

With the exception of humans, all other animal species have developed their appropriate bodily modifications through a process of ‘natural selection’. Any differentiation of the sexes evolved through a slow process of organic evolution of which the most visible manifestations were: bodily evidence of genetic prowess; body surface for protection, comfort and camouflage;

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<sup>1</sup> Sallie Tisdale, *Talk Dirty to me: An Intimate Philosophy of Sex* (New York: Doubleday 1994; reprint, London: Pan Books, 1996), 44, 45 (Page references are to reprint edition).

weaponry for hunting and fighting and display. However these attributes would never have developed had they not also taken on their double role as ‘natural’ ornaments, necessary signifiers (tools) in the process of mate attraction and selection.

In terms of physiological equipment human bodies are grossly inadequate as tools for display and fighting but what has been remarkable is that humans, unlike animals, have learned to compensate / outwit biology by providing / designing their own bodily modifications pro-actively, making tools to extend their ability to achieve better or more efficient task resolutions. As with other animals these attributes would not have developed had they not taken on the double role of an extension to ‘natural’ ornaments and as necessary signifiers (tools) in the process of mate attraction and selection. Humans could make required modifications and enhance / represent themselves by applying / attaching to their bodies appropriate artefacts in response to the needs described above. Alongside their organic evolution, humans have created a ‘cultural evolution’, which is understood in this thesis as the extended phenotype.

In a vital way gender has nothing to do with sex and sex has nothing to do with gender. Sex is far, far more than the fitting of genitals and hormones together, and gender is what it is without sex at all. Identity isn’t a wholly fixed thing. If we can call into question all the forms and signs of gender, then perhaps there is no such thing as gender. Gender is all illusion. We create this gestalt that makes gender possible; we make each other men and women.<sup>2</sup>

Thus there is a distinction between biological adaptation, ‘natural selection’, and cultural adaptation, ‘nurture’, the later being regulated by human consciousness and self will. This led to humans’ ability to adapt to whatever the environmental circumstances (physical and / or social) required, ie modifications to the body could be orchestrated and changed at will by being applied or left off.<sup>3</sup>

## 9.2 Representational tools / material culture

As the evolutionary processes developed differentiation and social structures an era of hunter gathering resulted in differentiated social roles and thereby differential societies within the singularity of interdependence, the tribe. Re-interpretation suggesting a symbiotic motivation for the differentiation of the male from the female in social context and role fulfilment is, it is suggested, made possible by interrogating notions of gender as biological difference once removed.

There is no historical evidence to suggest that women did not make tools. On the contrary, looking at humans’ nearest related primate the chimpanzee, (see illustration in diagram 11.2b level 1) it is the female, not the male, who teaches young infants how to select and make an appropriate use of tools, and, as flint knapping specialist Phil Harding says, “women would hardly sit and wait for men to come home to make them a particular tool if they needed it, they would have made it themselves.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 45

<sup>3</sup> V. Gordon Childe, *Man Makes Himself* (London: Watts & Co. London, 1956), 16, 33.

<sup>4</sup> In conversation with the author at “Art in Action”, Oxford. 1990.



In addition, studies of contemporary hunter-gathering societies have shown that women's contribution to the larder provides 60-80% of a family group's diet. The food she provides is often more nutritious, more time-efficient and more reliable than that gained from hunting. Additionally, women in these societies have to be extraordinarily knowledgeable about the natural history of plants and animals in relation to food sourcing and its edibility. There are enough similarities between contemporary hunter gatherers and prehistoric (Palaeolithic / Mesolithic) societies to indicate that their subsistence / food gathering practices may not have been too dissimilar.<sup>5</sup> What about women's unique attributes: pregnancy, carrying a baby full term, the act of giving birth? All are physically demanding and extreme situations, as traumatic and life threatening as any battle. Comparable physical and emotional onslaught on the male warrior / hunter body would be seen as major in the heroism of its endurance and potential for injury. It would be foolhardy to ignore the aforementioned factors as contributory to cultural development. Mutual vulnerability led to mutual dependancy to minimise risk, hence the sex contract. Humans of both sexes learned design by applying and recording cognitive decision making, by imitating applicable shapes which were found in, or suggested by, nature.<sup>6</sup> That humans learned the correlation between broken flints and their use as specific tools is an obvious and basic example. Modifications to what nature provided, in response to physical needs, was one route to civilisation. This human cognitive ability provides for a wider range of possibilities than this basic concept such as imitation when progressed to the level of complexity of the imagination and dexterity of hand, mind and eye co-ordination.

This cognitive shift precipitating development manifested itself not only in the making of utilitarian artefacts such as hunting tools, utensils, weapons etc, but, as hypothesised in previous chapters, in the development of a consciousness of differentiations in social life which needed a formalisation of its structure. Although this may have happened quite some time before organised hunting and physical tool making, external group interactions such as territorial skirmishes, however local or small scale, required ritual posturing to avoid injury or at worst genocide. It was the structure of humans' sexual behaviour which first forced the creation of signs, signals and representations for such things as sexual impregnation / liaison and the warning off of unwelcome advances. Therefore, as a displacement activity, the earliest manifestation of the making of objects serves as a reinforcement of bio-sexual imperatives, not of their suppression.

Here, at the dawn of civilisation, when humans invented specific tools for a variety of purposes, the invention of the earliest type of tool brought with it the psychological, cognitive, representational values of signs. It has been overlooked that the cognitive tools which were required in response to the origins of sex orientated culture were developed in response to psychological as well as biological needs, acting simultaneously as a communication tool insofar as they symbolised much more than practical utility. Design inventions and innovation took place in response to humans' social and psychological needs as well as the biological, a phenomenon which had profound significance. Although there is no physical record of the precursory developments which led to the intelligent construct of culture, recent controversial research (as already discussed earlier in this thesis) has investigated the evolution of the mind's cognitive, creative and imaginative operation.

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<sup>5</sup> Margaret Ehrenberg, *Women in Prehistory* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1989), 51, 52.

<sup>6</sup> For a simple and well researched reference on the origin and design development of man-made tools and towards the making of other objects see: Kurt Rowland, *The Development of Shape* (Bucks: Ginn and Company Ltd., 1979), 4, 9.

Using terminology such as ‘cultural and behavioural selectionism’,<sup>7</sup> ‘cultural virus theory’,<sup>8</sup> the idea that humans’ specific ‘social tools’ are generic and fundamental to the structure of human beings and their society, these specialists develop a theory of evolutionary psychology and apply it to the development of artefacts. By identifying certain clues they are able to provide a feasible insight into the operations of the mind and theorise about the interconnective play between genetic patterns of development and cultural evolution. This process, seen as an extended phenotype to cultural evolution and meme theory, suggests that information transfer allows the generational learning essential for the making of artefacts.

Garner talks about how “Evolutionary psychologists engage in a reverse engineering: from the contemporary operation of human capabilities, they try to infer the selection processes that led over many thousands of years to the development of a particular faculty.”<sup>9</sup>

Pinker describes the process as Reverse-Engineering the Psyche

The mind is a system of organs of computation, designed by natural selection to solve the kinds of problems our ancestors faced in their foraging way of life, in particular, understanding and outmaneuvering objects, animals, plants, and other people. The summary can be unpacked into several claims. The mind is what the brain does; specifically, the brain processes information, and thinking is a kind of computation. The mind is organised into modules or mental organs, each with a specialised design that makes it an expert in one area of interaction with the world. The modules’ basic logic is specified by our genetic program. Their operation was shaped by natural selection to solve the problems of hunting and gathering life led by our ancestors in most of our evolutionary history. The various problems for our ancestors were subtasks of one big problem for their genes, maximizing the number of copies that made it into the next generation. On this view, psychology is engineering in reverse. In forward-engineering, one designs a machine to do something; in reverse-engineering, one figures out what a machine was designed to do.<sup>10</sup>

Interdisciplinary approaches allow the development of hypotheses which can be applied to objects / artefacts leading to the conceptualisation of a ‘sex culture’ based on a material culture of sexually representational body related objects / symbols adorning the body.

### 9.3 Social tools for social groups

Earlier chapters considered an hypothesis concerning the origins of concept formation in relation to natural materials such as flowers, describing how it was possible to suggest that there was an analogous content providing context, and symbolic values present in the consciousness which could be used as a tool to enhance, define and communicate certain information about women’s sexuality. However, this focus on the formulation of ideas must now be considered alongside the transposition into objects. Therefore materials beyond those required for basic

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<sup>7</sup> “... the notion that items of material culture can be treated as extensions of the human phenotype, and the implication that successful variants of technology are a result of selective pressures on decision making, ... ‘fitness’ of an artefact is measured by its replication and spread through time and across the prehistoric landscape.” Herbert Donald and Graham Maschner, eds., *Darwinian Archaeologies* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), part II, Chapter 2, *Cultural and Behavioural Selection*, by Michael O’Brien, 15.

<sup>8</sup> See also ‘Cultural Virus Theory’ and ‘Artefacts as Viral Phenomena’ Ibid. Chapter 4, *Cultural Virus Theory and the Eusocial Pottery Assemblage*, by Ben Cullen, 43 -56.

<sup>9</sup> Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed: multiple intelligences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 36.

<sup>10</sup> Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (USA: W. W. Norton, 1997; reprint, London: Penguin Group, 1999), 21-23 (page references are to reprint edition).

sustenance and bodily comfort, objects which have “. . . special qualities over and above what one could be entitled to expect from the simple considerations of performing a function.”<sup>11</sup> can be described as bringing psychological comfort, as having symbolic values.

These symbolically loaded images and concepts provided an abstract platform on which humans could be conscious of, and exchange with others, what they thought and felt. Organisation of these symbolic values in relation to their use as representational tools embedded in objects and actions gave rise to a symbolic order upon which it was possible to construct a system of social interaction and a complex exchange of communication using mainly visual language.

Humans habitually living in and / or encountering other small social groups which involved both sexes, paired and unpaired, would have required a communication structure which clearly transmitted to one another their sexual status in the group, their emotions and intentions. Abstract and concrete thought arrived with consciousness. Therefore for those who wished to signal availability a ritualised system of reciprocal visual signals / tools had to be devised alongside the basic natural signifiers of body shape, tone of voice and body gestures. Other forms of mimicry / exaggeration would have followed, whether in the form of camouflage, as enhancement or disguise for sexual gain, etc. mood signifiers, hunting (as discussed earlier), gender tagging or other identifications.

Mimicry / analogy, artificial similarities, signs, codes images messages, provided a well understood set of embedded values, though artificially constructed: of volatile, dynamic, cognitive, influential and formative constructs by way of communications, motivated and manipulated by the core of our primal and or physical understanding as living beings. Thus the early organisation of ‘social tools’ formed what is today known as material culture. The contemporary critical debate now acknowledges that there is little or no division between the utilitarian and the cultural / symbolic / ritual, that they have shared meanings manifest as cultural objects. That these objects of material culture are now accepted as designed products, in the literal sense, is a culmination of a long process of reinterpretation observing the past achievements of cultural progression (which differ from those of evolution).

It is reasonable to hypothesise that if humans originated in Africa (albeit that later migration throughout the world took our species into other environments) then this is where the first steps of human evolution took place. Therefore the art of body adornment also evolved in and migrated out of Africa and some remnants of its origins may still be visible or traceable. Likewise it is reasonable to propose that many features of the lives of modern nomadic or foraging tribes, or even settled peoples like those of the African Bushmen, may have changed little. Their modes and rituals concerning body representation seem to appear similar to the palaeolithic period, and until recently were relatively unaffected by the modern world and tourism. Sadly, many rituals and traditional means of body transformation and types of jewellery work will have disappeared before they can be properly recorded. Many however remain, and therefore vestiges of former practices can easily be recognised. Even in contemporary urban societies it is not difficult to deduce origins where specific criteria for detection are apparent. The difficulty lies in the multiplicity of levels and fashionable trends in contemporary society which are camouflaged within its structures, and the multiplicity of presentational forms of social expression.

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<sup>11</sup> Deyan Sudjic, *Cult Objects: The complete guide to having it all* (London: Paladin Books, 1985), 23. Sudjic’s book provides a good analysis of such contemporary objects.

Humans are both a tribal animal and a sexual animal. In the study of contemporary pre-industrialised communities such as many of the African tribes, anthropologists who debate observations of body representation only pick up at a point where the grouping of humans are already formed into large tribes. Smaller groups such as individual families forming alliances were the forebearers of the tribe and must have laid the foundations of social, civilising principles.

## 9.4 Emotive zones: Event marking individual / personal transitions

Individual survival and reproductive imperatives of this kind influenced the formation of social structures which became extended with increased population to the present day levels of complexity. The key factors impacting on evolutionary development are summarised in the following relative to the above hypotheses. The organisation of society requires regulation, policing and signs of conformity relating in the first instance to sex and reproduction, mate selection, viability and availability as discussed. Body markings signify specific levels of maturity and who is socially desirable through rites of passage: show such aspects as sexual / gender identity / markings recording and mapping out of different levels of maturity, viability and availability.

The significant public and private events leading to maturity and social acceptance / respectability for the female are:

**Birth** = Gender / Sex = public recognition = prescribed attitude towards infant and upbringing

**Infancy** = relationships = bonding and dependancy hierarchies = patri / maitre-clan section = tribe

**Childhood** = often betrothed to future husband

**Pre puberty** = sexual immaturity

**Initial menses** = sexual maturity = viability / fertility status

**Marriage** = sexual partnership tie or contract / agreed monogamy.

**Pregnancy and Birthing** = confirmation of fertility

**Nurturing** = post natal dependancy demonstrates ability to protect

**Post weaning** = sexual availability again

**Menopause** = sexually non-viable = undesirable and sexually non-productive, infertility

These important rules permeate throughout and into the evolving psychosexual consciousness of the male and female as repetitious events and life stages both in the intimate circumstances of the family unit and in the communication of them to the community at large.

As societies developed separate identities and individuality moulded / formulated different roles, based on differing needs, adornment as a sign of difference became more complex, as did the other rituals, myths and religions which upheld them, thus binding more tightly the community which contained them. The temptation to look at these activities as separate has obscured actuality, and shifted theories of beauty and spirituality towards interpretation as vehicles for voyeurism leading to a misguided perspective. The following attempt to refocus

analysis has rightly acknowledged a civilising process evolved from early forms of adornment or body transformation but has disproportionately emphasised the body as differentiating the material medium.

In his introduction to his book 'Marks of Civilisation' Arnold Rubin writes

... we have scrupulously avoided terms with negative associations (e.g. deformation, disfigurement, mutilation) and frankly hope that they will eventually disappear from serious discussions of these phenomena. Rather, by acknowledging these modes of artistic expression as something very interesting and mysterious and profound that human beings do to themselves and to each other, we prefer the positive bias embodied in terms such as "perfection" – and ultimately civilisation – as closer to peoples' own conceptions of the activities involved.<sup>12</sup>

Rubin's notions of this early primary adornment as "artistic expression" reintroduces to the debate a serious attempt to uncover levels of significance in the elements of "deformation, disfigurement, and mutilation" as evidence of the existence of civilisation or civilising influences through cultural display. Women's 'modes of artistic expression' in this context speak for themselves. The iconography emanating from woman's transformed body speaks of physical and emotional brutality embedded within the very foundations of the evolutionary principles expounded by Darwin as survival of that most fitting for the purpose.

It is possible to see how these instruments of body fashioning / imaging of objectified beauty and thereby a medium for artistic /aesthetic expression embody such elements of affliction as anguish, misery and pain, both mental and physical, as an evolutionary necessity. The visual aesthetic evocation and concomitant physical crafting beyond mere social sign or signal of this early primal adornment might well be judged most significant in relation to evolving culture and civilisation as transmitting collective consciousness rather than being limited to the metaphysical.

## 9.5 Mapping for display: The female body

A different focus: when looking at body art from a position of analysing what is represented / communicated of the social, Pinker's notion of reverse engineering of the psyche is a useful metaphor inasmuch as the end product, the artefact, is a consequence of the social context or consciousness of the society it represents. The relevance of acknowledging direction of motion is compatible with a notion of evolving imperatives in human development.

In relation to this discussion it has been proposed that the socialisation process results in a plurality of requirements and that therefore that which is displayed is that which is socially acceptable, and by implication that which is unacceptable ie., that which is an aspect of the individual psyche, is sublimated as such when embedded in the artefact (re-presented) and may become acceptable. Further, the process of evolved human interaction has three strands which have been put forward as explaining women's subject / object relations.

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<sup>12</sup> Arnold Rubin, ed., *Marks of Civilisation: Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*. (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, University of California, 1988), 14.

Thus far it has been established that there are 3 main overlaying and interactive imperatives as follows.

**(1) Biological Imperative** (1) Genetic partner selection / Reproductive values.

**(2) Social Structures** (2) The politics of social ideology

**(3) Individual Psychology** (3) Appeasement of men's fear and anxieties in dealing with women's sexuality and fidelity.

These three critical and interrelated evolutionary facets of intersexual, intersocial and individuated relations (Chapter, 2.2 to 2.2.6, and figure 2.4) have been supported by a variety of evidences previously stated. To look at body adornment / embellishments and jewellery and understand how the implicit cultural and behavioural practices at any point in history manifest the bio-psycho sexual imperatives arising from our sexual intelligence and level of collective consciousness at any particular moment in time requires a specific reading of the form and content of the visual representation.

It is necessary to approach ancient practices of body marking such as body painting, cicatrization, scarification, tattoo, etc, not in the traditional literal interpretation as a manifestation of art and the personal beautification of the body but from an alternative position, the evolutionary bio-imperative position, using interpretation and analyses based on the evolutionary psychologists' enquiry through the use of reverse engineering. Research has proved that the blank slate scenario can no longer stand up against all contrary evidence, indicating that it is highly improbable for complex cultural and social structures to have just appeared from thin air to fill in a vacuum in the mind after birth. We have seen how human body, brain and mind evolved sexual intelligence from the sexual imperative through thousands of years from humans' ancestors to contemporary *homo sapiens sapiens*. The previous chapters have explained that the human body does not come into the world as a blank canvas but as a vehicle for the replication of genes, primed with complex DNA and genetic instructions the interpretation of which is hard wired into body, brain and mind at all levels of the human consciousness and its evolved bio-psyche.

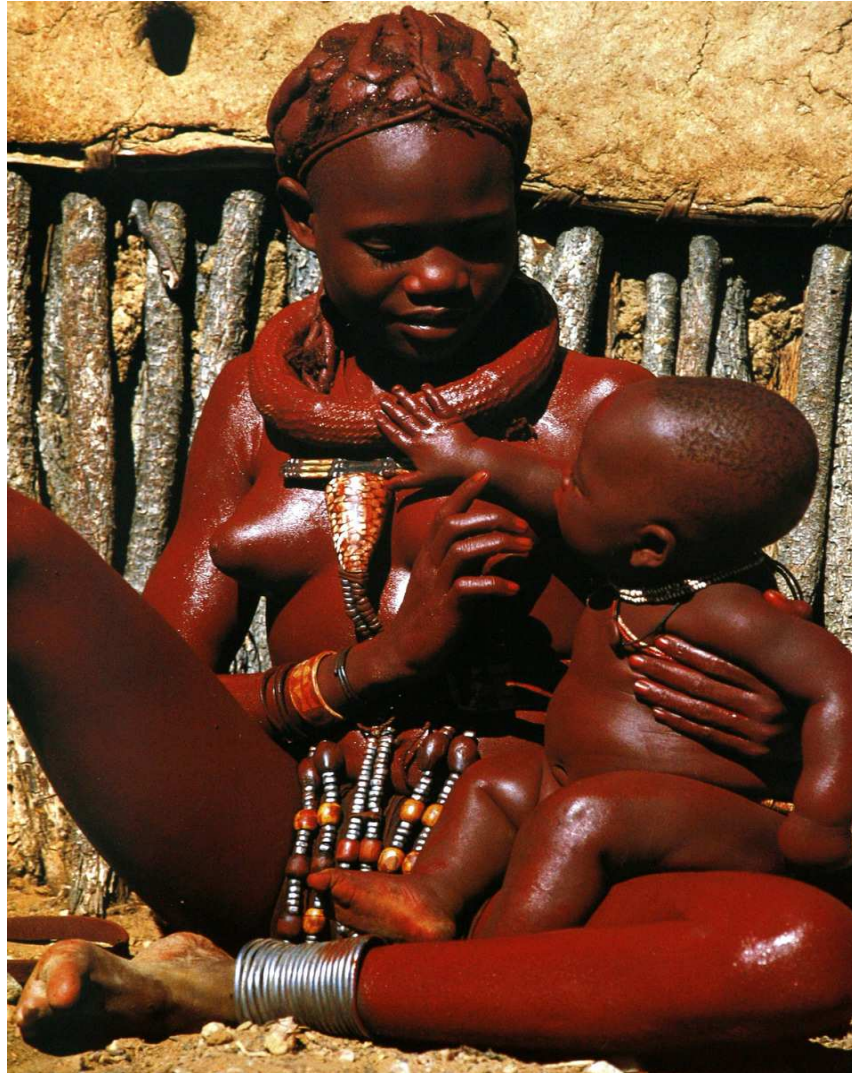
The following illustrations encapsulate the key stages significant in evolution and move towards event signing as a social extension of biological imperatives. These studies will show how consistent and ancient forms of body embellishment are still practised today and that the persistent, traditional concept and interpretation of 'the art of personal beautification' is a partial and incomplete explanation of what body representation is really about. Evidence collated in the previous chapters will show how these evolved practices have a much wider context and more significant implications than are usually suggested. Based on this evidence we will be able to show how bio-imperatives relate to the sexual intelligence imperatives based on the former, and that there is a symbiotic relationship between these and cultural evolution.

## **9.6 One: Natural body grooming: Modified mode of enhancement**

Most bare skinned mammals such as the elephant, hippopotamus, pig etc have an innate urge to indulge in mud wallowing and dusting of the skin for very sound reasons. ie., protecting the skin from damaging environmental elements that they are subjected to in their every day lives. As the human body became more stripped of protective hair, the 'naked ape' thus exposed had specific



problems to overcome. Keeping the body in good condition and thus free from biting insects and sunburn was essential and an excellent survival strategy. The use of mud and clays / pigments further mixed with animal fats initially kept the body healthy, protected the skin from sunburn and insects. Figure 9.1 below shows a mother, and her child “smeared with a mixture of red earth and animal fat when only a few days old.”<sup>13</sup> New born babies have little pigment to protect them from the sun’s rays. Fats and oils acting also as carriers for pigments and dyes kept the body’s skin clean / supple, inhibited chafing / cracking in dry and or cold climates (especially face and lips, the more exposed areas) thereby keeping the body free of infection which might occur in small wounds.



*Figure 9.1 Baby smeared with red earth and animal fat*

Additionally humans began to understand how smearing the body with different pigments and dyes changed the look and form of their bodies in specific ways which could in turn convey specific associations and make social statements thereby providing erotic connotations and signifying a range of meanings, for example, the oiled body signifies that the individual practises good body care. Further it highlights aesthetic elements such as healthy skin and other features which may constitute the overall health and bio-viability of the individual for reproductive purposes so critical to the biological shopping list of the copulatory gaze. Subliminal psychological subsidiary elements

<sup>13</sup> Robert Morton, ed., *Passages: photographs by Carol Beckworth and Angela Fisher* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2000), 4.

of perception occur, the oiled body looks like / simulates the light sweat of sexual excitement, feels like the texture of sexual lubricants, seminal fluids. Glistening lips look sensual and moist, linking to another area of response, that of feeling. Sexual stimulation from the visual image in the subliminal or unconscious mind also connects the emotions through the evocative mechanism. The worship of sexual aesthetics in that context is inadvertently erotic.

Self awareness relative to sexual self-consciousness and the awareness of differentiation developed an awareness of analogies of sexual identity linking the conceptual to conscious practice which became materialised, in this case, in ritualised practice. The evolving sense of self brought about by a realisation that what is practised defines oneself to others is often effected through manifestation and utilised in multi-variant situations and forms. In the evolved art of body decoration, representation developed from the controlled imperative for body care to the conscious transference of the materials (oils, paint pigments, dyes, powders etc) to signify social position, thereby becoming a socio-differentiation art form.

Simple discoveries transformed into repeated activities such as putting kohl around the eyes which stopped the glare of the sun reflecting off the inside edges of eyelids and mitigated the glare of bright soils, sands, snow or water. Kohl kept insects off the eyes and also emphasises them, making them the focus of attention, enabling a more easily read set of facial expressions by way of exaggeration and thereby holding the attention of others longer. Enlarged eyes make the face look more childlike and therefore non-threatening and appealing and thus sexually inviting. Drawing attention to or emphasising desirable aspects and camouflaging undesirable aspects of the natural body (as in case study Chapter 3, Figure 3.6 ‘Two faced values’) are procreative imperatives. Examples of double role cosmetic function abound and as they evolved the practical aspects of body care, body painting and transformed body re-presentation became modes of gender definition and control in social and cultural structures.

### **Further extension of natural grooming**

Keeping the body in good condition: ie., combing of hair, picking off parasites, licking wounds clean, etc., as social and sexual bonding are important aspects in the formation of social structure and display of individual socialisation or social conditioning.

The head is considered ‘the seat of power’. Indeed great powers of sexual attraction is attributed to the hair. Various symbolic coiffures are displayed, and the whole of a woman’s life might have once been revealed in the style of her coiffure. There were once styles for spinsters, for married-women, and for barren-women, mourning-women, and those about to have a child. Even women in disgrace, or past child-bearing age were required to display these facts by the hairstyle designated to their particular case. [Igbo women’s hairstyle and distinct accessories conveyed specific messages. ie] . . . A childless wife coated her head thickly with camwood-paste and stuck cowries into it. Cowries, symbolic of fertility, were hopefully to assist her condition. Wives of chiefs once hung leopard’s claws and beads on strings and dangled them from the backs of their heads, This was to inform others that these women were pregnant. . . .<sup>14</sup>

The genetic agenda firstly expresses that which underlies grooming (for the health and maintenance of the body). Thereafter its role is extended beyond this basic function into the arena of social display. Drawing attention to the body here is as much to do with the copulatory gaze as it is to do with protection. Any further promotion of self through temporary and extended grooming techniques

<sup>14</sup> Eve de Negri, *Nigerian Body Adornment*: (Nigeria: Nigeria Magazine special publications. Academy Press Ltd., 1976), 15-16..

conveys much about the integrity and complexity of interaction within the group, notwithstanding those imperatives which are expressed by temporary changes in appearance.

These examples of temporary self esteem additions to the natural function of grooming are significant indicators of the multifunctional nature of body decoration underpinned by an evolving perceptual development embodying the elaboration of items / objects identified as jewellery. There was a parallel desire to state other temporary conditions fulfilling other functions. Additions to the grooming function would therefore seem to signify other temporary states yet to come and anticipatory and / or retrospective statements. Until a complete mapping out of a woman's sexual history was clearly published by representations on her body, the singular occurrence or situation was emphasised. This is further underpinned and elaborated through items, objects and jewellery to force home the message.

### **9.6.1 'Signing the inter-personal': Family, social groups, tribes**

There are several important primary considerations associated with marking the body in a social context relative to identity differentiation and the communication of status. Identifying an appropriate mate further to assessment of genetic / aesthetic attributes is observable in the practice of body marking of the female as are other passages to maturity and position within the hierarchy. The level of cultural development in terms of rituals and technology achieved within the group or tribe will be reflected in the nature or type of decoration and symbolic content applied to the body. Body decoration flags up sexual identity which, for the female, changes according to level of maturity and circumstance but also indicates alliance and personal and peer group kinship associations. An instantaneous glance at the decorated body immediately communicates to the initiated such things as gender, suitability, availability, comparability of status, maturity in rank, wealth and so on. It may well be that, in the early stage of the development of social groups whose members existed at the subsistence level, those who wished to communicate to other members and outsiders a connection / bond to another individual marked each other, inadvertently or deliberately, with scratches, bites and bruises, which we would call love bites.

Sexual and relational bonds were probably the first deliberate marks made on one individual's body by another individual, other than those inflicted in conflict, which were more usually male to male. Thereafter, further more complex developments in mutual marking displayed specific information to others and made a public statement in a context of larger groups or tribes. The affirmation of bonding or declaration of ownership is a recurring theme when marking the body. Other more sophisticated signs / symbols in formal decoration on the body also acted as both invitation and warning. As humans' cognitive skills evolved, what were initially 'mating marks' became consciously simulated by a variety of techniques on the body and were organised into controlled compositions, applied as statements relating to sub-functions of information, the communication of complex temporal / communal associative needs (as will be discussed further in this chapter), culminating in a culturally specific iconography.

## **9.7 Two: Event marking, social, measure of involvement, unity and kinship**

Human settlement allowed extended family groups to settle in one place and develop social structures. Occupying patches of ground required extended family territory to be not only

managed but also protected. Also this development spawned additional responsibilities on males to compete, acquire male hierarchical status and authority which demanded intelligence as well as strength. Kinship solidarity protected the group or tribe and this form of what might be thought of as genetic collaboration and protection of the genetic pool was the underlying sexual imperative. This new group reinforcement of the selfish agenda of reproduction marks the externalisation *via* in-group behaviour of the hitherto hidden genetic process.

It is suggested that distinctive markings for social interaction may have evolved as social controls or qualifications identifying, for example, A as B's woman. A and B's children could have been marked as AB to ensure further against an already innate aversion to incest but, just as significantly to identify extension of the family beyond one generation.<sup>15</sup> Humans needed to know who was who in terms of the latitude possible while extending the gene pool. As other animals identify each other by scent humans' more developed sensibilities evolved in response to the differing needs of more sophisticated code and sign systems.

### **9.7.1 Transition: Temporary body embellishment to permanent ornamentation**

Temporary marking is usually used for more transitional situations such as festivals, ceremonies, or rituals, celebration of a range of different events throughout the year, where people adapt their personal decoration accordingly. A bridge between temporary and semi-permanent may have been utilised by early humans as a compromise as in the example described by de Negri.

A different kind of marking was once used on the face and body. This was made with the use of an irritant juice. The juice, in fact, was made from pounded caterpillars mixed with potash and lime-juice. When the irritant juice was painted on to the skin it caused weals or ridges to appear. These remained on the skin for several months, before subsiding. Besides causing the raised weals, the juice temporarily stained the skin.<sup>16</sup>

As natural mating marks and scars usually heal and dissipate they would therefore be considered as temporary and transient. The pressure of living in more permanent social groups required a more indelible form of marking, a more drastic and permanent form of skin weals or other appropriate markings. Thus permanent forms of body ornamentation evolved in response to pressures of group co-operation and social management, not least the socio-sexual aspect. To provide permanence would involve some form of body mutilation and this is still a revered practice in the more rigid societies of today. There are various forms of permanent marking as listed on page 187 - 188.

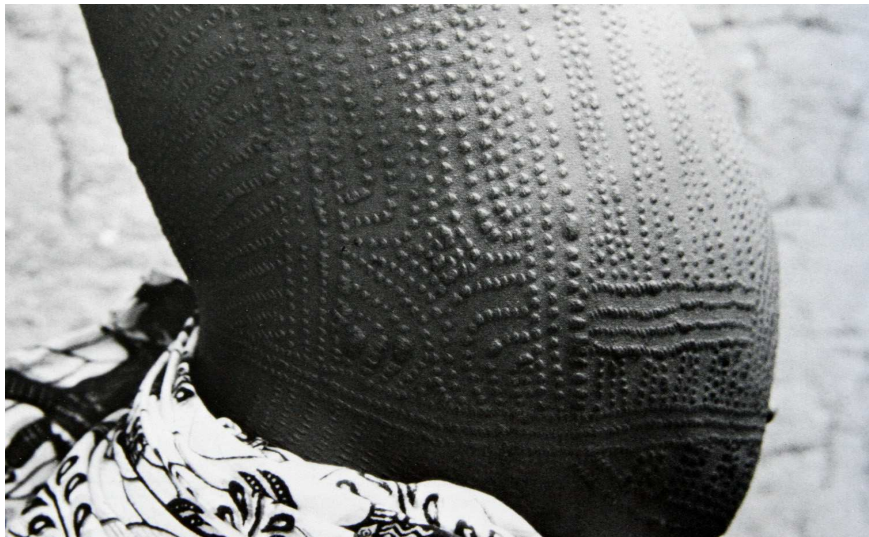
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<sup>15</sup> Morris defined the 'natural instinct' process to the incest issue as the following "As with all pair-bonded animals, the parents are possessive of one another. The mother 'owns' the father sexually and *vice versa*. As soon as the offspring begin to develop their sexual signals at puberty, they become sexual rivals, the sons of the father and the daughters of the mother. There will be a tendency to drive them both out. The offspring will also begin to develop a need for a home-based 'territory' of their own. The urge to do this must obviously have been present in the parents for them to have set up a breeding home in the first place, and the pattern will simply be repeated." See: Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1967; reprint, Herts: Triad/Mayflower Books 1977), 72. (Page reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>16</sup> Eve de Negri, *Nigerian Body Adornment* (Nigeria: Nigeria Magazine special publications. Academy Press Ltd., 1976), 14.



Although much depends on the colour of the skin as background for the decoration, the essential for communication purposes is maximum contrast. Marks made needed to be clearly visible against context background and permanent marking needed to be instantly recognisable at the greeting / approach distance. Where there was ready access to a variety of pigments the high contrast requirement of decorative sign was easy to fulfil. Where there was scarce access to a broad palette such as in the plains or desert fringes and where high light intensity tends to promote darker pigmentation in the skin other solutions were needed. Permanent marking was achieved in several basically similar ways. In many countries, especially on the African continent where people are dark skinned, a form of marking is used which stands proud of the skin as in figure 9.2. These marks are made by designated transcribers of meanings or tribal officials who pick up the skin with a thorn or iron hook making the cut with a specially made sharp cutting tool. Marks are often further emphasised by the use of colouring substances such as soot and dyes. These practices, known as scarification or cicatrization, capitalise on the dark skin's characteristics which already has a natural tendency to form a growth of hard scar tissue of pinkish colour on the healing of a cut. This is known as a Keloid.



*Figure 9.2 Detail of raised scarification marks on stomach*

Many of the African tribal marks look like rows of beads

... up-standing marks like small berries, ... [reminiscent of the Gelada's display of oestrus signals on their chests and rumps <sup>17</sup> ] Cicatrization in this form was used on both men and women. It was usually effected at the time of puberty.

Such cicatrization was a mark of bravery for boys and for girls a part of the fertility rites connected with 'coming-of-age' ceremonies. The lower part of the girl's body was cicatrized before marriage, and the upper part on the occasion of her first pregnancy. Camwood-paste was thickly painted over the marks to deepen the tint of the skin-colour.<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned earlier, as monogamous pairs formed into groups and groups into tribes humans had to find a way of controlling and policing women's sexuality and younger males' access to them. Rather than resorting to physical confrontations and the possibility of serious injury,

<sup>17</sup> Chapter Four note 16. "Geladas (*Theropithecus*) bear an hourglass-shaped patch of naked pink skin on the chest. In females this is edged with bead-like blisters, and there is a similar area on the rump. At oestrus the vesicles become fluid-filled and prominent."

<sup>18</sup> Eve de Negri, *Nigerian Body Adornment* (Nigeria: Nigeria Magazine special publications. Academy Press Ltd., 1976), 9-10.

humans evolved structured intelligence / political strategies and mechanisms which could circumvent these problems and pacify anxieties and stress by replacing the physical aspects of control and dominance with the psychological.

Mind control comes when you have total control of communication in an environment; when you have manipulation inside the group, such as constant self criticism and confessing; and manipulation of individual guilt.<sup>19</sup>

Mechanisms were put in place to deal with the important and potentially problematic stages in life, as described below. Various modes of body embellishment developed as transmitting symbols, signifying meaning. Not only could these convey particular information about the condition of an individual but codes of conduct could now be established to run in parallel so that human behaviour could be policed and controlled. This could be operated on the simple basis that compliance meant acceptance and non-compliance meant rejection within the desired group. The innate compulsive comparison developed into group-prescribed conventions of body display. The signification of encoded meanings enabled and facilitated the addressing of problems and implementation of solutions eg., the need of an individual to be accepted, to be part of a group, results in a type of self-policing and therefore the social ideals rising from the simplest of origins are self-perpetuating and generative of what we call culture.



Figure 9.3a Betrothed girls in patri-clan colours



Figure 9.3b Prescribed markings and shades of pigment tell a history

## 9.7.2 Permanent marking: Southeast Nuba, Sudan

Illustrations 9.3a and 9.3b

Females, from the age of about six years (when they are first betrothed) until consummation of marriage, oil and ochre daily if possible, in colours appropriate to their patri-clan section, for patri-clan section specific colours: [Figure 9.3a and 9.3b]. And, on childbirth and while nursing, again may wear some oil and ochre on their shoulders — this time the colour appropriate to the infant's patri-clan section. What is signalled, then, is their father's and their husband's patri-clan section membership — no visual diacritica marks their matri-clan section membership (which females, of course, pass on to their offspring).

<sup>19</sup> Dr Robert J. Lifton as quoted in V. Vale and Andrea Juno, ed., *Modern Primitives* (San Francisco. Re/search Publications, 1989), 201.



But, a young girl also receives an initial set of body scars on the first sign of approaching maturity when her breasts first start to appear (scars from the navel to the breasts — [see Fig 9.3b] Other more extensive scars are cut (now covering the entire torso) on initial menses and a final set covering the back of the legs arms and neck, are cut after a woman weans her first child. This last set of scars signals sexual availability again after a long postpartum sexual restriction while the infant is nursed. The final set is regarded as a beauty necessity, and if a husband refuses to pay for the scarring specialist, a woman may seek a lover who will do so, and her first marriage will end. The scars on a woman's back are regarded as sexually pleasurable to her lovers, And finally, at menopause she takes on a distinctly different skirt colour and a belt that no longer allows the cowries on it to rattle as she walks — a sound said to be sexually attractive.<sup>20</sup>

Patterns of prescribed rites of passage are also displayed through similar modes of body marking such as tattoos which show up well on paler skins and skins which do not have the natural keloid forming tendency. As was the case when humans dispersed from Africa to other areas of the world and as skins became lighter, humans had to adapt and discover which kind of scars showed up best on their skins. The need to mark the body to develop and sustain the structure of a society seems to have occurred as a universal phenomenon and, if not dispersed seems to have sprung up independently, evidenced by many similar reports from anthropologists from all over the world.



*Figures 9.4a and 9.4b Front and back tattooing of a Koita (New Guinea) girl*

<sup>20</sup> Arnold Rubin, *Marks of Civilisation: Artistic Transformations of the Human Body* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History. University of California, 1988), vol. 2. Significance of Differences in the Male and Female Personal Art of the Southeast Nuba by James Faris, 34-35.

Tattooing of a Koita (New Guinea) girl who has reached a marriageable age. The decoration is begun when she is about five years old, and is added to year by year as she gets older. The V-shaped marks on the chest, with certain others, are done last, and are an indication that the girl is marriageable. . . . She has had much of the back of her body done, but tattooing above the waist in front [see Fig 3(a)] will not be done until she has reached a marriageable age.<sup>21</sup>

### 9.7.3 Mental transformations: Connecting internal cognition to external mode of expression

As explained in Chapters 2 and 3, bio-genetic interpretation of beauty / body aesthetics have enabled us to decipher or deconstruct body surface decoration as the outward manifestations of inner imperatives. In the context of evolved contemporary tribal culture (reflecting early evolutionary ethnic groups) it can now be seen that the aesthetic criteria and ideas about beautification are in fact imperative resolutions or responses signalled on the body. Many studies have asserted that the decoration of the body in the ways described here is a form of visual language communicating both functional and individualised mental / intellectual processes. These are often dismissed in the West as archaic practices by ethnic groups who have strange aesthetic criteria and ideas about beautification. This attitude has until now left us in an intellectual vacuum with little attempt at analysis or elucidation beyond this superficial social analysis.

We can now recognise that there are highly significant symbolic relationships between genes in humans and the co-evolution of bio-mechanisms driving culture which have been further delineated by the human mind through the mode of body representation (the augmented body) and symbolic comparative re-presentations as referenced in formal structures as social communication. It is not known where in human evolution the individual cultural expression of visual language first occurred. However the previous chapters have discussed levels of consciousness and responses which may have connected and co-evolved. In the case of body decoration the absence of the body in early archaeological records only permits speculation that this kind of phenomena correlated and or co-evolved accordingly. However current evidence of environmentally conditioned behaviour predicated upon bio-imperatives seems to suggest that it did and therefore that early humans did produce the mentifact in the form of body decoration.

We can discern how various agents and their functional contributions may have become connected one to the other. (1) The natural organisational laws of nature, the genetic consciousness which, inherent in our body, brain and mind, our very being, drives the genetic imperative for reproduction to a stage where (2), approximately 2 million years ago, the human's brain capacity and its cognitive ability, correlate with incremental levels of consciousness and mental capacity which have been identified through analysis of inorganic artefacts / mentifacts such as stone tools. We have also addressed compulsive comparison and sublimation, strengthening the case for the probability of their cultural use at this early stage.

Throughout hominid history mechanisms and opportunities for rehearsal and learning by

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<sup>21</sup> Walter Hutchinson, ed., *Customs of the World* with an introduction by A. C. Haddon (London: Hutchinson & Co., no date given c. 1880) chapter 1. *Melanesia*, by R.W. Williamson, 1,9.

repetition have been available to be grasped by hominids of intellectual potential, transformed into mediums that eventually differentiated into the highly complex forms of representation and cultural interpretation encountered today. Symbolisation is central to the co-evolution of body, brain, mind and culture, interpretation of visual language and its use as a representational tool. Contemporary recorded comments accompanying the illustrations may be relevant to attempts to comprehend the thought processes of similarly organised societies many thousands of years ago.

The illustrations accompanying Chapter 8 have demonstrated how the accompanying mental connotations evoked by an object transform it into an object of representation, a symbol, and how these mentifacts evolved a psycho-social dimension by their re-presentation in organised form. Previous discussions demonstrate how the mental responses to the object rely on the connotations evoked through such interaction. The object is at once both itself and that which it evokes, thereby being a / the thing which it resembles and also represents. An object thus transformed can be said to be representational. Over time, stylisation and refinement of the form of the object can render it abstract and symbolic, that is to say that which it once resembled no longer resembles it, however it still represents it and thereby stands in its place devoid of resemblance. A symbol is both an abstracted object, extrasomatic, however it is also a mentifact by dint of the cognitive process applying connotation through an evolved psycho-social dimension occasioning its re-presentation in organised form.

Drewal records the view of tribal Yoruba body artists that

Refined technique [in producing quality marks] is the difference between art and accident.<sup>22</sup> [the] Baule [of the Ivory Coast] call accidental scars *kanvuen*, not *ngole*, [term for deliberate scarification] thus distinguishing the aesthetic mark from the unaesthetic random scar. . . . Corresponding to their distinction between nature and culture, the Baule distinguish verbally between naturally occurring things, and analogous aesthetic, man-made ones.<sup>23</sup>

The transition from accidental scarring with its accompanying connotations to deliberate scarring with meaningful associations in a symbolic transmission would have required humans to be able to interpret quite complex, abstract information, recall its interpretation and maintain collective agreement as to its meaning. This transition would have been a lengthy process embedded through repeated practice and passed down the generations through ritual and mimetic transmission. The ‘self’ in and of the ‘collective brain / mind organisation’ and consequent structure of mechanisms for interpretation and assimilation are adaptive in a developing cultural environment. Of critical importance would have been the capacity under selective pressure to become highly specialised through successive generations in order to respond to change needs and / or functionalities.

#### **9.7.4 Transformation: Repetition, pattern, form, into symbol into narrative**

Repetition is a natural occurrence found in multivariant forms and in its levels of complexity of structures. Replication in nature is the way in which generic forms or elements are perpetuated and ensures consistency within a designated whole whilst at the same time allowing for improvement in quality and fitness by incremental metamorphosis.

<sup>22</sup> Arnold Rubin, ed., *Marks of Civilization* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, University of California, 1988), vol. 6, *Beauty and Being: Aesthetics and Ontology in Yoruba Body Art* by Henry John Drewal, 85.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. vol. 7, *Baule Scarification: The Mark of Civilization* by Susan Vogel, 104,

In nature, repetitive elemental forms which construct a symmetrical or counterbalanced whole (such as, for example the leaves of an ash tree) are balanced and equal in conformity. Their being proportionate and equidistant from each other ensures that each organism has the same level of sustenance as its neighbour. Similarly the human consciousness collectively mirrors and recognises the natural replicative mechanism and this is evidenced by numerous and varied applications in appropriate problem solving situations. Therefore innate responses to situations conform to the same natural laws and creative response activities flow from this.

Multiplications of replica forming collective wholes seem to generate and / or heighten aesthetic pleasures and responses because they are evocations of the familiar pleasure. Therefore it is not surprising that our innate understanding of the elements of structure influences the forms of creative output as manufactured of which pattern in decoration is one type, as also is the motif as symbolic unit. The brain mind drives the hand and eye in a symbiotic relationship with nature which, harmonious in the early evolution of humans, in its turn through the process of repetitions and replications sets the conditions for metamorphosis and / or paradigm shifts which alter the levels of consciousness.

The drawings presented by Berns,<sup>24</sup> Figure 9.5 below are of women of Ga`anda, Nigeria and show scarification representing stages of rites of passage. These illustrations help us to track or follow a process of marking on the body relative to the sexual imperatives discussed, from a starting point of the initial single scar, to repeated arrangements such as a row and or repeated rows, to a composition, to further compositions as components of an overall composition. In parallel the object / subject (the physical scar, signifier) encoding signified meaning, is expressed in rows of elemental connotations, a chain of symbols / meanings as connected narrative: to the metaphysical; to the human as a civilised being; or, as described in this thesis 'the integrated human'. The social human is now progressed from abstract entity to object and proceeds to elevate the copulatory gaze to socio-politically controlled mental and psychological aspects of the gene pool strategy.

A practice of marking the body by scarification is widespread over the African continent, and in Ga`anda in northeastern Nigeria the method is known as Hleeta. All personal embellishments are public notifications which signal specific stages of an individual's development. In the case of women the focus is strictly structured around the female's state of sexual viability, fertility and capacity in the context of reproduction, and rigidly fixed on the body with scarification. Specific areas of the body are selected as separate contextual frames for each specific narrative. and are executed at a transitional period in the individual's life. The examples shown in Figure 9.5 are a breakdown of the stages (a-k).

Hleeta is accomplished in six stages, beginning when a girl is five to six years old. . . .

The patterns worked during each stage of Hleeta are characterised by rows of closely placed cuts that scar to form slightly raised "dots" somewhat lighter than the surrounding skin [As in Figure 9.2 showing beaded scarification of the stomach.] To execute a row of incisions, the skin is pierced with an iron hook (ngalkem), its point at a right angle to the shaft, and lifted into a ridge; fine, regular lines are then deftly cut across with a triangular razor (fedeta;). The result is a neat, delicate pattern of scars.

<sup>24</sup> Arnold Rubin, ed., *Marks of Civilization* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, University of California, 1988), vol. 4, Ga`anda Scarification: A Model for Art and Identity, by Marla C. Berns. 59 - 61. Contours of figures drawn after Chappel (1977:206).



**The first set of markings**, called hleexwira (“scarification of the stomach”), consists of two concentric, bisected chevrons above the navel [Figure 9.5a]. That the first cuts made draw attention to a young girl’s womb emphasises her reproductive potential. . . .

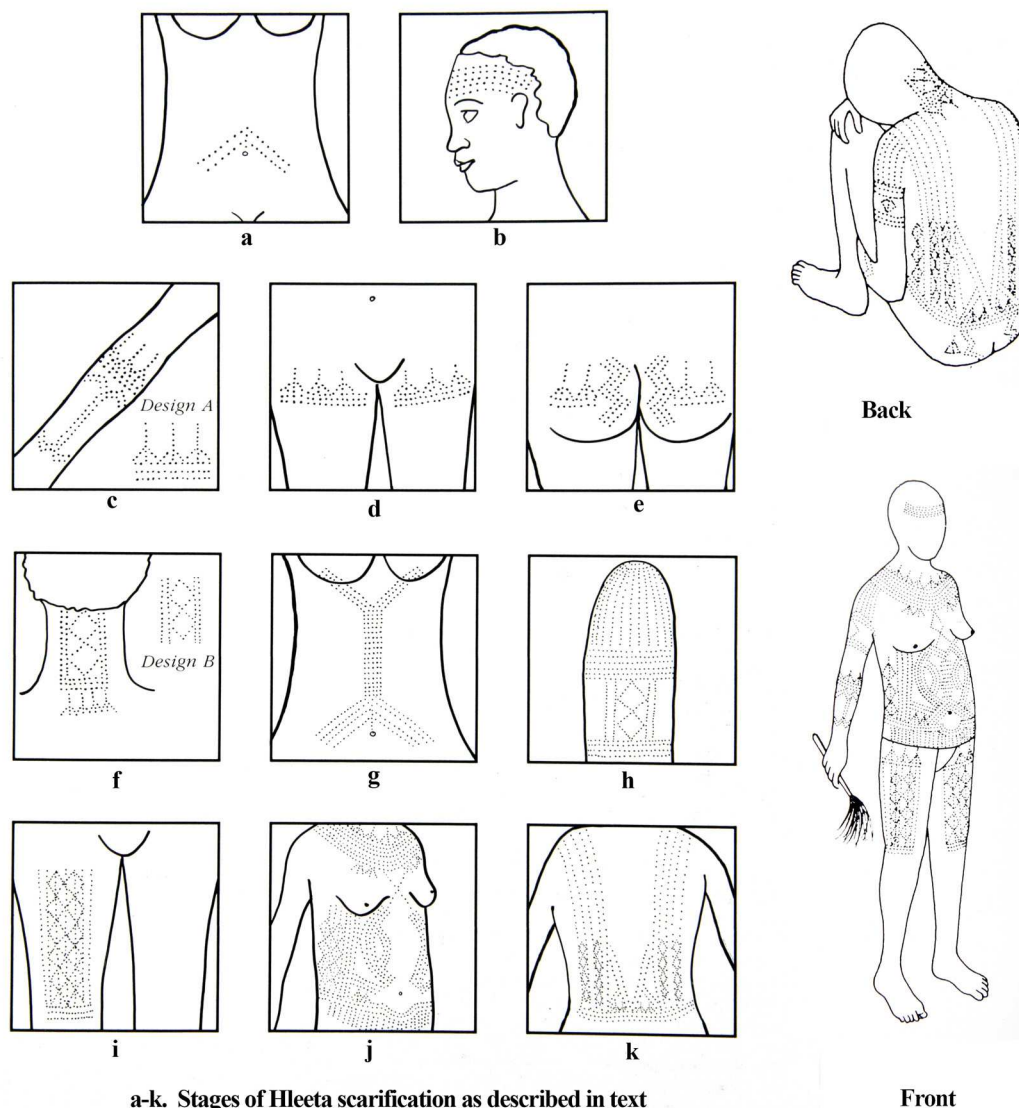
**The second stage** of Hleeta, hleepa?nda (“scarification of the forehead”), entails the incision of four or five horizontal lines extending from ear to ear, the number of lines determined by the height of the girl’s brow (Figure 9.5b). Two years later, the **third set of markings**, hlee’berixera (cuts on the forearm”), is incised and involves more elaborate patterns of compact design (Figure 9.5c). The most distinctive element is a row of forked branches aligned over horizontal lines. . . .

**The fourth stage** of Hleeta requires repetitions of Design A to be made across the top of the thighs and buttocks (hleefelca; Figure 9.5d-e) and at the base of the neck (hleekersiberata; Figure 9.5f). On the nape, another distinctive, repeated motif is introduced, consisting of a lozenge or chain of lozenges framed by vertical lines, called Design B. . . .

**The fifth stage** of Hleeta is done when a girl is around thirteen to fourteen, called njoxtimeta (“cutting in places”). A column of short horizontal lines is cut down the centre of the torso, branching at the top (Figure 9.5g); more lines are worked at the shoulder and upper arm, framing another unit of Design B (Figure 9.5h). . . .

Before the final phase of scarification begins, each girl must have her ears pierced and her upper and lower lips perforated. Traditionally, blades of grass worn as daily adornment; iron or brass earrings and labrets were substituted on ceremonial occasions. (Today, no jewellery other than imported or manufactured earrings is visible on Gan`ada women.)

In March of the year when a girl’s scarification is to be completed, the front of her thighs (hleefedata) are first marked with rows of vertically linked lozenges alternating with vertical lines (kwardata), a continuous multiplication of Design B (Figure 9.5i). Kwardata shows that a contract of marriage has been officially “sealed” and prohibits any other young man from approaching the girl. . . .



a-k. Stages of Hleeta scarification as described in text

Figure 9.5 Drawings show stages of scarification symbolising rites of passage

Two months later, the girl undergoes hleengup (“cicatrizacion all over”), which involves filling in the areas of the body still left unmarked: the chest, the sides of the torso, the lower abdomen, and the back (Figure 9.5j-k). This is a far more extensive phase of scarification than any the girl has previously experienced; it is likely that the prolongation of Hleeta over a number of stages prepares a girl physically and emotionally for this final ordeal.

After hleengup a girl observes a period of seclusion to allow the cuts to heal. She is then eligible to participate in the public festivities that conclude her marriage contract, . . . It should be noted that one last unit of Design B can be cut into the backs of the woman’s calves (hleekante?ta) before she completes hleengup. Boyle (1916b:364) indicates that these calf markings were only made if a girl procured an abortion twice while still living in her mother’s compound. . . . permanent reminders of the girl’s injudicious behaviour, they are still regarded as part of a positive programme of aesthetic transformation.<sup>25</sup>

By the act of scarification the social human is now visually apparent, identified in relation to sexual maturity and progressed toward becoming an abstraction as a sign object, and in the process has become subsumed into the rituals, governance and transactional structures of the tribe. This new situation for the female shifts the copulatory gaze from the interpersonal to the socio-political representing a collective control of mental and psychological interdependency beyond the individual. The collective provides a larger gene pool upon which the species can draw. However it needs to be regulated in some way to inhibit degeneration and foster healthy regeneration. The social priorities in this respect mirror and extend the genetic priorities. By some unseen intuitive process the resultant system obliges the individual to subjugate the self for the good of the collective unit. Both the social male and female are compelled into a relationship requiring a sociable symbiosis while at the same time sublimating individual desires.

This apparently simple form of decoration, a visual manifestation of cognitive evolution, suggests a function that confines individuals in a social order and has focussed upon the functional suppression of individuality. For this to take place there must necessarily be subjugation, compliance or coalescence of self interest, perhaps a little of each. Even the simplest shift in the socio-cultural context takes a long time to achieve group or tribe acceptance and support for new practices and to develop an instantly recognisable iconography. The non-figurative forms of decoration are clearly unambiguous since they speak by virtue of their position on the body and the time of event. The form of arrangement is perceived appropriately by the peer responsible for the task of scarring which, as this often differs from individual to individual, may therefore speak of the nature / character of those individuals involved. Through the inevitable social discourse practitioner and consumer can determine a personalised style in the process of scarification. This illustrates the complexity of even the most seemingly simple of social acts.

### **9.7.5 The skills of the artist as agent: Pattern as extended phenotype**

In looking at examples of scarification and tattoos, especially complex ones (as in figures 9.4a, 9.4b, 9.5, and 9.6a, 9.6b) below, it is easy to overlook the skills of the artist. The format of the composition must be determined in advance. This requires forethought and planning as alterations are not possible. Replication of a simple unit or element of mark is the easiest and most effective way to produce pattern or visual effect, sign or statement. Differing simple arrangements of marks collected or concentrated on different zones of the body offer a wide range of possible total body images.





*Figure 9.6a and 9.6b Nuba women from Southern Sudan showing extensive scarification*

Humans find balanced composition comprised of single units compulsively attractive both within and outside the group. It stimulates our senses, triggers our mechanisms of compulsive comparison and logs the resultant data easily in our memory store, triggering evocative mechanisms relative to individual memory. Well balanced figure and ground relationships are pleasing to the senses, eliciting responses including pleasure, pain, security, identification, sexual arousal, aesthetic satisfaction. Not only are the marks important but equally important are the spaces in between so that there is the creation of an overall sense of order gratifying to the aesthetic sensibility. We seem to be constantly responsive to the innate urge to search out and rectify visual disharmony. Arrangements of patterns and space, dark skin against light, raised against smooth, shiny against matt, humans adjust even asymmetrical opposites to find their balance by equalising their values of volume to space or figure to ground. Creating balance and visual harmony, contributing to an overall visual bio-aesthetic, further bonds the group as a harmonious whole.

When the above elements come together on the human body and are further enhanced through its replication on humans as a group, tribe, race, etc. the binary opposite occurrences of patterns and space, dark skin against light mark or raised texture against smooth, shiny against matt, are again indicative of the quest for harmony and balance as human sensibility strives to project upon the group that which is intrinsic to the individual in an effort to satisfy the bio-imperatives. This extension of the innate or imprinted is

the phenotype extended and is clearly present in the creation of body decoration of the scarification type. Marking the body, as designated tribe or group scarifier, reveals a social role which is at once social documenter, sign writer of individual experience, rule interpreter through a process of transfer and transposition from the spoken and understood to the sign and symbol, and also mediator between the individual and the group. This is not a simple practice of implementation of tradition, an emulation of what has been done before; it is rather a dynamic process of response to need.

In the context of uniformity of marks

In Zahavian terms they correspond to the zebra's stripes . . . An individual has to display an indicator which conforms to a standard pattern. Its observers have to be able to compare like with like. 'The markings that we see as uniform are the very ones which show more clearly the fine differences among individuals regarding the attributes most important to them,' . . .<sup>26</sup>

### 9.7.6 Facets of mediation: Social integrity

The strategy of generalisation enables organisms and their species to escape the constraints of specialisation. The threat of extinction confronts the overspecialised, . . . it contradicts the evolutionary strategy [especially] of the primate order.<sup>27</sup>

Aesthetic criteria which express group sensibility, can allow for individuality as discussed later, but it is limited within such groups as those who use scarification as a process to sign the body. It is only when the activity of signing the body is given to the individual that individual expression within the group can come to the fore. Our innate sensitivity to balance, symmetry and harmony of patterns and form gives us a sense of pleasure when we see it, it captivates our interest. The overall visual invitation is "read me for pleasure". It proffers a sense of engagement and feeling of wellbeing. However this is quickly followed by a realisation on the part of the observer that there is another message from the observed, namely that "this information is important to you, specific meaning is in the content, the context of the text on my body and dictates how you may respond" (as in illustrations Figures. 9.6a and 9.6b). Static two dimensional patterns come to life on a dynamic three dimensional body to occupy further dimensions of time and cultural space. Events and experiences are recorded on the body as a summary of its historical past and blank space predicts a future. Each body, collectively moving as one in the same environment as the other, becomes unified into a single cultural statement.

Practitioners within the tribe described in this section give insights into the mediation process.

Body artists without exception stress aesthetics when discussing kolo: 'We are making designs, art (A nse onon) . . . to make a person famous (gbajumon) literally, '200 faces know him' Ogunjobi 1975). . . . The emphasis is clearly on the visible display of the human body enhanced and beautified. [The recorded artist's remarks such as the following are commonplace], ' . . . the women do it to enhance their beauty.'<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Marek Kohn, *As We Know It: Coming to Terms with an Evolved Mind*, 2d ed., Granta Books (London: Granta Books, 2000), 138.

<sup>27</sup> Peter J. Wilson, *Man, The Promising Primate: the conditions of human evolution* (USA: Yale University Press, 1980), 38.

<sup>28</sup> Arnold Rubin, ed., *Marks of Civilization* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History University of California, 1988), vol. 6, *Beauty and Being: Aesthetics and Ontology in Yoruba Body Art*, by Henry John Drewal, 84.

Both artist and consumer collude in the presentiment of the ‘copulatory gaze intelligence’ responding to the anthropic principle based on the theory of an implicate order which is integral to all organisations within the universe, and therefore integral to the evolved human ‘aesthetic intelligence’. These are an extension, utilisation and re-application, re-interpretation, re-emphasis of the generate order within us. Artistic and creative activity are in this context the principal mechanisms underlying fulfilment of the genetic agenda. The artists / craftsmen ‘scarifiers’ chosen by tribal societies are those ‘most fit’, most skilled and cognitively sophisticated at the practice of embodiments or interpretation in representation functionally implementing sublimation. In the ‘biological’ sense, this is enabling the fulfilment of imperatives, *via* the socialisation route, gratifies the individual whilst it restores and maintains the balance of any psycho-socio / disturbances which might otherwise occur.

### 9.7.7 Transition: Survival of the fittest health and strength traits

Scarification is a painful business but it is not solely a test of pain thresholds. Relative to the genetic agenda it is also a test of resistance to infection. The rubbing of substances into the open cuts and the speed and performance of their healing not only demonstrates state of health, but persistent exposure to infection also acts as a form of inoculation. This is physiological common sense, a test of mate quality before investment provides sound practice for genetic viability and reproduction of strong, healthy offspring vital and relevant to maintaining the gene pool quality of a group.

Figure 9.7 below, illustrates the actuality of scarification whereby the client can loose a substantial amount of blood, which tests the health and fitness in recovery but also the pain boundaries. This non-sexual intervention with the body through a primarily ritualised socialisation process also has a sensual dimension. In presenting an individual journey through the cycle of life it both evokes past experiences and anticipates future ones for the client body. This self-awareness or self-consciousness in the ability to overcome pain through willpower eventuates in the negotiation necessary to achieve balance between self and society amid the apparently oppositional expectation placed upon the individual. Here fitness of the body equates to fitness of the mind and thereby fitness for society.

... all good things have unpleasant aspects. ... Wearing elaborate kolo on her body, a woman exhibits her willingness to bear pain. It is thus significant that a woman acquires such designs when she reaches a marriageable age. In so doing, she asserts that she possesses the necessary fortitude to endure the pains of childbirth, an ordeal that recurs traditionally at four - to five year intervals (Caldwell and Caldwell 1977). Aesthetic value is bound up with the value of endurance and the willingness to bear discomfort to accomplish a greater good.<sup>29</sup>

The healed cuts produce a matte black pattern with low-relief rippled texture against semiglossy, brown skin surface. ... conveying a pleasing rippled texture on skin. [The marks are described as sexually arousing visually, because of their tactile associations during sexual contact].<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Arnold Rubin, ed., *Marks of Civilization* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History University of California, 1988), vol. 6, *Beauty and Being: Aesthetics and Ontology in Yoruba Body Art*, by Henry John Drewal, 83.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 85, 90.





*Figure 9.7 Scarification in progress*

Concepts of being civilised as we understand it today emanate from social rites of passage involving endurance of pain, fortitude, changed or transformed states and aesthetic values, relative to consciousness levels, all associative of the individual's journey from outsider to respected insider who has proved themselves by delivering to the group that which is expected. Social discipline is perpetuated through the social benchmarks of progression in the social order hierarchy. The rise of the aspirant individual, publicly acknowledged, refocuses the interpersonal admiration to a social level of recognition and responsibility one removed from the sexual imperatives. This socially conditioned transformation of perceptions of the self, as determining reproduction through virility and fertility, to sublimation of the natural urges of the individual as 'social human' in group situations, is abstractly represented on the sculpted body, merging mind with its internal dimensions, explicitly to the external

### 9.7.8 Social Structures: Early politics: Coercion and persuasion

Another dimension to the acceptance and or rejection of the individual by the group in the socialisation process is the extent to which treatment received impacts upon the individual desire or ability to conform. The testing through ritual of the individual's resolve to sublimate their personal urges to the common good is expressed in contrived behavioural practices setting the group against the individual in respect of hierarchy.

In New Guinea the Roro people, who tattoo themselves extensively, describe the un-tattooed person as 'raw' comparing him to uncooked meat . . . The Roro see the tattooed man as 'cooked meat', transformed by a human process and thus given a social identity. Therein lies the distinction between a social being and a biological entity.<sup>31</sup>

Lévi-Strauss presents an anthropological context in his raw / cooked theory in proposing that all cultural relations become evident and should be understood as binary pairs / opposites, to clarify understanding of objects, symbols, and context. Therefore the 'raw' symbolically represents the state of natural whilst the 'cooked' identifies / acknowledges the transition to culture. In this instance adornment acts a mediator for the transition from uncivilised / animal state to civilised / social.<sup>32</sup>

Social organisation enables humans to live together in reasonable harmony. When there are common ground rules, actions and reactions are in accord with the collective psychology of the group, communal life is more predictable, reliable and less stressful and hence conducive to survival. Non-compliance of an individual often results in group teasing or ridicule and accusations of being uncivilised or on the same level as an animal, not socially or mentally advanced. An individual who would not conform may disturb the harmony of the group and thereby risks ostracism. Group rejection of the unfit or the non-viable entity or self-exile often results in early expiration of that life and an evolutionary dead end.

Collectively agreed upon beliefs and behaviours are the glue that binds a culture, the instrument of social cohesion and transformation, "What interests me is a society's definition of itself as civilised in contrast to uncivilised, raw nature."<sup>33</sup> Societies' designated valuation of these marks, supported by religious ritual and public fanfare coerces and influences so that without these experiences one is considered to be uncivilised. It is imperative that transmission of genetic agenda continues and therefore any reinforcement by the socio-cultural mechanism is readily subsumed as a tool that promotes reproduction. 'Marks of civilization' is a human evolved socio-psychological way of saying 'we now have nature and its sexual imperatives under 'our' control and we can manipulate them for the good of our society.' Thus the selfish gene is satisfied that its work is being done for it by the evolved mind it designed for just this job.

Non-compliance of an individual with the social norms established often results in a series of sanctions varying from teasing or ridicule to accusation by the tribe or ostracism. Group

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<sup>31</sup> Victoria Ebin, *The Body Decorated* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1979), 24.

<sup>32</sup> Claud Lévi Strauss. *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a science of mythology*. 2d ed., (Great Britain: Pimlico edition, 1994).

<sup>33</sup> Arnold Rubin, ed., *Marks of Civilization* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History University of California 1988), vol. 7, *Baule Scarification: The Mark of Civilization*, by Susan Vogel, 97.



rejection of the unconventional equates to an unfit, or non-viable entity so far as the group is concerned, but it may also be construed as self-exile. Whether or not those ostracised have brought about their situation purposefully will determine their survival potential outside the group. Genetically speaking what happens may be the beginnings of mutation or adaptive behaviour, which influences others, and thereby change, or a sexual imperative to establish a new or extended group. However in the case of the woman being outside the social group and its identifying sign systems, the main result is that the social group has an altered perception of what the woman has now become. She becomes other and thereby sexually available for the opportunist male to copulate with consensually or otherwise. This vulnerability often results in the individual having limited life expectation.

The legitimate desire of the tribe, manifest in peer group pressures, to preserve its integrity through the use of controls can eliminate non-conformists or re-assign and thus reintegrate them. The group's tolerance of alternative behaviour marked by individualism in signage on or about the body suggests a level of sophistication or indicates a specific level of consciousness facilitating the diversification of social roles.

### **9.7.9 Sexually differentiated behaviour and social roles manifest in layering of temporary and permanent signs on the body or as adornment of it**

To some extent this question of the imperatives for differentiation was addressed in relation to a prehistoric change requiring differentiation of sex roles occasioned by the rearing of offspring and also by hunting as opposed to gathering, both imperatives which are sexually physiologically / biologically driven. (see Chapter 4 which discussed determining factors and resultant changes to body aesthetics and representational needs impacting on the evolving copulatory gaze). As our species developed, differentiated social roles for both sexes evolved in response to environment. This situation requires male and female to offer mutual support and commitment to one another. Changes in human behaviour, male to female occasioning differentiations in the social role of each, have been identified as pertinent to the argument in respect of the impact of sexual imperatives.

One hypothesis for differential social roles is that 100,000 years ago (the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic) the appropriate tools and skills for killing and disposing of bigger game had been developed. This is thought to have been because social groups were becoming larger and the demand for food greater. Bigger game was dangerous and therefore needed the concerted effort of group strength for which the male was better suited. Additionally bigger game required speed, mobility and silence whilst stalking. In respect of the reproduction of the species the male was also expendable and the hunt could often result in fatalities. Women were likely to be carrying a vulnerable noisy infant, or stopping to nourish them, were burdensome in the hunting situation. Also pregnancy required confinement and travel in the pursuit of big game was not possible for such women and a pattern of division of social and or collective activity was established. The role of women was consequently refocused upon imperatives of species reproduction, nurturing of offspring and domestic ritual. When humans moved to colder climates and meat became a more important element of diet it would have made more sense if only part of the social group were to focus on hunting whilst others gathered plants and smaller game like fish and stayed nearer the home base with the young,



pregnant, elderly and sick.<sup>34</sup>

However these theories are called into question as in contemporary human hunter gatherer societies, even in hot climates and where there is plentiful game and other organic food, there is still a division based upon sex difference. This sex division filters down to every role performance and object touched and made within the socio-cultural level of evolution irrespective of where or when it became established. It is Erickson who draws the focus of attention to a possible and more fundamental explanation of gender-related divisions in the specifics of participation in groups. In respect of what he defines as the consumption of cultural value, whether materials, food or artefacts / products he observes that;

Rather, each sex is characterised by a uniqueness which includes (but is not summed up by) its difference from the other sex; a uniqueness which is founded on the performance functions of the future inseminator and the future child-bearer, in whatever system of distribution of labour and cultural style. Here the modes of intrusion [the active phallus] and inclusion [the passive vagina] are polarised in the service of production and procreation.<sup>35</sup>

Taylor elaborates Erickson's statement with the idea that: "Outward anatomical differences between men and women are thought to reflect yet greater existential ones."<sup>36</sup>

If this is so, then one would think that the collaborative investment of a monogamous pair bond is somehow contradictory because of its confines rather than extending to the nurturing of their offspring. However here Taylor is drawing attention to balance in the social context where individual differences are sometimes sublimated for the common good, collectivised, and on other occasions or in other situations the individuality of difference is exploited. This seeming contradiction or conflict of interests is a practical mechanism leading to a sexually neutral mode of external signs in the relationships between complementary opposites.

In support of this argument Wilson puts forward the idea that as early human social structures evolved, (unlike other primate social organisations), they had to accommodate some form of constructive incorporation of post-pubescent adult males. For the male there was a transition from living as a solitary individual, as with many primates, to living with a female as part of a monogamous pair, with a focussed investment in his offspring and living as a family, to living within a group etc. The need to find constructive ways of organising social life and continually having to justify his importance in it was problematic. He had to acquire and secure his position and this had to be done in such a way as to ensure his survival and the successful reproduction of his genes. The invention of identity as husband, father is not based on a biological given, nature, but on his initial required identity as part of a social entity, nurture.

. . . because fatherhood and kinship are the first cultural facts and are entirely dependant on females, the male position is precarious and the structure of society fragile. . . . This fragile weakness must be strengthened . . . by cultural factors in which the male fathers continuously impose and reinforce their position and hence the culture and social structure of a given population. . . . the primary ways in which this is done may be subsumed under the heading ritual, where male cultural dominance is created [and / or is] the focus.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Margaret Ehrenberg, *Women in Prehistory* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1989), 42,43.

<sup>35</sup> Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and society*. (Great Britain: Imago Publishing Company, 1951, reprint, London: Paladin, 1987), 80 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>36</sup> Timothy Taylor *The Prehistory of sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture* (London: Forth Estate Limited, 1996; reprint, London: Forth Estate Limited, 1997), 76 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>37</sup> Peter J. Wilson, *Man, The Promising Primate: the conditions of human evolution* (USA: Yale University Press, 1980), 66-67.

In this context of the emergent family, extended group dynamic, the differentiated combined influences of each of the parents resulted in sexual differentiation and attitudes / values reinforcement in offspring of differing genders. This differentiation in and acceptance of new gender-based responsibilities and roles in the group dynamic reinforcement process represented an extension of innate gender identity into the realm of the psycho-social support of the family and as the dominant influence on behaviour. Whilst environmental change impact and responses were expressed as social evolution and explicit behaviour, it is suggested that the biological early species genetic inheritance also played a part as an unseen motivational force. Relevant here might well be the inherent fear of reversion to the asexual biology of the primal (as described in earlier chapters). This very real anxiety and genetic mutational possibility, though not consciously acknowledged, may be presumed to be genetically acknowledged. Therefore unconscious imperatives to differentiate beyond the interpersonal, a gender construction, support the notion of a sexual difference imperative reinforcement mechanism operating through socialisation.

The biological imperative requires a clearly defined and differentiated sex type to be established in order to ensure successful reproduction in the next generation. Therefore the social role needs be encouraged by both parents, not only in their responses to the child but also in their behaviour towards each other and others. The archetype, once established, becomes a nurtured / conditioned stereotype for each sex in perpetuity, through the socialisation underpinning its extension. This resulted in clear divisions of gender identities and roles. The concept of father / husband, mother / wife, their child, cousins, in-laws etc, permitted the male a clear identity. This was psychologically constructed and reinforced through behaviour and the transforming through the mentifactoring of their environment into clearly defined sexual divisions. In terms of evolutionary psychology Wilson suggests “Male cultural dominance is [therefore] a function of male vulnerability, which must be protected.”<sup>38</sup>

## 9.8 Three: Difference defines: Anxiety of ownership

Another aspect of the extension of difference reflected in social behaviour and individual psychology is that associated with ownership of / commitment to / relations with presumed offspring “Whereas a woman is thought to instinctively know that the baby developing within her carries half of her own genes, a man – unless he guards her day and night – cannot be quite as certain that his genes are being passed on.”<sup>39</sup> This causes the male significant anxiety problems. From the moment of assured virginity through copulation and eventual birth the male must be vigilant. This period might have been almost impossible for the early male to police, therefore the behavioural practices which developed responded mainly to the male’s needs, further contributing to a range of circumstantial or nurturing conditions to which the mother, and subsequently the infant, were subject. This later came to be formalised and accepted as the period of confinement for the female, one of a sequence of rites of passage to maturity.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.66.

<sup>39</sup> Timothy Taylor *The Prehistory of sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture* (London: Forth Estate Limited, 1996; reprint, London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1997), 76 (page references are to reprint edition).

If the male did not have complete control over his partner's sexuality and procreative activities, his gene transfer / reproduction could not be guaranteed. Whilst the early male might have had little comprehension of what was being passed on, his instincts or prior biological imprint compelled him to imposed regulations of monogamy. For him the prospect of genes only being passed on through his partner would be counter-productive in the context of combined best gene characteristics. Her fidelity, however achieved, meant that he assured his reproductive inheritance. In the prevailing environmental circumstances the male used his physical strengths to take the initiative and impress or condition the female into co-operation with the genetic characteristics of generational transfer. Monogamy could be counter-productive for the male. As his genes would only be passed on through his one partner, her infidelity could mean he would miss out on opportunities to secure reproduction and inheritance. Although it would have been in the male's interest to hedge his bets and impregnate several more females, hence underpinning his chances of spreading his genes (especially when there were other males on the scene with a similar agenda), this was no longer tenable, reinforcing the case for establishing the social animal as distinct from the natural one.

### **Importance of kinship recognition. Marriage and the exchange of women.**

The idea of kinship and the construction of kinship systems is fundamental to all societies and the creation of publicised identity therefore evolved out of a need to keep track of, account for, identify, memorise and recount with accuracy highly complex kinship relationships. Some kind of permanent record projected outside themselves and toward each other was required in order for the successful practice of the exchange of women to take place. The identification of the gender, kin relationships, sexual history and therefore viability of a female in a group situation is critical knowledge if humans wish to co-operate and live amicably in larger tribal groups and above all do not wish (for reasons already discussed) to leave mating to chance. The problem would be that others would not necessarily have immediate or visual access to this knowledge. Therefore the explicit symbolic marking of the body seem to be an ideal and logical solution and in its simplistic form was a major breakthrough. Gender, sexuality, and organised reproduction could be socially systematised and culturally structured

The resulting apparent insensitivity towards women's needs, as discussed by so many feminists, gives a distorted perspective which conceals its true origins. Although it needs to be addressed in the context of body representation we need to be reminded that what seems a pitiless, insensitive socio-cultural plot has its origins in and has been driven by the ruthless logic of genetic and sexual imperatives.

Deviance from the social rules set to regulate matings, a form of sociological mutation, may enhance the gene pool but this may be at the cost of the individual. Social structures are often seen to inhibit this behaviour with severe forms of punishment. A tricky balance needed to be found whereby a reshuffling of the genetic cards could take place but under strictly controlled and regulated conditions. Unstructured liaisons could lead to conflict and the risk of importing disease and / or contamination by unsuitable genes etc, leading to possible weakening and disintegration of the group or even eventual extinction.

Individuals who reneged on these social rules risked being treated as outcasts and would not survive long on their own or, as in some of today's cultures, risk 'honour killing'. Therefore there is a preference to control cross-fertilisation and do it according to the 'sexual intelligence logic' of the tribe. Within the process of the exchange of women and / or arranged marriage, male possession of the female and her children etc. implies dominance of the female by the male. However she has resigned herself to live in symbiosis with this code of conduct in order to advantage her contribution to the gene pool in the long run. The needs of the individual are sacrificed for the common advantage of the group. Exchange of women reshuffles the genetic cards. Collective fear of others' non-compliance, backed up by myths and coerced by ritual, ensures compliance, and alleviates male fears.

To recapitulate, just as important as flagging up sexual female fecundity was "... patri-clan section diacritica of father and of husband. The significance of the patrilineal-male association has been indicated and the conceptual associations which assign females, through colouring, a patrilineal address, are clear."<sup>40</sup> As Taylor infers, concern surrounding male / female strategies to guarantee gene reproduction have, in contemporary culture, been elevated to the complexity of gender ideologies, making more explicit the continuing problematics of the impact upon individual psychology of what began as biological expediency.

Such strategic differences are claimed to lie at the heart of the so-called war between the sexes, indicating why competition within the species – between males or females – is as important a force in evolution as competition between species. Marx and Engels considered that 'the first division of labour is that between man and woman for child breeding,' and Engels went on to state that 'the first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male'.<sup>41</sup>

However Shere Hite challenges the conventional explanations of how and why a male dominated society may have developed and proposes that the underlying message accompanying this change may have had a slightly different slant. She asks whether it could be that the focus of attention on gender division, may have come about as a

... fundamental principle of a new social order and to establish the basic "personality traits" of these two "original beings" as the prototypes for future society? [She goes on to make a further interesting point that] These personality traits may not have been standard for the two genders at the time.<sup>42</sup>

Anxiety, male or otherwise, as the precipitant of change in a social climate where social structuring makes such a drastic divergence between the female and the male roles creates a necessity for additional signing on and off the body which defines not only the interpersonal commitments but also the group acknowledgment of it. Now recognised as the nuclear family, status and authority in this social form requires intelligence as well as strength of purpose. Kinship like genetic collaboration in protection of the gene pool, became an

<sup>40</sup> Arnold Rubin, Marks of Civilisation: Artistic Transformations of the Human Body (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History. University of California, 1988), vol. 2. Significance of Differences in the Male and Female Personal Art of the South Southeast Nuba. By James Faris, 35.

<sup>41</sup> Timothy Taylor The Prehistory of sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture (London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1996; reprint, London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1997), 76 - 77. (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>42</sup> Shere Hite, The Hite Report on Love Passion and Emotional Violence (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987; London: Macdonald Optima, 1991), 209 (page references are to reprint edition).

added imperative in group organisation but these new support systems also supported and reinforced the selfish agenda of reproduction, which was signed very differently. Investing in partnership and hence his offspring by the male required more focussed attention to his family unit. In addition constant contact between females and males and other groups and family units meant there was an opportunity to express interest in other members of the opposite sex, which necessitated controls.

An additional system of rules, initiation rites etc, began to develop which would regulate / ritualise access to and formalise the protocols of permissible behaviour relative to the protection of the family and the breeding system. Whilst representation of maleness and femaleness became primarily defined through the body for both sexes, there nonetheless developed a clear division in social role which favoured the male on occasions by virtue of the female's body cycle, menstruation, conception and incubation through to childbirth. During these periods the female was off limits to others and temporary signage of the body (in some tribes signified by painting the female white) was presented to the community at large. However in the period in between the peak of her cycles the female's fidelity and integrity needed to be signed and safeguarded.

The space in which the male might exercise dominance or stewardship over his female's reputation offers itself up to a variety of methods and ritualised practices. Every aspect of this involvement, not only with his family but also in his broader participation in the structure of society presented more complexity and further exercise of independent control of his circumstances, his destiny in relation to the expectation of his society. Whilst this situation fuelled and affirmed his power it also fuelled his insecurities and thereby led him in some instances to exert power over his female in individualistic and varied ways discussed later.

In her necessary shifts of emphasis in directing her energies and concentration to the domestic or bonding focus of creating and maintaining the family structure his female counterpart therefore differed. Her diplomatic or negotiating strategies were significantly different in their demands and less enforceable through physical strength than those of the male. Therefore where their objectives coincided the female usually acquiesced to the male demand or strategic approach to signing the signifying of their commitment to each other and the family.

As social behaviours precipitated cultural conventions in a complexity not hitherto encountered, there evolved the extended use of signals and signs which were needed to communicate the status of male and female in a multitude of new contexts. These aspects laid the foundations for stereotyping, that is to say signs which are so embedded that the individual psyche is unaware of them. For the male, material accessories defined his sex through items which signified virility, aggression, assertiveness, prowess as hunter provider, protector and authority over others and in general anything that recorded and evidenced his having made an impact on the world beyond his bodily environment. His body outlined definitions of power and authority, and by this definition he distinguished and defined the difference between male and female but also his custody of her through mutual agreement.

In this new situation the female by contrast became more introspective, preoccupied with modifications directly concerning her own body, its image and its functions, its reproductive and survival qualities, advertised in some cases by extreme manifestations (which will be discussed

later in the section addressing the Handicap Principle). She reinforced her naturally constructed biological image not in accordance with her own ideals but with reference to prevailing socio-cultural conventions, reiterating her aspect as an object of male desire whilst at the same time providing a vision which defined for the male his 'ideal' of what her sexual and social aspirations should be, including her commitment to him.

As explored in the previous chapters it is easy to understand the need to devise such signalling tools or body extension transmitters when advertising reproductive qualities, community status and responsibility as well as taboos and aspirations, all of which are extensions of that which might gain advantage in the selection stakes, for example by repelling rival suitors.

As monogamy became more and more a part of the social structure, men and especially women came to understand that extra-monogamous affairs threatened the stability of their liaison. The solution which evolved was for the sexes to work separately and develop separate types of work, was directly linked to biological imperatives and embedded in culture along with the associated masculine and feminine patterns of behaviour. This dichotomy evolved in parallel as an extended reflection and further socio-sexual reinforcement which remains with us, embedded in a complex and diverse array of cultural objects, some of which may relate to task performance but many of which are visual extensions of the bio-imperative. These may be considered as gendered (gender designated) objects. The gendered object is not necessarily an object apart, it may well be a level of meaning or significance amid other levels within a common form of object. The gendered object embodies and may even amplify specific characteristics of a sex and allows those characters to be framed in a formal manner of display. Key concepts of representation and / or the communication of sexual differentiation are further discussed in the case studies of jewellery objects.

### **9.8.1 Individual psychology: Appeasement of male anxieties in dealing with women's sexuality and fidelity**

Overt sexuality manifest in the interpersonal relations of a male often appear to subjugate the female to a greater or lesser degree. In any civilised society, whether ancient or modern, unfettered male desire would be regarded as rape. However, moderated, socially acceptable dominance of the female by the male has at different times and in different circumstances as previously discussed been permissible or tolerated.

Adornment and / or jewellery has reflected this diversity of tolerances arising from differing circumstances, irrespective of whether or not it damages or covers up erogenous zones. Alongside this actuality of differing social conventions of different stages in social evolution, notions of subservience in socially conditioned, attitude driven behaviour have a specific manifestation which overlays the primary imperative. Slavery, bondage, submissiveness, passivity, intimidation of others have all emerged as levels of consciousness permitting social behaviour to develop. These dominance practices reflect the alpha male modes of control signifying wealth, power, ownership and social status and in responding to the male imperatives, have moulded female adornment.



The copulatory gaze of the male in a comparative environment required tactics lest he lost the opportunity to mate. The strategy of diverting the attention of a competitor required inventiveness, suspending immediate sexual needs to undertake subversive action. This, however, precipitated temporary anxieties until the action proved successful and gratification was achieved. The environmental space where anxiety was created, an integral factor in the development of social systems, supported the fidelity principle advantageous to the mental stability of the male. The knock on effect on the female was to precipitate responses which both subjugated her to his stability requirement and at the same time created a similar anxiety in her. It is argued that this progressive reciprocal response between the male and female is a key factor based on biological imperatives which is consistently extending to form ever more complex societies giving rise to cultures and civilisations. The extended male copulatory gaze would provide male power / female subjugation without using aggression and would be provided by the female herself through her responses.

Elements of the copulatory gaze thus provided for the opportunistic gene's reproductive needs, extended through elements of the gaze's psyche and sublimated context. The evolutionary socialisation of the female (male self-assertion through the control of women's emotional and physical being) is used for the augmentation and fashioning of women by male determined values and needs and both sexes' control of their anxieties. Male control and its coercion implemented through systems of reward and punishment, albeit psychological, is a response to critical points of stress. Social control has been maintained throughout the ages by fabrication, myths, politics, rationalisations, rules about differentiation, representation, alliances, and the imposition of fidelity and an array of conditioned role patterns. In the beginning the male / female sought biological ascendance / dominance, and culture is the phenotype extended of this biological phenomenon.

The subsequent opportunistic development of male appropriated structures of social organisation maintained the male's favourable position with the minimum of stress or effort since the female's responses had always to follow his, ensuring a system structured in such a way as to rule out all possibilities of opposition or challenging to its founding protocols. The hierarchic alpha male system is not so much a system for the benefit of the alpha male but rather a male initiated or copulatory gaze imperative system, which has been proved over time to be socially reflective to the extent that, given the opportunity and favourable circumstances, either sex could adopt a lead position within it.

Weeks argues

. . . that the meanings we give to 'sexuality' are socially organised, sustained by a variety of languages, which seek to tell us what sex is, what it ought to be — and what it can be. Existing languages of sex, embedded in moral treatises, laws, educational practices, psychological theories, medical definitions, social rituals, pornographic or romantic fictions, popular music, and commonsense assumptions (most of which disagree) set the horizon of the possible. They all present themselves up as true representations of our intimate needs and desires. . . . The patterns of female sexuality are inescapably a product of the historically rooted power of men to define and categorize what is necessary and desirable.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality* (Great Britain: Ellis Horwood Limited and Tavistock Publications, 1986; reprint, London: Routledge, 1989), 16 and 38 (page references are to reprint edition).

It is suggested that although this view does not conflict with the thesis argument it is important to recognise that, before a meaning was ascribed to it, there was an actuality of copulation and sexual interaction and its underlying genetic reproductive imperatives. Though different cultures may deal with sex and the construction of femininity in many diverse ways, there is a common thread which runs through nearly all cultures and that is the apparent subordination of the female by some form or other of restriction of her subjective entity. It is further suggested that this is expressed in a variety of forms of physical and emotional refashioning.

If aspects of adornment of and by the female formalise and display principles of presumed subservience for the purpose of ameliorating male anxieties then the female is instrumental in converting her prescribed sense of inferiority into a reality of defiance in the overtness of her ability to transcend and transform herself into an object. Adornment in this context can be viewed as a subversive act which allows her some control of her own imperative for genetic dominance through public display, albeit through something of an enticement or tease.

Subordination in adornment of the female is often a representation of a former implemented physical limitation / overpowering imposed on the female by the male. Visual demonstrations of display help displace what might have been an extremely violent past event in the copulatory or mating ritual. Impediments to the former unrestricted copulation resulting from the male requiring fidelity are symbolised through ornamentation in adornment referencing the actuality of the event.

The following examples of adornment fashioning relative to socialising functions are, it is suggested, the prototypes which resonate in much of the jewellery of today in terms of form. Functions, however, are often subverted into ironic gestures or critique of established structure and order. This aspect of contemporary jewellery will be discussed later in chapter 10.

### **9.8.2 Extreme adornment: Psychotic impediments to mobility**

Illustrations figures 9.8 to 9.11

Of the Dinka, Dr George Schweinfurth wrote in his book *Heart of Africa* (1874) 'Heavy rings load their wrists and ankles, clank and resound like fetters of slaves. Free from any other domination . . . they are not free from the fetters of fashion.'<sup>44</sup>

Sweinfurth goes on to link restraint adornment to notions of fashion victimhood which is interesting inasmuch as it suggests that when representation becomes pragmatically dislocated from its roots it somehow becomes mere fashion or a vacuous style. It is argued that this latter vacancy of meaning is really a departure from its original purpose and thereby distanced from conscious recognition of the origin of the representation.

In drawing attention to the restraint of the legs, arms, waist, feet, hands, neck, lips, nose etc, which impede movement and mobility by adding weight, through mutilation etc, we can see how it debilitates the senses and self will, and thus reinforces the prevalent social structure whilst simultaneously subverting the extreme dominance. Fisher infers a specific actuality imposing

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<sup>44</sup> Angela Fisher, *Africa Adorned*. (London: Collins Publishers 1984; reprint London: Collins Harvill, 1989), 55. (page reference is to reprint edition).

subservience, but is this the case? Fisher's and others' anthropological images offer visual evidence of adornment (see following illustrations) which not only symbolises the female's subordination but also accessorises and conditions the process of domestication to which she is subject. This places the function of body restraint, transposed by symbolic representation into a new paradigm of the body as the foundation upon which much jewellery is predicated.

It is not uncommon, particularly where indigenous / aboriginal people pursue a lifestyle which has changed little for thousands of years, to have reports of, for example, anklets which sometimes weigh as much as two pounds each or bracelets weighing fifteen pounds. Also there were accounts of heavy neck rings such as Flugel mentions (by reference to Stanley) which witness a continuation of the symbolic and ritualistic restraint principle in action and its effect in shaping social behaviour.

As Flugel points out "Stanley, for instance, tells us of a negro king who made his wives carry round their necks metal rings weighing in all between forty to eighty pounds!"<sup>45</sup> which in addition to their weight became so hot in the tropical sunshine that they required constant dousing with water to keep them cool and bearable to wear. Some examples of this kind of adornment have been designed to fit so tightly that they stop muscle development, (muscle was not considered an erotic physical characteristic) and also distorted the morphology of the body.

Publicly available display of the embellished body can be regarded as a shorthand emblematic categorisation of the sexual biography / history of the stages of a women's reproductive potential and availability; her clan relationship; her sexual status; how many sons she has; if they have been circumcised; if she is menopausal, if she is widowed and so forth. Thus problems of status in early social structures became externalised visually on the body (as additional display to body marking) and more exaggerated in order to be read from a non-intimate distance and in accordance with the social standing of the male.

The 'fashioning effect', changes the concept of self and gives individual females leverage over other aspects of their situation, compensating for the impact upon their demeanour. In an apparently male-dominated culture the fashioning of women and their appearance reinforces the monogamy, subordination and dependancy imperatives. Reinforcement is also achieved through a structured process of ambiguous rituals, myths and distortions of honour / shame, reward / punishment, resulting in her confusion and disorientation. Within such a framework a structure of values could be constructed which would give men control of the manipulation of the female integral to the cohesive function of managing monogamy.

What has in the past been interpreted as women's masochistic nature, viewed in the context of the imperatives presented here whereby both male and female have vested interests in co-operating with each other, may be equally revealing of the opposite in the sadistic side of the male copulatory gaze, which may also perhaps be regarded a rational and practical response action. Her need to gain approval rather than be physically assaulted or rejected makes it incumbent upon the female to subvert the process in whatever way possible, likewise the male needs to copulate without recourse to rape in order to conform to socially acceptable behaviour.

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<sup>45</sup>

J. C. Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., (London: The Hogarth Press Ltd., 1966), 50.



The protests of female children at their mother's grooming have always had to be soothed with the notion of suffering for the purpose of beautification in order to gain approval not only of the male but also of society in general. Influenced by bio-imperatives fuelled and reinforced by myth and ritual in tribal groups the female willingly complies.

In equatorial forests anklets of great weight, traditionally part of a woman's dowry and symbols of status, were forged onto woman's legs to be worn to the grave unless they were removed by smiths. In the mid-twentieth century the Liberian government forbade women wearing these anklets because it was thought to make them look like slaves. Lighter removable designs were adopted and large anklets are now valued only as currency. . . . [see illustration Figure 9.8]. Some of the heaviest and largest anklets were worn by the Kru of Liberia. Bell-shaped anklets such as this, weighing up to 6 Kilos, donated status and were believed to ward off the evil spirits of the ground.<sup>46</sup>

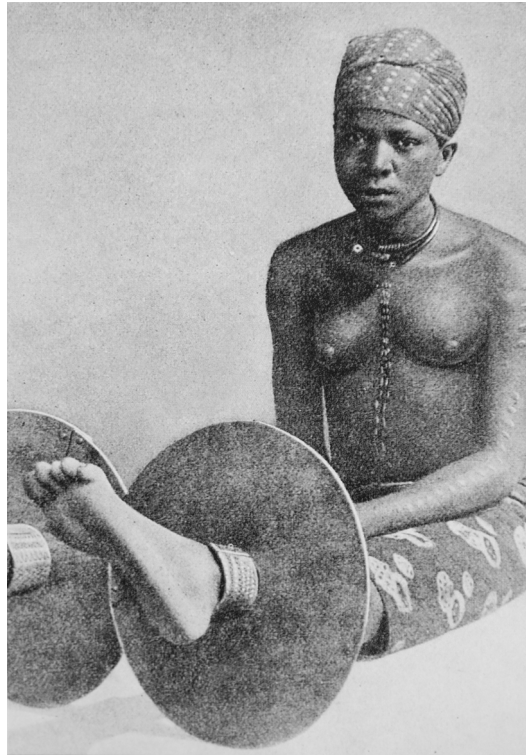


*Figure 9.8 A bell shaped anklet worn by the Kru of Liberia, weighing 6 kilos and measuring 21 cm*

<sup>46</sup> Angela Fisher, *Africa Adorned* (London: Collins Publishers 1984; reprint London: Collins Harvill, 1989), 88-89. (page reference is to reprint edition).

In the case of anklets by the Igbo of Nigeria.

They were attached by the smiths to the ankle, and women had to swing their legs outwards as they walked to avoid tripping. They were only removed to be replaced by even larger ones indicating greater prestige.<sup>47</sup> (See illustration Figure 9.9a)



*Figure 9.9a An Igbo woman wearing a pair of plate-like brass anklets*



*Figure 9.9b One of a pair of plate-like proportioned brass anklets*

Though cumbersome and heavy, such prestigious objects were often worn into middle age. This example is 13 inches in diameter and its surface is decorated with punched designs. [(see illustration 9.9b. One of a pair of brass anklets). These] . . . anklets of plate-like proportions . . . cause them to have a rolling gait as they walk. This style of movement is often imitated by those who are not adorned in this way to suggest that they too are accustomed to decorating in such a prestigious manner.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup>

Ibid. 88.

<sup>48</sup>

John Mack, ed., *Ethnic Jewellery* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1988), 10.



Another example of the wearing of heavy brass anklets are those displayed by the women of the Wodaabe tribe from Niger, West African Savannah (see illustration figure 9.10).

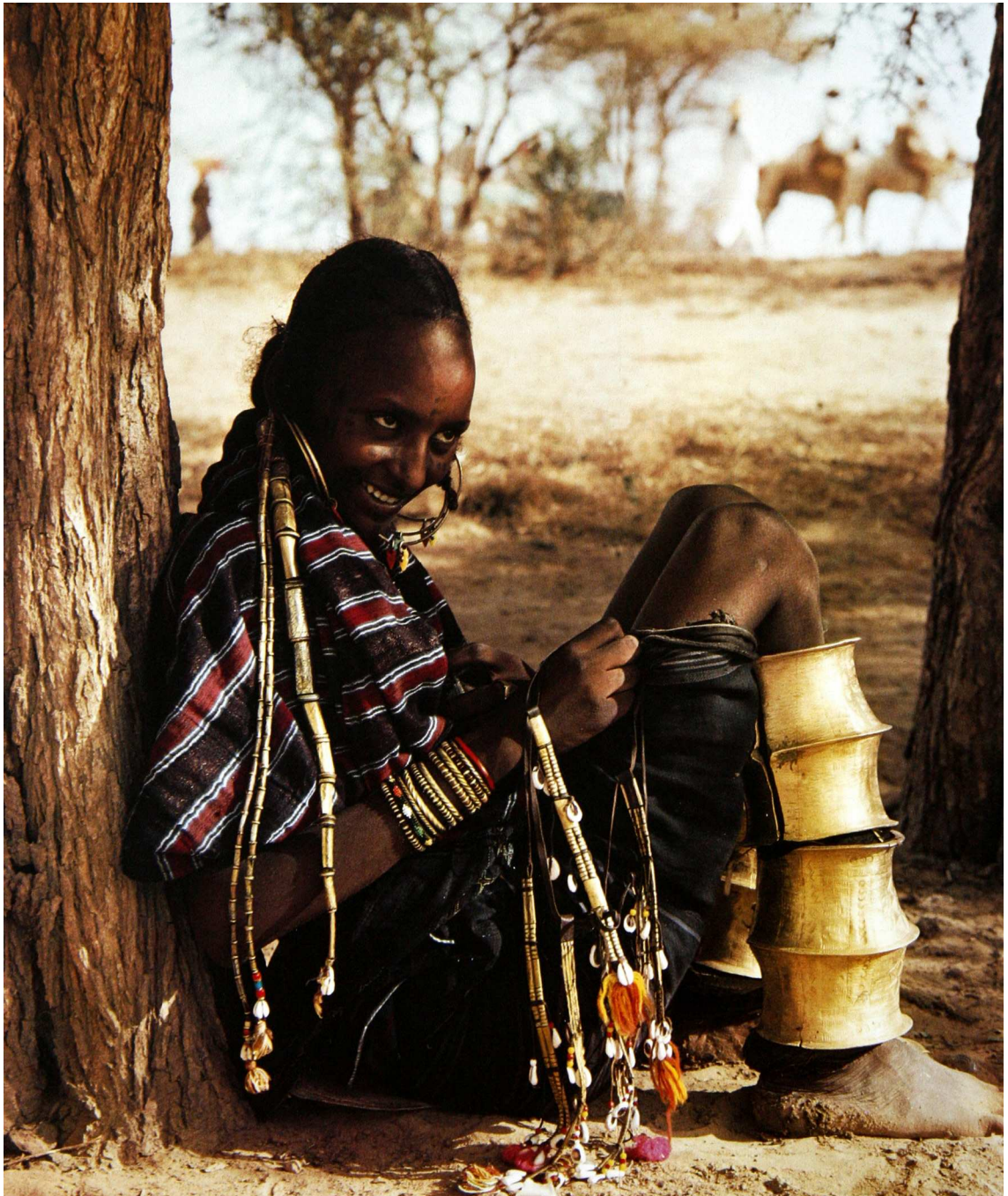


Figure 9.10 A Wodaabe girl wearing two heavy brass anklets

Her heavy brass anklets, called *jabo* are traditionally given by a mother to her daughter and are worn to attract men's attention; their weight, which tends to make the hips swing while walking, adds an extra element of seduction. Well-to-do girls wear two to three pairs, protecting their legs from inevitable chafing with cloth wrappings. The anklets are worn only until the girl has borne her first child.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Angela Fisher, *Africa Adorned* (London: Collins Publishers 1984; reprint London: Collins Harvill, 1989), 158 (page reference is to reprint edition).



Hobbling of this kind obviously changes the walk to a kind of sashaying gait of the female and although it has been stated that this compliance with this kind of restriction has certain motivations it is worth speculating about what might be advantageous to the female other than commitment to a monogamous relationship. Exaggerated hip movement as a consequence of hobbling is not the same as emulation or stylisation of the movement in a conscious body language of enticement display or avoidance display for women who are not in a monogamous situation.

To paraphrase a recent research study <sup>50</sup> it has been revealed that women swing their hips most at their least fertile point of their menstrual cycle. This completely contradicts the presumption that females would wiggle their hips at the peak of fertility when they would wish to be at their most alluring in order to attract the attention of male suitors. This form of seductive display apparently amounts to a deception or distraction from when her real peak of ovulation occurs. Whilst her swaying hips are busy fuelling men's erotic desires she is literally wasting their time and possibly their energy. Authentic signals of sexual viability and receptiveness such as subtle bodily changes can only be ascertained by a male on close contact with her and during at least one cycle and hence she may already have established intimacy with a desirable suitor. Her actions may fuel an established mate's jealous anxiety. Thus he would make sure, or it would encourage him, to stay close to her, which in turn would protect her from unwelcome attention or assault from undesirable suitors and thereby affirm her fidelity.

These male constructed and fabricated additions to the female body in a form regarded as decorative jewellery appear to be ambiguous in their consequences. As fetters, these overweight and awkward constructions restrict the female's freedom to wander, never mind run away. She, however, not completely restricted, adopts a form of motion which is both alluring and stylised. In its action it both attracts and might repel by its very awkwardness. Have these jewellery devices been fabricated as mechanisms of deceit to deflect undesired sexual advances, or are they 'honey traps' for the competition and selection of the alpha males? To project sexual allure to attract males at her least fertile would promote choice and activate male competition.

The motivating principles of who has fashioned what for the benefit of whom is hard to discern but if we follow the rules of nature we will have learned by now that everything works in a mode of competitive symbiosis and a sort of uneasy equilibrium is struck where the smartest for the time being outmanoeuvres the rest. In this instance it seems to demonstrate the role of ambiguity in the constant shift in conflicts of interest between the sexes in relationships both to each other and the social group to which they belong. In group or tribe situations it seems that calling least attention to herself at her most fertile time acts as a protective disguise. That research shows that at the peak of her fertility a woman walks with the least hip movement and also keeps her knees closer together and takes smaller steps whilst walking or running, reinforces this interpretation.

Notwithstanding that observed from a distance it limits intimate information being exchanged, long distance hip swaying sends out the first broad signals which act not only to identify gender but also to exaggerate the difference between male and female. It also serves the female at close quarters as a signal inviting interest by proffering characterised movements which

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<sup>50</sup> Meghan P. Provost, Vernon L. Quinsey and Nikolaus F. Troje, "Differences in Gait Across the Menstrual Cycle and Their Attractiveness to Men." *Archives of Sexual Behaviour* (April 2007) :1-7 pages not numbered.

occur during the sexual act. As pointed out by Provost et al, the way a person walks conveys quite specific information about them, especially their sex and in women their condition in pregnancy. Constrictive jewellery inhibits natural movement and thereby causes confusion by the displacement of genuine sexual signal information with a deception. This fulfils many social functions which may include male to female anxieties and rivalries, female security, fidelity or sexual display and or / others which relate also to age.

Emphasis placed upon body movement and its accompanying signals exists in other societies presented in different ways. For example, whilst here movement is artificially exaggerated by extreme jewellery in the form of metal hobbles, Marco Polo relates a different but similar scenario in relation to hip sexual signalling. His report about the virgins from Cathay shows how minimised movement can also signal a sexual condition deception.

Young ladies of the province of Cathay excel in modesty and the strict observance of decorum. They do not frisk and frolic and dance . . . [but] walk with eyes cast down in front of their feet. [Virginity was a paramount requirement and would be tested as part of the marriage contract. So anxious were they] . . . to ensure this strict preservation of virginity, the maidens always walk so daintily that they never advance one foot more than a finger's breadth beyond the other, since physical integrity is often destroyed by a wanton gait.<sup>51</sup>

Deception or concealment is a response to anxieties on both sides of the sexual divide. Its purpose in relation to the evolution of society is an extension of the underlying bio-sexual imperatives of protection against predation upon the local gene pool and / or control over its extension. There are as many aspects to assuaging anxiety by sexual deception as there can be sublimated social behavioural manifestations and visually presented representations. It may well be that anxiety in its basic form provides the dynamic motivation which protects and progresses human evolution.

### **9.8.3 Augmentations to natural beauty: Sculpting a response to the copulatory gaze**

Illustrations Figures 9.12a to 9.22

Sexual politics plays a role in the reinforcement of biological imperatives which operate within the social extension of interpersonal relations male to female. Body adornment and later the fundamentals and techniques of forming of materials into jewellery applied to the body identified individuals with society and also the individual within society. Differentiating characters in the visual signs indicated underlying imperatives both directly and indirectly.

As the customary signing of the body developed as described in this chapter a progression towards body augmentation of natural beauty went hand in hand with integrated attachments fabricated from both natural and other materials such as metal. The two tribes from Burma described below, for example, use a combination of organic material such as rattan, lacquered cotton, with brass, copper or silver.

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<sup>51</sup> Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. and introd. by Ronald Latham (Middlesex: Penguin Books 1958), 167-168.

Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. and introd. by Ronald Latham (Middlesex: Penguin Books

The women of most of the Karen tribes (see illustration Figure 9.11) are noted for the amount of copper rod which they twine round their arms and legs. The Loilông Karen women are remarkable. . . . Rattan rings are bound round the leg below the knee, and into those at right angles are fastened brass rings in a fringe. These interfere seriously with active movement. No woman walks without a staff, and few have been more than a mile from their native village all their lives. A tight sheath of brass covers the arms to the elbow.<sup>52</sup>



*Figure 9.11 Women of the Karen tribe*



*Figure 9.12a Women of the Kayah tribe, Burma.*

<sup>52</sup> Walter Hutchinson, ed., *Customs of the World* with an introduction by A. C. Haddon (London: Hutchinson & Co., no date given c.1880) Chapter 7. *Burma* by Sir George Scott, 288.





Figure 9.12b Women of the Kayah tribe, Burma.

In illustrations Figures 9.12a and 9.12b Burma's Kayah women wear lacquered cotton leg rings which are worn in place of the more expensive silver ones if they cannot afford silver. "The rings make walking very difficult; when sitting, the women must stretch out their legs as they cannot bend them, and circulation in the lower leg and feet can be affected"<sup>53</sup> It has been suggested that the original purpose of these adornments was to protect the women from snakebites whilst foraging for food. One will find many similar items of adornment in many other cultures but as discussed earlier these also have evolved to double up with a social / psychological functional role in respect of their hobbling and limitation of movement of limbs.

As with other tribes in making display artefacts the Masai gradually introduce materials into the ear lobe (see illustration figure 9.13). The resulting unnatural extension of this part emphasises its importance as a zone or focal point of attention. There are a variety of reasons for doing this.

These long beaded ear flaps show that a Maasai woman is married, and the Maasai hold that a man should never see his wife without them. The pendants, *surutia*, proclaim that she has a circumcised son; she will have lent them to him during the healing period following his circumcision, and for the Eunoto ceremony if he was chief warrior.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Richard K. Diran, *The Vanishing Tribes of Burma* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1997), 128.

<sup>54</sup> Angela Fisher, *Africa Adorned* (London: Collins Publishers 1984; reprint London: Collins Harvill, 1989), 27 (page reference is to reprint edition).



*Figure 9.13 Maasai woman's long beaded ear flaps*

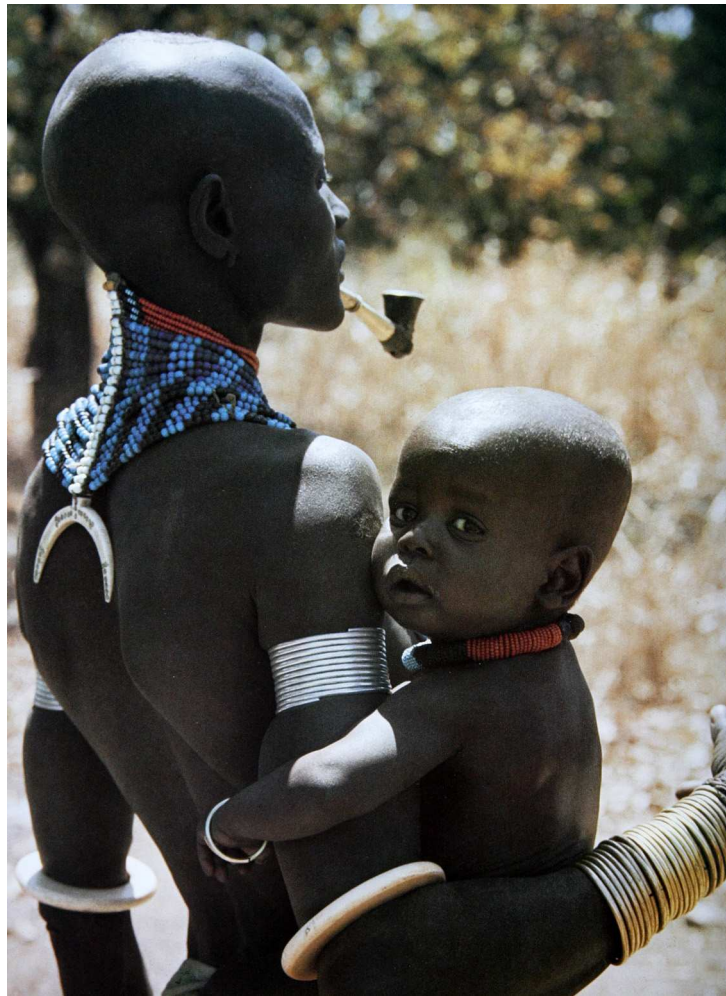
Generally speaking the political interests of the male are at the heart of the social structure as a show of power. However, the relationships are also an integral aspect of social hierarchic systems and extend that which is interpersonal between the sexes towards a formal display of kinship, rites of passage and in some cases ownership. By imposing a social political formal responsibility upon each individual irrespective of sex, a conformity is established in which each knows and acknowledges their and others' place in the social structure.

The 'natural' (biological) need for boundaries, is formalised by extension into a 'natural' evolving societal structure. However, it may force an unnatural behaviour in response which in turn has resulted in some peculiar, deviant or individualistic tribal / peer group manifestations of specific imperatives. Mutations in the gene pool occur naturally in this situation of social extension of natural imperatives. There is often subversion or intervention which operates to the detriment of individuals or groups. The results of extreme social or personal psychologically motivated interventions have led in the past either to extinction or generated sub-groups wherein mutilation to extreme levels of perversity in suffering or sacrifice of individuals is supposedly justified as being for the common good, placation of the Gods or perpetuation of the group.



As discussed, some argue that the causation of extreme or perverse mutilation of females is alpha male domination of the hierarchic system. Others argue circumstantial / environmental cause and effect. Whatever the case these behaviours are characterised by specific visual signs in a visual language in response to specific psycho-social environmental situations and thus the following discussion is set within this context.

Like the corset, bracelets and armlets are fitted very tightly to accentuate the body's natural form. Coils of wire were wound so firmly round the arms and wrists that they only just permit circulation and often cause the limbs to swell, but the Dinka admire roundness of limbs and will endure the discomfort with pride. ...<sup>55</sup> (See illustration Figure 9.14.)



*Figure 9.14 Dinka woman wearing tightly fitting coils of wire*

This form of constraint results in swelling of limbs simulating, where there may in reality be minimal nourishment, a well nourished body which would, if it occurred naturally, indicate her fertility capacity and ability to conceive, sustain a healthy pregnancy and nourishment of the child through early period of growth. This form of signalling is especially significant in places where there are food shortages or where famine regularly occurs. A woman who looks well fed signifies fecundity, that she eats well and / or that her husband is a good provider and / or is well off which will deter other male competition. Pseudo-signing of biological health can be

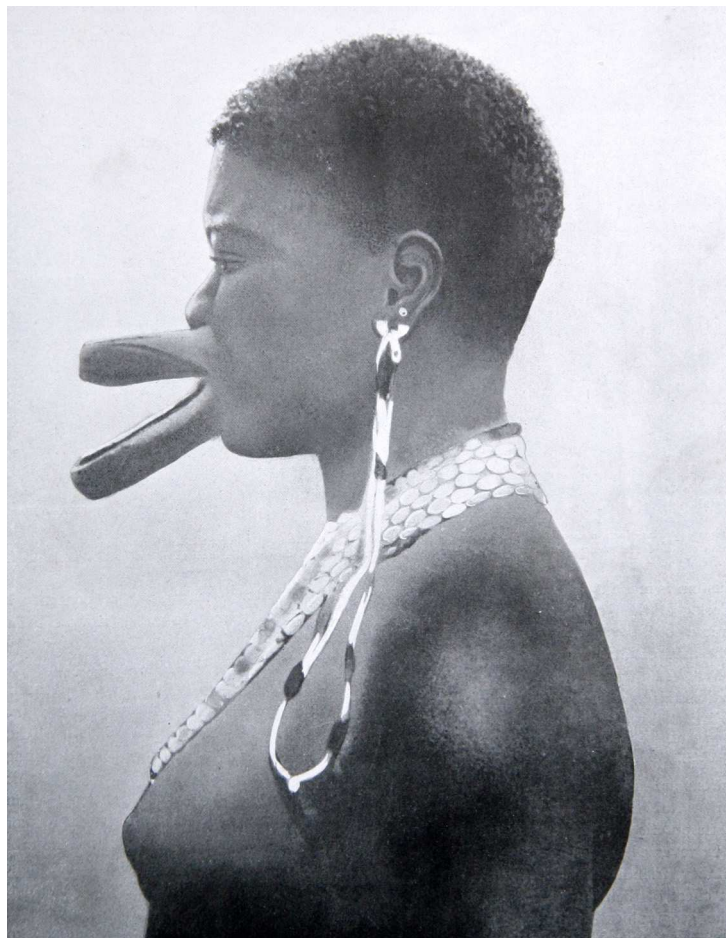
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<sup>55</sup> Angela Fisher, *Africa Adorned* (London: Collins Publishers 1984; reprint London: Collins Harvill, 1989), 54 (page reference is to reprint edition).



taken to even greater extremes. Adornment can be used to shape, squeeze and re-form desirable characteristics of parts of the body, such as the emphasising of the waist to achieve ideal hip to waist ratios of the desired proportions. Body parts can be made more symmetrical, breasts can be made to look fuller, legs to look longer, skin look more healthy, less hairy etc. This kind of integrated jewellery body representation underpinned by other modes of adornment is seen as created to draw attention to the key points of female ideal beauty. However beauty seen in this context as in others reflects an aesthetic judged by learned approval criteria. These are based on survival imperatives not always solely sexually motivated. The symbolism is not always apparent but objective review of the vast numbers of examples of this genre of adornment begins to enable the de-coding of layered significances. For example, in the case of lip plates;

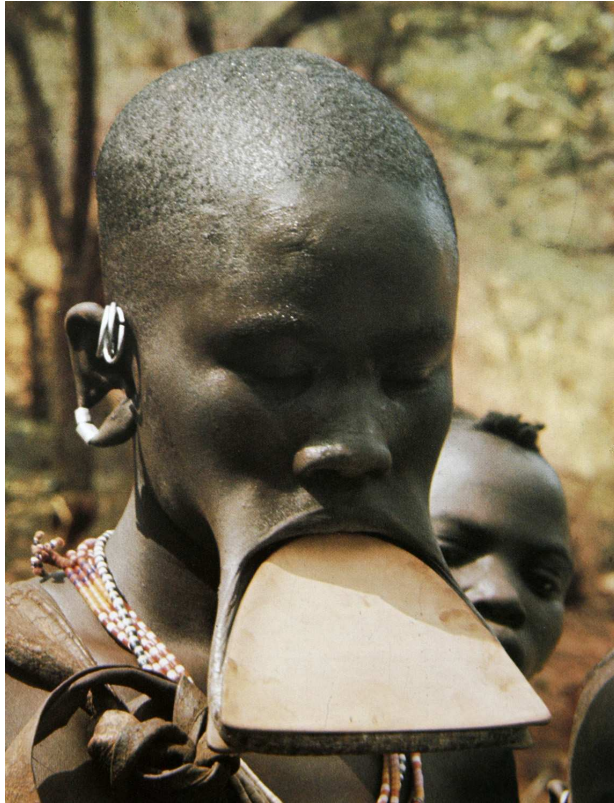
All the women of the Sara tribe have this artificial deformation of the lips as a sign of beauty. The effect is produced by piercing the lips and gradually enlarging the holes by inserting wooden discs, the size of which is increased as the lips get distended.<sup>56</sup>



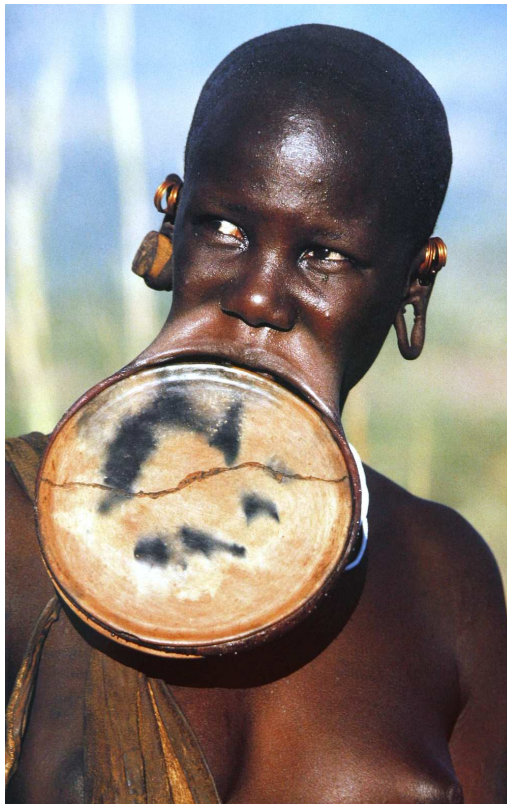
*Figure 9.15a A woman of the Sara tribe wearing lip plates in both upper and lower lip*

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<sup>56</sup> A. C. Haddon, introduction to Customs of the World by Walter Hutchinson, ed., (London: Hutchinson & Co., no date given c.1880), iii.



*Figure 9.15b Vast lip plates worn by the Kichepo tribe of south east Sudan*



*Figure 9.15c A Surma bride wearing a clay lip plate*

Vast wedge-shaped or circular lip plates are worn by the Kichepo of south-east Sudan. They have long been considered an essential part of a woman's adornment and were traditionally worn in the presence of men or mothers-in-law. Some maintain that the practice originated as a means of discouraging slave traders; others that it is associated with animal worship, in that the women extend their lips to make themselves look like certain birds – broadbills and spoonbills for example. Today, large plates are worn only by the older generation: younger women who resist the custom wear much smaller plugs or none at all.<sup>57</sup>

A Surma bride from Ethiopia wears a clay lip plate, which is inserted six months before marriage. The size of the lip plate indicates the number of cattle that the young man must pay for her dowry. This bride wears a plate symbolising the bride price of seventy five cattle.<sup>58</sup> [See illustration Figure 9.15c].

However there are other reasons for this extreme representation through adornment if we refer back to Dawkins where he explains how deliberate over exaggeration of the bio-sexual signal acts as supra-stimuli to behavioural reflexes. Transmission of suprasexual-symbolisation like filled out breasts, buttocks, shiny red lipstick coverings of the plumped up lips of today etc get their fair share of male attention, in fact stop the males in their tracks. A similar hypothesis could be applied to lip plates.

Nathaniel Portlock <sup>59</sup> describes how women eat with an implanted lip plate whereby the woman would put more food in their mouths than could be swallowed in one go and hence during chewing would lay masticated food on the plate. Aside from its apparent ritualistic quality as a public act, it is interesting to speculate in its origins as a practice and the purpose of hampered food consumption in this way. Since the plate is removable, this activity may be due to sheer exhaustion in eating or it may have something to do with extraction of maximum of nourishment from the scarce resources. Simultaneously the plate could be about the purposeful act of desensitising highly erogenous zones such as the lips, thus destroying and hampering the sexually stimulating delights of kissing. Or it could be that her speech is deliberately inhibited. All of which have a good grounding in reproductive practicality, responding to an integration of survival and psycho-sexual imperatives.

It would seem that many of the above cases illustrated would confirm that body invasive embellishment of the female body presents this kind of adornment as embodiment of multivariant psycho-sexual anxieties and survival imperatives additional to the representation of ideal beauty. Embodiment in living and growing flesh reveals a social agenda of apparent male dominance or methods of forming the female's consciousness, at times resulting in her being literally bereft of strength, voice or manoeuvrability, impotent despite the omnipotent regenerative role she is expected to take in culture. Sublimation on this scale of the sanctity of the individual's body allowing interventions which distort and in some cases mutilate cannot merely be about male dominance. The viability of groups depend on cooperation particularly in extreme situations where extreme solutions are required.

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<sup>57</sup> Angela Fisher, *Africa Adorned* (London: Collins Publishers 1984; reprint London: Collins Harvill, 1989), 55 (page reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>58</sup> Robert Morton, ed., *Passages: photographs by Carol Beckworth and Angela Fisher* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2000), 60.

<sup>59</sup> Arnold Rubin, *Marks of Civilisation: Artistic Transformations of the Human Body* (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History. University of California, 1988) , vol. 14. *Women, Marriage, Mouths and Feasting:: The symbolism of Tlinglit Labrets* by Aldona Jonaitis. 204 (End note 2, a quote by Nathaniel Portlock, who visited the Tlinglit coast, Alaska in 1780 where similar saucer size labrets were also worn).



Illustration Figure 9.16 shows a Garo woman displaying her beauty (presumably dressed by the photographer for the sake of western modesty). The weight of her brass rings has extended the earlobes to the shoulders. The women from the Garo hills “wear fifty or more brass rings in each



*Figure 9.16 A woman of the Garo hills wearing fifty or more brass rings.*

ear, a ring being sometimes as much as four inches in diameter. When a man dies his widow puts off her ear-rings till the funeral ceremony is over and sometimes never puts them on again”<sup>60</sup>

This dramatic image looks painful, however, the time and duration over which these rings were accumulated suggests that the process is not as uncomfortable as it might seem, although the result is cumbersome and as with any form of piercing there is a risk of infection.

The earrings of the Li woman from Hainan Island, South China sea, (Figure 9.17 below) likewise seem to have been exclusively designed to achieve the extreme and exaggerated affect. . . . “Her five pound brass earrings, a mark of high status, were typically worn swung up into her hair as headgear.”<sup>61</sup>

Much intrusive and extreme body intervention jewellery is placed directly on the erogenous zones of the female, covering over, placing pressure upon, or distorting these highly sensitive areas of the body (as previously referenced in relation to the lips). The human ear-lobes, often

<sup>60</sup> Walter Hutchinson, ed., *Customs of the World* with an introduction by A. C. Haddon (London: Hutchinson & Co., no date given c.1880) vol 1, chap. XIX. *Bengal, Behar and Orissa*, by F. B. Bradley-Birt. 550.

<sup>61</sup> T. C. Lau, “A Ringing in the Ears”, *National Geographic* vol. 194, no. 6. (December 1998): 134.



*Figure 9.17 A Li woman from Hainan Island wearing five pound brass earrings.*

seen as vestigial appendages, have evolved with a very specific role: during sexual arousal they become engorged with blood (vasco-congestion), swollen and hyper-sensitive. “(Surprisingly, the humble ear-lobe has been rather overlooked in this context, but it is worth noting that there are cases on record of both males and females actually reaching orgasm as a result of ear-lobe stimulation).”<sup>62</sup>

The following analysis of the anatomy of a Burmese beauty reveals how the aspiration to realize the aesthetic ideal is taken to the limits of the extreme. The images provided offer visual evidence of how adornment encapsulates male desires and here attempts to transcend human physical limitations to an extent verging upon the destructive. In addition, the images offer visual evidence of adornment contributing to the act of female subordination and being an instrument of her domestication. This is also in the case of some of the Padaung tribeswomen of Burma who seemingly follow this pathway of extreme behaviour. As mentioned earlier one of the most disturbing aspects of the manifestations of female body invasive decoration / components which has been consistent throughout history is their restrictive nature. We have noted how components of adornment have been deliberately designed to restrict the feminine body’s activity, yet retain its sexual accessibility. Thus women’s submissiveness is presumed enforced, keeping her in place through the hindrance of her ornaments which necessitate her being weighted down, hobbled and restrained.

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<sup>62</sup> Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape* (Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1967; reprint, Herts: Triad / Mayflower Books 1977), 59 (page references are to reprint edition).



The following illustrations Figure 9.18 to 21 shows how extremes are taken to the very limits of human endurance “A relentless embrace of brass, the burden of beauty shouldered by a Padaung tribeswomen of Burma armours the neck in a coil that weighs about 20 pounds, and measures a head-popping one foot high.”<sup>63</sup> (See illustration Figure 9.18)



*Figure 9.18 A Padaung tribeswomen wearing a complete set of neck coils*



*Figure 9.19a Little girls in their first set of brass neck coils*

*Figure 9.19b Girls as young as twelve years old can already wear a complete set of neck coils*

<sup>63</sup>  
(June 1979): 798.

John M. Keshishian, M.. D. “Anatomy of a Burmese Beauty Secret.” *National Geographic*. vol. 155, no. 6

In Burma the Padaung ‘Giraffe Women’ have a form of adornment which is a permanent fixture reshaping her body and impacting not only upon their shape and posture but also upon their behaviour within the tribe / group to which they belong. Rings are placed around their neck and ankles, the first rings being placed on her neck in early childhood. Whilst tribal alliance is certainly signified by this practice, her role and function in lifestyle is also purposefully stated. Whilst there is in the progression of ring placement an element of signing the sexual maturing process of the female there are also other significances in the practice of ringing. From early childhood at about five years of age the first brass coils are formed around the neck, thereafter, single rings mark out sexual maturity at about twelve years of age (the female’s procreative potential and availability), and social progress in the symbolic classification and ritual. A long slim neck is considered to be feminine, exaggeration amplifies this ideal, and gives clarity to the physical and conceptual definition of femininity.<sup>64</sup> It is interesting to note that cross-cultural reference seems to support the theory that an upright head in most societies is recognised as a symbol of grace and refinement. Good deportment donates nobility and dignity, confidence and pride. Her adornment is shorthand in the Padaung culture, used in the transformation to implement a proposition of civilisation by using woman as an individual visual example of the ideals to which the tribe aspires in behaviour, confirmation of the cultural rules to which these females subject themselves. This adornment and personal enhancement advertises breeding and deportment as desirable in its exaggeration of regions of the body seen as areas of elegance and display of craft skills in forming perfect circles.

Nearly every ‘cultural object’ has its existence rationalised by the claim that its origins have stemmed from a functional need or logical purpose. However in most cases these would seem to be merely contrivances presented in ‘mytho-logical’<sup>65</sup> forms to justify the purpose of social behaviour. In the case of the Padaung tribeswoman there is the myth that her tightly coiled neck is protecting her from being bitten in the neck in the event of her being attacked by a tiger.<sup>66</sup> However attacks by tigers may not have been so frequent as to justify such debilitating armament! Could it equally be claimed that it may be more likely that her neck is being protected from the bites caused by an illicit lover when in the throes of passion? Perfection and practicality coincide particularly in the rings, which are worn about the ankles and arms, engendering also poise and elegance in movement. These women are highly respected in society as special inasmuch as they carry and convey the hallmarks of their civilisation. Fakir Musafar suggests the Padaung woman’s predicament is one of being selected for idealisation and of privilege when he makes the following remarks. “You can’t look down, you have to bend from the waist to do that. But they’re regarded as beautiful and special and they’re treated with great care.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Morris provides a clear definition of the biological/gender difference to the neck as a reference to femininity. “Traditionally, the exceptionally masculine figure is ‘bull-necked’ while the exceptional feminine figure is endowed with a graceful ‘swan-like’ neck. These differences are real enough. The male neck is shorter and more thickset, the female neck longer, more slender and more tapered” He continues to point out the physical differences between the sexes and why. In this context he also references to an image of a Padaung woman but his explanation as to what physically happens to her “the neck vertebrae were pulled apart” is incorrect. Desmond Morris, *Bodywatching: A Field Guide to the Human Species*, (London: Johnathan Cape Ltd., 1985), 117, 123..

<sup>65</sup> Words used by Leach to describe the logic and pseudo-logic (mytho-logic) of expressive behaviour. Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication: The logic by which symbols are connected* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; Cambridge University Press, 1991), 69.

<sup>66</sup> See: Richard K. Diran, *The Vanishing Tribes of Burma* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1997), 218-219.

<sup>67</sup> V. Vale and Andrea Juno, ed., *Modern Primitives* (San Francisco: Re/search Publications, 1989), 32.

Civilisation in this context might be understood as being a stage in development whereby the social, cultural, politics and technology coincide and achieve quality of collective self-consciousness, which endures and sets a benchmark for following systems.

As well as the 20 lbs of rings worn around the neck:

Rings worn on arms and legs may weigh a woman down with an additional thirty pounds of brass. Since leg coils hamper walking, the woman waddle. Constrained from drinking in the usual head-back position, a ring wearer leans forward to sip through a straw. 'And the voices of the wearer, wrote British journalist J. G. Scott, sound "as if they were speaking up the shaft of a well." . . .<sup>68</sup> (See figure 9.20)



*Figure 9.20 Constrained by her neck coils a woman leans forward to drink through a straw.*

With the free use of her limbs restricted her sense of autonomy is eroded. She is, however, compensated by the esteem in which she is held. The weakness and inability which limits any aspirations to power and assertiveness in a physical sense gives way to a more subtle authority derived from her as object of possession and veneration. Her subservience has been forged out for her relationships / kinships with others in compliance with the traditions of the tribe. With twenty pounds of neck rings and the further weight of arm and leg bands a woman could be wearing a total of fifty to sixty pounds which could be half her own weight. This does require adaptation in habit and behaviour if the burden is not to overcome inherent strength. However, strength here shifts a paradigm of the physical to that of the character. The loss of personal identity is transposed to achievement of revered status a tribal treasure which represents all that the tribe is and stands for.

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<sup>68</sup>  
(June 1979): 801.

John M. Keshishian, M.. D. "Anatomy of a Burmese Beauty Secret." National Geographic. vol. 155, no. 6



Could it be that adorning the female has in this context as much to do with claiming tribal affinity and representing the tribal claims of possessions of a level of worth or domain over others? The contrivances of the male, if such they be, in presenting the feminine self consciousness and feminine behaviour in the forefront of cultural iconography as the civilising force, is advantageous to the male in the sense that thereby is created the desire for social virtue through a formalised or fixed display. The Padaung woman's mode of appearance is fixed and with no freedom of choice or incentive to change, her role within her society is as fixed as the rings around her neck, as it was for her ancestors and will be for her successors. Suspended in timelessness, she (as representative of her social unit and its cultural ideals) is constrained to operate in set modes of thought and expected behaviour patterns which almost become fossilised in cultural representation irrespective of environmental or circumstantial changes.

Keshishian states that "In past times the punishment for adultery decreed removal of the coils. The head then flopped over, and suffocation could follow."<sup>69</sup> This suggests the seriousness with which the bad behaviour of those held up as ideal representatives of civilised values is taken in such a culture. Whatever the original intention for making and using neck coils, whether to cover up the areas of sexual excitement to deflect temptation, mark rites of passage and so on, the penalty of death, real or imagined, as a consequence of collapse of the neck when rings are removed acted as deterrent to abhorrent behaviour much as it does today. Whatever the case, and myth or not, the threat of this extraordinary and cruel punishment for adultery was enough to discourage inappropriate behaviour of any kind and therefore the rings have also become symbolic of, and synonymous with, social responsibility. Emotional violence coerces without resorting to actual violence.

The notion of correction took its roots in the necessities of social rule, retribution and deviation from the rule is punished by restriction or applied physical violence or reparation. Although there is often a close visual likeness between the apparatus or instruments of punishment and some forms of female adornment the motivations for their creation are not at all related. Most manifestations of adornment are predicated upon conformity in interpersonal / intersocial behavioural signing. Several societies today have still as part of a marriage rite, retained ancient rituals which are re-creations of the primitive practice of taking by kidnap. A struggle and capture by force is re-created as part of the wedding ceremony. Today tokens such as a chain placed around a women's neck by her mate could be seen in this context to have sinister undertones where indeed she may at one time in history been held captive by the neck. In the case of the Padaung women it was believed that the loop at the back of the first six to eight neck rings, see illustration Figure 9.21 below, were there to keep her in check. Should she misbehave a rope would be placed through the loop and she would be tethered to the house or a tree.<sup>70</sup> As a tethering loop, it symbolically implemented a principle of ownership, which is prevalent in many social groups whereby the partner is but one of the goods and chattels which establish the status of a unit within the group. In this context the female is willing to conform to be seen as signifying her commitment, loyalty and or subordination to the hierarchy, and her wish to be tied to her partner and her role in his life in support of the family unit.

<sup>69</sup> John M. Keshishian, M.D. "Anatomy of a Burmese Beauty Secret." *National Geographic*. vol. 155, no. 6 (June 1979): 798.

<sup>70</sup> See: Richard K. Diran, *The Vanishing Tribes of Burma* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1997), 218.



Figure 9.21 Paduang tribeswoman in complete set of brass neck coils. (side view) showing loop at the back



Figure 9.22 Large nose ring worn by Indian tribeswoman

Another extreme in adornment which holds subliminal significance relative to biology is seen in the example illustrated Figure 9.22 whereby the nose ring of an Indian tribeswoman from Tatania is enlarged and exaggerated beyond what is usual, its weight and bulk forcing the woman to adopt a specific posture.

Large nose rings (nath) are also worn in the left ala. They may be plain silver or gold hoops, but they may also be extravagantly ornamented with enamel, pearls and precious stones. Heavy nose-rings must be supported by cords or chains hooked to the hair or head covering to hold the ornament flat against the cheek, otherwise their weight would distort the nose.<sup>71</sup>

This demonstrates how a mode of jewellery can frame behaviour in terms not only of deportment but also transforming the individual into a sign of status synonymous with a style of life. The embodied narratives of specific codes and conduct of culture are many and varied and indicative of a specific level of consciousness in evolutionary psycho-social complexity which only women can have.

#### 9.8.4 Zahavis' handicap principle

Why do these women, for the sake of male sanctioned, socially idealised beauty, act in this way to alleviate the male sublimated fantasy / natural urges causing psycho sexual anxieties? There are only two possibilities: because they were forced to or because they wanted to. Women's mode of adornment taken to extremes would seem to suggest as argued in this thesis that sexual selection, as a prime motivator of socially constructed behaviour takes control into new spheres or orders of magnitude because of the group psychology dynamic.

We have all watched the peacock's aesthetically dazzling display when in full courtship he is seen strutting his masculine superiority in order to attract females to mate with, and most of us are now familiar with the theory that it is peahens' preference for these characteristics in the male that has, over thousands of generations, created such a spectacular creature. The peacock is a wonderful example of the Handicap Principle theory as presented by Zahavi who argues that

<sup>71</sup>

John Mack, ed., *Ethnic Jewellery* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1988), 76.



The high cost that signalling often involves is clearly seen in the case of the peacock. . . . to be able to put on such shows, peacocks have to drag massive tails around most of the year. By managing to find food and avoid predators despite such a burden, a peacock proves that he is the high quality mate the peahen is seeking to father her future chicks. [Zahavi claims therefore that] . . . there is a logical relationship between the signal and the message it conveys.<sup>72</sup>

It appears that selective mating by the hen with those peacocks with the biggest and finest feathers (to the point where they inhibit flight from predation and by implication attract danger), identifies the fittest. Zahavi asserts that these embellishments should not be seen as disabilities but rather as handicaps that provide an individual with the opportunity to advertise and evidence superior quality as a viable source of genetically superior sperm.

In the human species the male / female role is reversed and the various modes of some women's adornment have a serious cost, but it is this investment in the luxury of extra physical expenditure which may drive home a very significant point of better than average fitness of mental and physical stamina and endurance, supra-symbolic evidence of supra-genetic quality. Approval / admiration in competition for attention by the opposite sex, the affirmation of appropriate criteria, responds in evolutionary time.

There is a definite correlation between a female whose mode of adornment seems to handicap severely her physically such as mobility, blood flow, eating ability etc. and the handicap test where the burdened female, going about her normal daily activities, manages to rise mentally above her required suffering. Psychological or character superiority is a premium commodity, particularly in environments where physical differentiations are slight.

More often than not individuals are coerced into participation. Evolving social structures increasingly oblige individuals into participation with established conventions. Those who do not voluntarily succumb to social pressures are more or less put to the test prior to admonishment. The test is therefore inevitable, an extended bio-sexual imperative weeding out signs of weakness, and is thereby a natural indicator in a process of 'health insurance'.

Once one accepts the Handicap Principle as a general rule, one can no longer see signals in nature as mere conventions. One therefore has to reevaluate all signals — including those that up to now have been thought simply to identify a given species, age, gender, or any other grouping— all the way down to chemical signals on cell membranes, which traditionally have been seen as merely identifying the cell as belonging to a specific type.<sup>73</sup>

## 9.9 Summary

This chapter set out to present the early beginnings of representation of skin marking and body sculpting of social development occasioned by imperatives which, originally biological and sexual, become sublimated through relational needs, first in the family and then in the group situation.

It emerged that these imperatives in their transformation from the personal / individual to the social

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<sup>72</sup> Amotz and Avishag Zahavi, *The Handicap Principle: A Missing Piece of Darwin's Puzzle*, trans. Naama Zahavi-Ely and Melvin Patrick Ely. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xiv.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

induced a change in consciousness which in its turn resulted in behavioural changes and thus holistically reflected in a cultural representation of a social collective. It began with the illustrative examples taken from current tribal practices, which are perceived as corresponding to the various stages in developing consciousness associated with and conducive to the environmental conditions which occasioned the stages of change. Grooming, it was argued, brought about the first and obvious appearance changes inasmuch as they were concerned with protection and conditioning of the skin and hair.

### **First level: Grooming as temporary presentation of the body**

Natural grooming is focused upon face and body features. Glossy skin and hair confirms and signifies youth and health and is therefore sexually explicit, attractive and even erotic. Through the basic activities of grooming, manipulation of simple materials such as oils and pigments, hair and skin ornamentation, human inventiveness created an elaborated decorative set of signs in abstract compositions depictive of the states of being.

First level scarification and artefacts became the medium of representation expressing the variety of shifting stages of women's sexual maturity, differentiated individual psychological state and group social declaration of fertility. These externalised signs regulated existentially the content and context of their sphere of life.

### **Second level: Permanent event marking in the body**

Extending a temporary multifaceted grooming function into a permanent symbolic apparatus and permanent marking activity was a continuation of signing the body within the context of an evolving social order best exemplified by the examples selected of scarification / tattoo. Evolving consciousness in parallel with psycho-social constructs relative to body marking and / or embellishment as objectified in adornment was initially focussed upon significant events relevant to both the individual and the social order; the need to control.

The primary concern in a group situation comprised of paired couples, family units etc., was grappling with and gaining control over such issues as territory, sexual / hierarchical status, kinship identity and relationships, tribal alliance and unity. These imperatives required a system of symbolic marking of the body which was permanent and irreversible, reflecting the actuality of the life cycle.

Prescriptive marking through scarification or tattoo irrevocably fixed a visual progression from pre-sexual to the sexual stages in life. States of sexual maturity reinforced through rituals as rites of passage were depictive of implementation of organisation and generational transfer.

Representations of encoded meaning, symbolic and physical, evolved to encapsulate the mastery of the physiological and the metaphysical meaning of living within the social group wherein each individual could be safely framed. Change signifiers, socially monitored and marked, were a vehicle for control and manipulation of individuals within a collective frame which also advantaged collective responses to external problematics or situations requiring solutions. These mental and physical shifts involved new levels of perception of meaningful associations translated into symbolic communicative transmission for interpretation and meaning. These were indicative of new levels of mental transformation and an evolving capacity for specific interconnectivity of individual intelligences which could focus on areas of communication

requiring specialised development and specialised skills. New skills of scarification and tattoo transformed simple, individual impermanences into common group experience marking acts of 're-cognition' as acknowledgements of social consolidation.

These new visual manifestations were representative of consciousness, new benchmarks of social sophistication, overlaying the former continuous theme of innate anxiety for survival and reproductive fitness. These could be tested through the process of body scarification, tattoo and piercing. Failure at any point of the procedure, physically or mentally, signified points of weakness. The iconography evidenced any individual's levels of fitness:

- **endurance of pain mentally and physically**, especially important as a test of fortitude in the preparation for childbirth.
- **the test of immunity** by having open cuts impregnated with foreign substances which subject the individual to possible infection and also indicated possible inoculation against future infection.
- **endurance of substantial loss of blood** and rate of recovery as a test of anaemia.
- **self discipline and social responsibility**, a willingness to conform to test the socialisation process.

The iconography of successfully completed scarification etc on a female is confirmation of the overall required criteria of mental and physical health and thus that she is good reproductive material. A body so decorated is therefore undeniably sexually attractive. The above criteria transformed perception of self and of others, provided status. The self thus assured is therefore able to negotiate status between fitness of self and fitness in society.

Also of primary importance and evident in the iconography of the illustrations is that individuals responding to common ground rules can live together in reasonable harmony thus making communal life of the tribe conducive to imperatives of survival and reproductive fitness and a healthy generative gene pool.

### **Third level: Difference anxieties, presenting extensions of the body**

The complex adaptation of behaviour required by social development impacted upon and within relationships, creating anxieties which required a new level of collusion or cooperation between the sexes, shifting levels of consciousness in individuals and causing an impact upon the social reflected in adornment signifying status. Within the complex social dynamic, anxieties are assuaged by acknowledgement and mutual respect, acceptance by society or recognition manifest in a designated status. In striving for status individuals are driven to extremes beyond the usual which leave material traces and impact upon the direction of the social dynamic.

Distinctive boundaries through differentiation of the sexes defined tolerances in sexual liaison activities, mate ownership and alliances. However, the evolving regulation of male / female interaction through reinforcement of prescribed qualitative body representation featured in visual forms of adornment / decoration (as extensions of the bio-imperative, such as gender differentiation relative to maturity) designating role function socially. Extra-monogamous affairs were an ever present threat to the stability of a liaison and to the stability of the group. This 'anxious space' created a need for a more comprehensive or all embracing specific mode of representation, one which could

better respond to these emergent 'psychosexual anxieties'.

Anxieties surrounding paternity could be assuaged and responded to by further extending body re-presentation which could reassure by inhibiting overt sexual interaction and activity. It is generally understood that of primary importance for the woman was the avoidance of insemination other than by her appointed mate for she could risk losing his support or producing poor quality offspring. However, it is not unknown or unnatural for clandestine liaisons to be advantageous to either sex as genetic diversity in the gene pool ensures survival.

The importance of prescribed or appropriate mating assuaged anxieties on both sides of the gender divide, albeit resulting in social oppression and limiting personal expression. Overt sexual anxieties required interpersonal subjugated expression by way of extended modes of body representation. The more extreme the anxiety the more extreme the expression. Extended modes of representation were tailored to address differing situational requirements and conventions resulting in new levels of consciousness, which in turn influenced behaviour. These 'new situation' forms of jewellery materialised to regulate physically and paralleled the transformation of behaviour at this new level of consciousness.

The socialised structures re-focussing the copulatory gaze both mentally and physically restrained female independence and self-assertiveness, marking the assuagement of male anxiety through the power of the group. Psycho-sexual anxieties introduced cognitive / emotionally expressive concepts and social constructs such as hobbling, submissiveness, passivity, subjugation, inferiority and, as a result, conferred status.

The function of body restraint, sublimated by symbolic representation and upon which much of the evolution of jewellery is predicated, is sexual allure, its acknowledgement and acceptance of consequences in various forms of masochistic, narcissistic sadistic practices sublimating the act of copulation. The overweight and oversized ankle fetters for example, which alter and exaggerate hip movements both inhibit and attract. The swaying of hips have specific encoded messages relevant to fertility and sexual allure which appear at first glance to be ambiguous in relation to the jewellery's initial role of restraint, providing potential for manipulation by the female of the predatory male interest responding to the sexual imperative while at the same time prescribing the social order.

Extreme restrictive body adornment interplays with the imperatives directly and indirectly and interpersonal relationships of the sexes are not always immediately explicit in the iconography. Whilst on a simply practical level jewellery encasing arms, legs and neck can protect from snake and animal bite whilst foraging, there is however the significant over arching nature of this jewellery in that it provides modes of body augmentation which can greatly exaggerate the natural desirable attributes of the female body.

Squeezing body parts into the desired shapes or idealised, overstated versions thereof furnishes gender emphasis, the pseudo-signing of health and fecundity, exaggerates symmetry and elegance and excites the copulatory gaze *via* the supra-stimuli of the male's behavioural reflexes. The appreciation of the aesthetics of these forms of body representation has therefore to be learned / understood in the context of approved criteria based not only on the obvious psycho-sexually explicit imperatives but also by the teasing out of more subtle underlying sexual interest in a socially functioning iconography.

The gross body mutilation / piercing required for the insertion and wearing of enormous lip plates and earrings can be seen to have the practical purpose of destroying erogenous zones and can thereby be understood as supporting the fidelity requirement programme by denying the female a source of sexual stimulation.

Extremely overstated or over exaggerated modes of body adornment, it is therefore argued, were an expression of and response to the nature of evolving and complex forms of socially constructed behaviour. Jewellery and accompanying modes of adornment in the art of body re-presentation subsumed previous imperatives and moved further towards new spheres of amplified symbolic representation and required communication of a new group psychology dynamic.

This part of the research analysis has dealt with the interrelationship of body representation / re-presentation which, through the practice of body augmentation and the application of artifacts carrying specific encoded information, delineates how the structuring of human behaviour and framing of social needs take place.

By examining traditional tribal societies the analysis can define the bio-psycho-logic behind the human need to structure a framework within which humans can conduct their social lives in the best interests of the group. In structuring such a framework there emerges a new level of consciousness and ability to deal with the increasing complexity and sophistication of social life. This part of the analysis provides the evidence for and a measure of the complex stages in the advancement of human intellectual and cognitive dexterity and the increasing sophistication in the application of communication through the medium of body adornment and jewellery.

At this point the thesis has concluded its argument as to how the imperative impact process has determined the development of body adornment and jewellery. This argument is contextualised and a model for the analysis and categorisation of jewellery and body adornment is developed by applying it to the work of the contemporary jeweller (case studies, Chapter 10).

To recapitulate the first order base imperatives which form the core of design awareness originate in mankind's primordial heritage. They set the blueprint for the design processes which drive the origins and evolution of life. Characteristic patterns arising from natural selection, sexual selection, differentiation and attraction of difference are established. The second extended order imperative is that of sexual selection where required characteristic patterns of aesthetic criteria such as beauty, symmetry, bi-lateral symmetry, proportion and balance of form establish the primary structure of the copulatory gaze. Both set the pattern for human physical development and the resultant preconscious consciousness (as a primitive form of subconsciousness) set in place immanent learning patterns and cognitive viability throughout the process of human evolution.

It is argued that all the above imperatives defined and discussed in the thesis establish the principal base order for all future development of human activity. They permeate every aspect of present day existence and underpin all the subsequent phases of human activity upon which the nature of human creativity, representation and sublimation are built. When the bio-sexual, socio-sexual and the psychosexual are linked as aesthetic relationships interactively through the mechanism of the copulatory gaze (the impact process) the genetic agenda is affected and so, through the ever adaptive aesthetic gaze, these effects are sublimated and made manifest in works of jewellery and body adornment.



The phenotype extended theory can be seen operating in the design work of contemporary jewellery and is evidenced within the substantive case studies. This identifies the extended imperatives as applied to or seen as driving the design process. Our need for representation / re-presentation is, it is suggested, a manifestation of a socially required sublimation of the biological urges which reconfigure our psyche and its externalised expression. Immense diversity in sublimated sexual expressions, as in the case of jewellery wearing, making and design, as discussed in the case studies, is based on a few simple imperative principles / laws that explain diversity and makes sense of design selection.

The case study of contemporary jewellery from a psycho-social perspective provides material to inform a new critical value system and fresh references for the analysis of today's jewellery and artistic expression.

# LEVEL 7 - HOMO SAPIENS SAPIENS TRIBAL - CHAPTER 9

| Biological Imperatives |  | Sociological Imperatives    |                      | Psychosexual Imperatives  |   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative                                       | Sexual Selection Imperative | Aesthetic Imperative | Control Imperative        | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |
| 1                      | The socio-political body   |                             |                      | Structuring society       | Sublimation as compliance                                 |
| 2                      | Artefacts compose cultural context                                 |                             |                      | Group bonding             | Sublimation of identity                                   |
| 3                      | Artefacts enforce social compliance                                |                             |                      | Gene pool protection      | Sublimation as submission                                 |
| 4                      | Common expression of social rules and regulations through artefact |                             |                      | Policing common behaviour | Submission to group identity                              |
| 5                      | The body as socio-sexual map                                       |                             |                      | Behavioural discipline    | Social alliance   |
| 6                      | Artefacts sustain cultural frameworks                              |                             |                      | Sustain gene pool quality | Committment to social ideals                              |
| 7                      | Organisation / implementation of all principal imperatives         |                             |                      | Gene pool cohesion        | Sublimation as re-inforcment                              |

Figure 9.23 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 7

( 9 - - 36 )  
HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES ( PAGES 34 - 36 )

## CHAPTER 10

### **A new awareness; new consciousness and signs. Cognitive process in reading Contemporary Jewellery.**

#### **Chapter 10. Level 8**

##### **Key concepts:**

**New socio-cultural ideals. Detachment from nature overlaid by nurture. Sublimation / subversion legitimised. Urban life creates psycho-socio-sexual instability.**

##### **Cognitive benchmarks:**

**Body augmentation / adornment as social vehicle. Challenging social organisation. Conceptual jewellery: a new medium to facilitate sublimation / self expression / identity. Relocating the copulatory gaze.**

**This chapter contains Case Studies 10.1 - 10.14. The Research Interview Schedule 2 and the statistical data can be found in the Appendix pages 371 - 391**

In the context delineated in the last four paragraphs of the previous chapter, this chapter puts into historical / cognitive context the current level of consciousness and creative sublimatory imperative influencing outputs in contemporary culture. Simultaneously, it verifies the hypotheses / proposition based new model framework of accumulated levels of research evidence through the examination of case studies of contemporary jewellery.

The discussion is developed to evidence the processes which enable the tangible manifestation of objects of adornment. This is presented through a series of case studies which focus upon the work of contemporary jewellery practitioners. Simultaneously the discussion focuses on how the emergence of modern culture has resulted in two divergent strands in the fragmentation of previously existing social structures. One is the ever-increasing profusion of material cultural objects required to express a similarly accelerating diversity of identities. Second, and resulting from the first, how cultural objects and their increasing complexity of independent embodied meanings have become incrementally removed / separated from each other and disjunctured so that they often no longer relate to the values and needs of those who are affected by them. Social constraints fragmented individual autonomy by progressively transforming natural experiences into social roles, primal sensibilities become suppressed and are estranged. Thus the evocation of emotions based on recognition is often a mystery to those who are distanced from it by symbols of representations of former imperatives. This section therefore examines the cognitive position in consciousness level to date and shows how humans deal with the highly complex social challenges faced today through the art of representation through jewellery. At the same time the discussion demonstrates the viability of the new model frame when applied to the analysis of contemporary jewellery in current cultural context.

## 10.0. Introduction

The thesis research has demonstrated how social and cultural development are phenomena fashioned by imperatives which, originally biological and sexual in nature, are transformed into, and presented as, sublimations through which individual and collective relational needs are communicated and acted upon. This is evidenced in the case studies of the 'Hairy Legged Woman' and 'The Red Heart' Jewellery, followed by Chapter Nine which describes how body adornment and jewellery as objects of ritualised sublimation operate as instruments for the cohesion of self and as group representations in the context of a pre-modern tribal society.

It is argued that when objectified into objects these imperatives operate as tools whereby the personal and social are organised into set patterns of behaviour and order. Despite their various modes of evolving expression in subliminal form, these objects relate to a set of consistent patterns defined by aesthetic criteria. Through their metamorphosis into objects these imperatives, sublimated through our behaviour and the creative act of making and wearing, express or make concrete in representational form human psychology as it relates to our social environment and physical needs and is expressed through the medium of material culture. The expression of mental, physical and metaphysical needs through such activities as body transformation and the wearing and making of jewellery objects draw on our innate engagement with the bio-sexual aspects of our psyche. As argued throughout the research, the benchmark is a consistent application of a set of criteria regardless of time and place and manifest at various levels of consciousness throughout human history.

In terms of contemporary jewellery we have arrived at an extraordinary time and place not only in human evolution but also in the evolution of jewellery as an art form and tool in the symbiotic structuring of human social and cultural order. From new levels of mental, intellectual and cognitive, social and cultural transformation have arisen problems which need solutions and resolutions fuelled by an evolving capacity for multi-variant discourse requiring in turn ever more complex forms of communication, not least through the art of body representation and creative expression through jewellery.

Before addressing the final stage of the thesis analysis, which sets out its evidence *via* the application of the conclusions as culmination of the thesis argument to selected case studies of recent jewellery, it is necessary to understand the socio-historical circumstances which influenced the progression of what is termed Contemporary Jewellery (see level 8 of the new model, figures 11.2a and 11.2b). This understanding needs to be located within the wider cognitive and sociological critical framework wherein relevant contextual references and research outcomes arising from the case studies are identified and co-located so as to inform the final resolution of the new model framework.

### 10.1 Contemporary Jewellery: Historical Factors from 1850 to date

It is neither the aim of this thesis nor within its remit to provide details of the 'conventional' rendering of the history and development of Contemporary Jewellery. This is readily accessible in the various books now available. Their authors present concise surveys which offer the diligent collection and documentation of examples of prominent jewellers as leaders in the field with illustrations of their work. These provide valuable information as to chronological reference points but are limited in relating analysis primarily to a social history of fashion / trends in jewellery.

In the context of the thesis topic it is argued that Darwin's revelations in the 1850s and Freud's theories (following on from Darwin some 25 years later) are the bedrock on which further revisionist theories have been constructed. Towards the end of the Victorian era new theories and behaviours led to revised concepts of sexuality in its biological, psychological, religious, moral, political, behavioural and medical constructs and in the recording and categorising of the realities of sexual behaviour. As women, oscillating between confusion and resolution, sought emancipation and sexual liberation, the psychosexual tensions and neuroses affecting relations between the sexes had to be confronted and addressed.

Similarly the ensuing progressive and avant-garde developments and aspirations of the modernist (1850s onwards) and post-modernist (1940s / 1950s to date) movements had a profound effect on how we think about and reflect on art and society. Through this continual dynamic flow of philosophies and discourses, significant breakthroughs were achieved by the radical revelations of the structuralists of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and by the post structuralists of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. They revealed how meaning is constructed and transmitted and addressed such matters as semiotics in the understanding and interpretation of the mechanics of signs, and systems of signification and the role of representation, not only in words and images but also as applied to objects such as jewellery and body representation (ie., revealing the context of visual language as presented through material culture).

As society made its transition towards the modern age, changes in jewellery took place in a sequence of stages directly influenced / stimulated either intuitively or consciously by this intellectual foment. Jewellers embodied the essence of the decades and expressed it through their jewellery *via* their use of materials, and an evolving iconography which signified changes in conceptual understanding and innovation in expression. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Art Nouveau jewellery was the first to reflect this new vocabulary. Radical changes in social structures required a new freedom of expression, beyond the confines of traditional jewellery. However, this brief venture into new territory came to an abrupt halt or was put on hold as society struggled with the Great War, the Wall Street Crash and the Second World War with their profound effect on established social and economic structures and the normality of life.

The growing focus on intellectual enquiry coupled with a shortage of traditional materials and the changes in a developing modern society demanded new formulations for the facilitation of expression through the conceptualising of new forms and the utilisation of new materials and technologies, alongside a developing social awareness. Over the same period, the ideals and pursuits of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the counter argument of the Modernist philosophies and approach of the Bauhaus (1919 to 1933) created the climate within which various art disciplines flourished. Yet jewellery could not quite find a comfortable niche within which to operate. Viewed traditionally as an applied art, modern jewellery neither fitted the mould of the evolving concept of industrial design with its emphasis on form and function, commercialism and production, nor could it penetrate the academic culture of the finer arts. Practising jewellers found themselves and their discipline marginalised. However this acted as a catalyst for some jewellery practitioners to take things into their own hands.

Over several decades jewellery designer-makers began to embrace self inspection and re-evaluation. From here on jewellers slowly began to redefine their own critical framework and



finally to break free of the conventional attitudes and presumptions attached to their discipline. Jewellery slowly acquired a new dimension of expression which, coupled with the development of new materials and technical skills, began to embrace the experimental, the inventive and innovative.

When in the late 1960s traditional social, political and cultural structures began to be broken down, there was simultaneously an invigorating and exciting experimentation in jewellery design. This experimentation continued throughout the 1970s and 80s, as complete freedom was created regarding form, material, technique, production methods, serial production and jewellery's relationship to the body – anything became possible in Britain, The Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Austria. . . . These were 'golden' years in which creativity and personal development were considered more important than marketability.<sup>1</sup>

Emboldened by their new found identity, the New Contemporary Jewellers began exploring and pushing the boundaries of their discipline in every imaginable direction.

In 1989 Huygen presented a new definition:

We can say that every product that refers to a function or specific purpose does not belong to the fine arts but to applied arts, and of these products all that are not conceptual come under craft work. . . . [thus Huygen makes a distinction between the terms artist-craftsman and designer maker, but:] The concept 'function' has in the last few decades broadened from just meaning operational to include the symbolic, the emotional, the individual. Because of this the distinction between applied and fine arts has come under heavy fire. . . . From the sixties onwards jewellers . . . have been stepping out of line by exploring the limits of usefulness in their field.<sup>2</sup>

Over the last forty years Contemporary Jewellers have contributed to this discourse in order to do away with this distinction and thus they have been able to redefine the nature of their discipline on their own terms. During these decades jewellery designer-makers have argued out their relationship with, and their role in, society to define a new critique of value judgements through their work and a heightening of public awareness. By the late 1970s the term 'New Jewellery', later referred to as Contemporary Jewellery, was widely understood, accepted and used. Today Contemporary Jewellery has long since shrugged off conventional notions of luxury, status, power and beauty and has permeated the boundaries of fine art, fashion and performance etc., thus reinforcing its social role through full integration and influential participation with modern life.

Most significantly " . . . in recent decades a worldwide and specialist infrastructure for jewellery has been created with its own training programmes and galleries, museum collections and collectors, books and catalogues."<sup>3</sup>

Today's practitioners relentlessly continue pushing the boundaries of the discipline. Work may range from the experimental in materials to conceptual work, 'mentifacts' which challenge the sexual, social, political and cultural meaning of our lives,

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<sup>1</sup> Jivan Astfalck, Caroline Broadhead and Paul Derrez, *New Directions in Jewellery*, with an introduction by Catherine Grant (London: Black Dog Publishing Ltd., 2005), *What kind of jewellery are we actually talking about?* By Paul Derrez, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Frederique Huygen, *British Design image and identity* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, in association with Museum Boymans-van Beuningen 1989), 125-126.

<sup>3</sup> Jivan Astfalck, Caroline Broadhead and Paul Derrez, *New Directions in Jewellery*, with an introduction by Catherine Grant (London: Black Dog Publishing Ltd., 2005), *What kind of jewellery are we actually talking about?* By Paul Derrez, 13

... this might be the body itself, social or psychological phenomena or other theoretical concerns. In excess of their own materiality and formal qualities, objects made in this mode have often strong narratives inscribed, which are concerned with the symbolic and emotional investment we all have in objects we make, wear and love.<sup>4</sup>

Having put the history of Contemporary Jewellery into context we can now return to address the evidence of the thesis argument through the following case studies of recent and current Contemporary Jewellery. Today a complex social dynamic is exposed as humans are displaced from one culture to another, highlighting different moral and sexual codes, religious and social attitudes and considerations of political correctness. These are just some of the modern day sources of friction, confusion and anxieties to be dealt with.

This section continues to evidence issues for discussion of fitness, desire and 'procreation once removed' but is recast in a new sociological context. The focus is now shifted from pre-modern tribal societies as exemplified in Chapter 9 to urban populations in an industrial and post-industrial society, where related issues are now manifested in objects of adornment as instruments of socialisation to facilitate unity and collective identity, and / or rebellion. Social constraints increasingly alienated the concept of self from the natural environment. The focus on the social role submerged the individual into modes of depersonalisation and required social representation of self.

Culturally transmitted ideals are learned by individuals and their concept of self is shaped by them. The levels of consciousness discussed and the transition towards the new reflect not only socio-sexual politics in the individual or differing choices or impositions of adornment and display, but also design practices which create the artefacts for selection. The extended urbanised reality brought about a need for readjustment to the new order of things, questioning of the established order and reflection upon self and the process of re-forming a diversity of differing self-identifications. The progressive shift from magic to religion was extrapolated to science and then to psychosexual theory. It could be argued that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century religion began to be replaced by psychology and the process of self discovery, and especially the discovery of the sexual self and the way in which concepts of sexuality were used to serve as tactical contrivances supporting social systems and regulations as described by Foucault in his *History of Sexuality*.<sup>5</sup>

This new situation is discussed here and represented in the concluding Chapter 11 by a new Mandala of jewellery significances. At the same time the earlier critique of Untracht's Mandala is further developed to argue that we can now take a stand in discourse whereby, in order to 'see' a holistic understanding of the completeness of design, we should be able to demonstrate an analogous 'origin of the species' in jewellery outcomes, as evidenced through each case study, in the form of descendants as modified / derivative versions of original embodiments of design imperatives.

This section therefore reaches a watershed in discussion and analysis whereby two parallel discourses take place. One branch of the discussion generates a critical appraisal of cognitive

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<sup>4</sup> Jivan Astfalck, Caroline Broadhead and Paul Derrez, *New Directions in Jewellery*, with an introduction by Catherine Grant (London: Black Dog Publishing Ltd., 2005), *Jewellery as a Fine Art Practice* by Jivan Astfalck, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House 1978; reprint, Great Britain: Vintage Books, 1990).

shifts taking place within the process of the creative output by contemporary jewellers which simultaneously define a period of social shifts, and turbulence and transformation. The other integrates the accumulation and culmination of all previously argued discourse through the same selected case studies of contemporary work to formulate an holistic critical analysis of the design process. This argues and demonstrates the various formative processes throughout human evolutionary history that have forged the pathway to contemporary cognitive and perceptual levels of consciousness, impacting on creative expression and sublimatory aesthetic substance through body adornment and jewellery objects.

As has previously been argued, aesthetic criteria are identified reflections of the bio-psycho-sociological and psycho-sexual situations impacting upon the human psyche and should therefore be found mirrored within every step of the creative process. These two parallel strands of interpretation in each case study complement the focussed analysis of contemporary jewellers in their own historical context with an analysis and interpretation simultaneously supporting the argument that each design element is part of a much wider scheme. This argument is formulated incrementally at the end of each case study (under the heading contextualisation) whereby manifested evidence is referenced as discourse to relevant areas of the thesis arguments.

Selected aspects of contemporary work are decoded to define distinctive cognitive steps and show how their overlaying is a consistent dynamic process. The constant re-configurations of mentifacts, the aesthetic gaze, and increasing sophistication of cognitive sensibilities manifest new progression in visual, emotional, psycho-social and political criteria as society evolves within a modernist environment. Attention should first be given to understanding the nature of the new visual and creative languages of adornment and display related to new levels of consciousness / adjustments emerging in the context of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (when people were exercising their free will to shrug off tradition and the social restraints of the Victorian legacy).

The section examines the evolutionary context, which brought about a situation whereby sexual expression / imperatives are no longer in direct discourse with the body but rather the discourse is conducted exclusively in the creative process and iconography of the artefact / jewellery. It proposes that the motivations impacting upon the creative processes are a reflection of individual artists' and their audiences' responses to these social changes and the sublimation of their personal psycho-sexual proclivities. These are questioned and resolved only in an altered consciousness leading to a search for a new visual language with which to express transition and re-presentation. All of these are a consequence of a contextual change arising from the industrial and post- industrial revolution and a resultant transformation from a predominantly rural to an urban lifestyle.

## **10.2. Jewellery speaks**

To address the location of mapped imperatives brought about by changes to be discussed, the research examines creative expression from the perspective of the contemporary jewellery practitioner.

The following case studies take the form of respondents' descriptive accounts wherein the visual metaphoric references are separately presented and distinctive dimensions of the work are analysed layer by layer until, in conclusion, they recombine in a singular cognitive

exemplification embodying differing levels of consciousness. Decoding takes place at all levels from the most simplistic, that of visual appeal, ie., the object taken at face value, to the most complex, that of symbolic content. Analysis gathers momentum as each step, examined, explored and defined, is superimposed on the next. Elements examined combine to cover a wide range of understandings, for example, how a critical analysis of the design process is made, how and why the success of the design is greatly dependent on knowledge and selection of appropriate materials. Just as important is the issue of craftsmanship, what it is, and why it is an important factor. All these elements show how messages, meanings and codes are refined to create the unique aesthetic experience.

To put the case studies in context: the thesis research has argued that the overarching driver of how and why humans evolved the practice of making and wearing body adornment and jewellery is a sexual imperative. This is comprised of the three principal imperatives with integrative and overlaying sections, A, B, and C, and are subdivided under relevant headings below.

### **Section A. The bio-genetic imperative**

- A.1 Visual appeal: Organised Chaos, the design basics Case study 10.1
- A.2 The psychology of form: Replication of sensually corresponding forms.  
Case studies 10.2 and 10.3.
- A.3 Impact of the psychology of materials. Case study 10.4.
- A.4 Cognitively processing analogies: Materials and Images. Case study 10.5.

### **Section B. The sociological imperative**

- B.1 The Dialogue in universal symbols, recognised analogies and concept formation.  
Case study 10.6
- B.2 Displacement of self. Women explore and enjoy the sexual self. Voyeurism.  
Case studies 10.7, 10.8 and 10.9.

### **Section C. The psychosexual imperative**

- C.1. The cognitive shift: Sublimation and conceptual jewellery. Case study 10.10
- C.2. Conceptual design and use of metaphors. Case study 10.11.
- C.3. Psychosexual anxieties: How the sexes view the female body.  
Case studies 10.12, 10.13, and 10.14.

The choice of selected case studies traverses the spaces between consciousness levels, reconciling our invisible bio-sexual sublimation with our need for voyeuristic visions of what we should not see or express, experience or explore (in public). The choice of these pieces of work makes an ideal set of case studies because of their pertinence to the thesis argument, and because, as the analysis shows, they offer perspectives in relation to a range of questions posed in the hypotheses and propositions.



## Section A .The bio-genetic imperative:

### A.1. Visual appeal: Organised Chaos, the design basics.

#### Case study 10.1 Bracelet by Peter Chang.



Figure 10.1 Bracelet by Peter Chang. 1993. Acrylic, polyester, PVC, lacquer.

Chang uses a variety of plastic materials often salvaged from discarded objects found in the environment. His work and use of synthetic materials symbolises the avant-garde spirit of the contemporary jeweller / designer maker. His recycling, making and re-presenting something exquisite out of discarded materials, sympathetically puts the bracelet in contemporary context of ecological awareness. Its form, connecting the natural world with our urban life style, gives it a new life and meaning of its own.

The following case study reveals and evidences through the responses of participants how our primal origins and biogenetic inheritance is linked and applied to the design process. (linking base level to level 8)



**Question 1. What are the first things which come to mind when you see this bracelet.**

**Question 2. What does it remind you of?**

*93% of participants were significantly consistent in their perception, conceptualisation and interpretation and were collectively in unvarying themes and analogies.*

“The ocean, something aquatic, it reminds me of the tropics or Mediterranean, makes me think of a holiday. It reminds me of marine life, a red mollusc of some description. The whole thing is in a shape like a snail or a sort of gastropod, but also the mosaic tile patterns were making me think of the Mediterranean. They reminded me of seaside earthenware with typical acidic ‘surfy’ type colours which also resemble tropical fish with the spot suggesting an eye and the opposite blue bit resembling the roll of an ocean wave.”

“Marine life, coral, tropical, and this is actually very close to a kind of clown fish, it’s a classical tropical fish. I don’t think that’s an accident, it’s entirely intentional. That’s obviously an eye. You have got what appears to be a scaly skin here. I wouldn’t say it’s a fish, it’s something a bit more reptilian. This looks like a mollusc, it’s not a barnacle. This reminds me of the sea, the waves. This looks like, again, an encrustation. It’s even got the soft part coming out like a conch shell, it’s definitely got a sort of soft creature inside.”

“A theme actually, marine life, abundance, colour, there are so many aspects of the sea, you know, a fish, there’s the fin and the eye and the, I think this is a sea anemone. There is sort of life and water and freshness and a lot of colour.”

“The way the different elements flow into each other rather than just be put stuck next to each other. There is a flow and in a sense that’s like the sea in itself. This is like the crest of a wave breaking, so the whole thing is reminiscent of the behaviour of the waves. It’s alive, it’s vibrant, it’s got this wonderful high contrast primary colours and stripes just like the creatures themselves. There is something natural about it, there is a harmony about it.”

“It reminds me of just an enormous range of sea life and of water.”

**Question 3. As your eye traces the object what ingredients do you think makes this work a successful or unsuccessful piece of jewellery?**

*87 % of the participants considered the composition of the piece to be successful.*

“Successful wise it gives that feeling of the sea, unsuccessful in that it’s a bit busy, its packed, but again successful as it still co-ordinates as a whole, yes it does, In balance you have got the tips here [*each protruding bit*], visually thinking you have got an equilateral triangle balancing the overall form.”

“I just think all the colours and the shapes and I just think it’s a nice bangle to wear, it all comes together, I do think it’s successful.”

“For me aesthetically I love a good clash and I love lots of textures but it’s not pleasing to my

eye as a piece of jewellery . . . I think it works for what it wants to be, I can see that he really loves details, and the fact that he's got all of those looks together into one piece, is amazing."

"It's not balanced but then it is in an asymmetrical way but I can't really explain, but as a whole it is balanced."

"It does work because they all seem to relate to each other. I don't think I could possibly say how the materials were used to create such a thing. It's quite impressive how it ties in with ecology."

"I guess there is some sort of narrative. . . . I guess if that was the aim it would be successful. . . it does make me wonder what is on the underside or the opposite side. . . . Yes, the surrounding elements lead your eye round and then through the piece. [*As an afterthought*] The only other thing mentioned, something about plastic materials which were salvaged. I guess with the whole ocean marine thing I just wondered if it had some sort of comment about plastic pollution in the sea."

*Chang has deliberately chosen not give his work titles, preferring to leave the viewer completely free to respond to and interpret what they see and feel on their own terms.*

### **Primal origins / instincts and the design process.**

Taking the above into account, Chang's piece of work serves as an excellent example to illustrate how some of the basic principles of design can operate. At first glance, sensations of pleasure, "it makes me smile", register as the gaze embraces the basic image and flood of concepts in a flurry of ocean-related colours and shapes. The artefact is both focus and setting. On reflection, further resonances begin to register and evoke subtle sensation. As the eye traces over the juxtapositioned elements of the design it seems to carry the very resonance of life. Organic elements embodied in the basic full rounded form take on a life force of their own, creating the impression of a "limpet, a snail, a mollusc" etc, creating an impression of sea like creatures which have inhabited the restless waters since life began.

Patterns of balanced repetitions evoke inherited feelings of pleasure. The precise pleasure of familiarity, the unthreatening balanced with the excitement of colour, the identification of the unexpected forms and the sensibility of aesthetic pleasure (and, in two isolated cases, displeasure) is tangibly linked to the unconscious in this piece. Spellbinding in their effect, differing points of detail disturb the flow and leads the eye back to the central and anchoring circular / ring part enabling, the eye to trace the form of its body more easily.

Connecting the gaze to specific isolated sections of the jewellery piece provokes confrontation, a confusion of sensations and visual disjuncture, an overstatement of flamboyance and ostentation. Next the gaze is refreshed by the piece's dextrous elegance, its beauty, its grace and refinement. Lines, forms and space assemble to give symmetry and balance yet nothing is identical and, when the senses have been sufficiently attuned, there before one's eyes these elements have coalesced to deliver a jewel of hybrid harmony which encourages the copulatory gaze as it searches for genetic viability, the criteria for which are symmetry, balance and rhythm, a primal imprint of sexual attraction. The recognition of these basic criteria stimulates pleasure sensations and therefore the copulatory gaze and yet, simultaneously unsettles it by the asymmetrical, thus suspending gratification in rhythmic oscillation. This interplay is symbolic where, in parallel, imbuing pain

and pleasure, comfort and discomfort, positive and negative feelings, we are aware that pleasure expires following fulfilment, tension equates to delight in aesthetic experience and torment. This fluency in design is perhaps a playful intent to place the copulatory gaze in a state of anxiety. Sexual tension in the pleasure principle requires, as a prerequisite, fluctuation with pain.

Chang playfully chooses to flood our receptors with a multi-linear palate, an orchestration of shapes, colours, disparate thoughts, fragments of ideas and emotions which morph into concepts as the various elements converge to compose and encapsulate a single narrative within the dynamic of the whirling circle of the bracelet form. Awareness of conservation is woven into the narrative to form an holistic embodiment and harmonising of visual and conceptual dialogue. Restless elements of physical and cognitive converge in harmony.

### **Contextualisation: The bio-psychosexual as embodied in design**

Chang's bracelet evidences sexual aesthetics, order and symmetry equating to the pleasure principle and encapsulating the following to differing degrees of magnitude.

- Unconscious behaviour governed by causal relationships between sexual imperatives, the reproductive survival mechanism such as gene propagation and the psychological mechanisms: the programmed response to the visual stimulus patterns. (Chapter 3.1, 3.5.2 to 3.5.5).
- Rudiments of aesthetic meanings, ie. inherent sense responses to proportion, symmetry, balance, line, form, rhythm: programmed symbiotic resonances.
- Response to the needs of sex as a replication strategy. Sexual replication is more variable, genes from each side provide balanced organisms. That both sides are the same but different gives a balanced whole, reshuffling combinations allows for random mutations. (Chapter 3.2.2.).
- the brain / mind evolved "particular systems of organisation . . . because they physically carried out information-processing procedures that led to the adaptive regulation of behaviour and physiology.". Thus certain elements are preprogrammed (Chapter 3, note 21).
- Genetically structured brain and the resultant mind, collectively manifest in the design work the inherent urge for order, organisation of form and pattern, repetition, symmetry, harmony and balance as the extended phenotype.

## A.2. The psychology of form: Replication of sensually corresponding forms.

Biological imperatives construct and influence aesthetic perception. The copulatory gaze screens for symmetry and balance (the bio-genetic viability imperative) and any slight breaking away from perfection (mutation in biological terms) in the ability to accommodate adaptation to change. The following studies (Two and Three) show how we apply this same imperative to jewellery and the creative act of its design and making.

### Case Study 10.2 Necklace by Jacqueline Mina..



Figure 10.2. Necklace by Jacqueline Mina. 1984

Minas necklace in platinum with 18 yellow gold. “Each oval unit began as a circular disc to which gold dust was fused. The discs were then passed between steel rollers with slit paper which left a surface impression and distorted the shapes.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore this design has been realised as a partly organic, process led piece. (Collection: The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths).

**Question 1** What are the first things / thoughts to come to mind when you see this necklace? What does it remind you of?

*47% of the participants said the units reminded them of leaves.*

“As a structure it looks like it’s derived from something organic.” “I sort of think of leaves and feathers where the units are sort of feathery.” “They remind me of petals. I like that piece.”

“They remind me of leaves feathers and seashells. There is a sense of richness and importance and it is in a sort of way powerful . . . important to wear”

“It’s absolutely stunning! It reminded me very much of a botanical sort of aspect. It looks like leaves so it’s very much that sort of sense of flora, and I love this sort of embossed nature to each piece and that each piece is slightly irregular, it’s not exactly the same pattern on each and it just looks very delicate, almost ceremonial in a way. It’s a very big statement for a piece of jewellery.”

“It made me think of mythology, also power, of beauty . . . when you would be wearing it more women would be jealous of you and it’s just saying something like, ‘challenging’ it’s almost like something that Venus might wear.” *[Thus this participant realised the qualities within the piece were capable of providing an enhancement / reinforcement of the wearer’s personal beauty and power.]*

## **Question 2. Does it give you a feeling of order or disorder?**

*100 % of the participants said it gave a sense of order. All echoed similar perceptions.*

“It gives a sense of order because each panel overlaps the other . . . the positioning of the shapes seems quite deliberate not random.”

“Order, in the way that it’s graduated, so although the units are not all perfect or the same, the neckpiece is very balanced and symmetrical and it’s graduated and it’s pleasing and it’s calming.”

“It definitely gives me a feeling of order . . . even though they are getting smaller the shapes are echoing each other clearly and even though they are not identical they are identical in shape which gives you that sort of cohesion.”

“It’s interesting. I think it has order but if you look at the detail it’s sort of unordered but there is still order despite of that so it would still be ordered”

“Because of the arrangement I would think it would have some sort of order, but because of how each disc is individual I would say there is order but representation of individuality at the same time.”

“They are not disordered, there is order within a variable within a parameter, these little bars, there is an order between them they are not chaotic or all over the place, within a variable parameter they are actually aligned.”

## **Question 3. Can you analyse specific sections and describe how they compose the whole?**

*80% of the participants described how the order of elements composed the neckpiece as a singular unified form.*

“Yes, it gives a sense of order, the panels overlap so each separate piece fits with the other to create a circle, every unit sits beside the other well in a sort of very precise way. I think it’s harmonious”



“Well they are oval forms and they are gathered together and every oval form has a bar in it and has the structure of the gold dust pattern and they are in different sizes and for me it is in balance because the left and right side is quite symmetrical.”

“The overriding feeling I have is of order because of the way the pieces are put together. Within this order there are obviously the details of these pins which are irregular, but they are not jarring, it’s a pleasant irregularity, the irregularity of the pins are certainly not jarring to the overall beauty of it. The proportion of the pin is very delicate in relation to the size of the discs and also the plates have been treated so they are matt, the shiny and the matt part and all of these elements break the monotony of uniformity.”

“The little rods are disordered, jumbled and yet are part of the order.”

“I suppose they give it a bit of play otherwise it would be rather monotonous. That creates more movement but still gives the feeling of cohesion even though they are going in different directions.” .

“It’s a very nice way of resolving it.”

“The elements, each unit follows the same pattern, so the same pattern is in operation all over it except for the joining piece which is slightly different, it’s got two bars on it but otherwise it’s very similar to the others. You have got what appears to be a disc that’s been curved across its plane. Its got grooves in it, several grooves, it’s got embossing across it in, like they are kind of wedge shape and they are of different widths and they go across the length of the disc. There are quite a few of them, some are really broad, some are just like lines. They are very narrow and they all have those embossings in a similar way, you don’t have two broad ones together. It looks like they are alternate broad and narrow. There are different sizes, and so there is a degree of order but that order is relaxed, there is a relaxed order about it.”

“Well they are kind of oval they have had a greater pressure applied to one side of them which has made them to have a kind of spread out edge on the bottom side so they are not totally oval, they are very egg shaped, they overlap each other and kind of splay out to create a repetitive form.”

“You get the feeling of completeness.”

Mina’s work is often process led, giving it a sense of its own life force as it evolves through its process in design development and its realisation providing its own organic dynamic as an object. Exploration of the metal’s response to the manipulation / co-ordination of the hand’s and mind’s eye between the maker and the piece of work, and from their interrelationship arises a transcendent physical harmony, an aspect which is subliminally sensed *via* the viewer’s copulatory gaze.

From a seemingly simple language, the design emanates an energy and refined tension which holistically projects a harmony of shapes and textures which come to rest in the quietus of a single circle exuding an aesthetic sense of order, calm and beauty. The underlying sense of pleasure is the fulfilment of the copulatory gaze.

### Contextualisation:

- As Case Study 1: but where the design focus is used to show how the biological imperatives are applied and how we create, read and experience aesthetic pleasure through repetition in design and the organisation of form

### Case Study 10.3 Necklace by Jacqueline Mina

... 'the terms of shape, structure and organisation pertain not only to the language of biology (that is forms) but also to psychology (that is, thought or ideas) ... shapes correspond, in our perception and thought, to comparable forms in the nervous processes'; [This is why most humans enjoy harmonious forms in preference to disorder] "In the broadest sense, then, we may conclude that a preference for regular shapes indicates 'regulated' or well-ordered sentiments, whereas irregular forms suggest 'unregulated' sentiments. Oval shapes are related to things biomorphic; cubes with the artificial and the constructional; simple shapes with what is straightforward; and complex shapes with what is complicated. The same applies to rhythms, structures and compositions. ... [that is, particular shapes lines or forms stimulate particular sentiments. A collective principle is that which,] ... equates symmetry with equilibrium and with the static; asymmetry with dynamism; absolute regularity and, likewise, absolute irregularity with chaos, in so far as they are both expressions of the differentiated: differentiation is brought about by ritual, that is, by the organization of regularised irregularity.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 10.3 Perfect Replicas! Necklace by Jacqueline Mina . 1988

Minas necklace in 18ct yellow gold with platinum gauze fusion inlay, and platinum-set diamonds. (Collection: Princess Adela Al Saud) <sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> J. E. Cirlot, ed., *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. Jack Sage, 2d ed., (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), s. v. "Shape (or form)."

<sup>8</sup> Jacqueline Mina "Self Portrait" *Jewellery Studies* vol. 6 (1993): 63.

The above quote suggests that humans have a psychological disposition to enjoy looking at and have pleasure in creating a balanced form or composition. From this follows the idea that practitioners identified and used a complex structure of sensual references in mechanisms to create / elicit resultant responses. These are known to the practitioner as the generic visual language, which is further reinforced by other compositional elements such as line, rhythm, form, figure and ground, volume, space, balance and so on. These elements can be demonstrated clearly and seen in operation by examination of Case Study Three (illustration figure 10.3) This, though it contains some of the same elements as the previous Case Study extends the philosophy of form to embody a design focus on more elaborated higher order impact references such as the use of the psychological correspondences in the organisation of form. Symmetry, distribution of light, space, pattern and the piece's replicated secondary patterning, simulate movement, colour and sound to contribute towards a Gestalt psychological<sup>9</sup> experience of figure and ground.

Case Study Three therefore demonstrates this in operation *via* the participants' responses. Ornate in language, the design's dynamic and rhythmic lines have energy, tension, force,<sup>10</sup>

### **Question 1. What do the shapes remind you of?**

*93 % of the participants said the shapes reminded them of hearts*

As evidenced in Chapter Eight, the origins of the heart form are based on the biological and the psychological and the derivative representations are an abstraction of several related forms, distilled and stylised into one symbolic form. Evolved from the reproductive imperative, the iconic image of the heart embodies / represents the physical and the metaphysical experiences of human existence.

Having achieved its function as a vehicle for the sublimation of human sexual instincts and desires and the bio-socio-psychosexual anxieties which previously accompanied them, its purified / stylised form, as in the neckpiece, leaves us free to indulge / yield to the pure pleasure sensations it now evokes.

Pleasure triggers resonate through the neckpiece as the heart form repeats its presence like the rhythm of a heart beat. The neckpiece creates the atmosphere for the aesthetic experience of attachment and pleasure sensations to take place as evidenced in the following participants' responses to question one:

"That's beautiful, it's stunning. "

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<sup>9</sup> Gestalt: a German word meaning, to take form, shape, to configure, to transform, is a term given to an offshoot of psychology (established in the 19As) which, through experimental documentation, demonstrated that, in the act of perception, the brain does not remain sedentary when receiving incoming data. The brain has a tendency to group incoming sensory data in an attempt to identify and often guess at what is being perceived. If the data is scant or the perceived image is incomplete the brain will attempt to decipher information based on past experiences. The result is that the brain will often complete the gaps or reconstruct the image in order to complete it, like trying to fit missing pieces to a puzzle. This kind of visual stimulus often results in two or more interpretations.

<sup>10</sup> "There is no culture which has not conceived of the idea of rhythm in one form or another because rhythm is fundamental to organic growth. It can be the regular repetitive rhythm of simple pattern-making or the rhythm of movement and counter movement in freely balanced tension." Maurice de Sausmarez, *Basic Design: The Dynamics of Visual Form* (U.S.A. Reinhold Publishing Corp, 1964 revised ed., New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1983), 79. (Page reference is to revised edition).

“Now I love this, it reminds me of hearts. With the diamonds and everything I think it’s absolutely beautiful.”

“It’s stunning and I love just the whole way it links together . . . I think it’s absolutely beautiful.”

**Question 2. Do you recognise a form of rhythm in this piece of work? Question 3. Can you describe it?**

*93% of the participants could recognise and describe this rhythm in the necklace.*

In addition to the emotional content of the heart form there are several further subtle and subliminal relationships existing within this design which, normally operating on a subconscious level, can on reflection be consciously recognised. Mina’s skilled arrangement of constituent parts creates a sensation of movement. The mind is teased by the spatial fluctuations created by each unit. These are linked to form the necklace. The gaze is informed by a sense of tranquil and sensual aesthetic pleasure. When asked to deconstruct what they could see and explain what was happening participants could describe how this was done.

“The shapes remind me of stylised hearts with chambers. Well, you know, there is this repeating line of diamonds, one arching across the top right and a second dividing each shape from the bottom, curving across to the left and punctuated with a diamond stop in between each. There is this line across the form which I guess is kind of splitting the form into two different chambers. . . sort of diastolic and systolic”

“It’s just I see concave and convex lines working together in quite a pleasing manner . . . The inner pieces are sort of following the format of the rather beautiful stylised silhouette and the other ones are leading the eye out more expansively, because it’s such a very introspective piece.”

“Yes, I think its very rhythmic, it just flows beautifully. Yes, I love that.”

“The strips of diamonds remind me of music, like a musical rhythm, this is an up going tune sweeping across [*from centre to edge*] and this is the lower one [*on left side down to tip*] and these sort of, the round diamonds, are fixed like a pause, or as just one tune, and then put together.”

“I can feel it kind of as an uneven circle going round, kind of almost moving outwards and inwards, you know, in a kind of pendulum motion. The strips of diamonds have a consistent pattern of regular rhythm and movement. As a whole it’s flower like, kind of almost moving out and spreading. The diamond strips take you outward but the central bit is a flower.”

“Yes, very much. It looks like there is a suggestion with these arcs, these silver arcs they look like they are bejewelled, they’re diamonds, lovely stuff, it looks like they are arranged to give a sense of rotation, almost like a mechanical gear wheel in a way. It’s designed to give a sense of a harmonious rotational effect around this ring of hearts.”

“That’s beautiful, it’s all these hearts and it’s the patterns, the background it’s like wall paper.”

“The hearts with the diamonds . . . I think it’s absolutely beautiful. To me they all look similar, they all look identical and I love the design on each one which is slightly different and I think it’s beautiful.”

“The diamonds are all coming up from the centre of the heart and then over the top of the heart and then the little solitaire diamonds between each one. The background design on each one is different, it breaks the monotony, do you know that’s beautiful.”

“It’s stunning and I love just the whole way it links together and again, like the other necklace, the embossed surface of each piece has slight variations which as a whole works very well.”

“Yes, there is a rhythm going on in the work, where the strips of diamonds have been set. There is a kind of harmonising going on, the strips create a sort of flowing line. You have strips going across the tops and across the centres. You have bits going round like that and then like that, it’s a bit like a dance.”

“There is another rhythm going on with the part circle strip of diamonds going across the centre of the heart and over the top. There is also something textile about them.”

“Yes, there is a rhythm going on in the work, where the strip of diamonds have been set. There is a kind of harmonising going on, the strips create a sort of flowing line. You have strips going across the tops and across the centres. you have bits going round like that and then like that, it’s a bit like a dance really, a 16<sup>th</sup> century dance.”

“Again it is a repeated form so there is a sense of undulation which goes throughout the piece, all the way round, and is only broken at the top with the clasp which isn’t quite the same. I would say it was more rhythmical than the last piece I looked at. I think because you have got identical forms here, these kind of cut out heart shapes. They seem much more identical than the previous pieces we looked at, So, starting off with the curvature which then leads to a point which then leads into a another curve really does suggest a rhythm, very much. I’m talking about the curvature of the outside line of the form. You have a curve leading into a point, leading into another curve, leading into a point and that is always drawing your eye around the shape, and that’s also repeated in the diamante strip. It’s a strip of *pavé* set diamonds which start off-centre and then reach down to the far corner so they are kind of ‘sending’ out of the necklace which I suppose perhaps creates the idea of a rhythm or an energy that is flowing out of the piece of jewellery as well. This internal diamond strip ending with the single diamond, I guess it does a very similar thing to the first shape I was describing but it has slightly more energy behind it because you have got this curved strip, which is thin, ending in a much larger diamond. It gives the effect of movement like an arching shape which makes me think of something taking a leap or a ball having been thrown and the kind of line that is traced behind its movement.”

This discourse explores rhythms, symmetry, repetition and hence evocation and the interrelationship of responses to representation to a point where it becomes helpful to extend the exploration to look at differing cognitive levels. Chapter 3.5.2 - 3.5.3 discussed the way in which humans are programmed to look for symmetry in the body. It is reasonable to presume that this would apply to the search for symmetry and balance in other forms which would in turn impact upon and explain the human sense of beauty and the pleasure sensations accompanying that experience. These two ideas draw on the theories of design described above. The transition



from the recognition of beauty in symmetry to aesthetic sensibility is brought about by evocation, a situation whereby those who engage with the representation are transported to a time and space where the mind is free to remember or imagine.

### **Contextualisation: The bio-psychosexual embodied in design**

- Based on the developments of Case Study Two, Case Study Three elevates the design focus to a more elaborate, higher order relating to the use of the psychology of form and the Gestalt qualities of figure and ground in the organisation of form, symmetry, distribution of light / space, pattern and its replication within these patterns to simulate, colour and ground.

## **A.3. The impact of the psychology of materials**

Having discussed the psychology of form, the analysis can now explore the psychology of materials in its practical and creative application. Identifying the fundamental principles of design relative to human evolution inevitably brings to the fore the necessity for the mediation of a multiplicity of factors in a relational process in creative practice. The resulting form engages with the hidden biological inclinations / imperatives, social mores and their inherent paradoxes but also with the emergent psychology of self.

Analysis of materials in practical application reveals much more than the simple determinant of form as physical structure. More than any jewellers before them, contemporary jewellers have developed a fluency in the language of materials. Their successful realisation of a design is significantly contingent upon the appropriate choice of materials. In relation to the vast array of materials currently available they have broken the conventional boundaries of their time by not ranking materials exclusively in terms of monetary value. They choose materials not for their intrinsic value but for their beauty and working qualities. They have exposed the beauty of some of the most humble materials, evidencing that craftsmanship and the working of appropriate materials can and do transform on a variety of levels. Contemporary jewellers know that the success of a designed object is largely dependant on the use of materials which are sympathetic to and relate to the qualities of what needs to be expressed and represented. In their ambition to achieve full expression, makers of contemporary jewellery do not hesitate to use or blend unusual materials such as rubber, leather, paper, glass, plastics, found objects and mix them with precious materials such as silver or gold. Anything is open for exploration and application.

They have exploited the ever expanding choice of materials and techniques as they become available to select appropriate characteristics: to simulate, mimic, substitute and allude to one another. This might be to suggest emotion, to repulse, confuse, perplex or to stimulate as determined by their associative qualities when appropriately applied. In purposeful selection of appropriate materials the working properties of each material must be known and handling skills perfected. Their tactile and sensual characteristics also have a role to play in the representational making process, particularly if they are to achieve and maximise the desired impact. A material's manipulative and visual characteristics are used to play with the range of human sensibilities in reflecting and responding to modern life as exemplified in the following Case Study.

**Case study 10.4 Rubber Neckpiece by Vickie Sedman.**



*Figure 10.4 Vickie Sedman. Rubber Neckpiece 2005. Silver; silicone rubber: hand fabricated, cast.*

**Question 1. What does this particular piece of jewellery bring to mind?**

*53% said it reminded them of a centipede or caterpillar, followed by other mixed references to organic forms such as sea anemones and parts of the human body.*

“When I looked at it I immediately thought sphincter or a bowel, you know like a ring of muscle which is corrugated to aid constriction and expansion that would compel movement along with those sort of finger structures to aid movement through, perhaps, some absorption, like in the lining of the stomach.”

“Coral, it’s the same colour or almost the same colour as you used to get in coral necklaces with all the sticky out bits. Or a centipede, and it looks really tactile, it looks beautiful. I think if you

saw it in reality you would want to pick it up and sort of feel it because it's made of rubber. It's great, it would be quite fun to wear that."

"Organic forms, snails and it's these little bits that remind me of their feelers, there is a sense of wetness to it, it's the silicone rubber that reminds me of that effect."

"To me it's like a whale's mouth . . . and then they have managed to get all the rubbery bits which are all like teeth . . ."

"It's a rather delicious piece of work. It reminds me of a caterpillar. . . Sea anemones' fronds sort of waving in liquid or in air and also I immediately have an emotional reaction or relationship to this piece of work. I feel the need and the want to sort of caress it, also to have these little sort of nodules touching, it looks like it's very tactile."

"It brings to mind worms, or a centipede, blood and the veins and therefore a little bit creepy and the silicone rubber, it's a soft material, the things going out of it are a little bit icky."

"Sea anemones. a caterpillar . . . kind of alien on a planet."

"It looks really organic . . . to me it's two things, it's a living organism almost, the other thing is it looks like an artery or a vessel or something that's very corporal and because of the colour as well it reminds me of blood and it does look like something pumping through it, as a sort of a conduit or a sort of pipe of some kind. And I also thought it looked, because of the fronds coming off it, it reminded me of a little bit of a centipede and a living organism, it looked alive."

"It reminds me of some kind of sea anemone, the ones with the little fingers coming out. I don't know what it's made of but it looks like a kind of rubber and those little bits would move like an anemone would in water."

"It's very much like a centipede, or two centipedes for obvious reasons, you have got this segmented longitudinal tube like body and each segment has got appendages that could be legs, it's got lots of them and it curls round like they do and at the joins you have got the silver joining pieces and they look like a head. . . . It looks more like a centipede rather than a millipede, however they are quite similar in some respects."

## **Question 2. How does the use of this material give this piece of jewellery its particular characteristics?**

*87% could describe how the qualities of the material gave the jewellery its particular characteristics.*

"I guess the rubber itself kind of supports the idea because it is flexible and can expand and contract and is tactile, it makes you think of something internal."

"It has given it a sense of wanting to touch it and it's probably very comfortable to wear as well because it would be quite soft against the skin, and these catches are probably magnetic are they?"

“The material looks very fleshy and bloody as though it has been just freshly taken from the body.”

“It gives a snail-like effect, a solidness to it but you feel it’s almost leaking. You’ve got this kind of soft versus hard. These bits on the inside of the rubber are like a snails’ antenna.”

“It’s the material which gives its characteristics so absolutely, it’s the solid parts and then the parts which form the globules, it has a rigidity and a liquid sort of state.”

“ . . . stretchy rubber . . . always can be kind of something not worldly, kind of gooey, alien, space age.”

“Because rubber has been used and I’m guessing that underneath, in between, silver wires which are forming compartments give it that compression and stretching of material but it reminds me of something like a deep sea urchin with tentacles, something unrecognised with no name.”

“It’s the rubber and I think the softness of that and the kind of pliability of it, it’s like it’s the lining of an artery, or like a worm, it’s that sort of skin and because of the sort of the loops inside it, it’s almost like . . . you can sort of see it pulsing along a bit like through an internal camera.”

“Because of the colour, the sharpness of the ridges, the edginess of its boldness, it’s fetishised as well. The colour reminds me of blood and torture, it’s sort of sexualised when it goes on the body. It reminds me of something tumescent, reminiscent of this sensation of arousal and tentacles of pleasure.”

“Because it’s made of rubber it makes it look like it’s quite nice to feel and touch and to play with, I want to squeeze it to see what it would do.”

“Its ductility . . . forms a graceful curve. It provides it with a certain sheen. It looks organic . . . it presents a sense of changing mass, changing in density, a flow, it looks animated.”

“ . . . the rubber gives it this kind of gentle sheen on the surface of it, I suppose that seems to be rather emphasising the kind of peaks and troughs, the natural undulations in that rhythmic form which kind of goes in and out, in and out, creating little concave hollows between ridges and that sheen from the rubber. It just emphasises that rhythmic form even more in the hollows and the ridges. It makes me think of condoms, the texture of it and the idea of it being over something and again it brings in that organic association with it, reminding you very strongly of a living form. And a living form that, I suppose, it’s quite phallic. It brings to mind kind of sex toys.”

The characteristics of the material and the exploitation of it in the creation of the form of this piece of work provides the viewer with the potential for several interpretations and associations.

Further analysis shows that the shape, volume and balance created by alternating density and opacity has an impact upon the brain’s priority in scanning the image. The secret to the sensory pleasure experienced here may be that the artist grants the audience freedom of interpretation.

Thus what is perceived or reconstituted, through the optical effect, and sensory reception / response is allowed to be the joint product of artist and audience.

The piece of work reveals skill and understanding in the potential / manipulation of material and workmanship. Equally extraordinary is that the work of art has been created out of a material not normally associated with the making of a precious piece of art. Its beauty is only revealed by insight and understanding of the material's potential to realise the design. Effectively stretching and anchoring the material over a skeletal like structure has enabled the artist to manipulate and control densities as if it were another separate medium. The journey from raw material transformed by hard work and dedicated craftsmanship into an object of beauty and high value is a strategic approach inherent in the creative practice, tacitly acknowledged by many contemporary jewellery designer makers.

Our unique ability to empathise, sublimate and explore pleasure through the displacement process also renders us susceptible to evocation which is a basic principle of aesthetics and thereby an imperative in creativity. Through analogies, metaphors and connotations we are led through the paradigm shift of perceptual response reactions to interpretation of qualities embedded in visual forms, materials and imagery devised by artists. Contemporary Jewellery artists know these phenomena can act as stimuli to curious combinations of sensuality, and understand how their erotic potential can be realised through their work. They know how to manipulate / harness the psychological undertones of sexuality, created by sensual experience and covert use of erotic connotations through material substances exuding these primal qualities, thereby linking our animal / somatology with the metaphysical through concept formation.

#### **Contextualisation: The Bio-psychological aspects as embodied in design**

- as Case Studies 1, 2 and 3, but producing another layer ie., as appropriate choice and use and handling of materials (as in nature)
- two bilateral halves make a balanced whole consolidated / harmonised by the appropriate use of material applied to design. As in nature these qualities are confirmation of overall phenotype quality (see Chapter 3).



The next Case Study, 5, enables us to shift our conscious visual awareness from direct representation (as in the rubber neckpiece) to the exploration of the indirect, to explore and experience the symbolic dialogue embodied in the flower pin.

#### **A.4. Cognitively processing analogies: Materials and images**

##### **Case Study 10.5. Rajola Stickpin**



*Figure 10.5 Rajola Stickpin Coral, ivory and gold. 1990.*

Subliminal sensual / sexual references continue to be examined in contemporary jewellery. Artists often make use of natural forms and in this instance the use of an organic form is presented in the abstract shape of a flower. However, the artist has either unconsciously or deliberately confronted the viewer with a challenge which invites resolution. In theoretical terms, the Gestalt sensation of an oscillation between abstraction and representation occurs followed by the realisation that there is a binary link between object and concept. In Case Study, 5, participants' responses and interpretation describe how this takes place and how their perception and cognition shifts as they examine and reflect upon what they see and understand.

##### **Question 1. What does this piece of jewellery bring to mind?**

*80 % of the participants made the cognitive shift between object and concept formation. 73% of those participants who realised the binary connections identified the flower as an orchid or lily.*

"I guess the first thing that comes to mind is a flower. I was going to say an orchid but its kind of like a lily, but I guess in a Georgia O' Keeffe kind of style, flowers which are really sexualised

where it's suggesting something quite sexual as well as a flower, such as female genitalia."

"It just looks very fussy and messy to me. It's very organic, it's like leaves and petals. It looks like there could be almost little worms on it. I don't like it at all because it seems to be all just stuck together, or is it something rude? Yes! I suppose you could say it was vaginal or clitoral!"

"It's the Georgia O' Keeffe flowers really, which, when you look at it, you think they aren't really flowers, or are they? I would say it's an orchid but I don't know. I couldn't recognise the flower but it's very labial."

"Well, one: flowers, but also the female sexual organs. I know it's a lily."

"It reminds me of a vagina, the wires remind me of sperm fussing around wanting to get in. It reminds me of an orchid, an orchid is kind of associated with the vagina. If I had to choose I would say an orchid."

"Well actually now looking at it, it could be a clitoris, easily, I just realised, I mean it looks like a flower, it looks like a lily. It's the first time I have actually realised what that is, I looked at it this morning and didn't see it and now it's suddenly snapped into place."

"This piece I found more difficult to digest, it reminds me of, I can think of two trains of thought, one is a cross-section of a flower or something floral and the other would be a sort of vulva."

"This reminds me of a painter, Egon Schiele, it reminds me of female genitalia basically. Egon Schiele painted a lot of women with their legs open and it would look like orchids. If you look at his work it reminded me very much of his paintings very much the same sort of floral / vulva connotations there would always be a lighter colour and then a vivid colour in the middle exactly like this."

"My connotation is a flower, or the female organs. I kind of like the connotations I think it's a lovely tropical orchid."

73 % of those participants who realised the binary connections, identified the flower as an orchid or a lily. These flowers have a longstanding history of symbolic association carrying the unspoken language of feminine sensuality and sexuality embodied in their exotic forms and delicate fleshy petals.

Here, at primary conceptual level, a flower is perceived. The glossy coral centre looks freshly opened to exude an exotic earthy presence and compelling realism that stresses its sexuality, demonstrating the artist's carving skills and astute choice of material, as to colour and texture. This indicates that something deeper may be taking place, and that further meaning may be encoded in the piece. It is natural to interpret first impressions by referencing to the familiar, but cognitive perceptions (concepts) can shift. Define the flower in more graphic language and the shift is readily experienced. Exotic, erect in all its vulvic glory, its labial scalloped petals are spread apart to expose a glistening waxy erotic form, signifying earthiness, fertility and regeneration. Its form alerts a subconscious already primed. Edmond Leach calls these 'shift' experiences: metaphoric / metonymic transformations. In linguistic terms metonymic means

the use of one word for another, but in this case, reference is made to the visual / perceptive phenomenon. “The essence of the matter is that, with symbolism (metaphor), as distinct from signals, *natural indices and signs*, we use our human imagination to associate two entities, or sets of entities, either material or abstract, which ordinarily belong to quite different contexts”.<sup>11</sup>

Reflection provides the insight that the object is referring to the female sexual anatomy. The message may not at first be obvious to some so that it may be overlooked, but once the code is deciphered the analogy is so explicit that it is impossible to see it as anything else. These are not the only cognitive connections to be made. One representation is a metaphor for the other but with the added dimension that the concept works in both directions. The two facets shift in the mind like figure and ground: cognitively connected, they reconcile both aspects of the male gaze in that, by looking at the flower, the compulsive, voyeuristic and censored side of the gaze can be indulged and fulfilled without guilt or shame.

The orchid, that most captivating of flowers, is often used to refer to woman, to female anatomy which is, with its plumped out lips, often compared to a flower, its unfolding with arousal. Both carry all the connotations and associations of sexuality and fecundity as described in Chapter 5.4 note 12. A sequence has now been established where each conceptual component is interdependent on the other and a kind of allegorical narrative takes place, albeit at a level of complexity apparent only to those who engage with it. The artist’s auto-suggestive and imaginative playfulness with concept / object is a reminder that sex cannot be separated from the other parts of life but rather that its discourse forms and informs creative practice and aesthetic sensibilities and perceptions at any given time. As Tisdale points out: “The planet itself is laden with sex, marbled with my physical and psychic responses to its parts, made out of my relationship with its skin. How we are rooted to the earth through our bodies determines how we see other bodies, and ultimately the earth itself.”<sup>12</sup> We use our own bodies as a reference point.<sup>13</sup>

The design provides, for the practitioner, several further allegorical dimensions. With its outer crinkly parts of ivory and its inner section carved of coral the orchid shows sensitivity in choice of material and decisions in interpretation. Whilst carving coral is reasonably simple, though one must proceed with care, carving ivory is a remarkable sensual experience. Ivory, luxurious, exotic and creamy in both colour and texture, is easily shaped to the will of an artist’s hand, when worked with care it responds with gratitude. It sighs and shudders as it is carved with and across the grain, dictating how it should be handled. It yields to pressure if handled with patience, care and sensitivity. Approach it without respect and its mood is more unpredictable. Too much pressure produces a shrill sound, an expression of its discontent, a further reckless move and it will suddenly snap as easily as an orchid’s petal, and the artist’s hours of labour can be destroyed in a moment. Cut into a virginal piece of ivory and its chaste qualities establish an almost spiritual rapport with the maker where materials, artist, sensations and pleasures fuse as one to consummate design.

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<sup>11</sup>

Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication: The logic by which symbols are connected* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1976, reprint, Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1991), 39 (page reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>12</sup>

She goes on to say, “This seems obvious, and yet we don’t call this sex. To do so makes sex awfully big, but big is exactly what sex is. Freud was never more right than when he called the human animal “polymorphously perverse.”. Sallie Tisdale, *Talk Dirty to me: An intimate Philosophy of Sex* (London: Pan Books, 1996; reprint, London: Pan Books, 1996), 3 (page reference is to reprint edition)

<sup>13</sup>

Here the artist expressed the need to define allegories in the design between the qualities of materials and symbolic values.

The gaze luxuriates in the delicate, seductive and evocative qualities of the materials as object. Whilst self-referencing the terrain of the body in progressive self-awareness precipitates arousal as a necessary prerequisite to a sexual event but the event itself is not inevitable. The erotic imagination provides free range to our fantasies, thereby fulfilling sexual need without physical engagement and relieving sexual frustration. In the creative act the artist adopts a reverse process of reification attempting to make the abstract concrete in order that the viewer can make the concrete abstract. The voyeuristic is inherent in the social construct and strictures of our time and is an inevitable consequence of detachment from natural imperatives. Maintaining the erotic / voyeuristic without straying into the territory of the pornographic requires a certain adherence to the order of social constraints which are implicit rather than explicit. This will be further examined in Case Study 10.8.

### **Contextualisation: The bio-psychosexual awareness embodied in design**

- as in Case Studies 10.1- 10.4: but bringing a further layer of analogies, inspired by materials and images.
- beginnings of nature / nurture “nature is known through symbols which are themselves a construction upon experience” (Chapter 4 note 14 and Chapter 5)
- ‘Self’ awareness ‘self’ consciousness. Evolution and visual symbols, origins of art and representation, (Chapter 5).
- The art of seduction, the processing of abstract and conceptual thinking. Arousal content and meaning is germinated *via* associations, where the body is a means of natural reference and emotions evoked from a means of reflective reference. Connecting relationships, physical, emotional and metaphysical produce an amalgam of differing elements metamorphosed into symbolic context as conceptualised narrative: Chapters, 5.3, 5.6 to 5.7.

## Section B. The sociological imperative:

### B.1. Dialogue in universal symbols, recognised analogies and concept formation.

#### Case study 10.6 Memory Necklace by Zoe Arnold



*Figure 10.6 Memory Necklace by Zoe Artbold*

This case study identifies and describes a further intellectual shift in consciousness level, involving analogies and metaphor as embodiments of significant events related to our personal and social experience of life. These are intellectual and tangible substitutes for something experienced whereby the selected icon encapsulates specific emotions and meaning, a behaviour socially determined yet individually expressed in which a relatively uncomplicated substitution of meaning changes an aspect of natural behaviour into a more complex structure as it becomes channelled into a social context.

In sharp contrast to pre-modern societies where the traditional mapping out of one's destiny was passively accepted as preordained, we now live in a world where the transition from tradition to modernity has been established by the 'reflective self' and whereby a search for a deeper meaning of life defines one's individuality and self identity.

We live in an era where the emphasis is on individualism, independence, self-reliance and self-fulfilment and where the affirmation of these gives us a place in society. As Giddens puts it: "interpersonal existence is being thoroughly transfigured, involving us all in what I shall call



*every day social experiments*, with which social changes more or less oblige us to engage.”<sup>14</sup>

Zoe Arnold’s Memory Necklace, “with its richly clustered pendants and hoarded possessions is a modern take on the charm, while more sculptural pieces can be displayed on the wall when not being worn.”<sup>15</sup> This piece encapsulates current shifts and changes taking place today not only through her approach to design but also in the nature of how it is to be worn and displayed.

Participants’ responses to this piece of work show an accord with the mood of the times in which the key objectives of individuals coincide with and evidence current values and the changes taking place.

### **Question 1. What rites of passage or what major events in your life would you mark or memorise?**

*Whilst 60% of the participants cited the marking of traditional social events such as marriage, birth, birthdays and death as important, many listed personal life experiences as of equal value, requiring private acknowledgement through the collection of objects which would evoke memories and associated emotions (with the exception of one interviewee who used the scarification on his body as a mark of transition). Similarly there are many more individuals who would use tattoos for an equivalent purpose.*

“I kept thinking in terms of milestones or I guess you might want to memorise things like your birth date, relationships, friendships, the discovery of sexuality. Moving countries and ownership of property and I guess in terms of age, birth, childhood and adulthood.”

“No I’ve been thinking about it and I can’t think of anything. My life, it’s just been disaster after disaster.”

“For me it would be having children, it would be babies and moving house because I’m very attached to the house we have been in so I would have little houses. The birds obviously indicate freedom and the doves marriage so that’s what it would be for me.”

“Actually my entire life. You can take it in an upfront way a very obvious way and sort of say things like marriage, birth, death, separation, closing a door and opening up another door. I guess it’s a general idea of all these passages so there is a start, a during and an end, you know, every day.”

“Well I have marked an event in my life but I haven’t marked it in jewellery. I went through a difficult break up with my partner, we had a small child. I basically tried to kill myself and this is why I have got scars on my arms and then I marked that in a special way on the actual anniversary because I was actually glad I had survived and I was very glad that I was alive, but I’ve marked it in a very different way because the marks on my arms, that’s for me the negative scarring, and now I’ve got, don’t be shocked, [*he rolled up his shorts to the thigh to reveal two,*

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<sup>14</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992; reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997). 8 (page reference is to reprint edition).

<sup>15</sup> Goldsmiths’ Fair Catalogue, 2009. No. 19.

*beautiful, equally symmetrical, branch like, white scarification designs, on each leg*]. I use that as a celebration of the fact that I'm glad I'm still alive and these are my positive mementoes. [*What made you so glad you were alive again?*] The first year was hell and then it was followed by the most wonderful of experiences. My scarification was done as a ceremony to celebrate this fact. A week beforehand I had to abstain from smoking, drinking and practise really pure living and then after the scarring I had to basically do the reverse, bad things like drink lots of coffee and tea etc. Afterwards I felt totally liberated, I was free to tackle anything that came along in life."

"The real moments in life which are for example exams, travels, happy moments, sad moments, and learned lessons and things that make you remember someone or something, some kind of moment or some thing you have inherited from a grandparent or something."

"To me it would probably be my cat, because my cat died in December and I loved her. I have always loved cats, they have this kind of mysterious aura about them, the way they sit in the sun and the kind of way they do things. There are a whole lot of things, a mother's death, a friend's death."

"I do sort of collect charms, for me its mostly places I've been to. I tend to try and collect a silver charm from each country I've visited. Some of them would be sort of religious, particularly in South America there are a lot of crosses in the art work, so the Aztec crosses, or it would be a place with an interesting monument. To me it would remind me of the places and the different cultures. And also things like big age birthdays like twenty first and fortieth, I bought some jewellery to commemorate my recent birthday, for me it was a big thing."

"The major events I would want to mark would be: getting married, working as a volunteer for two years, and just different things connected around that, the feelings of the first couple of weeks . . . I was overcome by the heat and the humidity, I had a bit of a phobia about spiders so there's things around that first visit. . . . and I got very ill there so these are major things that I remember and made a mark in my life. Also, getting my degrees. I remember when I got my first degree results, because I got a first, and I remember how exciting that was. And then things like my dad dying, there are sadder things that I remember in my life, they tend to be either the very happy occasions or the very sad occasions don't they?"

"The major events in my life I would mark are my baptism, my confirmation, finishing my GCSEs,"

"Flight! is this a dove? This could be a crow or even a bird of prey with the fronds on the wings like this. They remind me of flight, freedom escape because they look like they are escaping. I would mark escape, freedom, being able to breathe, getting to the outside, this is absolutely about freedom, it's interesting that there is the dark bird, the black one, flying downwards almost like plummeting downwards, which again is rather a good sign. It suggests rather that the bad is falling to earth and the white bird is flying off to its freedom. It's all good by the looks of it."

"I would not want to go down the normal route and memorise things like when you turn twenty one, you get the key, I wouldn't want that kind of *cliché* way of marking an event. I would want to memorise what I refer to in my own work as internal events, things that I think are significant to the development of each of us or me specifically in terms of my kind, of my perception of the world, and what's going on around me, and the kind of experiences I have had, intimate

experiences or relationships of any kind be they platonic, be they with family members, be they the sexual variety. I'd want to emphasise those things, those kind of more personal details that I feel make the picture of me, which represents me more."

## **Question 2. What objects or symbols might you use?**

*33 % would use traditional and familiar symbols 73% could not conceptualise / compose their own version leaving 20% as the only ones with original ideas (they were jewellery designers), and one exception to the rule using scarification.*

"I guess there are really obvious things like the use of Zodiac signs or something like that, when you were born. I don't know, I was thinking there are some things like mementoes you might want to collect, maybe like keys, I was just trying to think of myself, what things I would like to collect, and I think, I do collect lots of bits and pieces: stones, words, photos, mementoes or such, but they are not really symbols. They are more for sentimental reasons, to remember moments in my life. I treat them like sort of memory keys. Sometimes songs can do the same thing." "I don't know, if I were going to be collecting stuff like that it would be organic stuff, but it would be particularly personal, it would be recalling nature to me."

"I like this piece very much, rings are such a strong, evocative symbol, so rings are something I would use, maybe grandparents' rings or rings of someone deceased. There are obviously various symbols people have used over the years, keys to celebrate when you reach a certain age like twenty one, but because it's all sort of commercialised it's sort of kitsch and doesn't have any meaning for me. Personally I have a lot of boxes with little things, just things. I suppose I'm very much hiding things from other people."

"I would use objects or symbols to represent my cat, like a claw, a whisker, the colour of her eyes, the pupil. My cat had greeny yellow eyes so I always look at green as a symbol of her."

"I'm afraid I'm not very good at keeping things but yes, I do keep hair."

"The most specific symbols I think is each occasion would call for a different symbol. I don't have a sort of one particular symbol."

"I would use found objects, stones, small photos, pieces of cloth."

"I would use gemstones, just beautiful stones. I often have beads hanging around, definitely beads. I'm just obsessed with the colour fuchsia so I would always have bits and bobs of ribbon of fuchsia for no other reason than I like the colour."

"I would collect charms, and I bought some jewellery to commemorate my recent 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. For me it was a big thing."

"Well I never thought about having something like that, I'm not sure I'd want to because I'm quite a private person so I would personally not want to have something on where people said 'what's that about?', because I would not want people asking me that, so I personally would not have symbols incorporated in a necklace."

“With me I would probably use maybe a dove as in my baptism and representing the spirit. For exams maybe certificates. I wouldn’t know what objects but I’d probably use anything that had white and maybe also a watch to talk about how time has passed.”

“I would use the white dove, yes, I would use that. I had not thought of the black birds, the dark ones flying down or falling down but, now I come to think of it, it’s quite a good representation of losing your baggage. I would use those symbols, there are things in there, the captivity, the suffocating environment, being there against your will. [*Would that be something to do with your illness?*] Recently, yes, definitely, earlier in life, escaping the clutches of my family, escaping my elders and betters. I always wanted freedom from my earliest recollections of being seven or eight years old. I always felt cooped up and I just wanted my freedom, I’m a natural rebel.”

“The objects or symbols I might use? The eyes are a very strong symbol for me and something I use recurrently in my own jewellery. Perhaps anatomical symbols such as the brain. I think I’d also consider using sensory images such as the ears, nose, eyes and fingertips, lips, the kind of things you receive information with and respond to in the world around you.”

Whilst many of the participants would use existing, familiar symbols to represent and mark the traditional, socially shared, events in one’s life, the non-artists were at something of a loss as to how creatively to infuse symbolic content into a piece of personalised jewellery.

Although most participants evidenced in the previous case studies that they could freely interpret what they experienced through analogies and metaphors, they could not themselves generate symbols to encapsulate their feelings and experiences.

Culture needs unique individuals like the contemporary jeweller to create, regenerate, lead or embody changes as they evolve. It needs producers of material culture to create products / mentifacts which enable a co-evolutionary dialogue with the abstract internal world in relation to the external one, taking account of the level of culture which reflects and evidences society’s recognition of them, and thereby the embodiment through a material declaration to the world at large. In this tangible artefact we can appreciate how the interconnections of the physical, emotional and metaphysical experiences are the subject of the piece metamorphosing into its symbolic meaning as an entity removed from its subject.

Culturally evolved products are sensory mentifacts embodying and enabling us to see the integrated and shared dialogue and meanings of the internal and abstract realities of our existence in the modern world. They are reflective of and confirm that which has been socially internalised / determined. These environmental objects are a kind of external relation manifestation which serve to confirm and project a shared point of view. In this instance Arnold’s neckpiece uses these elements as a tool creatively to exploit and evoke specific emotional responses. She clearly sets out the message within the neckpiece by projecting elements of importance through the various levels of reinforcement of the ideas and aspirations implicit and explicit within this piece. Here she utilises her skills in the careful selection and bringing together of a series of key symbols (as containers of concept) to embody a highly significant package of emotion with impact. Unitary socio-symbolic elements (containers of concept) are linked to the bio-imperatives to consolidate aesthetic sensibilities whereby the object itself becomes one single unified expression of sublimation.

Publicly shared emotion is often a manifestation of a level of sentimentality and in its non-specific cultural reference, often *via* its displacement, results in what we know as kitsch or cliché. In more complicated arrangements internalised conceptualisation, that is the representation of a symbolic process such as the formation of a concept, avoids this and the symbolism may therefore seem more indirect and intriguing. For example, when a metaphor and a simile appear together in language, spoken, written or visual, the connection or pairing presents a reinforced discourse enabling a deeper understanding of the original premise. The composition of the images in the neckpiece allows a collection of concepts and emotions to be conveyed symbolically in a simple chain of events as psychodynamic operational links.

### **Contextualisation: Symbolism embodied in design**

This case study references all previous chapter contexts and relates to Chapter, 5 and 8 in its psycho-social focus, summarised as follows:

- symbols replace the natural in substitution
- re-configuration of symbol usage by overlaying
- higher levels of consciousness, abstract thinking, concept formation, symbolic representation
- empathy, allure as evocation of recalled memory
- love bonding, unity and fidelity (conceptualisation of) as encapsulated in this proposition from Steven Pinker in ‘How the Mind Works’.

Symbols are physical bits of matter, like chips in a computer or neurons in the brain. They symbolise things in the world because they are triggered by those things *via* our sense organs, and because of what they do once they are triggered. If the bits of matter that constitute a symbol are arranged to bump into bits of matter constituting another symbol in just the right way, the symbols corresponding to one belief can give rise to new symbols corresponding to another belief logically related to it, which can give rise to symbols corresponding to other beliefs and so on (Chapter Five note 20).



## B.2. Displacement of self: Women explore and enjoy the sexual freedom of self. Voyeurism.

Evolving social orders condition populations toward collective objectives and the socio-structural imperatives of modern urban life have led to changes not only in ideas of status but also in continuous re-definitions of gender, permissible behaviour, the relationships between individuals and their modes of expression / representation.

Self-conscious regulation or suppression of the unconscious within a contemporary social order requires a constant re-evaluation of the self not only in appearance but also in behaviour and communication which expresses conformity with or reinforcement of the new social trends.

“The self today is for everyone a reflexive project – a more or less continuous interrogation of past, present and future. It is a project carried on amid a profusion of reflective resources: therapy and self-help manuals of all kinds, television programmes and magazine articles. . . . [The body:] becomes a visible carrier of self-identity and is increasingly integrated into life-style decisions which an individual makes.”<sup>16</sup>

### Case study 10.7 Maidenhair by Michelle Hughes 1997.



Figure 10.7 Maidenhair by Michelle Hughes 1997

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992; reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 30-31 (page references are to reprint edition).

Self identity today is strongly linked to and dependant on attributes of physical appearance and power of sexuality in the context of bio-sociological ideals which we strive to achieve (through various modes of sublimation) in order to subdue our psychosexual anxieties.

In addition the consequence of reliable contraception has meant women are free to be master of their own bodies, reliable birth control has given them the freedom to explore their sexual and erotic pleasure in sex for its own sake and in their own right, separating sex from the fear and burden of reproduction. The libido, thus liberated, has cut through the many boundaries of inhibition to explore and set free the sexual self. The emergence of this phenomenon has created socio-psychological changes whereby, as Giddens puts it “Plastic sexuality can be moulded as a trait of personality and thus is intrinsically bound up with the self. At the same time – in principle – it frees sexuality from the rule of the phallus, from the overweening importance of male sexual experience.”<sup>17</sup> to be more in accord with the sexual ideals and pursuits of women.

The private experience of sexual awareness and the subconscious clues to it are readily recognisable by those who have passed a similar threshold and are familiar with the ‘sexual experience’. Case Study 10.7 demonstrates how the visual display of individual physiological desires and the psychosocial can, when projected through the wearing and design of jewellery, be collectively read and understood as supported by the participants’ responses to the head piece entitled ‘Maiden Hair’ designed and made by Michelle Hughes (Silver forged and linked chain of Gingko leaves).

### Question 1

**What does the image bring to mind? What do you think might be her age?**

*80 % of the participants interpreted the image as having a Roman and / or Greek influence providing a sense of mythology, symbolising power, victory and or triumph. 53 % of the participants gauged her age to be young, in her late teens or early twenties, however nearly all felt the female in the image to be on the cusp of sexual experience / fulfilment*

“I was thinking of an ancient Greek kind of feel, but it is described as gingko leaves or Maiden Hair. It reminded me of the artists Gilbert and George who used Gingko leaves. It grows in quite urban spaces and their pictures were about London. It also reminded me of naturopathy where Gingko has to do with clarity of mind. Do I feel a sort of innocence? I suppose so, maybe it’s just her profile, most of her face is in darkness. So I can’t quite think what her face might be like. I guess the wreath is also suggesting Eastern academia as well a celebration or an honorary thing.”

“A laurel wreath, it’s pretty. It’s a very feminine piece and it’s also because she is blond and it’s all that kind of feminine elegance. Yes, so you would imagine her quite tall and wearing lovely long clothes. She is young, about 20. No I don’t think she is that innocent, a bit more worldly wise.”

“That reminds me of the Roman laurel leaf garland, so it’s victory given to the victor. It’s her personal triumph.”

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992; reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 2 (page references are to reprint edition).

“It’s a lovely thing and very classical. Obviously Gingko leaves but to me it reminds me of classicism [*generally associated with harmony and restraint*] or neoclassicism. It is a young girl because the wreath is plain silver and not gold so it’s a young thing. Probably in earlier times it would have been worn by a maiden not yet married, because her hair is not formally arranged either.”

*Participants sense how the mysterious ambiguity in the underlying message beyond the immediate image is suggested by her distant expression and tousled long hair which implies that she holds some sort of secret or self knowledge. There is an air of untamed naturalness to the unfolding of her womanhood, yet a confidence in the control of her own sexuality, an air of triumph.*

“An empress because of the crown, a crown of power, power in its own right, one of authority and control. She could be dominant, she could be passive because she has got the power of nature on her side. She has a gentle passive dominance, a reminder that she is all female.”

“This reminds me of Titania in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. I think it would be for a young person, it’s quite Grecian. . . . It’s rather lovely. She is very young, I should think about eighteen or nineteen years old or she may be a bit older, maybe about twenty five. It could be used for a wedding, I suppose, yes. It’s sort of virginal.”

“It brings to mind some sort of initiation rite. I think obviously it goes together with the idea of pureness, of perhaps a virgin being a sort of forest nymph and being set free to pursue her sexual awareness.”

“It brings back in mind Roman times, aristocracy, marking something of importance. Her features and hair, it just reminds me of a girl who is from a higher class background and wearing the silver headpiece makes it even more aristocratic.”

“Greek myths, Daphne. She is almost fairy like, like a nymph, it’s beautiful and it’s subtle, she is in her puberty . . . you can read into it what you like.”

*Several participants have described her as a nymph. A nymph describes the insect as well as the creature of Greek and Roman myth, one of the daughters of Zeus. These semi-divine maidens roamed lakes, rivers, meadows, trees, air etc in their eagerness to find mates amongst superior deities or unsuspecting mortals. Thus nymphs are flighty, young and beautiful females, synonymous with uninhibited sexuality. They infer nymphomania, normally a male fantasy of a female whose erotic desires and activities outstrip his own. A further analogy can be drawn with the word nymph used to describe the damsel fly or dragonfly which has not yet completed its metamorphosis and is therefore virginal in several contexts.*

“It reminded me of sort of Roman times, of the mythological Goddesses and of laurel leaf crowns. It looks very regal, and also because of the Gingko leaves, I don’t know if there is any significance in that particular plant. [*Gingko leaves come from the Maiden Hair tree*] . . . it looks very sort of nymph-like, it reminded me of fairies or nymphs and there’s just a very mythological kind of aspect to it and very delicate. The nymph is young, nubile, voluptuous, all the things we have wanted to be.”

“Somebody in her late teens or early to mid-twenties. I suppose it would be in the time frame you are referring to because now we would consider a woman of that age span to be young and kind of fertile but perhaps if you were going to go back in history that age would get lower. So I think it’s culturally and historically specific of the age.”

Classical analysis argues that the dammed libido finds a satisfactory outlet through the creative arts whereby the artist makes the ‘socially unacceptable’ acceptable for themselves. If, as is likely, Hughes, the jewellery artist, aware of this fundamental concept, seems to have extended its principle by transposition, whereby it falls on the female subject of the jewellery piece, and whereby the maiden poised on the brink of creativity is a consequence of sexual fulfilment and knowledge. The image clearly depicts a deflowered young maiden in an altered state of knowledge, suggesting that the intimate ‘knowing’ of not only knowing an ‘other’ but also that she has passed over the boundary from virgin to womanhood and has relinquished a part of her younger self which in the modern world is often seen as a triumph over ignorance.

### **Contextualisation: The physiological versus psychosocial reflective awareness of self projected in design**

- As in the first three bullet points in the previous Case Study (Number 6). However there is a change in the focus of the interpretation. Though an element of voyeurism may be detected it comes closer to seeing the ‘theory of mind’ (interpreting, anticipating, conjecturing, what another may be thinking or feeling) in operation
- experienced is the emphatic reading of recognised sensual codes and signs radiating from the image of the young maiden in its symbolic content
- reading of abstract signs and associated connotations through the process of signs and codes induces reflective exploration of the self, set against emotional experiences, when one has subverted social constraints and inhibitions
- projection of another’s thoughts and feelings through the visual language of their adornment and facial presentation. Concept formation through the insight whereby indirect symbolisation of the visual projection is interpreted
- concept of and consolidation through analogy: self realisation of womanhood and the libidinous part of self. Calculated deflowering as an act of rite of passage and the discovery of sexual pleasure. A new self consciousness - a new level to an altered state of mind.

### **The natural self. Case Study 10.8 Corset Body adornment.**

An item of jewellery on its simplest level is a three dimensional object invested with visual and tactile values. It is a form of art which can, when placed on the body, immediately be sensually engaged with. To engage intelligently with a piece of jewellery requires several levels of recognition and the maker has the advantage not only of being aware of this but also of being responsible for the embodiment of multiple levels of meaning, allowing multiple interpretations which call upon an individual’s depth of understanding of the characteristics of materials, techniques and modes of representation, old and new. We know this from experience but also

from the practical processes involved which require an intimate knowledge of design / problem solving and the manipulative skills for the realisation of the object itself.

As with other modes of creative expression, jewellery comes in many genres and multi-dimensional levels. However in the event of Case Study 10.8 the participants were presented with, and asked to consider, a simple aesthetic context, that of the marriage of the artist's skills and the beauty of the female body.

**Case study 10.8 Corset body adornment.**



*Figure 10.8 Corset / body adornment made by 3rd Year CSM student (name not known) 1989 approx. Silver wire formed into body shape and gold plated.*

**Question 1. If you were female / male how would you view this image?**

*80 % of the participants viewed the image as a celebration of the female body.*

*67 % of the participants commented on the impracticability of the body piece. Here the last respondent (one of the two jewellery designer / makers in the group) puts this clearly in context "jewellery in its design can be something purely about the body and not about considering practicalities such as how and when you can wear this item".*



“I dare say how you view it would be on the female side. It could be seen as some sort of celebration of the female body because it kind of is outlining or it’s tracing and accentuating her natural curves. It’s almost like a line cartoon how it traces the outline. Alternatively it could be seen as something quite restrictive . . . that kind of traditional sort of corset, exploitative and simultaneously unobtainable, maybe even supportive. It also reminds me of, say, wrought iron, ornamental gates or sort of fences so it could be protective as well.”

“I think it’s great, . . . it’s for somebody who has got a fantastic body and likes to show it off. It’s very feminine but you would be limited as to where you could wear it.

If I were a male I’d probably say Phwoar! It makes her form very visually accessible doesn’t it? So I was thinking they would be quite turned on.”

“Arousing, yet a person who is unobtainable, that unyielding body wear, it’s not like you can rip it off, if you see what I mean.”

“Sexual and in another sense a reference to being female as it covers the two areas, the breast and the abdomen, so it’s to do with her fertility, her monthly cycles, pregnancy / producing and childbirth. As a male I see it as sexual, there is no other word for it, what else would it be? Because she has certain specific areas covered or hidden leaving us with an element of intrigue.”

“It would be very uncomfortable to wear. There is obviously something holding it up but I should think it would be very uncomfortable to wear. I think a man would find it quite erotic.”

“I think it’s an interesting question because obviously it deals with our female and male psyche, obviously living within a female vessel I can only speak for myself in my female capacity. We decide on how much to pander to engage with male visual desire. . . . I see it as being uncomfortable and constricting. I don’t find it at all erotic. I don’t condone it either. It neither reveals completely and it certainly does not leave that sort of erotic image. . . . Again I’m slightly restricted in my answer being a woman, so I see the world through female eyes. I guess that the majority would find it arousing and provocative and challenging.”

“If I were a female I would comment on her body because I have noticed a lot of females comment / criticise one another’s body. ‘That’s not good and she does not have that in comparison to that etc.’ In addition I would be thinking how uncomfortable it would be to be wearing that. But I’m happy that it shows off her body in a way that shows not too much, so that’s interesting as well. Its classic more than erotic. . . . I’m gay, but as a straight man I would be thinking ‘this was quite hot’ and it also reminds me of a sort of chastity thing so I’m thinking ‘look but can’t touch’. As for me I like it because it reveals, but not really too much and I think of it as very feminine which I really like, it follows her round forms but I also wonder what it is like to wear because you really have to be brave mentally and physically, I think.”

“Feminine, corsetry, delicate, ornate, sensual. If I were a male I would think it was flirtatious, inviting. It’s almost like a chastity belt, visually accessible and physically unaccessible.”

“That’s quite cleverly done, it’s clever the way it follows the curves.”

“I had sort of two reactions to it, one was wow it’s amazing and it’s just an incredible piece of art and the other one was God, that looks incredibly uncomfortable and painful even to wear . . . it almost looks like it’s pinching, it’s possibly causing pain, but what it also does is it’s bringing in the body into the sort of ideal female form. It’s making everything look smooth and flat and voluptuous and it’s cupping the breasts and it’s kind of creating the sculpting of the body into the ideal. If I were a male I’m sure I would think ‘wow it’s an incredible piece of art’, but how it’s showing off the female body it’s sort of like a framework for her sort of voluptuousness and it’s almost like presenting something as a receptacle, it’s sort of like ‘here I am’.”

“It depends . . . I think some men who like page three, I think they might actually quite like it. . . . Some men might think that quite glamorous, it’s a sort of chastity thing but at the same time there is still a lot more flesh than most people have on show, so any male would think ‘she is asking for my attention’.”

“As a female maybe like protecting yourself, like guarding yourself and also possibly maybe to sort of entice men, but also to sort of say, ‘I want you to be attracted to me but also to the things that make me’. I think men would probably find it a challenge where they would say ‘oh my goodness I like this but she is clearly blocking me off’.”

“As female I’d be saying ‘I’m emphasising, I’m exhibiting, I’m showing off my partly physical side, I’m showing off my attitude, what I want to do and where I am in life, I’m showing my sexuality, my beauty and my nonchalant attitude. As a male I would view this image as advertisement, invitation, I’m single, I’m available. It’s entirely an expression of single female fertility, very feminine, very exhibiting.”

“It glorifies and sexualises the female form. It takes curves which are very commonly found within the female form and uses them in this actual form as well, it echoes it. When I look at this image I’m split between the impracticality of a piece like that, because it’s obviously not day to day wear, with the idea that jewellery in its design can be something purely about the body and not about considering practicalities such as how and when you can wear this item. Purely it does glorify the shape and the form of the body and that was solely the intention and that is a purpose it is fulfilling very well. If I were male I would view this image as both inviting and slightly prohibitive because it does create a barrier. Although it tantalises in a way, because it’s showing that form off in that way and emphasising the female curves, it is also reminiscent of a sort of chastity belt, so it’s got that sort of suggestion of ‘off limits’.”

The message is uncomplicated, the discourse is the celebration of the marriage of artist’s skills and the beauty of the female body. We are presented with an image which is honest, unpretentious, there is no performance, no hidden agenda, just the celebration of the beauty of the female body (the result of amazing refinements throughout the course of her evolution<sup>18</sup>). The image is of a wonderfully svelte body, a portrait of nature’s unassuming, unadulterated perfection. This is equally matched by the complex making skills and aesthetic judgement of the artist, reminding us that artistic creation, as an act in itself, has been perfected and refined over the course of its evolving and symbiotic interrelationship with the bio-cognitive, psycho-sexual

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See figure 4.2 of this thesis.

imperatives, and their sublimatory representation through body adornment.

**Contextualisation: bio-cognitive imperatives, as design criteria, elicit responses from the copulatory gaze**

- Design imperatives, based and fashioned upon the bio-genetic and sexual imperatives, express, extend and amplify the sublimation of aesthetic criteria and artistic creation.
- The innate psychosexual desire to access / covet bio-genetic reproductive material either original or through sublimation *via* its replication in an artefact.

**Case Study 10. 9 Two brooches by Rosie Kent.**



Figure 10.9 Rosie Kent, two brooches, *Cunnilingus: Modern pleasures*, 2007

Two brooches can be worn separately or joined together. Silver gold plated, black rhodium plated, citrines.

The brooch in Case Study 10.9 is representative of elements of behaviour which we identify in modern society as compulsive, clandestine viewing. According to Freud we have an innate compulsive curiosity about our own and other's bodies, genital anatomy and the primal activities leading up to the sexual act of intercourse. This evocation of the sexual imperative is a natural expression of human desires and needs. Our pleasure in looking is a primary source of sexual excitement, (an essential response to the reproductive agenda of the human species) is defined in modern culture as a voyeuristic activity. However voyeuristic impulses / fantasies and the accompanying pleasure principles which drive the compulsive curiosity are constantly thwarted by 'civilised' suppression and the concealment of it, resulting in further distress, guilt and frustration, which must in turn must be suppressed, like keeping the lid on a steaming kettle.

In Case Study 10.9 the artist shows how voyeuristic sexual pleasure and sexual sublimation can be manifested in such displacement activity as in the creation of conceptual jewellery, whereby suppressed sexual instinctual forces are transferred into an object. This can be clearly seen as a vehicle whereby such intense and powerful impulses and emotions are given both meaning and a means of emotional release through their very deflection and sublimatory nature which is further emphasised when the object is placed on the body.

At the same time, this piece of jewellery fulfils a further role wherein the artist's confrontational

representation of a sex act, strategically operates as a catalyst to bring to the fore discussion on the subject of voyeurism. This requires case study participants to engage on a further level of cognitive understanding. Their responses below demonstrate how a piece of conceptual jewellery can ignite the process of thought and insight followed by a reflective taking stock of what forms of voyeurism take place today, why, and a rationale of what this means to them.

**Question 1. How and where does voyeurism take place today?: Question 2. What do you think most people like to see?**

*67% of the participants most frequently listed the television and the internet. This was followed by magazines, newspapers, books and the world about us. Those participants who responded to the follow up question collectively covered a whole gamut of emotionally charged voyeuristic situations, ranging from covert to overt sexual exhibitionism, fantasised or real, to expressing experiences of the more extreme challenging / confrontational situations, simulated or real (see statistical data, Case Study 9 question 2, Appendix page no 385), One participant declined to take part in this case study, (answers were too disparate to quantify).*

“It takes place everywhere in all forms, popular culture. I guess it’s Western Popular Culture, things like television, you get things like reality TV. Car Crash TV, internet where you can see pornography, magazines, celebrity magazines, books, kiss and tell tales in the news papers, CC. TV, mobile phones. I was thinking about it last night. I guess it’s describing how people driving past a car crash slow down to rubber neck. I think it’s a kind of a real cringe thing where the kind of television presentation records awkward situations, that kind of stuff. I think most people like to see situations which involve the most extreme emotions, in situations where people let down their defences, so, from extreme things like embarrassment, ecstasy, grief, all those emotionally coloured things.”

“I think there is a culture of voyeurism with the television, with ‘Big Brother’ and all these reality shows. I think it’s rampant and I think it’s an unpleasant side of our nature where people like to see unpleasantness and other people’s discomfort. I hate that.”

“I think it’s sort of online pornography really, if you are talking voyeurism in its purest sense. In a way you gets lots of things on Channel Four like ‘Two Ton Dad’, plastic surgery, stuff like that, freak show. I don’t know what most people want to see.”

“The media, from ‘Big Brother’ to the gossip pages of the Sun. We see it in a much broader sense, but it is pure voyeurism, we are obsessed with it. I suppose people do want to see this, [pointing to the image] but actually I don’t know, they want to be titillated like in ‘Big Brother’ and I suppose that has happened where people have been found in bed. I don’t watch it but I do read the news papers so it has come out. It’s interesting that people like to hear about it but I’m not sure that most actually want to see it or be seen looking. Things have changed so much in our lifetime because in the 1970s this would be seen so completely differently than how it is seen today and in the 1950s it was very closed as a reaction to the abandonment of the 1940s, during and after the Second World War.”

“You have got the internet, television, posters, mobile phone and it’s sexual voyeurism, some people see it wider than that. I think there is a need for all of us to have a secret look. I think people like to see titillation. I think when you just show everything it’s boring.”

“These pieces of jewellery remind me of the pictures I’ve seen in the Karma Sutra, I wouldn’t wear them but I suppose you could have them not as brooches, you could have them as pieces on top of items of furniture. Voyeurism takes place today on the internet, television and in books. I think they [*people*] like to see this sort of thing actually [*pointing to the brooch*]. In fact I have always found pictures much more interesting sexually than watching on the television. I find looking at a book which has interesting photos much more sexual, especially if its got a text by it as well. I don’t know, people are funny, they would not admit to it. I mean, I love seeing sexy pictures myself. Men obviously do, I don’t know about my friends, I have never discussed it with them. I find it very sexually arousing.”

“I think probably an awful lot voyeurism goes on, there is no one source, probably the internet is used the most. It involves a lot of society, yes, it’s happening all the time but in a very subtle way. If you’re walking down the street the sort of real powerful means are the electronic word, a flash of words where you don’t even have time to realise. It’s a very interesting subject. I think, most people, they like to feel power and control and domination, or be engaged in situations where they get their silent kicks. It’s very much about emotion, one’s sense of security with one’s own needs and desires and fears.”

“In connection with this picture I see voyeurism as really looking at other people having sex, or having to do with nudity or something like that, on the internet and also on the streets. But I think voyeurism can also be very broad, it can also be seeing how other people behave and maybe having nothing to do with the sexual act. . . . What people are doing is making a comparison with themselves, how other people look and how they behave.”

“Internet, red light district, magazines. Most people like to see: the sensual, nude, semi-nude images? Couples in intimate positions and situations.”

“Well primarily I think it takes place in science fiction, the internet, porn and all sorts of things you can dabble in and sort of, dip into, and the press, the media, and, I think, what people do like to see is sort of fantasies re-enacted, taboo sort of subjects, they are the things they may not have dared to indulge in real life but one can kind of slip into that sort of fantasy world visually. I think that is what people like to see, the sort of things that they would never really touch upon themselves, just sort of wild fantasies, imaginings, sex generally I’m sure, and I’m sure there are some people who like to see pain as well, or sort of, not the threat of pain but the anticipation almost, all sorts of emotions, fear as well. I think voyeurism is where people like to see other people scared as well, watching terrible things happen to other people whilst they are safe and sound whilst watching that. Exactly the whole gamut of emotions that people like to see.”

“Peep shows, some parts of Soho, in some people’s bedrooms *via* films, books, illustrations to get them in the mood. When the excitement has gone out of their love life to get them all excited if they want to do something, maybe enact, or picture something that they would not personally do but they have got something inside them that thinks they would possibly like to do but they are never really going to get that far but it turns them on to watch it.”

“Normally where it all seems to be behind closed doors type of thing. I don’t really think about that sort of stuff going on. These days you’re looking at the blue porn market where they pick pretty girls and blokes who can carry on forever, it’s not really true life.”



“ Women’s clothing and the way they dress. There is far less modesty than there has ever been before, people are more daring. It’s far more difficult to shock now, whereas in the past we could dress in what may seem now a relatively undramatic fashion but we might have shocked people from previous eras, now conservatism is more shocking. I suppose people like to see the human form in some way or other. I don’t think people are ready to see quite overt representations of the sexual act or of a sexual nature in public. I don’t think we are at that stage. I think maybe the Dutch or the Scandinavians are a bit further down that road than we are.”

“I think voyeurism takes place all the time when we are out and about and we have got other people around for us to be visually stimulated by them in whatever way that is, even if that is just pure curiosity or human intrigue. I think perhaps socially it does kind of fit into certain structures so I suspect most young men and women and even older men and women might partake in voyeurism, . . . I’d say it does happen to a certain degree all the time. I think you are looking at human forms that attract you, be that the same sex or opposite sex. You are looking for the idealisation of a certain gender or perhaps even both genders depending on your persuasion. You’re looking to both have something that’s partially not revealed and then perhaps even joining the dots yourself as well. There is definitely a search for comparison because if you are looking at men perhaps you are thinking of clearly in a sexual way but if you’re looking at the women, or if you’re a man you’re looking at the men, I’d definitely say there is quite a strong element of comparing of ourselves and again I’d say that happens both at day time, at work, or when you are out and about or at night time as well, it’s the closest we can get, especially as I think we are quite repressed in Britain. I would say its things like nudity when something is partially revealed there is definitely a draw a kind of compulsion.”

As participants’ responses revealed; Voyeurism today is not only a form of sublimation as displacement for the sexual act, it goes wider than that. It is a kind of exploration, a taking note, marking out through investigation, establishing the boundaries, sometimes breaking them. As a culture we are steeped in a state of ambivalent confusion concerning public and private with the boundaries of social constraint on continual shifting sands.

Today’s model of voyeurism therefore fulfills a much wider need, it involves the continual referencing to and testing of the established frame of criteria for how we should conduct our lives and our behaviour. We evaluate through the various modes of looking and assess how social rule is conducted. There is a collective understanding that voyeurism exists as an accepted part of our culture and we choose to indulge in it through various mediums and genres at the various levels available to us. We can gauge the accepted rules of what is and is not permissible behaviour and what must be private or can be public, we can access the tabooed and make value judgements for ourselves. Therefore voyeurism operates as a medium / mechanism to facilitate the resultant metamorphoses of our own self identity and self-realisation.

### **Contextualisation: The bio-psychosocial impacts on sublimatory creativity embodied in design**

- Case Study 10.9 shows the deeper understanding of how a psycho-social phenomena as a consequence of its displacement or substitution by another form has been developed as one of the mechanisms available to us to enhance our understanding of how we convert verbal or visual information and media generated experiences into reflective knowledge of self-realisation

- overlaying the above and previous chapters' context is the introduction of an elevation in intelligence processing: the cognitive process of interpretation of meaning, concept formation, and mechanisms of self-referencing through images, analogies, processing of psychosexual abstract content and context

## **Section C. The psychosexual imperative:**

### **C.1. The cognitive shift: Sublimation and conceptual jewellery**

#### **Case Study 10.10 Neck jewellery by Bruno Martinazzi.**

Case Study 10.10 is an extension from Case Study 10.9 where the art of looking / displacement and conceptualisation converge.

At this point the opportunity is taken to examine what is termed here the 'cognitive shift' and the mental processes involved in the design of conceptual jewellery. A cognitive shift occurs when certain qualities in a piece of art trigger the mind into recognising a connection between the internal self and the external world. The term cognitive shift here means the crossing over from one mental understanding to another where there is a link between visual perception and cognitive perception, followed by a response to the understanding of its meaning. When a shift, often from one state of awareness to another, occurs it could be interpreted as an insight where the image is converted to a form of mental speech.

At this point one may enter the case study from a deeper level of understanding based on a chain of cognitive shifts provided. Before this is done it is important to define how the conceptual design process works. Anyone involved in the process of design knows it to be a complex form of cerebral exercise. Design is an intellectual / emotional evolutionary process, an experience of learning utilising a structure of solutions, knowing how to apply these to focus on one particular theme through the process of critical analysis until the final design solution is realised. Kevin Coates, a Contemporary designer / maker of conceptual jewellery, describes the design process as follows

... the will to make the journey from subconscious (the 'interior') to conscious thought, where it is finally given form. This is a surprisingly slow process, and like many natural processes, a cyclic one: the seeds of an idea are absorbed through the senses, something is seen or heard, read or recalled, and there follows a period, sometimes lengthy, when the idea will remain dormant before filtering through the layers of the subconscious, until the conscious mind becomes aware of its existence, and its need to be realised, and expressed. Then follows the equally long process of design which, in effect, is a dialogue between idea and form — the subconscious and conscious versions of the image — until (through exploration of the possibilities of form, colour, and scale) a mutually acceptable design emerges, in turn to take its own place in the outer world of the senses.<sup>19</sup> [This is what cognitive psychologists and designers term concept formation or problem solving].

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<sup>19</sup>

Kevin Coates, "Kevin Coates": An Exhibition of Jewels." *Goldsmith' Company Catalogue*. 6-17<sup>th</sup> July 1981,

For most jewellers Von Newman sums it up very well:

“The history of man’s efforts in constructing meaningful images – his art – is a part of our total knowledge.”<sup>20</sup> A process so personal that it is difficult to define. Case Study 10.10, Bruno Martinazzi’s Neck Jewellery is an excellent example of how a piece of conceptual jewellery operates.

**Case Study 10.10 Neck jewellery by Bruno Martinazzi.**

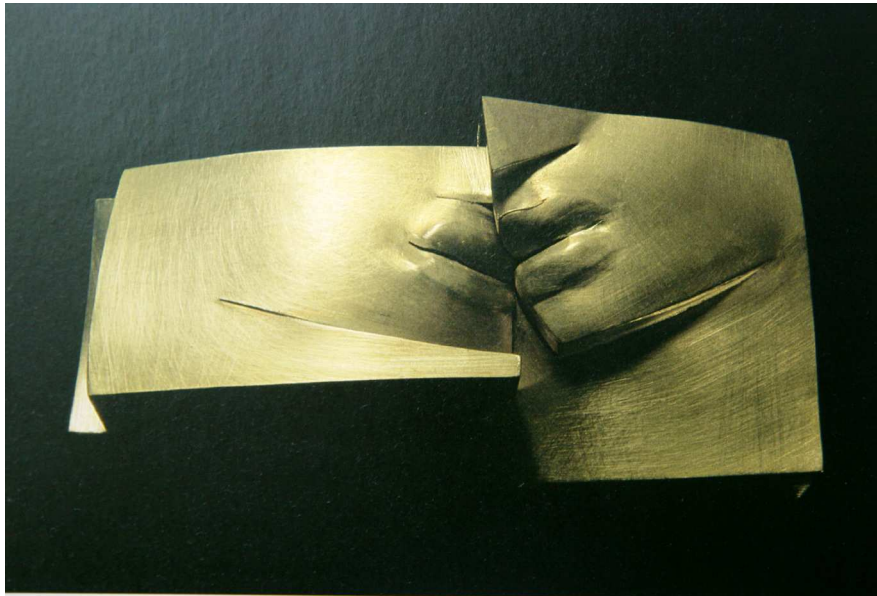


Figure 10.10. Bruno Martinazzi, Neck Jewellery, 1999. *Quel piegare - Amore* (translated as: the pain of love) 20 carat yellow gold, 18 carat red gold.

**Question 1. How do you interpret the image / object?: Question 2. Does the image make you feel troubled or reassured?**

*67 % of the participants provided a succinct, well defined narration evoked by the content of the image as an emotional dialogue. 60 % picked up a certain element of unease or sadness connected with what they saw. Some felt they were witnessing some sort of illicit involvement. 20 % gave a literal interpretation. Although the image involves looking it is not a voyeuristic activity as such, it is more a glimpse at and a feeling of empathy with the couple’s situation. In this instance male and female participants were equally insightful about the situation. Women however, were more articulate in their conceptualisation and narration.*

“I guess it’s some kind of kiss. They don’t look particularly gender specific. . . . I basically feel troubled because I’m not exactly sure what it is about. It could be interpreted in different ways, the lips could be curled in resignation or it could be submission or a kind of reluctance.”

“You get the impression of lovers, it’s kind of forlorn almost, it’s like standing in a train station and they’re sort of about to part company for a while. It’s very intense, there is a lot of tension to it. . . . Gender is hard to define except the one on the right sort of looks like the more dominant one. I think it’s slightly troubling, it’s sort of sad.”

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Von Newman, *The Design and Creation of Jewellery*, revised ed., (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd., 1973), 227.

“I see it as two lovers, very trusting, leaning in towards each other. . . . I see it as two people together, gender identity does not matter, you can interpret that as however you want it to be.”

“Well, I think it’s a rather beautiful thing. . . . looking at it the lovers are so similar that it’s almost as though they are one and the same. . . . They look quite sad, there is definitely no laughter there so . . . There is an element of sadness and troubledness.”

“It’s to do with a type of intimacy, a type of one to one connection. It’s loaded with emotion. Because the two lips are touching the souls are being touched because each is giving something, whatever that is at the time. I think they are generally trying to establish everything in terms of giving and they can’t and they can’t control that. There is a tension there, there is no reassurance and there is no assurance, it’s a bit of a risk not knowing what to expect in a new relationship. It’s a form of suspension not knowing what’s past or what the future will be, it’s just the present so what you see is what it is at the time, because afterwards it becomes something else.”

“It’s two people kissing, maybe two black people, and they’re just touching, they are not actually kissing but it’s very tender and reassuring.”

“This is an interesting piece because I looked at it and then I really looked at it again. I kind of gained intimacy with the piece. So I see it on further reflection as quite a peaceful image and emotion. I see it as being a complicit kiss, a complicit union and complicit bonding with a certain degree of being furtive, of being timid of being guarded and very provocative and very beautiful because it says so much by what is unspoken. The non-contact is just a sort of *frisson* of a fleeting moment, that it’s the beginning of it, the rest is to come but we are not necessarily part of that and we don’t need to necessarily engage in that. We are not in this case a voyeur. I feel really reassured by this image, because they are complicit. I also feel curious, but I think the reassured is more than the curious, not in the sense that you want to be there watching, no, I want to know what the ending of this piece is!”

“I couldn’t kind of get it into my head whether it’s tragic or kind of intensely sexual. I see it as a modern sculpture, emotive, sensual, humane intense. It makes me feel troubled. There is a kind of troubled intense love with an essence of desperation. They are either being illicit and they can’t really have each other or it’s so full on they really can’t cope.”

“When I first looked at it I thought, is it two men kissing? Because both faces look very masculine, both have very masculine jawlines, and the way one head is turning over the shoulder it’s almost like a hesitation, not sure whether to pursue the kiss or not. It’s almost like they are brushing past each other, it’s not a full on kiss, it’s almost a reluctant kiss. I think it doesn’t make me feel troubled, but I wonder if reassured is the right word either. There is something very tender in it which I liked, the fact that there is a kind of hesitation there, it’s almost like one is not sure if the other is being accepted. It’s sort of a half kiss, the mouths aren’t completely together, almost searching.”

“I would think two people who care about each other, just possibly about to kiss or maybe seeking reassurance as they just happened to meet each other. It’s reassuring because of the closeness.”

“Sensual intimacy, something almost secretive, like a stolen clinch, like a stolen, passionate exchange of a kiss. It’s like it’s hidden completely from the public by mutual consent. It’s reassuring in its honesty. There is an honesty between the two, the couple, although it’s secret it’s hidden from the outside. It leaves me with mixed feelings. It seems like this is something totally secret. Interesting.”

“It’s very intimate, there is a kind of alliance suggested between these two as though they are in on something together. There is a kind of unity about their pose, they are not isolated in any way. I think it makes me feel reassured. There is a slight suggestion that perhaps they could be conspiring.”

Although one is privy to a tender situation between two lovers the artist provokes no sense of intrusion, the couple are oblivious to the world around them. That Martinazzi’s focus is on the couple’s lips means there is no distraction from the emotional content, there is no background noise to distract from the idea that one has captured a moment suspended in space and time. The lovers’ searching lips separated by a deep vertical cleft suggests, on a subliminal level, a sense of unity in isolation as though each, as a consequence of their relationship, must grapple alone with their inner thoughts, their desires and insecurities to search out some sort of resolution.

Here we are witness to how an artist uses specific formulas of representation from his repertoire of skills to elicit from the viewer a specific form of cognitive conceptualisation, one to provoke empathy through self-referential reflection.

### **Contextualisation: The physiological versus psychosocial reflective awareness of self projected in design**

- Though a sense of voyeurism may still linger, ‘looking’ is no longer passive, it is now more clearly coupled with the theory of mind and the art of interpretation through a higher level of cognitive conceptualisation
- Through the visual narrative presented by the image, recognition and empathy with the emotional content and its relevant context in modern society forms a reflective reminder of the distress caused by social constraints and the discomfort and possible consequences of breaking them through illicit behaviour

## **C.2. Conceptual design and use of metaphors**

One can now recognise that a cognitive shift has occurred from interpretive narrative to symbolic content narrative relative in the fullest sense to a more complex cognitive processing, to what can now be described as conceptual jewellery. As stated in Case Study 10.11 a cognitive shift occurs when certain visual elements, constructed messages in a piece of art, trigger or stimulate the mind into recognising a connection between the internal self and the external world. In this situation other levels of complexity move from purely representational / observational translation to metaphysical and / or temporal reality, to encapsulate the essence of some thing, phenomenon, experience, or concept. The term conceptual jewellery describes the transition from one level of understanding to another where visual perception



is linked to cognitive perception, leading to a response through the changed understanding of meaning whereby the cerebral processing of ideas is converted into intellectual dialogue as an evocative and / or meaningful conceptual narrative. We are not necessarily always aware of this change in perception. Sensations of an altered state of mind occur as we are drawn to experience consciously reconnections of the subconscious with the conscious. Cognitive shifts accommodate instantaneous communicative connections on several levels simultaneously.

**Case study 10.11 The Cross Necklace by Slawomir Sewerynowicz and Magda Zienowicz.**



*Figure 10.11 The Cross Necklace. Slawomir Sewerynowicz and Magda Zienowicz, 2001  
Forged silver, wood, acrylic paint.*

The neck piece in Case Study 10.11 exploits this to achieve a cognitive shift from one perception of Christian beliefs and ideology to a reassessment / re-evaluation of them. Placing one's head in the neckpiece changes the iconography to project a very different set of communications.

**Question 1: What does the image bring to mind? Does the image strike a chord with you about any aspects / attitudes in life concerning sex, the body and love?**

*87 % of the participants saw it as making a statement which was both provocative and evocative. Participants brought to the fore many aspects of religion that in their minds were not acceptable*

**Question 2: What psychosexual aspects / restraints / dictates of religion and accompanying social structures do you find the most distressing?**

*73 % of the participants listed several aspects of religion as distressing (see Appendix Page 387 for detailed list of topics)*

“I guess the image is about like being crucified and because you can put your head in it, it’s putting you in that position. I don’t know if it strikes a chord with me. I guess one thing I can think of is the image of Christ on a cross. I guess it can be a fairly erotic type of image. I don’t know!”

“I don’t like this at all. . . . I just find it quite distasteful in a way. If I saw someone wearing it I’d think it eerie. The arms are too long compared to the body so it just looks unsettling because the proportions are all wrong, and the proportions are even worse because someone’s head is in the middle of it which is huge compared to the rest of the body. I think it’s disrespectful, you know what I mean? It’s making a statement about religion. [*would it be about any recent events?*] Not really unless you wanted to be anti-Christian. Yes, it’s somebody who wanted to show disrespect, that’s the impression I get with it, it’s a provocative piece. . . . I find the subordination of women in religion the most distressing, religion is used a lot to subordinate women. . . . I’m thinking mainly in the way Moslem women are treated. Also in Christian and other religions the woman has always to be the one who is at fault. If there is any kind of carnality going on it’s not the man who can’t control his desires it’s the woman’s fault for provoking him. Even Confucius had a saying, ‘a back door is not a door and a woman is not a human being’, that sounds really sexist to me.”

“I just think of ‘The Life of Brian’. I wouldn’t say it was a serious piece of Christian jewellery. It could get a bit deep, I could go on about childbirth I suppose, if I really wanted. I would not see the funny side of that, it’s not like sticking your head in a thing down at the fairground and having your picture taken like the fat lady, it’s definitely more serious than that. I think you could offend some people. It doesn’t seem to be a thing you would want to walk around in, I would admit you’d need to be careful. Religion starts wars, they all seem to be holier than thou but end up being anything but, especially the Catholic Church at the moment, but its only because its their turn. I don’t think you can trust any of them. I doubt if the Christian faith is any better and then of course you have got the Jewish faith, they hide behind that to start all sorts of wars, they say religion starts most wars and I suppose it has one way or another. If people want to have faith that’s fine, it may comfort them, but I find it disturbing if they want to carry it all through their life and don’t act normal.”

“Well it obviously relates to the crucifixion. I was brought up completely without religion, so it hasn’t any meaning to me. However I find religion fascinating. I find Christianity fascinating, that they worship these, actually horrific, images. So it’s always a horrific image to me, which it is meant to be. You are supposed to put your head in there but also if you’re looking at it, just as an object, there is an empty space, no head, it’s symbolising current affairs, like child abuse and ordination of women, and suggesting that the ethics of Christianity have been thought through by an empty head with no brain, or someone has buried their head in the sand.”

“We are all a sacrifice. it’s an ambivalence of peace because if I were to wear that there would be a blasphemous thing going on and simultaneously there would be truth going on. It’s asking you to put yourself in that place and it would cause a lot of trouble. I experienced something similar with the wearing of a coin which showed both images of a bible and something Islamic. If I were to wear that it would be interesting how people would react and what they would have to say, it would be a bit scary. Religion causes so much trouble and much upset and there are so many wars fought in the name of religion, people blow themselves up for it. Everything

is so corrupted and twisted over other people's religious point of view, it's completely out of proportion. The symbol of the cross has this finality about it, however the whole biblical thing and beliefs, it's all really questionable. There are questions about interpretation and what people witnessed at the time, was it all exaggerated?"

"The Crucifixion and it's asking or crying out for help. It's a very distressing picture, as though someone is suffering a crucifixion of some sort. Yes I do find religious pressures distressing because, I was thinking about, I'm very pro abortion so I think the dictates of religion are against abortion. I think for a woman she should have the right to choose. So that I feel very strongly about. If a woman wants to have a termination she should. There is so much about religion I don't agree with. I think lots of people who are religious are very disapproving so that's another thing I don't like, there are many dictates in religion I don't agree with and it's mostly against women. I mean, the Moslem religion, the fact that some are not allowed an education."

"It's very up front, it's just about the crucifixion and the separation or the union of the mind, the body, the soul, and the way the actual part of that goes round the neck interlinks them but also leaves them disjointed, disunited, . . . it's quite a provocative piece. I don't find it blasphemous or distressing."

"For me it is questioning religion and Jesus. The question for me is, what is religion today? I am Christian. [*the participant, having disclosed earlier that he was gay was asked how he reconciled his faith with the denial of same sex relationships, the reply to this was*]: I think that was the sign of that time [*at the time of Christ*] if I would have lived in that time I would have had a problem. I would have had a woman and I would have had children because that's how I would have survived in that period of time. I think I was created in this way. I think God has created all of us and I think he has a plan for us as well. For example there are a lot of gay men in the theatre and ballet, that doesn't mean to say they are best at that, but they contribute to a happier world. [*asked how do you feel about where in some countries it's punishable by death?* *He replied*] It's horrible."

"I don't think of the sexual aspect at all, more the religious. It's a clever interpretation of the cross, but I've come from a background that's not religious. . . . I find anything to do with the crucifixion really quite freaky and I find it, how it obviously influences the world, that freaks me out. We are dictated to by the whole Virgin versus whore thing of Christianity, and guilt clinging to it. In desperation, when you have nowhere else to go, faith is the ultimate place to be, when you are at your last wits end. I think its clever what they have done with this piece as a whole thing."

"I think because it's a religious icon of the crucifixion. It's just sort of about pain and suffering, and wearing it, as a cross obviously, but also wearing it as some kind of penance and all of that sort of thing. That sort of suggests Catholicism to me and the sort of the guilt involved in sex, and that sex is for reproduction and not for pleasure. It's not what I would call a delicate piece of jewellery and it's also quite coarse looking, so it has that suggestion of pain, that sex is not perhaps a beautiful thing, it's a kind of necessary thing, it's suggesting it shouldn't be a pleasure. You know, you don't look at that piece of jewellery and think 'oh that's stunning that piece', you don't covet it but it still expresses these things. I think it's that association with the guilt and pain and also giving it those associations of what that has meant in history for women in terms

of contraception and guilt involved and the consequences of not being able to be responsible, you know, there is all of that guilt about being a woman.”

“To me it obviously looks like Jesus being crucified. I personally would not wear it, I think nobody would want to wear it actually. It does not offend me because I’m not religious but I do think it would upset a lot of people, so in that way it would be offensive. It would offend me in that someone wants to offend. To me, anyone who makes that is trying to make a statement and to get attention . . . art should get you thinking and talking but not necessarily offend. It’s a fine line perhaps but to me that goes over the edge because I know my Mum, for example, would be upset by that.

I find the full Burkha where there isn’t even slits for the eyes distressing. I don’t have a problem with women wearing it, . . . but I was in Lahore where I saw some women trying to cross five lanes of busy traffic with not even slits for their eyes. Apparently you can see through the grids, but only just because it’s so dark, and to me it’s just not right, there is a safety aspect as well. To me that is restraint going too far, that you’re not allowed as a woman to show your eyes. I can understand them covering up so that we should have some social limits about what young girls wear in society, as perhaps sometimes we display a bit too much, but in very strict cultural situations it’s gone a bit too far.”

“I know people do identify with imagery of this form and some people identify very strongly with it. I don’t identify with it personally, it’s not how I feel at all. I don’t feel like a martyr, not in that way anyway. I don’t feel my head belongs in that place, in that location.

I think that society is still deeply uneasy about expressing sexuality. This is Victorian culture, the long shadow of has not receded completely, there is still quite a lot of it left. There are those in the church, in religious places, and obviously we know what those places are and they are the wagging finger, they are the gate keepers reminding us what we should be restrained and repressed about because that’s what they are themselves. We are not free and if you are not free you can’t help but be a jailer yourself. The jailer isn’t free, the jailer jails other people and there’s still a great deal of that, and of course the religions being the arch conservative establishments that they are. We can’t have a more relaxed, free, open and honest culture or society unless we remove the shackles of this so called conservatism. I don’t think the two can coexist. Again the three major religions do guilt in a big way. They say it’s the Catholicism but Anglicanism is there as well, it’s got its roots in Catholicism, Judaism certainly and Islam massively, it’s all about guilt.”

“Well it seems to be an image of Christ on the cross but without the head, just his body which is very objective, it’s taken away any sense of identity which is slightly distressing, I find. It does strike a chord with me about aspects of love and of sex and of the body. I think especially with that notion of putting your head in there, sort of taking up that position it’s sacrificial and that seems to me to be a very pessimistic view of things, because going forwards a little you asked me about psychosexual aspects, restraints and dictates of religion accompanying social structures, what do I find the most distressing? When I look at this image it just makes me think, ‘gosh, love as a form of martyrdom, love as form of sacrifice’ and that strikes a chord with me because I was brought up as a Catholic. So I’m very familiar with that kind of idea that, if something is good enough, then you will sacrifice certain things for it and there is this idea of a kind of resurrection as with Christ that somehow through sacrificing yourself you are going

to gain in the long run, and I think that's a false idea. I think it's a piousness idea in that way. That's quite confrontational, that piece."

"Sex is not driven underground in modern civilisation. On the contrary, it comes to be continually discussed and investigated. [it is the subject of discourse, of research, sexual exploration and liberation] It has become part of 'a great sermon', replacing the more ancient tradition of theological preaching."<sup>21</sup> It is a tide which cannot be turned.

People are moving away from institutionalised religion in a search of a better vision of spiritual fulfilment. The piece of jewellery acts as a challenge to outmoded religious ideals, provocative in itself, in its attempt to bring a heightened awareness of current discussions and distress created by the dictates and the trespasses of institutionalised religion, especially in its attitude towards children, women and homosexuality. The artist as seer operates in a space where others might not dare to tread and projects a warning that religion must adapt to the values of the society it seeks to serve or else lose its place in modern society.

### **Contextualisation: Psychosexual versus psycho-social displacement through design.**

- This addresses several of the same points as the previous case study. However there is another shift in cognitive focus in that it deals with how the artist, as author of this conceptual piece, has used an historical metaphor to question religious idealism and its indiscretions in reference to the modern world.
- The composition of design has been orchestrated in such a way as to heighten awareness of the undertow of hidden aspects of the psycho-sexual concerns / anxieties taking place in society today. The conceptual processing taking place is connecting the internal with the external realities of our world, evoking emotions, metamorphosing into yet another layer of meaning and understanding.

### **C.3. Psychosexual anxieties**

As hypothesised in the thesis those primordial functions, impulses, passions, emotions, memories which are too stimulating to be acted out on a sociological level are dealt with on the sublimatory level in an attempt to replace the pain of unfulfilled desire with pleasure. These emotions are sublimated through objects, some bordering on the fetishistic, as is the case of the image in Case Study 10.12.

As a result of the social political changes and attitude towards sexual freedom from the 1960s onwards, artists have, with gathering momentum, grabbed at every opportunity of freedom of self expression and subject matter to give prominence to the female body as a part of their symbolic repertoire. Today the female body has become a dominant feature of popular culture, repositioning the argument of the representation of the female form as the object of pleasure, to the subject of discourse, in which it has now taken a central role. The influence of the feminist movement which has developed alongside leaves those who have moved beyond still trying to rationalise the representation of the female body into a kind of synthesis of deductive reasoning which is still not resolved.

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<sup>21</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992; reprint, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 19 (page references are to reprint edition).



Recent discourse suggests that the body has become a cultural construct subjected to modes of representation which define the ideals of a society constructed through various definitions of identity in both popular media and the academic arena, leaving the individual in the mainstream of society to make deductions of their own, each at their own level.

**Case study 10.12 Body Sculpture /Adornment by Allen Jones.**



*Figure 10.12 Allen Jones body sculpture / adornment. Exhibited 1997 at The Power of Erotic Design exhibition, Design Museum London.*

In Case Study 10.12 participants' responses to the image provide an insight and gauge to current personal values and attitudes in this area of investigation

**Question 1: If you were female / male how would you interpret this image? Question 2: How does it make you feel?**

*93 % of men and women were fully aware of the aesthetically erotic messages the image gave out, and why they might be drawn to it. Several acknowledged a sense of pleasure in what they saw, no matter how unrealistic. 40 % of the participants saw the funny side of humans' hapless*

*attempts to make and meet unrealistic and fantasised ideals, almost as though they were having a laugh at their own expense. There were voiced some mixed feelings of inadequacy, voyeurism, objectification etc but this was mitigated by the knowledge that in the real world this human body was just unrealistic.*

“It’s powerful in different ways, you can interpret it in different ways. Celebration of the female form. . . . I guess it’s something that is kind of overtly sexualising the female form. I think I have seen this sort of thing before and it’s always highly eroticised. From the male perspective the woman looks like some kind of fantasy, like Barbarella. It makes me wonder what the material is, it looks as though she would not be able to move in that and wonder whether it’s very constricting. I mean it looks like she would not be able to walk so that’s kind of disconcerting and also the sort of strap at the back.”

“I just thought ‘Wonder Woman’ she’s got these big pointy boobs like ‘Wonder Woman’. I don’t have strong feelings either way about it. I think it’s quite witty actually. Yeah I think if you’ve got a perfect body and you want to go out and strut your stuff, good on you. I think it’s quite assertive and it’s a kind of distortion in a way, she’s got abnormally shaped breasts, and she has no genitalia. . . . It makes feel slightly amused, but it’s just a question of an amusing piece. It’s almost like a parody of the perfect female form.”

“It’s very idealised, very robotic. As far as I’m concerned she is just stuck behind the piece of ridged plastic, because you can’t actually see her move it doesn’t make me feel anything. It’s a very unrealistic image, it has the pinched in waist and very upturned breasts. It doesn’t do anything for me, it’s not sexual, it’s definitely not erotic. If she was lithe and if she was moving I think I would see it differently but I’m only responding to what I can see here. Again I don’t find her attractive and I think her arms are too skinny so I’m wondering what might be underneath.”

“It’s Barbarella isn’t it? I think that is pornography to me because it’s making women into objects. This is achievable now I suppose with plastic surgery. I don’t feel easily offended but I suppose if I were to be offended it would be by that, I don’t like it, it reminds me of cartoon figures of women. Conceivably a male would find it erotic. I don’t like it, I don’t like seeing women presented like this, it is offensive to our sensibilities. It’s also slightly silly, though not in the way of funny silly.”

“I see it as liberating, because of the shape, the way it is constructed, the woman who is daring enough to wear that would be quite proud. It’s quite sexualised I suppose. But then, you see, a transsexual would wear that. They would use it to emphasise their feminine aspirations. It is a type of mask which states assertive sexuality. It’s a bit like Madonna’s bra. A straight male would find it sexually inviting. If you look at it, you would want to touch it, it’s very erotic, for sure there is no getting away from it. I think it’s a good thing. Me personally, it doesn’t do anything for me, but I can see why one would be fascinated with it. It’s a fascinating piece, you are drawn to it immediately.”

“This one looks like a blow up doll. or a James Bond Goldfinger girl. I’m sure for a male it would be sexy. I don’t find it at all sexy. I don’t like her breasts sticking out like that, I don’t like it, it’s not realistic, no one could have breasts looking like that unless she has had plastic surgery, so I don’t like it, its just like false, just like a doll.”

“I find it aggressive as an image, not so much because it’s representing the female body in this particular form, the material looks aggressive the way this piece of body wear has actually been presented, the model, the background, everything. There is a contradiction, I think, in this image as to whether the body piece is in fact adorning, enhancing this lady, a female form, a female sexuality, or if it’s exploiting and degrading and the fact that the strap has been left open is sort of also rather symbolic, that it’s rather, you know, it’s open to a lot of questioning but at the end of it I feel quite neutral.”

“I would say how unnatural that is. She is very thin her boobs are very strange and it’s a Barbie doll but her face doesn’t go with it. For a straight man that could be hot, it depends on what you think is nice, but I think she looks like a hooker and I don’t have good connotations with that, so for me it’s not hot at all. It reminds me of human trafficking so it’s not erotic. Because of those connotations it makes me feel a bit sick.”

“It’s a kind of fabulous, sensual, skin tight sort of outfit, verging on the pornographic, fancy dress almost. It’s like the perfect female body. Is it achievable? Well, Angelina Jolie seems to have pulled it off. It’s like a make believe fantasy of a woman’s form. It feels cheeky, sexy, fun, fantastic.”

“I interpret this image in two ways, one is I think it’s absolutely amazing, I just think it’s a striking image. I love the material that sort of bronze look to it and sort of the shimmering. It’s a beautiful thing and it’s amazingly crafted but, what it does to this woman, you know, brings her waist into an impossibly small size, it’s smooth, it’s that whole image, this is a man’s idea of a woman, and the impossibly pert breasts with the nipples that are pointing upwards [*laughing*] at a ninety degree angle almost, that’s an unobtainable idea of a female form, very cruel and she is encased in that piece and I don’t know if there is any flexibility in that at all, or whether she can move, but it just looks incredibly uncomfortable and restrictive, like a body cast. From a male point of view, oh he would probably think that was amazing, and how sexy and how erotic and wow what amazing breasts, look what that does! As a female it makes me feel inadequate, I look at that and I think wow, but at the same time I know its unobtainable.”

“It’s obviously a sexual thing, it reminds me of ‘Wonder Woman’ or something like that. It makes me smile really, it doesn’t make me think it’s overtly sexual because although there is a sexual aspect, obviously, to it, it makes me think it’s a bit of a joke sexual thing. To me I would think it’s like kind of a ‘Wonder Woman’ and the way the breast stands up it makes me think of Madonna in her phase. And it’s kind of all a bit out of reach unrealistic . . . whereas the body thing, that seems to me that someone might take that a bit more seriously. To me no one can take it that seriously. The wearing of it is probably a bit of fun and also when you take it off. If I were male I think I’d quite like it, it would probably be quite fun to watch and I’d probably quite like to take it off. I feel it’s a bit of a joke.”

“This just made me think that it’s maybe how women hoped that that’s how men think they look like or maybe what men want them to look like. Could it be achieved? Certain parts no, unless you used plastic surgery, I don’t think so. From the male’s point of view it’s probably most desired but probably not achievable and not reachable.”

“I have to say, that since I have been studying this, it has started to prod me into putting myself in female shoes more and not just female shoes but a black person’s too. Things I’d

never thought about, the other side, a guy always sees himself through a guy's eyes. If I were a woman I would be giving the man what I thought he wanted. It's basically saying 'look, it doesn't matter what I have got from the neck up, sort of thing, this is what you want and it doesn't matter who is in it, this is it.' As a male I see the image as possibly poking fun, possibly mockery, erm, making fun of the single mindedness of the male psyche, it does draw you in. This, what you have basically as the shell, is the classical, probably the most popular for the male, of the female form. Idealised as a kind of mask suggests it's a statement, saying that your thoughts are as two dimensional as this mask. I feel amused, it's amusing, it's funny, it's meant to be funny. . . this is an idealised version of a female form, it's unobtainable but obviously it's attractive."

"It's horrific, it's kind of glorifying the female body in a very voyeuristic way just for men, just for the appeal of the opposite sex and although she is standing inside this piece the fact that it doesn't extend up to the head, that it's ending at the neck and the arms, is kind of giving you the idea of kind of objectifying the body as something separate from an identity. It's not looking at the woman as a whole entity, it's just looking at the body and it's this look of the tag on the side of it which I find slightly off putting because it gives me the idea that this is something anyone can buy, that this is achievable that a man can buy this for a woman or a woman can buy this so that she can be what she feels she should be for a man. I think a man might even find it slightly confronting and intimidating. I don't know how obvious we all like to be about our sexuality. We were talking about voyeurism earlier but voyeurism isn't usually quite so obvious, we are not usually being quite so upfront so I find perhaps on the surface of things a man would find this attractive, inviting and exciting, kind of sexually stimulating but I think perhaps he may also find it intimidating. It's kind of separating, it seems like a barrier between the model and me so perhaps a man would see that in the same way. I suppose it makes me feel aware of my body in a way that I would not perhaps ordinarily be, just by drawing attention so much to the physicality of our being. It's distracting from other attributes. Is this achievable? Perhaps in very, very rare instances or perhaps through surgical means it might be achievable, it reminds me of the kind of Barbie Doll shape."

"You have got a cross between Goldfinger and Jane Fonda from Barbarella. Women don't normally look like that, well, not in my experience anyway, boobs don't do that in real life. As a male I would not say it's a turn on, it's a bit of a light hearted giggle . . . you can see it at the movies. It's a bit of amusement and it puts a smile on my face".

We have all experienced the mesmerising effects of beauty

"Beauty when you are in the presence of it, is a transforming influence, . . . it exerts real power. . . . It's strong stuff and few of us can resist its allure. . . . Aldous Huxley observed that ' beauty is worse than wine; it intoxicates both the holder and the beholder', . . . We crave beauty because of its rarity."<sup>22</sup>

At the bottom line much of the discourse taking place does not accommodate the fact that the enigma of the aesthetics known as beauty is part of the *pas de deux* of the ritual of sexual presentation / representation, the act of looking and pleasure in being looked at is the bio-imperative in action, it is how both of the sexes operate and fulfill the prompts of the

reproductive agenda. In the context of the image thus presented evolutionary psychology comes to the rescue to explain why we find certain elements of the human body so mesmerising and to provide a rationale for the artist's compulsive urge to replicate it in their art.

In approaching sexual maturity changes to the female body, especially the breasts, signal peak points of interest to the male copulatory gaze. These following signals are set to elicit interest and press all the primal buttons.

***The breast-bud of puberty.*** At the very start of the reproductive phase, when menstration begins and the pubic hair sprouts, the nipple region starts to swell.

***The pointed breast of young adulthood.*** As teenage years pass, there is a further slight increase in breast size. At this stage both the nipple and the areolar patch project above the breast, creating a more pointed shape.

***The firm breast of adulthood,*** The ideal physical age for a human is twenty-five. This is the stage at which the body is at its peak of condition and all growth processes have been completed. During the twenties the female breast fills out to its most rounded hemispherical condition. Although it is larger its weight has not yet started to make it droop.

There is only one point in the female's life when her breasts have maximum protrusion with minimum droop and that is the moment when the camera shutter must click to produce the most erotic images. It is interesting that expert photographers who work for glossy magazines specialising in erotic pictures find that there is only one kind of girl with the super-breasts they seek. Her age is slightly younger than one might expect, late teens, and her breasts have grown to full adult size slightly earlier than the average: they exhibit the perfect roundness required, but still retain the firmness of extreme youth. This special combination has provided the kind of image of which centrefolds and men's magazine fortunes have been made.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise the artist of the image has captured and presented his audience with an assemblage of the ultimate criteria for the approval and gratification of the male copulatory gaze. Humans' evolved psychological mechanisms of the primal bio-imperative continue to drive our behaviour and mould our culture. The problems begin when physical drives and society's supervision of aesthetic criteria and culture's manipulative exploitation of the female body and exploits of consumerism all start to collide.

Popular culture's constant exposure of the idealised female body has contaminated and corrupted the primal copulatory gaze with unrealistic ideals and expectations of what the body should be and what it should look like, the causal effects of which have created neuroses and anxieties about how to meet its expectations. The Darwinian agenda has not accounted for these cultural viruses and their establishment in cultural niches. Therefore the sexually articulated, sublimatory content and context of art helps to highlight issues that cannot be so easily detected or articulated, here the artist's work acts as a kind of satire to challenge illogical conventions and to reframe normality.

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<sup>23</sup>



In this context participants' responses brought to the fore the following:

- Men and women are fully aware of the aesthetically erotic messages the image gave out, and why they may be drawn to it. Several acknowledged a sense of pleasure in what they saw
- At the same time several saw the funny side of humans' hapless attempts to make and meet unrealistic demands. Almost as though they were having a laugh at their own expense
- There were feelings of inadequacy but this was mitigated by the knowledge that in the real world this form of physical beauty was a rare phenomenon, almost a freak of nature if it were natural
- Current raising of awareness might mean that the pressure on young impressionable women to comply with the unattainable and unrealistic idealism of physical and sexual attractiveness is beginning to be alleviated by being put into a more realistic context
- There was a sense that blatant deceit and manipulation of their copulatory gaze could overrule their primal response in a sense that it was false representation
- There was little sense of the anger or resentment which might have been encountered when feminism was at its peak. Both sexes showed how they had reached beyond that by expressing a mutual understanding of how the sexes, through the interpretation of the image, relate to each other today.

#### **Contextualisation: psychosexual anxieties: defusing by design**

- contemporary representation of the female body not only engages / interacts with the hidden biological inclinations, social mores and their inherent paradoxes but also highlights the development of emergent changes in the psycho-sexual and socio-political attitudes of the sexes
- shifting cognitive sensibilities operate new progressions in the psycho-social political arena to continue the drive of social evolution into new directions
- progressive intellectual enlightenment *via* application of evolutionary psychology explains the mesmerising effect of bio-imperative body aesthetics.

#### **Case Study 10.13. Cotton Twist, razor blade by Aneta Lis-Marcinkiewicz**

This case study goes on to show a further cognitive development whereby through the art of conceptual jewellery the use of sublimatory content is applied to instigate a particular dialogue.

In recent years post modernist critique has investigated / evaluated various representations in terms of the position of the sexes' relationship with one another, much of which has been evaluated against the backdrop of feminist critique. More recently the rapidly growing research, based on the Darwinian approach through the application of evolutionary psychology,

has provided fresh insights into human behaviour. This new area of enlightenment has complimented previous discourse *via* a more scientifically based argument and understanding of human nature and the fundamental concepts of how the male copulatory gaze operates and how and why women respond to it.

In contrast to pre-modern, tribal societies where body adornment mapped out the sexual state of the female body in a rigid and fixed mode of identity (see Chapter 9), the continuing process of sexual liberation in modern societies means that modern women are now responsible and in control of their own physical and intellectual identity which is dependant on self expression. Previous raising of awareness *via* feminist-critique based cultural studies has in many respects challenged and repositioned the way in which body representation, jewellery and its making have been operating. However, more recently an advanced form of conceptual jewellery has begun to emerge. Through the medium of jewellery, some women practitioners are establishing a platform for the open defiance of the contemporary stereotype of 'body aesthetics' and its dictates concerning a particular type of sexual representation.

The next two case studies show how some women artists are establishing, through defiant symbolic dialogue, affirmation of the sexual ownership of their own bodies through the medium of jewellery. A few female jewellers are making a combative reaction to the past and are incorporating into their repertoire more recent values surrounding a revised identity and body representation. Some women practitioners are beginning to explore, through their various uses of jewellery, how to destabilise conventional interpretations of masculinity and femininity and of sexual behaviour and to challenge their boundaries. This new jewellery seeks to build on this development to define the inner world speaking to the outer rather than being dictated to by it.

These jewellery / body practices capture the gaze whereby it no longer is able to consume passively the adorned. Through the decorated body the gaze is apprehended, repulsed, but, on a more sophisticated level re-engaged; the gaze is renegotiated on the terms of the adorned, it is the adorned who then controls the dialogue. As in Case Study 10.13.

**Case Study 10.13. Cotton Twist, razor blade by Aneta Lis-Marcinkiewicz**



*Figure 10.13 Aneta Lis-Marcinkiewicz. Cotton Twist, razor blade. 2004 (a response to a brief entitled : 'Short Message').*

Here the artist creates a particular state of mind. She has established this by the bringing together of two disparate elements / objects which, each with their own symbolic connotations, form a single binary narration, ie., a 'Short Message', one which triggers sensations of pain, apprehension and a general sense of danger related to our sexual insecurities, a potent collection of disturbing primal emotions. This transference of sensations, made real through the act of perception, is one of the most challenging to the artist and the most difficult to create. However, as the following participants' responses demonstrate, the artefact's impact on our senses evokes a particular cognitive dialogue that exposes several psycho-sexual related anxieties that still persistently haunt us.

**Question 1. How do you interpret this image?: Question 2. How does it make you feel?**

*87 % of the participants found it painful / disturbing to look at, read danger, damage and defence.*

*80% of participants said it made them feel anxious, uncomfortable, disturbed,. Many of them visibly shuddered.*

*Participants' responses brought two elements to the surface, one a personal response to sexual liberation and secondly the issue of living in a multicultural society where the meeting of one society's ideals (such as the circumcision of women) cannot be comprehended nor accommodated to the other.*

"It's a piece of underwear, but then with a razor blade stuck into it. To me it's a fetishistic sort of statement. It looks dangerous, I guess it could mean a kind of Punk chastity belt. I think it's deliberately provocative, it's aimed to provoke some sort of shock value. I don't particularly like it."

"It seems quite aggressive, it's like a sort of chastity belt type of theme. Like do not enter, but then again it's such a flimsy piece, it's a bit of a conflict with the sharpness of the razor blade and the actual garment. Its kind of almost got a homosexual connotation in a way, anal sex and stuff. I just don't like it very much."

"I see danger and I think I'd be very nervous dealing with that person. While you are engaging in foreplay you are in danger of losing your fingers. Yes, it would be a nasty dame, because you would not see that immediately so you don't know it's a hidden danger. You could almost liken it back to the ancient femmes fatale who are supposed to have vagina dentata which you wouldn't see. It makes me feel, well, very nervous, dealing with that person, I don't know about the artist, plus wearing that I would be a bit nervous about them."

"Well, I find that looks very painful. It could have several meanings, it brings to mind rape and slicing of clothing. It makes me feel, well, not very comfortable."

"The first thing I thought of was rape and being wounded. It's quite dark and disturbing. The blade is associated as being a male accessory, even though females use a razor that's a male symbol and obviously the panties are a female symbol and if you look at it more closely these could be the fallopian tubes. And you have got this not wanting to touch delicate material, easily damaged, ripped and wounded. It's disturbing, all I can see is damage, rape and pain."

“This one to me is just like a pair of thongs that you wear. I think it would be very painful to wear. It’s a bit like the removal of the clitoris, female circumcision, that’s to me what it identifies, women’s circumcision. . . . The razor just by the vagina. Circumcision for women I think that’s just terrible because you lose all feeling and everything.”

“To me it’s putting forward in a very direct way the two notions of power and of defence. I’ve worn more minuscular sized pants and it’s actually not very comfortable.”

“I interpret this as a protest against female circumcision and it gives me a bad feeling, really uncomfortable because I can almost sense the razor blade cutting into the human flesh.”

“ It’s harsh, aggressive, modern, sadomasochistic, gritty but urban. It makes me feel dirty and cheap.”

“Yes this is really, really interesting. I thought there’s a very serious level about it but also humorous because any women who has tried to wear a thong, for whatever reason, she feels she needs to wear one to be sexy or alluring or to turn on the boyfriend or whatever. It’s not a comfortable piece of clothing. It’s a real cheese cutter and the pain and the blade, that is exactly what it does, it cuts you up. It’s not comfortable, you’re constantly reminded about what you are wearing throughout the day. To sit down you need to reposition yourself and it’s, you know, it’s what a woman does to increase her feelings of sexiness or attractiveness or her seductiveness to a man and they think that that is what a man wants to see. He will never know what the reality of it is unless you make him wear it to make a point or to test the theory. They will never know how uncomfortable that is and what women do go through in the pursuit of being alluring to men. And you know there is humour in it because anyone who has ever worn one will kind of laugh at that but also it’s about the things we put ourselves through, the pain that we endure to be more attractive, and if you take that one step further it’s plastic surgery, you’re cutting yourself to change, to make yourself what you think is attractive to men. It makes me feel amused and also distressed.”

“It’s a bit sadistic, isn’t it really? The fetish of cutting and danger. It makes me feel quite uncomfortable. I wouldn’t want to wear it, that’s for certain. I kind of find it uncomfortable to look at because you think, oooh, because you think about wearing it so you feel it’s uncomfortable to look at and I kind of think why did they do that. It’s something to do with control of women, female mutilation, female circumcision.”

“I see self harm, self mutilation, servitude, sexual torture, it makes me feel uncomfortable. . . . If you put somebody in that garment, you know they have got a razor blade between their legs, it’s very powerful, it’s very disturbing, I have never seen anything like that before.”

“This is very violent. I find it very violent and disturbing. It’s this notion of having something like a razor blade in such an intimate location. In there lies the potential for violence. Even if it’s self harming violence or if its something that is kind of involved in a relationship between two people, or even if it’s just an idea, to have a blade in a place which is so close to so intimate, so delicate a part of your body is disturbing.”

“It means approach very carefully. It’s something that you can’t have, or no entry so it’s a warning. some things are off limits.”

Those being interviewed brought two elements to the surface: current aspects of sexual liberation and the issue of living in a multicultural society where the meeting of one culture’s ideals (such as the circumcision of women) cannot be reconciled with western ideals. The male to female interaction discussed, in relation to the image, is on a different level to that which is visible in society, and therefore we cannot take at face value what social rules may be applied, if any, when sexual interaction takes place. On the basis of this understanding, what happens behind closed doors will have to be a matter of negotiation, of trust and distrust, instinct and an evaluative assessment on how to proceed. The artefact reminds us that sex can be just one small step away from potential violation. In a way it is a form of paradox because it speaks of sexual liberation but simultaneously induces new fears and anxieties and is ambiguous because it is separate from, but only exists because of, our consciousness of the social monitoring of our behaviour.

Participants’ different reflections of perception and interpretation highlighted the question, in reading the image, are you viewer, subject, or object and / or victim? The mind shifts from place to place in an unsettled manner, but this is exactly what the determination of conceptual jewellery is supposed to do. Jewellery runs parallel to current cultural movements and debates. Today it is not always about producing beautiful objects, it has a far more purposeful role which is to seek out what is meaningful. In this respect, jewellery speaks about the body and has provided (as the thesis has argued) a powerful influence on the structure of society. We are currently living in a multi-racial, multicultural society, where integration with the modern world often clashes with inappropriate outmoded values.

Thus, in this piece of conceptual jewellery, we have on the one side a concept which acknowledges the western women’s continuing pursuit of personal ownership and control of their sexuality as they move forward in a continual state of flux. On the other side, in stark contrast, we are simultaneously confronted by the idea of the infiltration of barbaric practices such as female circumcision / mutilation, outmoded traditions with no place in western society today. The piece provides a powerful message concerning the physical suffering and emotional distress the practice causes to thousands of women, not only in our midst but also in the world beyond. The piece highlights that this is an issue that must be resolved, the mutilation of women’s physical and mental autonomy can no longer be tolerated.

#### **Contextualisation: Psychosexual anxiety, a discourse through design.**

- The artist’s cognitive skill demonstrates how, the bringing together of two objects, each with its own symbolic content, can be choreographed to create a new symbolic frame for reference
- The artifact expresses through symbolic discourse the needs and anxieties which, harboured within each of us, is manifest but sublimated in collective understanding
- The conceptual jewellery reveals the raw expression of sexual vulnerability and reflects the anxieties surrounding it
- How the displacement of sensation takes place through the artifact and is made real by transference through the act of perception as an instrument for reflection

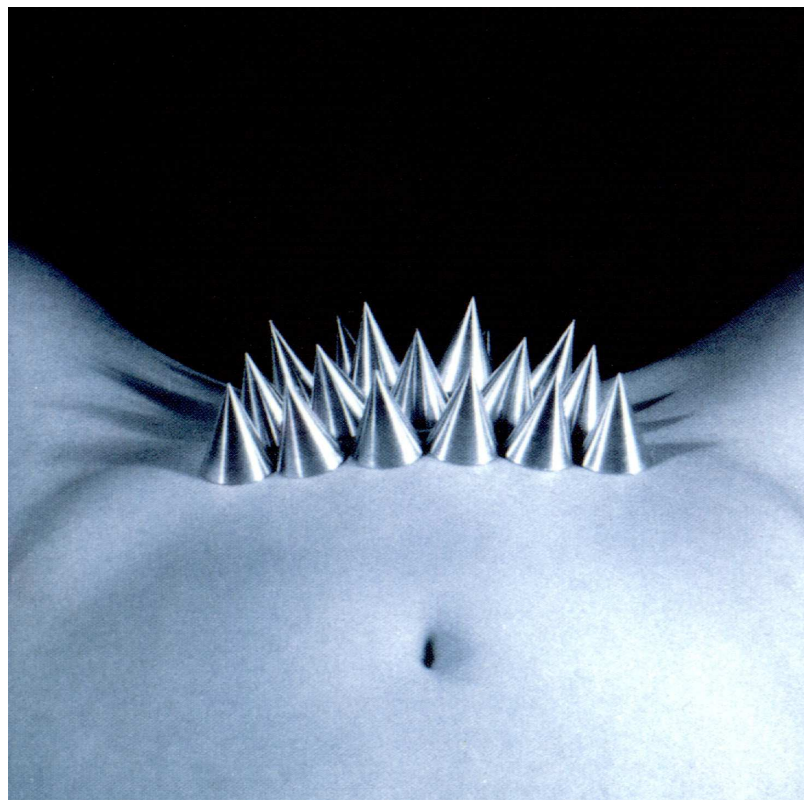


Post feminist studies, and the ensuing enlightenment, are transforming women. Women are in the process of building a new identity, constructing their own philosophy, their transformation is gathering an unstoppable momentum. Sexuality is being redefined by women, and by men who no longer wish to be part of a culture which has been so dominated by the heterosexual stereotyping of looks and behaviour and where it was presumed that women were there to feed an appetite, not to have one of their own.

As stated earlier, the identity of the sexual self depends upon the continual reassessment of set cultural values and ideals and reflective repositioning of self identity / self autonomy. The two previous case studies have evidenced the need for a new dialogue and the emergence of a new kind of conceptual jewellery, embodying a new methodology, to elicit debate and to provide a direct application of theory relative to the re-presentation of self through body adornment. As Chapkis suggests, “Images that inspire a deferred living can best be fought with opposing images of female sexual and personal authority. This point is not only to increase the diversity of images of female sexuality but to move beyond the passivity of the sexually *attractive*”.<sup>24</sup>

This final case study shows how jewellery is in a constant state of flux as its artists challenge the status quo of our existence. The specific significance of this approach is that it provides a rich setting for the expression of our needs and desires and a negotiating space and platform for real change as well as a reordered narration of the physical, mental and spiritual, self-represented and re-presented through the art and language of a body redefined through adornment. The following participants’ responses revealed how they empathised with this new approach.

#### **Case study 10.14 Defence Mechanism by Hazel White.**



*Figure 10.14 Hazel White, Defence Mechanism, 1995. Silver Cones attached to pubic area.*

<sup>24</sup>  
1988), 140.

Wendy Chapkis, *Beauty Secrets: Women and the Politics of Appearance* (London: The Women's Press Ltd,

**Question 1. How do you interpret this image?: Question 2. How does it make you feel?**

*100% of the participants understood the piece of work to be a statement of self defence, self protection and a form of warning.*

*53 % of the participants (all but one of the females) identified a sense of empowerment and preservation of self.*

*40% of the participants responses (all the male) showed respect and concern about the needs for sexual equality, mutual respect / negotiation and the freedom to be oneself. Perhaps a male version of the same scenario would open new avenues for discussion. They just need an artist to push open the door, who knows where that would take us.*

“It’s almost like the previous image again it’s that kind of Punk aesthetic. It’s a defence kind of statement. I guess it’s what you get on studded belts, that kind of thing, as a type of armour. But I think it’s a bit more comical than the other and it’s a bit more sophisticated. I guess compared to the other one it’s a bit more cool.”

“That’s very fetish, if a female was walking around wearing that it would be very antagonistic. It’s there for the wearer and it’s an aggressive statement, maybe a warning, don’t mess with me and maybe if you do I can be very aggressive and in that respect it’s maybe also an advertisement. Maybe putting out a message they are into aggressive sex or something.”

“It’s by the genitals, again unapproachable. Again, I’m not aroused or I can’t feel anything for this because I can’t see movement. . . It might be more inviting from a different view. There is no movement there, it’s static. OK, I’ll keep my distance!”

“It is the ultimate defence. . . . I would not like to be wearing that but I like the idea of defence. In a way it’s giving a certain amount of power to the wearer.”

“It’s saying ‘don’t touch’, it’s a defence mechanism. It’s doing that all right! That area is protected you can’t touch it, it’s barricaded.”

“Now this is really just saying ‘keep off, and it’s obviously a warning to men to keep away. Erm, very painful, it’s where your pubic hair is, it’s very anti-men. Even if it’s a defence it says keep off me. I don’t like it, I mean I don’t think anyone would like it. It just looks very frightening, it’s horrible.”

“It projects feelings of extreme vulnerability but also of being very powerful and ready to attack, and it’s also very extremely intimate. So on one level you could almost see it as sort of the way we live, very much in world where we talk about infringement of privacy, so this could also be seen on that level. It’s like we are travelling into an extremely intimate area.”

“A sort of chastity belt but a volunteered one. . . . It’s a strong person and she is trying to tell me ‘I don’t want to talk with you.’ It’s off putting, it’s holding people at a distance. I thought it was funny, it reminded me of Madonna and it makes me feel ‘stay away from her.’ ”

“Great concept, artistic impression of an interpretation of a modern chastity belt. It’s fun and it’s

cheeky. Men would feel it sexual, sexy because it's got that kind of punk idea. It would draw them in, they would want to remove them, isn't that the aim? Maybe I'm just raunchy. It makes me feel it's quite sexual, you don't know if it goes all the way down."

"Again it's a sort of a two way thing, I think it's kind of funny in the sense that I'm sure men will be turned on by the image but also it's sort of like danger. It's that whole kind of getting involved sexually with someone and sort of the emotional dangers involved with it, also the physiological in terms of STD, whatever, but it's the sort of, like the threat of what may come, or the consequences of the relationship, whatever that is, but I also think it's kind of funny. It's almost like a chastity device. It's almost like a woman protecting herself from the unwanted attention or whatever it may be, so, it's like a barrier. In a way it draws you in, the way it's very artfully positioned in that sort of crescent. It's almost like a kind of S and M connotation to it, it's a pleasure and pain juxtaposition. It's like you know what's there behind it. I think some people would be aroused by it. I feel there's almost like an empowerment in it. I think if you look at it from the point of the wearer it is like a self protection in a way, it's like I'm looking after what's mine, it's like an ownership and it's something you need to negotiate."

"It's the kind of thing I would be quite interested in seeing in the Tate Gallery to make me think about things, defending, rape, sexual attack . . . Most men, I think, they would not want to get too close to that. I think they would run a mile."

"It's kind of weird, especially where the jewellery is positioned. I think it's maybe protection from men who are probably more aggressive, possibly, or maybe men who may not care about your feelings. There is something that looks uncomfortable mentally and physically. I'm not sure how exactly it's meant to work but I'd definitely say it's a clear statement. It makes me feel uncomfortable actually, and for me I can understand why it's defensive but for me, even as a woman, I would find it's something I would not be able to look at."

"Ah come on, who wouldn't laugh at this? It's surreal and it's surreal in a funny way again. It's something new, it's very strange and it's funny because, it's hard to explain. It makes me think about it, it's strange, it's bizarre, there is something funny about it. The previous image is not funny at all. This, it's like you've got this hedgehog, porcupine, punk hair do. It makes me feel a bit uncomfortable but entertained and, thinking about it, there is aggression, there is violence there. This suggests sadism, it suggests cruelty to a second party rather than reflected inwards, this is defensive."

"This is entitled 'Defence Mechanism' but for me it suggests danger rather than defence. It seems to be using aggression as a form of defence so instead of defending itself as a secondary action it's already putting itself in such a position that it's hostile, prickly. It makes me think of a vagina dentata. I think it might perhaps draw in men. If you were to take that image and think about that in terms of someone's behaviour, in terms of physical sex, that behaviour might draw somebody in. It's kind of, 'I'm not being available to you', it's the kind of idea of vagina dentata."

"It does draw you in to want to look at it. You sort of forget where it is. As I say, some things are off limits or someone or you would have to pick or choose whether you want to get further than that. I feel it's a curious thing. It brings questions. Are they there all the time? Or do they poke out through the skin, in alien fashion, if she decides she doesn't like you."

This case study demonstrates our unique ability to empathise, sublimate and explore pleasure and pain through the displacement process. It also renders us susceptible to evocation which is a basic principle of aesthetics and thereby an imperative of creativity. Here we have been led through a pattern of shifts in perceptual responses / interpretations embodied in the visual form and conceptual imagery as purposefully devised by the artist.

### **Contextualisation: Shifting positions of the gaze.**

This last case study has brought the argument to the point where the issues highlighted culminate in the quest for the review and re-presentation of aesthetic values and ideologies. The artist of this piece understood that to penetrate the space / sphere wherein the psyche of the female gaze could be examined and understood required an inversion of the male gendered gaze through the iconography of representation contained in the work. In this way the conceptual content of the image could elicit specific interpretation and understanding. The design and wearing position of the jewellery piece presents the opportunity to explore conceptual content and context by apprehending the male gaze through the ability to shift its stance to the female position. The female passive gaze is now active in its critique and control of the male copulatory gaze. The shift to the female gaze now takes three stances: the identification with the female's situation in the image; as spectator through the male gaze; and finally as a critique of the situation. It is this juxtapositioning of the sexes' gaze which provides the discourse.

### **10.3. Summary and conclusion.**

One would presume that sex is a private affair. Yet as we have seen, sex is a dominant feature of one's public life. Society, culture and civilisation have structured it in such a way that it has phenomenal command over our lives. As already pointed out, sexuality and power as a means of control are closely related, but individuals could collectively use this same power to bring about change, rebellion and reform for oneself and for others.

Sexuality as a concept is currently in a state of flux. Gender has been deconstructed and is in the process of being reconstructed. There is the emergence of a pliable sexuality, the genders are crossing boundaries and searching for new identities, cross referencing. It is this pliability which promises freedom in the individual. Sexuality is becoming multi-faceted. This process of deconstructing gender and the concept of hierarchies in presentation may decentralise, undermine, or immobilise, socially structured systems and the forms of classification for all who suffer under its influence. Its cultural construct may be taken apart and reassembled and the concept of other could take on a new and positive meaning. One could speculate that this leaves the art of sexual objectivity, in control of the individual, as a pure expression of the joy of being oneself.

Foucault suggests that:

Tomorrow sex will be good again. Because this repression is affirmed, one can discreetly bring into coexistence concepts which the fear of ridicule or the bitterness of history prevents most of us from putting side by side: revolution and happiness; or revolution and a different body, one that is newer and more beautiful; or indeed, revolution and pleasure. What sustains our eagerness to speak . . . out against the powers that be, to utter truths and promise bliss, to link together enlightenment, liberation, and manifold pleasures; to pronounce a discourse that

combines the fervour of knowledge, the determination to change the laws, and the longing for the garden of earthly delights.<sup>25</sup>

Sexual objectification, stripped of all political motives, is one of the greatest forms of representational art and intimate communication. Unlike any other form of art, it draws on all of the senses: sight, smell, sound, touch and taste etc. This aesthetic experience must be one of the most unique and spiritually moving encounters in human existence. An art powerful and worthy in its own right, powerful enough to change the future, its precise form yet to be determined.

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<sup>25</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978; reprint, Great Britain: Vintage Books, 1990), 7. (page reference is to reprint edition).



LEVEL 8 - HOMO SAPIENS SAPIENS URBAN POPULATIONS - CHAPTER 10

| Biological Imperatives |                              | Sociological Imperatives  |                      | Psychosexual Imperatives     |   |  |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| Genetic Imperative     | Natural Selection Imperative | Sexual Selection Imperative   | Aesthetic Imperative | Control Imperative           | Bio-social/<br>Psycho-sexual<br>Sublimation<br>Imperative |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              | The bio-socio/psychosexual body   |                      |                              | Challenging the status quo                                |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              | Each component of jewellery evidences the imperative impact on the creative process |                      | Cultural context             | Imperative influence                                      |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              | The art of conceptual jewellery as vehicle for discourse                            |                      | Evoke discussion             | Psychosexual anxieties                                    |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              | Rallying common consciousness addressing common concerns                            |                      | Power of communal discourse  | Diffusion of common anxieties                             |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              | Challenging/repositioning the copulatory gaze                                       |                      | Restructuring the status quo | Psychosexual needs  |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              | Body adornment expressing psychological needs                                       |                      |                              | Pleasure/pain gratification                               |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              | Sublimation of all the imperatives in bio-socio-cultural context                    |                      |                              |   |  |
|                        |                              |   |                      |                              |   |  |

HYPOTHESES ( PAGES 24 - 25 ) IN PROPOSITION CATEGORIES ( PAGES 34 - 36 )

Figure 10.15 Hypothesis / Proposition Table - Level 8

## CHAPTER 11

### **Conclusions: A new evolutionary imperative mandala for jewellery**

#### **11.0 Introduction**

The thesis argument related body adornment and the making of objects, specifically jewellery, to the process of human evolution. It presented these connections in a model predicated on the notion of imperatives, central to which is the biological imperative. Underpinning the social order, this impacted upon and conditioned the individual's psychology. The principal premise of bio-sexual, social and psychological interrelationships was variously evidenced by evolutionary progression towards its manifestation in the contemporary human condition.

The thesis begins by reviewing the evidence as presenting criteria for application in constructing a new model in place of Untracht's Mandala, which both builds upon and challenges the assumptions made by Untracht and others. At the same time it utilises the research findings to establish determinant categories which transcended current cultural or sub-cultural mores.

It is argued that the underlying imperative and motivational drives (which are in and of themselves' universal principles) are embodied within the artefact, specifically the jewellery object. It is established that the evolution of the human being from the viewpoint of biogenetic inheritance impacts upon individual cognitive development, influencing individual behavioural patterns. Mating pairs or small groups of individuals established certain behavioural traits which later developed interrelated modes of expression relative to communication. These were extensions of the biogenetic imperative, collectively understood and not mediated but rather opportunistic or random.

The thesis goes on to establish that further evolutionary steps from individual pre-consciousness and consciousness to collective social situations and the progressive constraints placed upon the differing sexes were initiated as social constructs and mechanisms relative to relationships with others. This resulted in the development of complex social structures associated with the notion of reinforcement through social marking communicated by visual means on the body. Relative to social marking, notions of beauty were discussed which also related to biogenetic imperatives expressed in body marking, evidencing ideal types for copulation and reproduction. It is important here that the transposition of marking the body as social entity, event and ideal is extended beyond the body as a representational element manifested as a 'mentifact'.

Social evolution was also discussed in the context of the transposition of self-image as a consequence of relations between the sexes in mediation requiring individual sublimation. These influences upon individual psychology were exacerbated by the social need for individual sublimation of biogenetic imperatives. However the expression of these primal imperatives were symbolic as a natural response to suppressed natural sexual behaviour in the context of a prescribed social orthodoxy. The symbolic re-presentation of the carnal reflected the suppression of desire by social dominance and therefore a loss of self, and the retreat of individuality into

the psycho-cognitive illusory condition of fantasy and / or fetish was expressed in the new displacement objects.

Criteria for the construction of the new Mandala were derived from the case studies. This thesis concludes by asserting that the universal principles embodied in the new Mandala / model express the imperatives as drives generating cognitive evolution, which produces concepts which require tangible representation.

## **11.1 Chapter Reviews**

### **Chapter 1 The critical evaluation of the history and context of jewellery as a mode of representation**

The first Chapter discussed existing texts and critical frameworks for the analysis of jewellery and associated body adornment, and concluded that currently available discussions are reductive, fragmentary and limited. Therefore there is no available academic discourse which consolidates contemporary debates based upon any historical consideration related to human evolution as illuminated by Darwinian theories. The lack of any previous provision of scholarly intellectual insight, systematic enquiry or considered theory, informing analysis and recounting the origins or describing the complexities of body adornment and the implicit need for the re-presentation of self, afforded an opportunity and rationale for the research.

Previous investigations into the complexity of sexual relations as multilateral in nature and the consequent inter-connectivity of human activity and the resultant psyche relative to socio-cultural influences imposed and /or reinforced by ritual have not discussed the imperatives resulting in the creation of expressive personal artefacts, except in relation to notions of the tribal which were depicted as 'other'. The shortcomings of attempts to model the formative inter-connectivity upon which self-adornment is predicated in Untracht's proposal for a Jewellery Mandala were identified and thereby gave direction to the research. Untracht's classifications and interpretations were shown to be an inadequate attempt at finding a logical and explanatory route through a seemingly disparate collection of representational artefacts, used as a mode of self-expression and taking the form of adornment or jewellery objects. Further evaluation underscored the need to define what was meant by 'self' and 'relational' as factors impacting upon expression.

The Chapter continued by arguing that a new critical model was required to provide an holistic approach to establishing a framework to identify the generative mechanisms and psychological motivations behind body adornment as well as the reasons for the social requirement for humans to have a compulsive preoccupation with the construct of 'self' and its representation and re-presentation. It was further suggested that this model should take account of human evolution and the imperatives which have driven the processes of interrelation to the point where such a complexity of modes of expression and forms of body adornment and jewellery have developed. Evolution as both theory and process was adopted as a basis for developing the research approach, allowing human imperatives to be traced and evaluating their significances.

Analysis of a wide range of associated literature suggested that there is a co-evolutionary driving force connecting genes with culture via the developing mind. Further that nature and nurture belong to the same process whereby biological and / or organic evolution resulted in functional specialisation, which spawned a form of intelligence, which in turn developed a reciprocal progression facilitating the chromosome pair xy (male) and xx (female) as sexual determinants. From these beginnings flow imperatives which drive the emergence and evolution of the human species, its cognitive capacity, the significance of sexual differentiation, and the individual and collective structural organisation of the capabilities necessary for survival.

Within this model a new critical framework of 'imperatives' was defined which cross-reference in a complexity of correlations with established theories resulting in critical evaluation criteria which were applied to the case studies. It was argued that the case studies evidence and verify the criteria established and justify the new model proposed. To further the research a set of hypotheses were presented for interrogation and a matrix devised in which the bio-imperatives can be cross-referenced to provide an overview of projected operant features and criteria. (see, figure 11.1 and figure 11.2a and 11.2b) and accompanying 'evolutionary pathway' (figure A.1), and the 'trajectory of human evolution' (figure A.2 first stage, and figure A.3 second stage in the Appendix). The charts illustrate the structure of research; identify historical patterns, key areas and levels of thinking and argument. Furthermore the models identify patterns and links and connections between issues, arguments and theories.

## **Chapter 2 Bio-imperatives: In the context of women's bodies and the development of a psychology of 'self re-presentation'**

Chapter Two therefore discussed the individual and collective psychology consolidated in evolutionary biology and behaviours to provide a unique operative mechanism for the survival of the species. The research approach operated on the understanding that the physical / biological evolutionary developments of body, brain and mind co-evolved in symbiosis and are all aspects of the integrated process of natural selection as a genetic dynamic of synchronisation.

This evaluation of current theory identified specialised areas of brain activity which suggest a process of transmission and further suggests how they might have been positioned and have operated. These propositions, albeit not universally accepted, are plausible and extensively discussed in the literature. Current theories give little prominence to the idea of a 'sexual / copulatory intelligence' which equates to other recognised intelligences leading to the assumption that physical imperatives or urges have not made a significant contribution to the evolution of social intelligence. The thesis, however, hypothesises that all bio-imperatives are based on a brain / mind interface which could be discerned as a form of intelligence.

The critical framework is constructed to operate on the premise that a subliminally expressed sexual intelligence is central to the core of human cultural behaviours and it is suggested that sexual intelligence as manifested in levels of consciousness, such as perception, visual / symbolic language, concept formation and synthesis is evidenced by an early integration of specific intelligences within the Palaeolithic period. It is further argued in the following chapter that these intelligences and their products represent variant consciousness levels, which began in their evolution from a position in the primal soup within which the processes of genetic replication took place.

In identifying the intelligence components of the copulatory gaze as evolved from its biogenetic base the research investigated Mithen's hypothetical model of the architecture of the mind. This identified levels of development and possible stages in the development of intelligence and mental capacities in human evolution and how these might be interrelated over time. Though attractive at first, in the context of this argument his analysis seemed flawed and limited as it presented the mind operating not as a set of integrated intelligences and levels of consciousness but rather as a group of separate entities which only started co-operating at a much later stage in human evolution, 1.8 million years ago. Additionally his proposed brain / mind's dedicated task areas totally excluded sexual intelligence as a concept. His argument was that animal tracking, hunting skills and tool making drove cognition and the development of perceptual intelligences rather than being a sign either of those taking place and / or their having been imprinted beforehand.

This research identified the sexual imperative as core to forging overarching sexual intelligence modules, impacting upon a central processing system whereby relevant information for survival and reproduction was collated and synthesised and subsequent reflective responses generated. It asserts that these primary responses were salient factors in the survival and perpetuation of the gene / species and evidence that cognitive development was sexually based and that a sexual intelligence is therefore central to the core of human cultural behaviours and subliminal expressions. The critical framework operates on the argument that sexual intelligence was in position and driving cognitive developments and levels of consciousness such as perception, visual / symbolic language, concept formation and syntheses. Early integration of these specific intelligences was in place over 2 million years ago, long before hunting and tool-making, can be evidenced as one of a number of key symbolically communicated social interactions.

The next stage in the argument was therefore to devise a rational explanation for the bio-imperative mechanism. This was discussed in the context of the concept of components, reproductive requirement signs, operating in a context of sexuality or the bio-aesthetics of the psycho-sexual. A case was made that aesthetic sensibility was present in a reciprocating copulatory gaze, from primal animal to socio-cultural animal, reasoning from the logical presumption that the sexual imperative transfers to cultural constructs and is therefore, in the event, nurture reconciled with nature.

Genetic selection, natural selection, sexual selection, aesthetics imperatives, control imperatives; a biological sublimation imperative (out of which, it was argued emanates the aesthetic experience), were cited as key imperatives in the growth and accumulation of complex human cognitive / bio-psycho-sexual consciousness developments. These might provide criteria for further investigation and analysis. Identifying causal relationships between various selection imperatives and their influence on the psycho-sexual mechanisms, which in turn influenced sociocultural formation and its evolution, allowed this process to be looked at in reverse by tracing the root origin of evolved cultural representations in support of the hypothesised presumption.



### **Chapter 3 The battle of the sexes begins: Conflicts of interest and agendas**

Relative to the aesthetic concept of sensibility raised in the previous chapter, Chapter Three discussed a set of hitherto nebulous criteria pertaining to phenomena of the aesthetic gaze. Supposedly humans are constantly aware of innate criteria related to their sense of aesthetics, related in the first instance to the human form and other representational objects and the emotional experiences they evoke. These were previously thought to be socially conditioned but recent research from various disciplines in related fields is suggesting that there is a complex and sometimes contradictory set of evoked experiences in humans which impact upon both responses and reactions to situations or events.

The Chapter discussion brought together evidences of sexual differentiation and natural selection, presenting an ordered base of set of imperatives which, relative to levels of consciousness, determine aesthetic sensitivities. In situations of natural selection, competition for individual survival focussed on the raw materials of sexual life, unconscious behaviour patterns, first order levels of preconscious consciousness in forming the early copulatory gaze representing attraction. As this progressed from natural selection to conscious sexual selection, essential to the survival and reproductive mechanisms, it also impacted on human behaviour, activities and an evolving bio-psyche.

Attraction to difference was an essential constituent of the sexual imperative. Reinforcement of differentiation required clear signs, codes and signals to fulfil the imperative, with each sex adopting strategies to gain advantage in the selection stakes. The physicality of the brain / mind evolved and was augmented symbiotically in its capacity to adapt and deal with progressing differentiation strategies. These provided a survival and combative edge as elements of natural selection. Their fulfilment and the resultant creative outlet, occurring through the sublimatory imperative in its evolved stages, led to the production of culture. The sexual imperative therefore influenced the aesthetic principles of an evolving discerning copulatory gaze and as a result provides an entirely new set of analytical tools for the analysis of beauty.

It was argued that the second order, sexual selection, competition between those of the same sex for an alpha mate plays an important part in formulating responses to opposite sex preferential selection criteria. Research evidences that the assessment criteria of the copulatory gaze, defined as beauty and sexual attraction, are nature's benchmark of superior reproductive / survival fitness. Aesthetic perception is based on the brain / mind's ability to perform a complex set of evaluations stored and referenced in the genetic imprints embedded in the human brain / mind and psyche.

Sexual attraction and selection in all living beings seem to evidence a clear correlation between corporeal symmetry and balance and perceived quality of genetic material. Empirical research has proved that the higher the score for symmetry and bilateral symmetry in all elements of the body the more superior the quality of the mate. Facial and body symmetry and proportion seem to hold the key to evidencing / proclaiming sound and balanced biological development and hormone production, demonstrating that the organism is of strong enough substance to be unaffected by such stressors as inbreeding, infections, parasites or other environmental or inhomogeneous elements. That these stressors could be detrimental to health and development

and guarantee a quality domino effect is evidenced by symmetrical or asymmetrical manifestation echoed throughout all the other elements of the body. Asymmetry is therefore indicative of poor reproductive quality material and therefore not attractive but instead leads to the exercise of the innate impulse for aversion.

The next stage of analysis can be better understood if body adornment / jewellery is identified as what Dawkins defined as the extended phenotype, whereby the gene continues to have an influence on the success of its propagation outside and beyond the body. With the extended phenotype, a hypothetical parallel can be drawn with genetic selection, natural selection and sexual selection, innate and inherited instructions which influence and impact upon our 'sexual imperative-driven', material / cultural selection. In the phenotype extended new levels of consciousness over-layered and extended previous ones. Body / brain / mind co-operated and co-ordinated in the evolving shifts from the unconscious to awareness of self, sexual appearance and re-appearance through re-presentation of self, incorporating such activities as body grooming, body enhancement and re-presentation, to form a higher order of interactions between the sexes as the persuasive manipulation of the copulatory gaze took place (but nonetheless remaining true to the primary imperative, the support of genetic goals). The innate desire for symmetry is the driving force in the refashioning of the natural body and thus of the design process. When women decorate their bodies in particular ways they therefore apply the symmetry criteria required to induce the copulatory gaze of the opposing sex in their competition for the alpha male. Therefore the argument that there is a divide between nature and nurture has been deconstructed and shown to be meaningless and without substance.

The Chapter concluded by asserting that the transposition of the biological imperatives into the realm of the metaphysical opens the way to further discussion in respect of the evolution of conceptual thought and its relation to symbolic orders derived from a realisation of 'self', distinct from the physical but shaped by it. These ideas are further developed in considering the development of brain, mind and consciousness in relation to self-representation. This aspect is argued in a context of evolving sexual strategies necessary in the context of changing collective interaction requiring new forms of behaviour or conditioned responses.

## **Chapter 4 Secondary levels of sexual imperative: Progression of the copulatory gaze**

Using this understanding as a starting position, Chapter Four continued to chart the parameters of human behaviour / responses within the context of the revised analysis using criteria from evidence presented in the substantive texts.

The oscillating ecological conditions impacting on emergent behaviour and cognitive development adjustments resulted in humans' conceiving sexual strategies as reciprocal responses to each other. The needs and requirements of each of the sexes in this constant revision underlie symbiotic consciousness levels, which accompany symbolic code measures of the values of each other. These were discussed in relation to the sex contract and changes in sexual strategy which deal with the advent of serial monogamy and its impact on the separate sexes' differential physiological changes in behaviour and appropriate adaptive bio-imperative modes of re-presentation.

Complementary bio-physical changes such as undisclosed ovulation and modifications of the female's physique in order to enhance sexual attractiveness and heighten male desire to encourage long term relationships required the evolution of new symbolic communications. Biological sexual selection operated alongside emergent physique and role differentiation requirements. Clear signals were required to advertise not only genetic criteria, but also such things as sexual availability or unavailability, predisposition for role differentiation, sexual alliance, fidelity, and emergent modes of body enhancement promoting exaggeration of sexually attractive aspects of the female body in order to sustain her mate's excitement and interest. Sexual selection signals readjusted / repositioned to incorporate the new form of psycho-social signal selection and thus forced an augmentation of the male copulatory gaze.

It was argued that these precipitated new rules which added to the existing modes of representation, communicating beyond the previous established first level selection criteria for optimum genetic reproductive quality. Changes oriented to the new social circumstances were behavioural i.e. her gestation period and subsequent nurturing of the pair's offspring, required him to provide and protect, which in turn required her fidelity. These changes forced the development of a sense of socio-sexual self-awareness of differentiation between this self and others and required communication appropriate to the emergent social context. This in turn created a space for internalisation and communication of revised / renewed critiques and accompanying signs, codes and symbols to accommodate the transition towards advancing levels of consciousness and behavioural changes together with an unfolding rudimentary social content and context.

The phenotype now extended created a new space within which to operate. Mind, brain and body symbiotically co-ordinated to create a system that would not only underpin the sexual imperative, but also reinforce it in its evolving social context. The second and third sections of the Chapter identified what might have precipitated the emergence of specific communicative signals and symbolic ordering required in the transformation from the separate sexes' sexual interactive needs and the need to structure early social developments. These were presented as 'sexual signals', evolving as visual symbols and as the origins of creativity and representation.

The question of the origins of the human ability to ascribe meaning to visual images was discussed in the context of Mithen's et al, hypothesis of footprint recognition and association. However the sexual imperative proposition argued here offers an alternative or additional plausible rationale for the progression of such cognitive skills as symbolic perception being inherent and a natural progression from the bio-operants. Long before hunting evidence was provided by the discussion of the Gelada's explicit body signals and how a co-relation of sexual signalling in the human primate can be detected. Recognition capability linked to that of association is, it was argued, a prerequisite for both perception and that of its reflective rationalisation, and thereby cognitive interpretive abilities were a primary prerequisite to copulatory needs. It was these abilities that facilitated the latter requirement for footprint interpretation as symbol or sign. However this argument rested on required evidence. It was reasoned that the physiology relative to female exaggerated breasts and buttocks, finer features and smoother skin etc. heightened sexual attractiveness and in return heightened sexual performance from the male. This was an important development because of its connotations relating to recognition and sign as personal experience and reaction. Therefore sexual prowess and copulatory satisfaction galvanised pair bonding and simultaneously acted as a test of the quality of genetic material as well as providing memory to inform the stored and differential responses.

By responding to the innate compulsion of the genes' exploitation of sexual imperatives, humans' predisposition to exploit survival and reproductive fitness for personal gain influenced the development of body enhancement to reinforce primal sexual criteria through the creation of objects of sexual, genital and gender re-presentation. This shift in activity required a specific form of consciousness level which must be defined at this stage of the argument in order to explain how this phenomenon could have evolved and provided an extended dimension to the copulatory gaze. Emergent conscious creation of the mentifact as a consequence of the sexual imperative representing individual interactivity to a collective social psyche was elaborated in support of this. It was asserted that the fundamental genetic bio-sexual imperative continued to drive recognition and association and its behaviour responses as cognitive development, extending the individual experience into the situational.

It was argued that consciousness can be understood as the assimilatory organ of intelligences, absorbing, collating, synthesising and assessing all relevant incoming data and providing an holistic intelligent rationale as a mechanism for appropriate response; thus linking unconsciousness, psychological, emotional, spiritual metaphysical phenomena etc., to each other. All of which, continuously being superseded by ever more complex and sophisticated mechanisms, kept pace with advances yet remained in accord with the laws of nature. The structuring of sexual interactivity in the shift between individualisation and group integration was the very predicament which nurtured / prompted specific problem solving elements to surface, whereby the incubation of a system of rudimentary 'information encoding' eventually gave birth to a use of visual symbolic communication supported by the acknowledgement and agreement of the collective 'others'. Awareness of this awareness, consciousness of self in this specific context, is highly significant as a causal agent, a catalyst for all ensuing related phenomena in the use of the art of representation / re-presentation as part of the construct of social organisation.

Abstract concepts or mental products such as aesthetics, emotions, fantasy, erotica, nightmares, sublimation and the often secret inner parts of the mind, processed through conceptualisation and manifested as concrete representations in artefacts, are not part of a material state and are therefore difficult to quantify. Science, art, and psychology are going through the uncomfortable process of accommodating / complementing each other to create a new shared pathway on a common ground. Arguably this culminates in a form of supra-objectivity where consciousness in itself translates as a form of representation within a representational system which provided new scope for 'being', and a whole new vision of the possibilities of and for being.

Common collective consciousness experience can operate as a further evolved form of enhancement in selective manoeuvres and manipulations, individual-to-individual or group-to-group. The levels of collective consciousness offered by the new capacity for fresh cognitive content such as construction and interpretation of the physical and metaphysical also offered potential for genetic selection and thereby sexual selection could thrive in this fertile ground. Mental signs, codes and symbols, and ability to control human interaction and behaviour linked the biophysical with the metaphysical, which argued a new reciprocity between nature and nurture. One of these adaptive opportunities to take hold and develop in early social development was the idea that objects embodied a mental content which could symbolise specific power values especially when carried on or attached to the body.

## **Chapter 5 I adorn therefore I am: The dawn of self awareness, abstract thought, analogies and symbolism**

Chapter Five discussed the evolutionary cognitive developments which led towards the notion and use of objects enhancing 'self' and the gradual evolution of a material culture. The discussion also set out to establish principles for evaluating levels of consciousness and of humans' self awareness expressed through abstract thought, concept formation, analogies and symbolisation, emerging as unique forms of communication. The gradual realisation of the awareness of self being defined, altered or influenced by social interaction is dependant on an inter-relational process articulated in the 'theory of mind' (the understanding of another's thought processes, viewpoint and motives, an empathetic notion that the other is another me). This transposition is dependant upon how the brain encodes perception, such as object identity, and registers the related emotional cues while also having the ability to reflect, rationalise and categorise.

The ability to act based upon a cognitive register which conceptualises received content by replacing one notion with another or an associated notion requires a mental dexterity which, in reference to the awareness of self in experiential relation to memory, differentiates the internal and external worlds. The other can also, as discussed later, become the object in the act of representation. The analysis here re-examines the contents and the context of the copulatory gaze, challenging the conventional 'visual symbolisation theory' which suggests that depictions or objects are solely a display of hunting prowess which suddenly appeared spontaneously 35,000 to 40,000 years ago. At this point the discussion pursues a partial deconstruction of these fixed definitions and focuses on a much earlier time period of cognitive / intelligence expression, evidenced by tool making, to suggest a clear lineage of motivations as articulated through the Darwinian logic of bio-sexually driven imperatives.

As evidenced in the previous chapter, awareness of the abstract sense of beauty and ability to respond reflectively with empathy were established characteristics necessary for coupling and nurturing. It was further argued that this mental ability was also involved in creating body representation which attempted to replicate the nature of arousal by allure. This, it is suggested, underpins all acts of creativity or making of objects. Earlier body representation and tool making clearly evidence a co-evolution between body / brain and mind. Advances in brain capacity were expressed through the interconnectivity of memory with motor skills in relation to sequence and order required for tool making (and the concomitant capacity for social organisation in achieving collective objectives). They are not separate processes, but one and the same thing, driven by the same imperatives.

This connectivity can be evidenced by our innate sense of symmetry / bilateral symmetry, the balance of proportions being consciously applied in tool making and that of other fashioned objects thereby providing evidence that these principal brain / mind functions would have been equally symbiotic in application to all creative developments of objects. Mentifacts as mental enactment or cognitive implementations resulted in the enhancement of physical self and / or self-emulation, which in turn reflected changes in individual and paired and group relationships in changing social contexts, actualised as evolving behavioural adaptations.



Tool making evidenced a level of consciousness whereby humans could recognise and simulate 'experience projection' and therefore it can be deduced that they could likewise apply a 'conscious' endeavour to the art of self-emulation or extension, a deliberate enhancement of the body, projecting personality by artificial means, necessary for engagement of the copulatory gaze, itself a pre-requisite of the sex contract. The example of the characteristics of the behaviour of nonhuman primates, as human's nearest relatives, is cited in order to discuss hypothetical possibilities of early humans' (Lucy 2 of 2.5 million years ago) behaviour which suggest origins for body adornment as a natural underpinning of an evolving collective division of sex roles, gender behaviour in human activities, which is symbolically represented in artefacts.

On this basis a plausible hypothetical scenario is presented of the when, how, what and why of the cognitive development needed in women specifically to draw on their successful projection of the sexual self. The hypothetical Lucy 2 scenario suggests that in order to challenge / secure / control situations in the competition situation of mate selection the female revised or reapplied cognitive skills to the evaluation of risk in drawing attention which might provoke persecution from the alpha females. This behavioural trait, it was suggested, elevates consciousness to another level, and was hypothetically evidence of an ability to formulate strategies and / or anticipate the consequences of actions.

It is suggested that a cognitive process of self-referencing to one's own body and the consequential awareness / perception of self in relation to others together with the utilisation of natural objects in mate attraction would indicate an early formulation of enhancement relative to allure, perhaps thereby representational of beauty. The behavioural adoption of objects as some kind of signal or instrument for seduction was indicative of a major breakthrough in human cognitive evolution. It is argued that the ability to register evocation led humans to respond reflexively and reflectively through the art of body enhancement to discover / experience / recreate these indomitable metaphysical powers as an extension of self.

The Chapter summary hypothesises that this cognitive paradigm shift of engagement in object, subject transference led to objectification of the self as the phenotype extended and to a new level of consciousness without which social structures could not have moved forward or developed beyond that found in foraging groups of early nonhuman primates. In the context of the hypothetical scenario of Lucy 2 which, it is argued, affords a deductive rational explanation of observation, the capacity to influence others (or the course of events) would have required specific cognitive skills which evolved ever more elaborate and specialised capacities as human sexual relations and social behaviours developed in complexity.

Artifice or deception, through re-presentation of a sexual self, required humans to have an understanding of and response to projection, composed by one and imposed onto the other, and the ability to deduce what was being determined by a complexity of social influences. Through participation in the social dynamic, cognitive processes could be seen but, more importantly, individual existence was extended into the collective. At this juncture, consciousness shift experience and memory differentiated between past, present and future, leading to an associated 'anticipation of effect' resulting in an impact on behaviour, which stimulated a cycle of re-presentation of self within a variety of social contexts. Evidence discussed in the following chapters suggests that elementary psychological conditioning, person to person and within the group, was manifest in a self-consciousness which drove intellectual development.

A cognitive register, referencing the hypothesised, evolving situations in the ecological context of Lucy 2, would strongly suggest a variety of foundation systems developing which compounded or galvanised a capability for making sense of what was seen as a perception-based interpretation of phenomena, out of which developed the full gamut of cognitive devices present in the modern human. In this context the artefacts of personal identity were a projection through a self-referencing experience and informed the base of aesthetic sensitivity, and therefore sensibility experience transposition, leading to symbolic re-presentation which redefined self in the social situation, providing a measure of cultural sophistication.

If, as this research proposes, our sense of aesthetics is the extension of inherent sexual imperatives / processes already at work, then survival favoured those who were aesthetically sensitive. Environmental and social factors impacted upon individuals, provoking the need for a refashioning of sexual prowess indicators if the individual was to become self aware in the behavioural connection and communication interchanges relating to mate selection competencies. These factors augmented natural prowess indicators in the physicality of humans' display.

On this premise the research analysis went on to demonstrate how body enhancement presented in objects of personal adornment thereby facilitated the objectified self beyond the re-presentation of the natural self, enabled participation in and influencing the developing collective of social hierarchy.

## **Chapter 6 The anatomy of ornament, display and sexual identity**

Chapter Six began by extending discussion of how the shift to physiological self, consequent in part upon the socially motivated objectification of self, intensified in evolved social contexts of increased competitiveness. Facilitating the reproductive success and quality outcomes, a new sex contract was formulated between male and female which, in the new social context, was dependent on their carefully calculated, mutual benefit, measured by each against each sex's expected contribution in the exchange of values required. This elevation of consciousness levels required for the perception of exchange values underpinned the structure and cohesion of the social order and the socialised being as the extended phenotype. The extension of self co-evolved as an essential element in cognitive and behavioural interrelationships: individual to individual, within family units, and also enlarged social groupings.

In exploring the objectification of self, framed within the context of reflective social awareness underpinned by or emanating from sexual awareness and sexual values, it was suggested that a form of self as a reference point to reflect on and evaluate the other resulted in a perpetual self-imposed revision of self. As the individual was being reframed as a 'social being' at once separate from the 'other', but paradoxically a part of the 'collective other' by association and dependency upon the other, it was inevitable that a further stage of consciousness or cognitive requirement shifts was needed. It is estimated that this was already embedded in the species but took a new turn 2 million years ago. It was constituted from the self, becoming the subjective self insofar as its imperative was evidenced by a new type of tool making, an advance in technology which was, in the context of the mated pairs, crucial to survival and replaced the serendipitous utilisation of found natural objects. The purposeful application of intelligence to

the creation of a hand-made tool was an external sign of sequential thinking whereby specific functions and manipulations had a time / order relationship. Memory was stretched in order to retain information which, when appropriately recalled, required co-ordinated actions. This cognitive process, hypothesised relative to advanced intelligence levels, was informed by problem solving capability, enabling the development and retention of technical competence and comparative evaluation over time. The extended cognitive ability needed to achieve the usage requirement and creative manufacture of hand tools, was a contemplative evaluation process relative to experiential learning and therefore a self centred function. Further discussion of this important cognitive shift was postponed at this point in order to address the issue of 'object subject relations' but reintroduced later in the context of 'sublimation'.

In reviewing the formation of this objective new 'self-context', (built on the previous analysis and findings), it is suggested here that the awareness of awareness, awareness of self, consciousness of sexual self, self and otherness, and self value in relation to others, are all in themselves already a form of objectification and already attached to them is the appropriate signification of the subjective objectification. However, comparison of intelligence skills and manufacturing skills at this point shows a clear development of applicable levels of intelligence skills and cognitive abilities and evidences a hard wiring of the brain capable of handling a developing socio-cultural behavioural repertoire of gathering sophistication, such things as self-reflection, theory of mind, visual communication through object symbolisation, kinship, language and art.

Re-evaluating these different but symbiotic abilities through time, the research further hypothesised how the conscious application of objectification of self and value of self through object making in a material culture, (symbolisation for public display) emerged as an operational system and developed as a mechanism in the structuring of social organisation based upon hierarchy. In pursuance of this, consideration was given to abstract values encapsulated in actions and exchange of objects as gifts or tokens which have their origins in the early exchange of food, ritualised feeding in courtship and other exchanges common to pair bonding situations. The negotiations of exchange of values that secure the bonding of a relationship requiring concrete tokens, marking or rituals evidence a further level of socialised consciousness.

Substitution or displacement of values embodied in an object and its subsequent gifting or exchange as symbolic value of individual qualities handed over from one to another are in themselves rudimentary forms of objectification since attached to them is the appropriation and signification of the one's assessed valuation of another. This signification became through time more and more separated from its source as social structuring required symbolic communication developed in complexity. Visual communication through object symbolisation evolved sophisticated structures as it moved from pairs to family groups to the complexity of communal groups such as tribes to become a kind of shorthand or visual language, understood by all. Since concepts could be transformed into concrete form, these appeared, as natural extensions of the body, in the form of enhancements which could embody and define in symbolic form such abstract values as gender, sexual status, sexual viability, inter-group and secondary relationships and contexts.

The evolving tokens as artefacts of desire, status and commitment became so symbolically saturated, sophisticated and / or specialised in their environmental niche that tokens of specific values became one removed from the value system to the extent that the artefact's symbolic

value also became an independent object which possessed an intrinsic material value, in and of itself socially tradeable. This, it would be argued later, is an evolved primary object, misrepresented by Untracht as a separate category of object rather than a transitional object symbolising a new state of being in a new social context.

Overt symbols carrying natural body references were now inadequate as evolution propelled humans towards more complex social arrangements which in turn forced a new psycho-dynamic setting within which there was a need for new representation and re-presentation of sexual bio- / socio-psychology. Self-expression through artefacts was specifically selected as the means by which to enhance status within the social group, thereby establishing what was desirable by proxy. In this context the individual physical self linked the psychological, through abstract representation or symbolic prominence with a new state of self being, located in an evolving socio- / psycho-logical context.

From their origins as bio-copulatory imperative value representations, body adornments in this new conception evidence a once-removed group imperative reflecting the individual sex contract but replacing it with a broader definition of kinship. The early beginnings of representation of social rituals such as that of a courtship / admiration or binding loyalty became independent in the object as a re-valued item of desirability. Socially re-valued items which retain original values encapsulated a degree of paradox or ambiguity, symbolically overlaying or associating such abstract notions as, for example, desire suggesting love, alpha sexuality and fitness as status and power, sex appeal as charismatic, successful provision as surplus and ultimately luxury.

We can see how these 'real' but abstracted values enabled the authentic object to transcend itself to achieve a new level of sophistication in social, collective, intellectual and symbolic meaning whereby reciprocal, collective understanding of the symbolic through actual body representation becomes ornamentation in a ritualised package of social values of exchange, designed to seal publicly the bond of a relationship. The binding nature of the, new psycho-social relationship as an appropriated embodiment of psychosexual imperative enforced social solidarity because the original imperative was innate and thereby irresistible.

Thus artefacts carrying behavioural consequences in their acts of transposed value usage became socio-political tools. Such objects embodying these revised values had the ability to embody a 'means', the sexual imperative, towards an 'end' which was social cohesion (described later in Chapter Nine). In order to discuss some of these paradoxes and ambiguities a contemporary image was used as a vehicle for analysis.

## **Chapter 7 Awareness of self / otherness and differentiation**

Chapter Seven traced the origins of archetype and beauty relative to difference and differentiation as evidencing levels of consciousness pertinent to the research objectives.

In time, evolving interactions in bonding and its effects promoted sophistication in cognitive adaptability and quick responses in a social context. Consistent application of individual knowledge, observed by others, resulted in accumulated shared knowledge. The act of learning, the one observing and emulating the other, then going on to teach another, was in itself a

process of evolutionary transference of knowledges (Blackmore's Memes Transfer <sup>1</sup>) but was also the facilitator between bio-genetic sexual reproduction imperative requirements in a social environment and is therefore a further indicator of bio / socio- cultural development.

However in tracing origins an important and contributory factor in the process is that facet of the copulatory gaze here identified as 'compulsive comparison'. This mode of perception searches out specific identities, establishing concepts of differentiation, otherness and sameness and is particularly relevant to the identity of self via the process of critical referencing for evaluation of self relative to others. In the need for the accumulation of a knowledge base, humans have an evolved urge to satisfy their desire for identity, its organisation and order, its groupings and categorisations. This, it is argued, is an innate response founded on, and a re-enactment of, the sub-structural design process fundamental to the creation of all things within the natural universe.

Humans have a natural urge for survival and a strategic ability to resolve problematic issues resulting in increasing cognitive dexterity in the differentiation of required factors necessary to achieve that end. Therefore the research focuses on a mechanism driven by curiosity, a process for genetic survival which manifests a sexual preference imperative in identification of suitability, and often observed as an innate obsession with compulsive comparison. It is suggested that the primary key to this process (which has its basis in the interconnected bio-social imperative) lies within the cognitive spaces of the connection between subjective self and objective self, leading to a subliminal self, or the self reassured, and takes place in a seemingly random order or sequence which is beneficial to all concerned. The discussion focuses on the evolving personal and social awareness of otherness and proposes that this cognitive ability to differentiate, recognise and empathise has its roots in the sexual selection imperative.

The following conceptual notions and cognitive mechanisms are identified in the compulsive comparison process:

- encoded identity
- binary opposites
- comparison of difference /sameness relative to stereotype
- ideal or requirement need
- evaluation of information (rejection or selection).

It was argued that a shift of consciousness reaches a new level whereby innate responses are consciously registered, interpreted and transposed to form new levels of awarenesses which can be channelled and controlled and elevated further, facilitating improved co-ordination and / or dexterity in physical skill and social communication or knowledge transfer. Higher order of thinking and its evolving levels of consciousness consequently impact upon levels of perception, co-evolving with the surrounding objects' accredited symbolic values.

The previously argued 'concrete' evidence in artefacts of evolving complexities of levels of multilateral interactions between the physical, the intellect and the metaphysical evidences a

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, with a Foreword by Richard Dawkins (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999). Information, songs, poems ideas, fashions etc, as elements of culture which are non-genetically transferred / replicated mentally by jumping from brain to brain, are all a form of memes.



more sophisticated level of being and knowing and the beginnings of the philosophy of mind, all elements linking and uniting multiple intelligences. It was further argued that this arose out of the simplest form of mental organisation, the application of the binary system. The application of binary opposition defines self and otherness via compulsive comparison as an objective process and the ability to differentiate and integrate the physical with the cognitive. One facet of differentiation recognition is that it has its origins in the I and (m)other concept as the fundamental relationship influences the realisation of other opposites such as disappearance / reappearance, distress / comfort, thereby linking to emotions felt at the separation of self from (m)other-ness and realisation of self as both subject and object. Realisations are at this stage a result of what is experienced as a consequence of an external causation impacting on or resulting in an effect which the self must evaluate and recognise as likely to occur again.

Understanding the fundamental traits of the familiar / similar as against unfamiliar recurrences shifts learning from reactive cognition to anticipatory response preparation in the mind. This preconception is also pre-identification of difference and sameness and underpins understanding as it constitutes post-experience realisation now embedded as knowledge. Similar context experiences in the evolving world underpin and reinforce this, forming fixed concepts or embedded or stored awarenesses which proliferate / mutate over time as variations on a type. Common collective experience elicits agreement or acceptance of fixed concepts which in turn re-inforces consolidation of common experience, forging identity recognition and hence the creation / emergence of the concept formation / confirmation and its categorisation as, for example, truth, analogy, metaphors, myths, archetype, stereotype and so on.

The case study analysis of figure 7.1 then discusses the notion of opposition in the context of subversion and deviances relative to the fixed conceptual agreements which require a different level of evolved thinking. Deviance in this context is regarded as one end of a scale of differentiations which need acknowledgement but in the process alter the awareness of individuals relative to the group and may require the individual to deny an actuality or at least disguise acknowledgement of it. This, it is argued, is a new level of consciousness because it pre-empts the psycho-social situation which is discussed later.

The case study focuses upon the differentiation aspect of compulsory comparison which is a subjective personal interpretation relative to experience and impacts upon individual identity. Personal experience is also a crucial determinant as to how the compulsive comparison mechanism operates within each of us in its search to define, in the first instance, our sexual identity upon which the foundation of our total identity is built. Utilising previously discussed findings and theories, the research teases apart a series of identified interconnected levels of perception and meanings, experienced by various elements of bio- / brain / mind response receptors. Acquired data is filtered through levels of consciousness intelligences making reactive decisions as the gaze progresses through its successive scans and cross-referencing of data, eventually screening out contradiction, ambiguities and confusion in the gaze's quest to seek an evaluative resolution.

The argument takes us to a secondary level whereby there is a conflict between bio-imperative dictates, gender, social and psychological conditioning, and subversion of ideal archetypal representation through deviant re-presentation, the representation of a different aspect of self. A further level of consciousness is identified whereby the process of sublimation can be used as a conscious act of subterfuge, in this instance for erotic purposes. As is evidenced, once

removed from the 'aesthetic' regulation of procreation, various modes of perception of sexual representation and / or orientation could advance. The mechanism is defined as enabling a perception capability of objectification via sublimation as an evolved logical progression from bio-imperative to socio-imperative, its advance being punctuated along the way by innovative discoveries which facilitate the process.

The deliberate act to subvert, mutate from the norm or the actual via manipulation of the individual 'given' natural, either by emphases (as in the case of the image) or disguise by removal of the offending hair requires a compromise of the viewer's gaze so that confusion is purposefully experienced to evoke specific perplexity of emotions. Such compulsive comparison based critical evaluation normally leads either to rejection or acceptance. Rejection, being the most emotionally traumatic, normally triggers a compulsive urge to take strategic action through the act of augmentation. Repetition of either with their accompanying defined emotions ensures that they are further embedded in our consciousness as time progresses according to the requirements of the bio-imperative. It is suggested, however that in this instance perplexity remains unresolved, hovering between sensations of possibilities, of rejection or acceptance which provides another space for the threat of competitiveness to occupy. It remains ambiguous which side can evoke sympathy and empathy and which jealousy if competition is based on otherness as being subversively 'erotic', and this highlights a factor in the awareness of difference in otherness being dependant upon which sexual standpoint the gaze is cast from. Female-to-female, male-to-male, female-to-male, male-to-female, underpins behavioural differentiation and offers as alternatives confirmation mechanisms and modes of sublimation within the interplay of social context as experienced in contemporary society.

Although the bio-imperative of genetic reproduction is not at this stage an overriding imperative impacting upon the cognitive process, it is apparent that the copulatory gaze of male to female, female to male sexual attraction and interaction is a factor affecting interpretations or differing conceptual constructs in the same experiential situations. Compulsive comparison as a mechanism for cognitive development has been considered in the context of differentiation and binary opposition and has been confirmed as a collective consciousness level by dint of shared acknowledgment of shared experiences which result in shared concepts. However differentiations also reveal differences which are often irreconcilable.

## **Chapter 8 Products of the human mind: Sublimation as 'Mentifact'**

Chapter Eight therefore examined the notion of the unfixed concept as a means of identifying, understanding, defining and formulating abstract concepts. That is to say where (a) collective acknowledgement of experience was no longer a coincidence but an agreed and established fact of life, a sense of common property was established however (b) where there was no collective acknowledgement, common property did not exist.

Using this premise as a basis from which to investigate and analyse the psychological factors determining the creation of representations and the shape of a form as 'hybrid' and having a sustained emotional impact regardless of time and place, a case is made for a notion of need driven development of the ability to transcend inhibition and / or the part of self which social values and acknowledged fixed concepts require to be hidden. Fixed concepts are embedded substance made acceptable material culture and are thereby complex mentifacts only part

of which is acknowledged. This is because they are made by an initial cognitive process of differentiation which identifies both fixed and unfixed concepts. Therefore an expression of both the fixed and the unfixed concepts can only ever allow acknowledgement of the fixed in that common social context. That which is based on unfixed (socially unacknowledged) concepts is therefore subsumed within the expression and remains unacknowledged in the common social arena. It is, however, nonetheless subliminal. The ambiguities caused are discussed within the three case studies of jewellery artefacts focussed upon how this state of affairs was dealt with from a creative point of view and rendered into an aesthetic experience. It is argued that the psycho-sexual aspects of life were expressed as art mentifacts or conceptual objects evolved to provide a consistent pathway for aesthetic sensibility, sublimation, emotional release and / or gratification sometimes referred to as the erotic.

For the purpose of exemplifying the psychological impact of particular shape configurations evolved in the process of the making of socio-cultural objects of display, the heart form was chosen to discuss how the conception of forms developed through time. In order to reveal what influenced the design principles determining form and function, Freudian theory was employed to identify and define the key operative components as tools for analysis and provide a narrative framework within which the pieces of work would be deconstructed. Deconstruction advanced not only an analysis of specific function but also revealed in 'meta-psychological' terms the steps leading to a resolved design and the embracing of emotional resolution manifested in the resultant hybridisation of a particular form.

It was concluded that the bio-physical, the psychosexual and the psychosocial have forged the psyche and are embedded in all art as a vehicle for sublimation or reification; the form, structure and organisation not only reference and relate to our inherent imperatives, mental and physical, but also provide a visual language of re-presentational connection or psychological relation to emotions which can be experienced through the overall impression of selective formative elements. It was further suggested that creative and artistic endeavour can reconstruct / promote conditions connecting the very real with the more abstract conceptual specifics of life, re-conceptualised and realised through the creation of objects which are habitual associative representations.

This framed subsequent approaches to the discussion of objects whereby an 'evolutionary' psycho-analytical approach was reapplied to construct a freshly informed analysis and interpretation of the role of reification / sublimation / fetishisation, showing a set of relationships focussed on the sublime and the objectification of self through mentifactured objects such as jewellery

## **Chapter 9 Adornments as instruments of cohesion: Society, culture, civilisation**

Chapter Nine considered the origins of a language of visual representation in skin marking and body sculpting as a sign of social development occasioned by imperatives which were originally biological / sexual in procreation for species survival but became socio-sexual individual identity markers of relational needs, first in the family and then in the group, that is to say ritualised sublimation of the self identity to that of the group as a consequence of events or situations. Anthropological studies suggested imperatives which transformed markings as body adornment for individual differentiation into the signage of a socially induced consciousness

level which in its turn resulted in behavioural changes and became holistically reflected in a cultural representation of a social collective ideal.

Tribal practices were used to exemplify the various stages in developing consciousness associated with and conducive to the environmental conditions which occasioned stages of change paralleling those in early evolution. Grooming, it was argued, brought about the first and obvious appearance changes. Initially a natural behaviour concerned with protection and conditioning of the skin and hair, it would eventually evolve as a means of identity or individual differentiation marking.

Three levels of grooming were identified: the first - as temporary presentation of the body; the second - permanent event marking on the body; and the third - body augmentation via objects as extensions and emphases of expression (the beginnings of jewellery). Natural grooming is focussed upon face and body features. Glossy skin and hair confirms and signifies youth and health and is therefore sexually explicit, attractive and even erotic. Through the basic activities of grooming, manipulation of simple materials such as oils and pigments, hair and skin ornamentation, human inventiveness created an elaborated decorative set of signs in abstract compositions depictive of the states of being. These activities were therefore biological imperatives concerned with condition and health care and thereby important for procreation in focussing the copulatory gaze.

Scarification and artefacts became the medium of representation expressing the variety of shifting stages of women's sexual maturity, differentiated individual psychological states and group social declaration of fertility. These externalised signs recognised the content and context of their sphere of life as sexual or productive individuals within the group. Extending a temporary multifaceted grooming function into a permanent symbolic apparatus and permanent marking activity was a continuation of signing the body within the context of an evolving social order best demonstrated by the examples selected of scarification and tattoo.

It was suggested that evolving consciousness in parallel with psycho-social constructs relative to body marking and / or embellishment as objectified in adornment was initially focussed upon significant events relevant to both the individual and the social order, the need to control. The primary concerns in a group situation are paired couples, family units etc., and therefore grappling with and gaining control over such issues as territory, sexual / hierarchal status, kinship identity and relationships, tribal alliance and unity all had to be 'signed' as either accomplishments or aspirations. These imperatives required a system of symbolic marking of the body which was permanent and irreversible, reflecting the actuality of the life cycle.

Prescriptive marking through scarification or tattoo irrevocably fixed a visual progression from the pre-sexual to the sexual stages in life. States of sexual maturity reinforced through rituals as rites of passage were indicative of the implementation of organisation and generational transfer. Representations encoded meaning, symbolic signs of the physical, evolved to encapsulate both the physiological and metaphysical meaning of living within the social group wherein each individual could be safely framed. Change signifiers, socially monitored and marked were a vehicle for control and manipulation of individuals within a collective frame, which also advantaged collective responses to external problems or situations requiring solutions.

These mental and physical shifts involved new levels of perception of meaningful associations translated into symbolic communicative transmission for interpretation and meaning. They

were indicative of new levels of mental transformation and an evolving capacity for specific interconnectivity of individual intelligences which could focus on areas of communication requiring specialised development and specialised skills. New skills of scarification and tattoo transformed simple, individual impermanences into common group experience marking acts of 're-cognition' as acknowledgements of social consolidation.

These new visual manifestations were representative of consciousness, new benchmarks of social sophistication overlaying the former continuous theme of innate anxiety for survival and reproductive fitness. They could be tested through the process of body scarification, tattoo and piercing. Failure at any point of the procedure, physically or mentally, signified points of weakness. The iconography attested to an individual's levels of fitness:

- endurance of pain and fortitude in forthcoming childbirth
- immunity to infection and inoculation against future infection
- ability to sustain loss of blood and make rapid recovery
- a desire to conform to the socialisation process.

The iconography of successfully completed scarification etc on a female is confirmation of the overall required criteria of mental and physical health and thus that she is good reproductive material. A body so decorated therefore is undeniably sexually attractive and transformed perception of self and others, conferring status. The self assured are therefore better able to negotiate status between fitness of self and fitness in society. Also of primary importance and evident in the iconography of the illustrations is that individuals responding to common ground rules can live together in reasonable harmony, thus making the communal life of the tribe conducive to imperatives of survival and reproductive fitness and the formation of a healthy generative gene pool.

It was further argued that 'difference' conceptualisation presented new extensions of the body in response to the new and complex adaptation of behaviour required by social development impacting upon and within relationships, creating anxieties which required a new level of collusion or co-operation between the sexes, thus shifting levels of consciousness in individuals and causing an impact upon the social as reflected in adornment signifying status. Within the complex social dynamic, anxieties are assuaged by acknowledgement and mutual respect, acceptance by society or recognition manifest in a designated status. In striving for status individuals are driven to extremes beyond the usual which leave material traces and impact upon the direction of the social dynamic.

Distinctive boundaries through differentiation of the sexes defined tolerances in sexual liaison activities, mate ownership and alliances. However, the evolving regulation of male / female interaction through reinforcement of prescribed criteria are featured on the body in visual forms of adornment / decoration. These, acting as extensions of the bio-imperative such as gender differentiation relative to maturity etc. are designated role functions in a social context. Extra-monogamous affairs were an ever present deviation / threat to the stability of a liaison and to the stability of the group. This anxious space created a need for a more comprehensive or all-embracing specific mode of representation, one which could better respond to these emergent psychosexual anxieties. Anxieties surrounding paternity could be assuaged and responded to by further extending body re-presentation which could reassure by inhibiting overt sexual interaction and activity.



It is generally understood that of primary importance for the woman was the avoidance of insemination other than by her appointed mate and the risk of losing his support or producing poor quality offspring. However, it is not unknown or unnatural for clandestine liaisons to be advantageous to either sex as genetic diversity in the gene pool ensures survival. The importance of prescribed or appropriate mating assuaged anxieties on both sides of the gender divide, albeit resulting in social oppression and limiting personal expression and a matter for inclusion or exclusion from the group. Overt sexual anxieties required interpersonal subjugated expression by way of extended modes of body representation and thereby the more extreme the anxiety the more extreme the expression. Extended modes of representation were tailored to address differing situational requirements and conventions resulting in new levels of consciousness, which in turn influenced behaviour. These 'new situation' forms of jewellery materialised to regulate physically and parallel the transformation of behaviour at this new level of consciousness.

The socialised structures re-focussing the copulatory gaze both mentally and physically restrained female independence and self-assertiveness, marking the assuagement of male anxiety through the power of the group. Psycho-sexual anxieties introduced cognitive / emotionally expressive concepts and social constructs such as submissiveness, passivity, subjugation, inferiority and, as a result, also conferred status. The functions of the body were restrained / sublimated into symbolic representation of sexual allure, upon which much of the evolution of jewellery is predicated: its acknowledgement and acceptance of consequences in various forms of masochistic, narcissistic or sadistic practices sublimating the act of copulation.

Extremely overstated or exaggerated modes of body adornment, it was therefore argued, were an expression of and response to the nature of evolving and complex forms of socially constructed behaviour. Jewellery and accompanying modes of adornment in the art of body re-presentation subsumed previous imperatives and moved further towards new spheres of amplified symbolic representation and required communication of a new group psychology dynamic.

## **Chapter 10. Towards a new awareness; new consciousness and signs: Cognitive process in reading jewellery.**

Chapter Ten sought to reveal and verify multiple levels of imperatives and socio-psychological issues as strands in visual language through case studies of contemporary jewellery, considered in relation to the discourses relative to psychology emanating from Vienna at the beginning of the post-industrial period and its impact on post-modernist society. This period saw a potent and significant shift in realisation of the nature of human existence, altering the consciousness level which impacted upon the conceptual underpinning of the creative processes and products of the jeweller and reflecting the new socio-cultural context of change.

Issues of desire relative to procreation and fitness recast in a new sociological context shifted the focus from pre-modern tribal society evolving through the agrarian and city state forms to complex urban detachment from nature. The development of modern society forced social change which brought with it related issues which were manifested in the arts and culture and thus objects of adornment, proffered as instruments of reflection or socialisation, forging unity and collective identity in a process of civilisation.

The emergence of modern culture and pressures caused by an urban way of life, prompted changes which fragmented the former social orders, diversifying working practices and depersonalising individual contribution. Identity loss was problematic and therefore reconceptualised by reference to notions of individuality and innovation in expression, developing perceptions of self determinacy. The evolving diversity of material culture objects reflected the current social needs with its plethora of diverse artefacts many devoid of personal expression but which, however, represented social aspiration and thereby an ideal of conformity. Gradually becoming an area of conflict for the aspirations of both jewellery wearer and maker, both began to address the situation.

Personal expression had become one removed as social expression and objects increasingly estranged from their origins re-formed into symbolic reconfigurations as instruments of discourse to accommodate / facilitate advances in social sophistication and homogenous identity. It was argued that this paradox was problematic and evidenced by the increasing social neurosis which was identified and began to be revealed and critically discussed. This in turn was increasingly reflected in the avant-garde developments of contemporary jewellery.

These complexities of post-modernist / contemporary society evolved complex sublimation through the new media of conceptual expression which, it was argued, was embodied in the work of the contemporary / conceptual jeweller. Case studies of their work reveal how the bio-imperative is a constant of humans' functional condition and is therefore, as a potent evocation of the pleasure principle, the physical groundwork upon which the development of the human psyche and the aesthetic psychology of the copulatory gaze is formed. Simultaneously they evidence the impact of socialisation as invisible and abstract forces which determine the dynamic of our psyche when set in opposition to our natural instincts. Their application of psycho-phenomena transmuted into symbolisation provides us with a legitimate vehicle as a process for sublimation. The contemporary jeweller's interrogation of the norms of personal, political and emotional conditioned responses are presented by means of ambiguity in the representation of the natural which was further extended through subversion of organising principles. Issues relating to sexual oppressiveness in the prevailing social order were elevated / sublimated into the erotic. However, this new consciousness in the creation of their mentifacts challenged convention through overt exposure by that which had been provided as background, namely the understanding of socio-psychological motivation.

Issues articulated as gender construction, and the exploration of sexuality and command of its liberalisation shifted the moral framework wherein new visions of identity and meaningful self-expression could take place and become legitimate. Self reflective re-evaluation of the concept of self and self identity, especially the sexual part of self, was set in motion. This raising of awareness leading to the recognition that cultural ideals operated, enforced and shaped modes of behaviour, thus setting in motion a chain of reactions to society's often cruel ambiguous standards as they conflicted with individual's needs, resulted in subversive strategies in liberating self-expression.

New levels of consciousness led to new practices in the creation of jewellery and shifted the requirement for adornment and display. This lent reinforcement to the current critical discourses relating to life in society and as a consequence advanced levels of consciousness relative to culture and new aesthetic sensibilities. As evidence of the extension of the cognitive capacity of

a sophisticated jeweller's mind, they have provided the broadest palette of design and research methodology to date from which to render the phenomenology of creative output. A new visual and creative language was created whereby discourse took place within the creative process impacting upon concept development and the resulting iconography of the jewellery pieces discussed.

Interpretation of sexuality through the visual language of expression was synonymous with Darwinian and Freudian theories. Simultaneous awareness and acknowledgement of the interplay of the conscious and unconscious mind revealed and gave voice to the dark voids of nature, permeating human existence and determining our actions. It was argued that, within the re-evaluated psychosexual and emotional space created by our own consciousness, a fusing of multiple levels of natural and conditioned thought transformed the abstract into concrete, generating the creative dynamic as sublimated expression which, when acted upon, resulted in the creation of reflective objects. This chapter conclusion combined previous chapter findings in its critical analysis, explicating the various formative processes that have led to an understanding of the way in which contemporary consciousness levels impacted upon creative expression of sublimated aesthetic sensibilities through objects

Each case study illustrated a facet of this argument through layered imperatives juxtaposed with interpretation whereby the separate elements which inhabit a piece of jewellery and other material culture objects were analysed, enabling the construction of an account of how each element is a part of a much wider scheme which derives from a prerequisite 'source' imperative. Defined and distinctive cognitive steps, overlaid by changing social constructs and behavioural traits and inhibitions, were informed by a consistent dynamic. The constant reconfiguration of these in mentifacts reshaped the aesthetic sensibility and thus re-formed the ever present copulatory gaze. The sophistication of consciousness of self and society was embedded in the objects which result from this context.

It was concluded that cognitive sensibilities are manifested as new progressions in psycho-social, political criteria taking place as society evolved towards increasing levels of sophistication and thereby the expressive visual language had to keep pace with the co-evolution of the physical being and phenotype extended arising in individual psychology and social structure. The critical framework and evidence presented throughout this thesis therefore offered an overview of imperative driven extension of the biological being as phenotype, extended in an evolving complexity of accumulative inter-relational aspects which impel the psycho-social event defined in the 'mentifactured' object as of evolutionary consequence.

These menti- / artefacts can, it is argued, be cited as benchmarks of levels of consciousness and therefore when the criteria revealed in the research findings are applied to an analysis of these objects it is possible to interpret their significance and meaning. As contextualised by the case studies, this facilitates identification of a working model of the principles of design.

## **11.2 The New Model**

In order to develop a system for the purpose of the analysis of jewellery and related artefacts in the above context, a review of Untracht's Mandala reiterated the shortcomings in his model whereby he attempted to categorise jewellery artefacts by arbitrary social function alone rather

than by categorisation as levels of consciousness presented in tangible form as representational of self expression reflecting social function. This research adds to Untracht's model a dimensional difference which necessitated a radical re-formulation denoting proportioned imperative impacts which drive the production significance and meaning of the object.

The critical framework and new model generated by the thesis provide an imperative driven evolutionary context which also presents an holistic integrated analytical tool for the interpretation of the role / field of body adornment, jewellery and its creative design as a process of human evolution and culture. This takes us beyond the standard, disjunctured and often arbitrary historical interpretation of the discipline. A matrix accompanied by a diagrammatic / diagnostic model has been devised whereby the defined imperative elements can now furnish the various generic manifestations of jewellery listed in Untracht's Mandala with the argument that body adornment, jewellery and its related fields are the fundamental implements through which the sublimated imperatives act out the genetic agenda.

The matrix (figure 11.1 below) provides an holistic overview whereby each evolutionary stage can be read in synchronic and diachronic order and the listed contributory elements can therefore be consecutively assimilated and understood as linking elements which provide context to a specific level in time in parallel with an evolutionary context through time. The Matrix is presented as an evolutionary relationship map featuring six key components arranged in consecutive columns. Each column is headed by a 'principal imperative value' under which is categorised and framed, in nine chronological stages, the relevant and specific information which constitutes the evolutionary pathway of causal events.

This holistic overview therefore sets out in morphological order structures and relationships to show how each constituent level corresponds to the rules and regulation of genetically driven imperatives. Different levels of correlated shifts and structures proceed by order of transmission, re-configuration and transformation to evolve as secondary structures which constitute and consolidate the perceptual development of the copulatory gaze, the extended phenotype, psychosexual / socio cultural artefacts / mentifacts. The Matrix is further condensed and transformed and presented in diagrammatic form as the new model, figure 11.2a and 11.2b below, to provide a diagnostic map wherein correlation and transformation in terms of causal effects can be visualised as an holistic structured flow of events.

The diagram can be divided into two interrelated parts. One half, (the critical frame 11.2a) shows the progression of the three principal imperatives which forge the copulatory gaze and consolidate events as manifest in the phenotype extended. This is reflected by the other side (by the design trajectory 11.2b) which relates the proactive implements created by our ancestors and benchmarks levels of cognitive ability contained within the created objects (these are discussed consecutively).

Central to the critical frame diagram, shown as the blue / green section, is the 'bio- / logical' base order imperative, the source from which flows all ensuing phenomena, from humans' earliest beginnings to modern highly complex cultural manifestations of the phenotype extended. This is flanked by two equally important imperative factors which impact upon and feed into this flow. To the left is the socio-sexual imperative which provides social situational context and to the right is the psycho-sexual imperative which describes causal change. Each section level delineates its own distinct evolutionary pathway whilst at the same time each level

## MATRIX







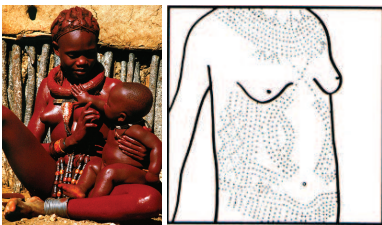
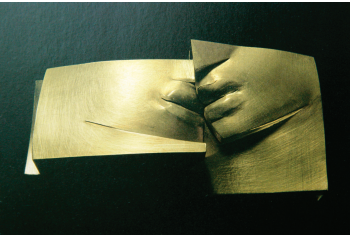
| Social imperative  | Bio-socio-sexual implements as phenotype extended.  | Cognitive shift.  | Psycho-sexual imperative   | Tool evidence  | Levels                    |
|--|---|---|--|--|---------------------------|
| Incipient pair bonding   | Body language.<br>Social emotions.<br>Incipient kinship relations.  | Innate/perceptual skills (visual recognition of signs as representation)  | Capacity in situ for primitive form of sense of self awareness.<br>Primitive theory of mind.   | Use of simple implements to obtain food.   | Level 1<br><br>Chapter 3  |
| Consistent serial monogamy.  | Changes in sexual strategies/bio-gender differentiation.<br>Changes to physique to enhance sexual attractiveness/ excitement/desire and encourage long term relationship and commitment to each other.<br>Augmentation of the copulatory gaze.  | Revision of aesthetic criteria.<br>Revision of sexual selection communication systems ie., signalling of biogenetic criteria as signal selection criteria.  | Awareness of self, socio-sexual self, primitive form of self value.<br>Primitive association/ conceptualisation.   | Found ready made objects are selected and used to augment another tool to suit a purpose.<br>Chipping with one pebble at the sides of another pebble to produce a sharp edged implement. Tools to make tools.  | Level 2<br><br>Chapter 4  |
| Established serial monogamy.<br>Status/role differentiation.<br>Inception of ritual through transformation/representation and re-presentation  | ‘Self’ enhancing object/incipient material culture.<br>Mentifact formation/application as communication system/cognitive devices.<br>Cognitive implements for self emulation by artificial means to gain control.   | Attachment of mental content to object as symbol.<br>Abstract thought, concept formation, analogies and symbolisation.<br>Ability to reflect, rationalise and categorise experience.  | Connection of interior world to exterior through empathy.<br>Objectification of thought outside self.  | Purposeful creative manufacture.<br>Gradual competence evidences an expanding intelligence. Glimmers of personal possession and human culture  | Level 3<br><br>Chapter 5  |
| The socio-sex contract.<br>Family units within enlarging social groups.<br>Sexual and social objectivity/role definition.<br>Personal, social and collective communication and cohesion.<br>Interrelationship between self, object and others as signs of social value not things.<br>Constituting socially tradeable material value.  | Objects acting as concrete symbols for mutual exchange of abstract reality values.<br>Body adornment provides schematic order, control and purpose to activities.<br>Objects as tokens of value for exchange are transformed into independent objects of specific symbolic value to be used to particularise and enhance personal status  | Connection of object and subject relations.<br>Ability to make systematic enquiry based on logic and reasoning, making discriminatory and informed judgements and ability to problem solve.   | Artefacts are recognised as socio-political tools.<br><br>Evolving cultural consequences.  | Evidences formation of creative sequential strategies in physical and mental capacity.<br>Memory and transference of knowledge and skills.<br>Purposeful and sophisticated manipulative skills, planning and foresight evidences mental wiring.<br>Consistent accurate repetition, demonstrating re-enactment.<br>Application of innate sense of symmetry and balance is not only aesthetic but produces a proficient tool.  | Level 4<br><br>Chapter 6  |
| Accumulated knowledge and transference of shared knowledge into intergenerational knowledge transfer.<br>Incipient establishment of stereotype/archetype.<br>Establishment of self as both subject and object.   | Innate desire for identity, its organisation and categorisation, innate desire to differentiate, recognise and empathise.<br>Evaluation of information in selection/rejection process.<br>A common collective elicits agreement, fixes concept and forges identity as truth.  | Facets of the copulatory gaze operate through ‘compulsive comparison’.<br>Alliance to or subversion of ideal archetype.<br>Realisation of self as both subject and object.  | Sublimation:<br>Increasing mental capacity / dexterity in consolidation of concept formation and resolution as a means to an end.  | Assimilation of subjective self into objective self leading to subliminal self.<br>Multilateral interactions between physical, intellect and the metaphysical.   | Level 5<br><br>Chapter 7  |
| Collective acknowledgement of experience is common property and conditions modes of communication.<br>Forms have co-evolved and developed into a recognised symbolic order and stylisation.<br>Socio-cultural objects / vehicles for sublimation.<br>Overt display, representation and re-presentation.<br>Nurture overlayers nature to determine form and function.   | Psychological factors determining the creation of representation in the form of ‘hybrid’<br>Ability to transcend psycho-sexual inhibition through sublimation of both acknowledged and unacknowledged or the tabooed.<br>Key operative processes determining form and function.   | The provision of a consistent outlet for aesthetic sensibility, sublimation, emotional and erotic gratification.  | Personal/collective psychosexual as aesthetic experience can be safely dealt with.<br><br>Consciousness and subconsciousness can be fused / reconciled.  | Psychosexual aspects of life expressed as art mentifacts or conceptualised art objects.<br>Provides not only emotional resolution but also leads to ‘well resolved’ design in reconciling base elements of aesthetics and the psycho-sexual.   | Level 6.<br><br>Chapter 8 |
| Tribe.<br>Cohesion of individuals, paired couples, family units.<br>Individual and evolving social order within large groups. Control over issues such as territory, sexual/hierarchal status, mate ownership, gender, kinship identity / relationships, tribal alliance and unity.<br>Identification of status ranking of sexually productive individuals within the group.<br>Ritualised sublimation of self identity to accommodate collective group identity.<br>Collective responses to external situations as social consolidation.<br>Social sophistication as extension of innate anxiety for survival and reproduction fitness.<br>Tribe, healthy generation of collective gene pool. | Natural grooming, as evidence of health condition relevant to bio-imperatives. Is sexually attractive. Visual representation through temporary/permanent skin marking and body sculpting through jewellery.<br>Prescriptive permanent marking to identify/define visual progression of states of sexual maturity of individuals within the group.<br>Marking of individual differentiation signage to that of social ideal.<br>Objectification of self. | Body transformation as vehicle for control and manipulation of individuals for the good of the group.<br><br>Over exaggerated modes of body adornment as response to evolving, complex forms of social control.<br>Restrictive body adornment: management of monogamy, fidelity, gender projection<br><br>Evolving consciousness in parallel with psycho-social constructs relative to body painting/marketing/embellishment as objectified through adornment.<br><br>Recognition and mental application of symbolic signs which embody physiological and metaphysical meaning whereby individuals can be safely framed, controlled, manipulated and socially monitored.<br><br>Exclusive symbolic communication transmission. Interconnectivity of individual intelligences through iconography.<br>Transformation of perception of self and others. | New levels of co-operation between the sexes and complex adaptation to behaviour controls, creates psychosexual anxieties.<br><br>Anxieties are manifested/sublimated through specific modes of body representation.<br>Anxiety for status results in extreme forms of representation as impact response to the new social dynamic.<br><br>Psychosexual anxieties manifest in emotionally expressive concepts and social constructs representing submissiveness, passivity, subjugation etc.<br>Bodies are restrained/sublimated into symbolic representation.<br><br>Restructuring of the copulatory gaze. Adjustment both mentally and physically in this new context. | Restrictive body adornment: management of monogamy, fidelity, gender projection.<br><br>Doubles up as handicap a form of fitness/ unfitness weeding out process.<br><br>Jewellery as mechanism embodying plural purpose: correction, deception, concealment/exposure, erotic/repugnant.  | Level 7<br><br>Chapter 9  |
| Shift from rural life to urban populations.<br><br>New socio-cultural context in response to change.<br><br>Personal identity over collective organisation of urban life.<br>Former social orders fragmented<br>Increasing social neurosis.<br><br>Cognitive sensibilities operate new progressions in psycho-social: political criteria continue to drive social evolution.   | Detachment from nature overlayers by nurture.<br><br>Now manifested in the arts and cultural objects of adornment.<br><br>Adornment and display mechanisms questioning the status quo.<br>Objects increasingly estranged from their natural origins.<br><br>Sublimation / subversion can take place and becomes legitimate.   | Depersonalisation is re- conceptualised in the form of self determinacy.<br><br>Issues/anxieties/neurosis of desire relative to procreation and fitness are mentally recast in sociological context.<br><br>Re-evaluation of self identity especially sexual identity.<br><br>Recognition that cultural ideals adversely affected personal needs.   | Sexual oppressiveness is evaluated / sublimated into the erotic.<br><br>Concept of self is reconceptualised in context of Darwin’s / Freud’s revelations.<br>Implications in self determined socio-sexual psychology awareness.<br><br>Need to subvert ideals in an attempt to liberate self expression.<br><br>Concept development through iconographic substance synonymous with Darwinian, Freudian and Post-modernist findings.  | Artefacts of personal expression representing challenges to social ideals.<br><br>Jewellery as new medium for conceptual expression.<br>Conceptual underpinning of the creative process.<br>Instruments of reflection, contemplation.<br><br>Psycho-sexual operating as vehicle in an artefact to facilitate complex sublimation.<br><br>Creative language whereby discourse can take place<br><br>Conceptual jewellery gives voice/vision to subconsciousness and consciousness and the metaphysical.<br><br>Turns fantasy as sublimated expression, into a generating creative dynamic, and so into objects of reflection. | Level 8<br>Chapter 10     |

Figure 11.1 The Matrix



THE CRITICAL FRAME

DESIGN TRAJECTORY

| <p>Base level order</p> <p>Our primordial heritage sets the blueprint</p> <p>Behaviour patterns are governed by reproductive survival mechanisms of gene propagation</p> <p>Establishes the principal base order for all future development of human activity.</p> <p>Socio-sexual imperative      Bio-sexual imperative as phenotype extended      Psycho-sexual imperative</p> |  |  | Proactive implements                                  | Contributing ancestors  | Cognitive benchmarks  | Base order            |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| Pair bonding   | Body Language, bonding emotions, kinship recognition   | Primitive sense of social awareness                                | Simple implements                                     | Chimp/Protohuman Hominid ancestors<br>8 - 6 million years ago     |    | Level 1<br>Chapter 3  |
| Serial monogamy  | <p>Primitive perceptual skills</p> <p>Changes in: sexual strategies, physique/aesthetic gaze and mate commitment</p> <p>Revision of aesthetic criteria</p>         | Awareness of self/socio-sexual self/self value                     | Tools to make tools                                   | Australopithecus afarensis<br>4 - 2.5 million years ago           |    | Level 2<br>Chapter 4  |
| Status role differentiation/re-presentational/ritual   | <p>Self emulation by artificial means</p> <p>Attachment of mental content to object as symbol</p>  | Connecting interior/exterior world through empathy                 | Purposeful manufacture/personal possession            | Homo Habilis<br>2.3 - 1.6 Million years ago                       |    | Level 3<br>Chapter 5  |
| Socio-sex-contract: Personal/social/collective cohesion  | <p>Object as symbols of exchange values schematic order, status</p> <p>Connection of object/subject relations</p>  | Recognition of artefacts as socio-political tools                  | Memory and transference of skills                     | Homo erectus<br>1.9 million - 300,000 (possibly 27,000) years ago |   | Level 4<br>Chapter 6  |
| Knowledge transfer, stereotype, self as subject/object   | <p>Processing: identity, categorisation, stereotype and empathy</p> <p>"Compulsive comparison": realisation of self as subject/object</p>                          | Sublimation as a means to an end                                   | Subliminal self physical/intellect metaphysical       | Early Homo sapiens<br>130,000 - 60,000 years ago                  |  | Level 5<br>Chapter 7  |
| Experience as common property, common symbolic value   | <p>Psychological factors determining form and concept as a vehicle for sublimation</p> <p>Sublimation outlet for emotional and erotic inhibition/gratification</p> | Psycho-sexual is fused/reconciled through the aesthetic experience | The psychological expressed in art mentifact          | Homo sapiens sapiens<br>45,000 years to date                      |  | Level 6<br>Chapter 8  |
| Tribe: cohesion of individuals, social order/control/status/health   | <p>Visual representation, skin marking/body sculpting to define sexual status</p> <p>Body marking/adornment as implements for social control</p>                   | Anxieties are sublimated through modes of body recognition         | Adornment as social management/fitness control.       | Homo sapiens sapiens<br>Tribal societies<br>Pre-industrial        |  | Level 7<br>Chapter 9  |
| Changes from tribal to large urban/population has psycho-socio-sexual impact   | <p>Sublimation/subversion through objects of adornment</p> <p>Anxieties/neurosis of desire recast as socio-political discourse</p>                                 | Concept of self is re-conceptualised                               | Jewellery artefacts to facilitate complex sublimation | Homo sapiens sapiens<br>urban/populations<br>Post-industrial      |  | Level 8<br>Chapter 10 |

The copulatory gaze

Figure 11.2a

Figure 11.2b

of each pathway defines the associated impact. It is the impact of one upon the other and their inter-relational outcomes which provokes those cognitive shifts (shown directly above each arrow pointing into the next phase) which each time launches the phenotype and its extension into the next phase level of consciousness.

Additionally these phase levels are graduated as defined by the density of colour. They delineate a progressive shift in emphases within the evolutionary imperative contexts whereby accentuation of causal effects moves from the biological to the sociological to the psychological. At the top of the diagram the two flanking imperatives impose little impact but as they continue down the evolutionary pathway a gradual compacting impact by these two demonstrates an ever encroaching dominance over the biological core. The last section therefore shows how the bio-imperative is repackaged in its cultural guise.

The notion of the copulatory gaze discussed in the thesis is referenced at the bottom, projecting backwards to indicate that its focus remains firmly embedded at the core of the bio-imperatives, modulated however, by the proportional impacts of the other two influences of extended imperatives. However the bio-imperative becomes subsumed into the socio-sexual and the psychosexual context to re-emerge and re-engage as the intellectual / animal constituent of the phenotype extended whereby body, brain, mind, and psyche continue to work as a single co-evolved component, informed by influences from remote experiences in our primal past to take its place within the wider contemporary system.

### **11.3 Design progression / propagation relative to ancestral participants / contributors and their historical time slots**

Parallel to the trajectory diagram part of figure 11.2 (a) is figure 11.2 (b). Showing contemporaneous evolutionary developments. Under the column headed 'Proactive implements' are listed elements of creative phenomena which prompted the necessary relevant and related cognitive shifts. This part of the trajectory shows the gradual formation of self-awareness taking place by examining the process of protohuman and human (hominid) mental ability to relate, encode and link perception to object identity with corresponding intelligence cues.

The second column of this part of the trajectory entitled 'Contributing ancestors' identifies our direct ancestors, (as currently evidenced) and dates their niche as time levels in relation to relevant cognitive shifts. This part of the trajectory shows how various hominid levels of consciousness could have evolved the ability to encode and link perception to object identity as described above in such a way as to create a form of communication that could rely on objects, conceptualised cognitive content, to express and represent the internal / external world of self to others and vice versa. By applying the logic of evolutionary theory the research evidenced that humans had the brain and mental capacity to experience, recognise and simulate 'experience projection' through visual symbolisation, leading to awareness of selfhood, personal objectification and exploration of materiality as a mode of re-presentation of self in an ever evolving new context.

Under the heading 'Cognitive benchmarks' the third column shows illustrative representations of creative tools (including the early hominids' mind function in Level 2) which act as benchmarks to confirm evidence of specific skills in cognitive ability and intelligence capacity.

These cognitive benchmarks are also cumulative as signs of multiple consciousness levels which are consistently overlaid and interactive. Here is evidenced the consolidation of conscious / unconscious processes which facilitated concrete manifestations of the copulatory gaze. Additionally, this shows how human design innovation and ingenuity has been programmed in as an innate process and is embedded in the human psyche. The contemporary jewellers' work highlights this constant and their case studies are used to reference to and define the various identified levels of the design process.

At the furthest end of the Design trajectory are identified the various evolutionary stages and consciousness levels referenced to the thesis chapters. This part of the diagram projects a jewellery-related genetic archive which shows the formulation which can be used to demonstrate how certain evolutionary permutations may have led to a specific development of jewellery or other closely related activities. The last cognitive benchmark image is a demonstration of how the metaphysical is one removed from the physical and the biological is now defined in a different spacial / specific environment and temporal context, subsumed into the contemporary intellectual ecosystem.

## 11.4 Discussion

The Matrix and Diagram present a trajectory of specific and relevant phenomena chronologically listing the various ancestral hominid predecessors who have taken part and contributed to the evolutionary history in the field or subject of body adornment and jewellery as implements of representation. It is to be understood that in real time these may not necessarily be neatly phased in sequential steps. Levels overlap, there are gaps and missing links which cannot as yet be filled through lack of current fossil and research evidence. It has been necessary to condense vast measures and tracts of time to trace, identify and research focal points wherever the available clues and evidence can be located.

Though levels are displayed in a sequential form it must be understood that there are time lapses and gaps in formal records. It is now known that tools made from bamboo have a tensile strength higher than steel and a cutting edge just as good as a flint, but organic evidence disappears which unfortunately may have provided many of the missing links. Tools and related body enhancing implements may have been in use since the protohuman era 6-4 million years ago, such as fingers as combs for grooming, the application of mud for cosmetic reasons, decorative items such as flowers, fruits, feathers, beetle wings, animal hair, woven fibres etc., as can be seen in many of the contemporary hunter gatherer tribes such as the Papua New Guineans or the Amazonian Indians.

Unfamiliar fields have contributed findings which were pivotal to understanding issues which existing research into the subject area could not supply. Despite recent finds of personal ornaments by early modern humans, *H. Sapiens sapiens*, dating back 100,000 to 135,000 years in Israel and established known finds from 75,000 years ago in Southern Africa, creative artefacts by anatomically modern humans are generally only discussed in relation to European finds 40,000 to 45,000 years ago, thus implying that reference only to European finds and their historical context<sup>1</sup> is valid for investigation and discussion. These have been well documented

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<sup>1</sup> See note 35 in Chapter 1.

but in the light of new research now need substantial revision, and a discourse based less on arbitrary presumptions and more on the reality of facts could lead to a better understanding of the evolutionary history of personal adornment. This also applies equally to contemporary jewellery.

Though gaps between time and evidence remain a problem, the new research model provides a hypothetical implement to reveal not only the objects' antecedents but the critical role body adornment and jewellery has had in the construction of human culture. To track back the process of its evolution is to understand its 'presence'.

### **11.5 Original contributions to knowledge and further research are as follows**

- The new research Model provides a critical frame whereby one should be able to pick up any object, access its niche / position in evolutionary time by measuring it against the various relevant imperative and cognitive levels (as presented in the new Model) not only to locate its position in human evolutionary history but also to make an analysis of the object's morphological history within the creative space of the human's mind, hand and eye as a co-ordinated, co-evolutionary design process by which an artefact is realised and becomes an object of independent symbolic function in its own right. One can see imperatives reflected as being of sublimatory substance in concrete form, threading their way through history as being patterns of human life.
- A raised awareness of the extraordinary neglect of the significance of the sexual imperative in the forging of human culture. This research has critically reviewed the architecture of human mind in relation to its creation of culture in this context.
- The bringing together, through a range of research and literature from diverse disciplines and subject areas, a commonality of correlations and aspects of relevance and pertinence, of connections hitherto un-investigated, consolidated to create a new model of allied imperative-driven evolution which rationalises origins and motivational drives, purpose and function of the field of jewellery and body adornment.
- In the context of fresh analysis the argument embodies elements from all levels of our evolution thus cross-connecting the evolutionary, biological, sociological and psychosexual as symbiotic phenomena. A single and co-ordinated body of organised knowledge is presented, showing how the evolution of culture is generated through complex mechanisms taking place in the human brain / mind which is itself a product of evolution. This does not separate our nature from our nurture, as has been common practice in the past, but rather achieves a new understanding of their role as psychological agents that prompt human behaviour and generate cultural phenomena.
- Whilst evolutionary psychologists argue that the structure of the human mind and its hardwiring was formed during the Pleistocene era (1.64 million years ago to about 10,000 years ago), they step in at a point where, this research has argued, several key aspects of our human nature had already been formed and are manifested in a universal human psychology. The object of this inquiry has taken its focus both before and after these points

of entry and exit (Levels 4-6 of the new Model) to evidence this point. Whilst it is agreed that Levels 4-6 were a time of significant cognitive activity and expansion it is argued and evidenced that the mind, before and beyond this evolutionary time, had been primed by its primordial inheritance.

- It is argued that humans have a common nature, a set of shared psychologies that are encoded in their DNA. from the onset of their existence. They have inherited a genetic endowment of evolved bio-psychological mechanisms which caused the development of the brain / mind into a specific direction which in turn forged the nature of the hard wiring.
- Thought being the product of the brain, the origins of its mechanisms would have been spawned in the beginnings of our earliest primeval existence. This area of research provides the evidence which determines the nature, origins and development of these cognitive systems. Therefore it is argued that our behaviours are influenced by evolving internalised cognitive mechanisms and systems of a symbiotic bio-psycho nature which, though expressed in culture in their multi-variant ways, have from their earliest origins at 'imperative base level' an identifiable commonality of basic psychology belonging to human nature as a universal phenomenon.
- Dawkins' selfish gene and extended phenotype theory <sup>2</sup> provided insights into how key evolutionary factors are maintained / facilitated through the creation of the mentifacured body. Here body adornment and jewellery are the fundamental implements through which the sublimated acts out the genetic agenda.
- Whilst the biological is facilitated by transmission of genetic information, the extended phenotype is generated by the three principal imperatives as defined in the new model whereby one can see how the behavioural and mental are transmitted. Though not biological in its secondary sense, the primary selection process is, nonetheless, subsumed into it through a gradual process of integration until eventually it becomes so absorbed as to present as a natural selection process through which the gene continues its agenda to take us beyond our contemporary context and into the future.
- The application of a neo-Darwinian theory has provided the missing link to the what, where, why and whom of we are today and the evolutionary rationale for our compulsive artistic endeavour to re-create and enhance our bodies and the creative process of jewellery making.

## Out of Africa

- This research breaks the cycle of the persistent Eurocentric habit of picking up jewellery's history at an arbitrary point in time on the assumption that the historical chronology of 'real jewellery' starts at about 4,000 BC in Mesopotamia, hailed as the dawn of civilisation.

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<sup>2</sup> To recapitulate "it attempts to free the selfish gene from the individual organism which has been its conceptual prison. The phenotypic effects of a gene are the tools by which it levers itself into the next generation, and these tools may 'extend' far outside the body in which the gene sits, even reaching deep into the nervous systems of other organisms." Richard Dawkins, The Extended Phenotype: The Long Reach of the Gene, with a Foreword by Daniel Dennett 2d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), vi.



- Evidenced by research from fields dedicated to our palaeohistory, it has been known for quite some time that our human ancestral history starts in Africa which is the cradle of discoveries pointing to humans' earliest known creation of artefacts. This lack of attempt to integrate humans' previous palaeoanthropological history as fundamental to the history of humans' creative development is tantamount to shutting out 90% of our developmental cultural experience, resulting in a seamless, disjointed and misleading account of affairs which makes no attempt to explore the relevance and relationships of its ancestry.
- The research has picked up and examined vast tracts of time which have, up to now, been sidestepped in the rendering of the evolutionary history of the self in relation to artefact production. Yet this is the very space where rich pickings and analysis of discoveries of human activities have informed our knowledge of human enterprise. In this context the research has examined and established how the human need for the act of representation and self adornment evolved out of a constant stream of synergetic interactions of specific domains and levels of cognition and creative expression over several millions of years.
- This vast vacuum in history needed to be bridged. Until this is accomplished and taken on board little evolutionary sense can be made of the field of jewellery and its related studies whilst historians continue to reference to and interpret jewellery in the established traditional mode. In place of this narrow view is presented a review of ethnic body adornment and jewellery in the context of where its relevance and reference begins, where it ought to, in Africa.
- The structuring of a wider frame of understanding and new context has provided the opportunity to straddle the fault line between what has been understood as ethnic or primitive jewellery and classical jewellery. The research has therefore evidenced co-ordinating principles which thread through and bind the historical narrative of jewellery by showing that all jewellery shares the same common ancestor and therefore that the disavowal of the ethnic as other can now be set aside.
- This reconciliation of disparities has opened up new possibilities which should advance critical theory and discourse.

### **Laws of design.**

- An evolutionary context has provided a theory of how the transition of preconsciousness to self consciousness and the personification of abstract thought crossed the threshold into such cognitive domains as analogies, symbolism and modes of aesthetic expression, dictating through the process of the imperative the need for the promotion of the sexual self via enhancement / adornment of the body.
- In the past the need for design has been seen as the human dependance on culture rather than the other way around ie., culture as the result of the interplay of the bio-sexual, socio-sexual, and psycho-sexual needs that produced what we recognise as culture (interpreted in the context of this research as the phenotype extended).
- The laws of nature regulating sexual reproduction set the genetic pattern within which organic design could take hold, develop and generate. Here the laws of design run in

parallel to that same principle but are embodied and expressed within and via that ‘extended space’ (of the phenotype) wherein are identified the origins and drives of the design process, our need for representation, re-presentation and / or sublimation.

- In this context the research consolidates its findings via the contemporary jewellery case studies which have been used to describe the significance of how the three major imperatives impact upon the generation and overlaying of elements of creativity in the field of jewellery making and its ‘aesthetic’ role in society. His work is exemplary at all levels as the working blueprint for all aspiring designer makers of jewellery and in furthering academic discussion.

## 11.6 Biological future: Where are we going?

The geneticist Steve Jones argues that “most social changes seem to be conspiring to slow down evolution. [It may mean] . . . that humans are almost at the end of their evolutionary road, that we are as near to our biological Utopia as we are ever likely to get.”<sup>3</sup> However it may be a precarious situation. Evolution sees no distinction between biological and cultural evolution, it merely acts upon what is presented before it and this places us in a new context.

One could argue that since their first appearance 4-6 million years ago humans have tampered with their biological given and that body enhancing practices have been in operation since human life began and have vastly enriched our lives. Our inherent fixation with beauty as fitness objective has served us well in the past. Under what conditions, however, does our co-operation with the genetic agenda become self destructive. The scope for augmentation covers a vast range of practices and is facilitated by many means. At the top of the tree is genetic engineering, gene therapy, in vitro fertilisation, body and facial cosmetic surgery, and the visually highly effective modes of dental augmentation. All are the outcomes of the imperatives’ adaptations as sociological and psychological impacts in the quest to augment and enhance the design of the genetic agenda.

Seeking transformation in an attempt to maximise our gene power may have taken us beyond the genetic mean. Has the selfish gene through the extended phenotype attained its ultimate biological goal? Social progression has impacted upon our evolution to such an extent that our future may now hang in the balance. Our changed lifestyle is interfering with the effectiveness and efficiency of natural selection. Have we reached the point of no return, are we in evolutionary meltdown? Has the genetic imperative transformed into a metaphorical virus occupying its host to cause its inevitable demise?

In our pursuit of aesthetic perfection we have ignored the fact that natural selection acts on a basis of difference, stereotype is not conducive to natural selection. In pursuing the ideal we are removing the strongest agents upon which natural selection achieves its purpose. Have the hazards of non-fitness re-entered through the back door? Weakening the effects of natural selection may present new unpredictable reactions causing a domino effect with disastrous consequences or, perhaps, natural selection will be provided with an opportunity for positive re-configuration.

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<sup>3</sup> Steve Jones, *The Language of the Genes: Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future*, 2d ed., (Great Britain: Flamingo 1994), 316.

As modern humans we as a species have been remarkably successful. From the different hominid species that have existed we are the only one not to have become extinct. But our rampant success may no longer be able to sustain us, we are polluting our planet and our failure to stop avoidable damage to our ecosystems may trigger a new chain of events to send evolution off in a totally different direction. It could be argued that, according to the laws of nature, most species eventually succumb to extinction. In the long term it is conceivable if not inevitable that we will not be an exception. However we can apply a higher level of consciousness: there is after all a genetic base for culture, the gene built our minds to apprehend adversity, perhaps we will be able to avoid or at least postpone our extinction.

So what about our near future? Informed speculation tells us we cannot escape our inherited hard wiring. Humans are genetically designed to be sexually charged and driven creatures, the sexual imperative and all its seductive persuasions is bedded in the most primitive part of our brain and the need to bond is embedded deep within the human psyche. As Fisher points out “To bond is human. This drive evolved some four million years ago – and if we survive as a species, it should be with us four million years from now”.<sup>4</sup> On this premise we can assume that the competition for mate seeking and the art of self emulation will continue to drive the human species. The bio-sexual, socio-sexual and the psychosexual and the cognitive copulatory gaze relationships will continue to be manifested in our behaviour. The genetic agenda, as substituted for or superimposed by the plethora of sublimated activities and tactics, forged by our ever adaptive aesthetic gaze.

## 11.7 Where do we go from here?

Today some societies’ requirements of modes of representation may have changed little and are still perfectly well fulfilled in any one of, or combined in, the levels outlined in the model / diagram. In the developed economies of Westernised societies human beings are driven by a complex fluidity and momentum of socially constructed structures requiring a constellation of identities necessitating multivariant modes of representation. Our modernist, post-industrial lives are driven by experimentation, curiosity, rebellion which, monitored by a form of self referential, self knowing, self justification continuously challenges every aspect of our lives but we are anchored by a form of confidence in who we are and what we are. However, we are reminded that our independence may be but a thin veneer, our primal insecurities remain so deeply ingrained that we are easily unnerved and knowingly exploited by the predatory cosmetics and fashion industry and their sleek advertising.

It is now the media which tells us how to conduct our socially constructed sexual lives. how to enhance / augment our faces or bodies, how to snare a mate or hold unto one, who is having sex with whom, who or what our role models should be. The biological imperatives continue to render the same genetic agenda but in a different guise. This form of restlessness has provided the contemporary jeweller with a plethora of contextual environments and sources to feed / draw upon. Sublimatory needs, impelled by constant altered states of mind, can be exploited to address a multivariant, multidimensional world of different artistic expressions through the application of old and new technologies, old and new materials. In this new model, jewellery

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<sup>4</sup> Helen E. Fisher, *Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy and Divorce* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1992), 298.

matters can be settled in their rightful place like fractal patterns whereby each reflects the dynamic system of the implicate order containing elements of the physiological, biological, sociological, psychological and metaphysical phenomena manifest as part of a greater generative structural order in which the holistic is reflected by each causal and significant part within a universe of immense diversity.

## **APPENDIX**



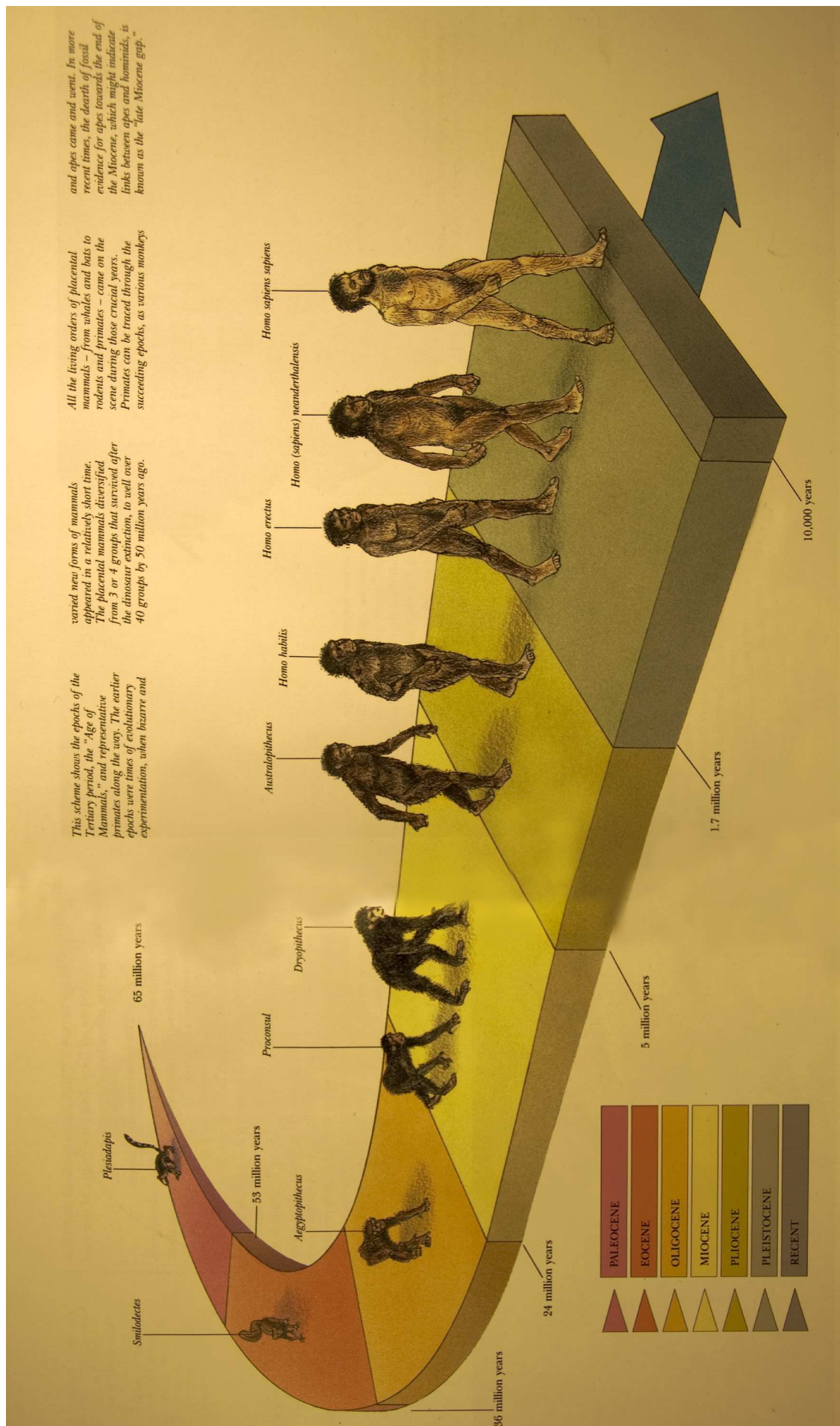


Figure A.1 Evolutionary pathway

## THE TRAJECTORY OF HUMAN EVOLUTION FIRST STAGE.

| STAGE/TRAITS   | ENVIRONMENT | BILLIONS<br>OF YEARS<br>AGO |
|--|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Earth's age  |             | 5 - 4.6                     |
| Earth was incandescent<br>heat being supplied by ra-<br>dioactive decay.   |             |                             |
| Dominant trend: cooling  |             |                             |
| Cooling from incandescence<br>to darkness and formation<br>of a solid crust.   |             | 4                           |
| Possible start to origin of life<br>(Fossil records provide evidence<br>of life)   |             | 3                           |
| Origin of life   |             | 2                           |
| Volcanic activity from internal<br>heat.   |             |                             |
| Activities generated static<br>electricity, released chemicals,<br>as gas which then composed<br>water = primeval atmosphere.<br>Above elements make up<br>the substance of life.) |             |                             |
| Surface cooled sufficiently<br>to enable water to accumulate<br>(Rained for millions of years)   |             |                             |
| Water charged with wide assortment<br>of complex organic molecules.  |             |                             |
| Compounds combined and interacted<br>Action complicated by presence clays<br>and salts, cause = clumping of organic<br>microscopic molecules: coacervates                          |             |                             |
| Chance combinations arose, stabilised<br>adjusted and acclimatised to earth's<br>instability as it cooled.   |             |                             |
| Result: survivors increasingly similar<br>to true organisms in terms of<br>food-gathering and energy-utilising<br>characteristics.   |             |                             |

Figure A.2 Trajectory of human evolution first stage

| STAGE/TRAITS   | ENVIRONMENT | MILLIONS<br>OF YEARS<br>AGO* |
|--|-------------|------------------------------|
| Larger animals with<br>more complex bodies were<br>living in the seas.   |             | 700                          |
| First vertebrates (early fish)<br>Shelled animals  |             | 500                          |
| Land vertebrates (amphibians)  |             | 380                          |
| Reptiles increasing in numbers<br>and diversity  |             | 300                          |
| Dinosaurs dominated (starting to)<br>Mammals arrived.  |             | 200                          |
| Earliest fossils from Europe<br>Shrew and mouse sized, probably<br>ate insects   |             | 220                          |
| Age of dinosaurs.<br>Mammals continued to evolve in<br>small numbers (size no larger<br>than a pet cat)  |             | 150                          |
| Earliest evidence of primate fossil<br>record (tooth)  |             | 67                           |
| It is believed dominant present-day<br>group of mammals, the placentals,<br>appeared by the end of Cretaceous<br>period                                |             | 65                           |
| Dinosaurs and many large reptiles<br>mysteriously disappeared along<br>with some groups of sea creatures<br>and plants. Mammals survived.              |             | 64                           |
| Early primates Plesiadapis (fossils date)  |             | 57                           |
| Mammals rapidly multiplied and diversified<br>numerous groups established.<br>One of those was the primates.<br>(Appearance of quite diverse primates) |             | 55                           |
| Fossils reveal primates underwent<br>several bursts of evolution.  |             | 36                           |

## THE TRAJECTORY OF HUMAN EVOLUTION SECOND STAGE.

| STAGE/TRAITS   | ENVIRONMENT                | MILLIONS<br>OF YEARS AGO* |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p><i>Dryopithecus</i></p> <p>Living and sleeping in trees<br/>Swinging through trees,<br/>    Quadrupedal on the ground<br/>Centrifugal groups (15 to<br/>    45 individuals) which<br/>    congregate when food is<br/>    abundant<br/>Staple: soft fruits<br/>Supplement: insects,<br/>    grubs, worms, lizards, etc.<br/>Oestrous periodicity; pro-<br/>    miscuous mating; consorts<br/>Animal call system<br/>Territory of core areas defined,<br/>    occasionally defended</p>  | forest                     | 20                        |
| <p><i>Prothominid A</i></p> <p>Living on the ground by<br/>    day, in the trees at night<br/>Quadrupedal travelling;<br/>    standing<br/>Evolved teeth for chewing<br/>    hard foods<br/>Gathering staple: tough<br/>    fruits<br/>Scavenging and catching<br/>    supplement: small<br/>    mammals, lizards,<br/>    turtles, eggs, nestling<br/>    birds, etc.<br/>Incipient sharing of meat<br/>No sharing of vegetables<br/>Centripetal matricentric<br/>    groups (5-15 individuals) in dry season<br/>Larger, centrifugal rainy-<br/>    season groups<br/>Incipient tool use: digging<br/>    stick and stones used<br/>    but not carried<br/>Incipient weapon use:<br/>    sticks, stones and<br/>    bones used but not car-<br/>    ried<br/>Oestrous periodicity; pro-<br/>    miscuous mating; con-<br/>    sorts</p> | forest fringe<br>woodlands | 10                        |

\*Stages and times are arbitrary and used for clarification only.

Figure A.3 Trajectory of human evolution second stage

| STAGE/TRAITS  | ENVIRONMENT  | MILLIONS<br>OF YEARS<br>AGO* |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| <i>Protohominid B</i>   | woodlands;<br>Savannah   | 9                            |
| Centripetal matricentric<br>groups  |  |                              |
| Bipedal walking   |  |                              |
| Carrying of food, tools,<br>weapons   |  |                              |
| Home bases on the<br>ground   |  |                              |
| <i>Protohominid C</i>   | savannah;<br>woodlands   | 8                            |
| Reduction of pelvic inlet   |  |                              |
| Selection for premature<br>parturition  |  |                              |
| Burdens of child care in-<br>creasing for females                                   |  |                              |
| SELECTION FOR: loss of<br>oestrous periodicity<br>copulation during preg-<br>nancy. |  |                              |
| Copulation soon after<br>parturition  |  |                              |
| RESULT:   | [By 4 to 3 million years ago these characteristics<br>became an established feature of early hominids<br>such as <i>A. afarensis</i> ] |                              |
| Increasing female fertility   |  |                              |
| Females overburdened with <i>more</i><br>premature births.                          |  |                              |
| Extended consorts, incip-<br>ient bonding   |  |                              |
| Male/female sharing and<br>division of labour                                       |  |                              |
| Sexual selection for male/<br>female secondary sex-<br>ual characteristics          |  |                              |
| Incorporation of male into<br>nuclear family/matri-<br>centric extended family      |  |                              |
| Selection for individuals<br>with tendency to bond                                  |  |                              |

[Between 8 million and 4 million years ago there is a frustrating gap in the fossil record. Little has been found apart from a few fragments of bone and a tooth. Therefore little information can be gleaned about our protohumanid predecessors at this time. No firm conclusions can be drawn from this sparse source. However by 4 million years ago a new chapter opens with some significant finds which throw light on our ancestral history. Our hominid line begins here.]



| STAGE/TRAITS  | ENVIRONMENT                       | MILLIONS<br>OF YEARS<br>AGO* |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Hominid A 'Lucy'. [A.afarensis]</i>              | savannah;<br>woodlands            | 4                            |
| Centripetal extended families                       |                                   |                              |
| Nuclear families in dry season                      |                                   |                              |
| Bonding, nuclear family                             |                                   |                              |
| Serial monogamy                                     |                                   |                              |
| Evolution of the social emotions                    |                                   |                              |
| Incipient kinship, politics, language               |                                   |                              |
| <i>Hominid B ['Lucy2'. Homo]</i>                    | savannah;<br>woodlands            | 2                            |
| Expansion and reorganisation of brain               |                                   |                              |
| Tool making, weapon making                          |                                   |                              |
| Constructing lean-tos                               |                                   |                              |
| Incipient 'big game'                                |                                   |                              |
| Hunting   |                                   |                              |
| Advanced sharing and co-operation                   |                                   |                              |
| <i>Homo</i>   | savannah;<br>woodlands;<br>tundra | 1                            |
| Migration from Africa                               |                                   |                              |
| Fire, clothing, houses                              |                                   |                              |
| 'Big game' hunting                                  |                                   |                              |
| Advanced tool making and weapon making              |                                   |                              |
| Advanced kinship, language                          |                                   |                              |
| Incipient religion, government, politics, tribalism |                                   |                              |

## RESEARCH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1

I am currently researching for a Ph.D in the ‘how and why humans evolved the practice of making and wearing body adornment and jewellery’. This questionnaire is part of the research process. Your response to these questions will be anonymous and any information you will provide will adhere to the Data Protection Act of 1998. Please answer as many questions as you can and as fully as possible.

### CASE STUDY 1. ‘Hirsutes you sir.’

This image with the caption ‘Hirsutes you sir?’ is from ‘Bizarre’ magazine May/June 1997.

1. What are the first things / words which come to mind when you glance this image?
2. Do you find the image compulsive to look at. Yes / No Please state your reasons why.
3. Can you describe the sensations, ideas, thoughts or feelings when you take time to look more carefully? Can you break down the image into components and rationalise what you see?
4. Do you find her attractive or unattractive?
5. If you are female: Would you want to look like this? Can you state your reasons.  
If you are male would you want / not want your girlfriend or partner to look like this?  
Can you state your reasons.
6. If it were you would you be worried about what others might think. Yes / No. Please state your reasons.
7. If you were female would you remove the hair from your body? If so from where and why?
8. What does her hairiness suggest to you? Do you know what the reasons might be for such hairiness?
9. Put yourself in her physical position how would you feel?
10. What does her form of display communicate to you? How would you interpret her pose and her attire? Who do you think she might be attractive to?
11. What do you feel is context behind of the image? What do you surmise from the title of the magazine ‘Bizarre’ in which the image appeared and the accompanying caption ‘Hirsutes you sir?’
12. Do you know what Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome is?

Thank you for your participation.  
Scilla Speet.

### Demographic distribution of participants.

| No | Gender | Age | Education                              | Occupation            | Origin   |
|----|--------|-----|--|-----------------------|----------|
| 1  | Female | 49  | NVQ 1st year banking Diploma           | Doctor's receptionist | British  |
| 2  | Female | 52  | MA (RCA)                               | Artist.               | British  |
| 3  | Male   | 42  | BA. Jewellery, PGCE                    | Jewellery/Designer    | Greek    |
| 4  | Female | 70  | Grammar School                         | Hairdresser (retired) | British  |
| 5  | Female | 55  | MA (RCA)                               | Jeweller/Designer     | British  |
| 6  | Female | 46  | BA Design                              | Textiles Technician   | Scottish |
| 7  | Female | 62  | School/academy                         | Carer /Cleaner        | Canadian |
| 8  | Female | 60  | Elementary School                      | Hairdresser           | Denmark  |
| 9  | Male   | 28  | MA(RCA)                                | Jewellery/Designer    | Austrian |
| 10 | Female | 53  | Elementary School                      | Factory worker        | Belgian  |
| 11 | Female | 35  | MA English/History                     | Museum curator        | Irish    |
| 12 | Female | 25  | BA Jewellery                           | Jewellery Designer    | English  |
| 13 | Female | 35  | Secondary School                       | Nursery Assistant     | English  |
| 14 | Female | 37  | BA Fine Art Evaluation                 | PA to Publisher       | English  |
| 15 | Male   | 25  | GNVQ (first level) Leisure and Tourism | Facilities Assistant  | English  |

### Number of Participants and age distribution.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| in their 20s          | 3 |
| in their 30s          | 3 |
| in their 40s          | 3 |
| in their 50s          | 3 |
| in their 60s and over | 3 |

## STATISTICAL DATA CASE STUDY 1 ‘THE HAIRY LEGGED WOMAN’

### Question 1.

*What are the first words which come to mind when you first glance this image.*

*93% (●) of participants had an adverse response to the female in the image.*

- 1 ● Strange, unusual fixated
- 2 ● Transvestite or transexual I’m genderly confused
- 3 ● Repulsive
- 4 ● Horrible, unnatural, unpleasant
- 5 ● Hairy woman!
- 6 ● Quite yuck, grotesque
- 7 ● Weird
- 8 ● Unattractive
- 9 ● Strange phenomenon, is it a man or is it a woman?
- 10 ● Not attractive
- 11 I guess I’m intrigued in a kind of way
- 12 ● Bizarre, unnerving and confusing
- 13 ● Not attractive, it’s very weird
- 14 ● Incongruous
- 15 ● It’s strange

After the initial scan all but one of the participants began to split the image in half, establishing top half as female and bottom half as male. Questions 2 and 3 were naturally merged as participants progressed with deconstruction of the image.

### Question 2.

*Do you find the image compulsive to look at? Yes / No. Please state your reasons why.*

*73% (●) of the participants found that they did.*

- 1 ● Yes, definitely
- 2 ● Yes, I did
- 3 Confusing yes, compulsive no
- 4 ● Yes, in a horrible sort of way
- 5 ● Yes
- 6 Just weird
- 7 ● Yes, because it’s weird
- 8 Not particularly (not something I’d spend a long time looking at)
- 9 ● Yes
- 10 ● I do want to keep looking
- 11 ● I’m intrigued
- 12 ● Oh, fascinating
- 13 ● Yes, I think it’s weird.
- 14 No. Weird
- 15 ● Yes it definitely draws me in

### Question 3

*Can you describe the sensations, ideas, thoughts or feelings when you take time to look more carefully? Can you break down the image into components and analyse what you see?*

93% (●) of the participants divided the top half from the bottom as part of their screening process.

- 1 ● did top and bottom first and then analysed components
- 2 ● did top and bottom first and then analysed components
- 3 ● did legs first then the top and then analysed components
- 4 ● did, a female top, midriff down male, then analysed components
- 5 ● did top (face first) put hand over bottom bit
- 6 ● did. Established torso female, legs male
- 7 ● did. Established top part woman further down over thighs, legs man.
- 8 ● did. (face first) top part and then bottom part.
- 9 ● did (face first) upper body then lower body and then analysed components
- 10 ● did (face first) then top and then bottom
- 11 ● did (face first) then top half and then the bottom, then analysed components
- 12 ● did (face first) then top half and then the bottom, then analysed components
- 13 ● did (face first) then top half and midriff down
- 14 No, did not wish to participate
- 15 ● did (face first) then bottom half

### Question 4

*Do you find her attractive / unattractive?*

60% (●) found her face to be attractive, whilst 87% (●) found the rest of her to be unattractive

- 1 Unusual (happy to accept her as she is)
- 2 ● Unattractive initially becoming desensitised (no threat)
- 3 ● ● Completely repulsive (nothing wrong with her face, rest too hairy, face attractive)
- 4 ● ● From the neck up, rest not attractive at all, mostly unattractive
- 5 ● ● Face is attractive, legs no, depends how much was visible
- 6 ● Unattractive, strange lady
- 7 ● No she is not attractive
- 8 ● ● Face attractive, the rest no
- 9 ● ● Face attractive, not my type
- 10 ● ● Just upper part, the rest no
- 11 ● I think she is very pretty
- 12 ● ● Her face certainly attractive the rest no
- 13 ● ● Her face is attractive but legs, arms and pose definitely not
- 14 ● No, not my type
- 15 ● Unattractive a great deal



### Question 5

*If you are female would you want to look like this? Can you state your reasons*

*If you are male would you want / not want your girlfriend or partner to look like this? Can you state your reasons.*

*100% (●) of the participants responded with a resounding no.*

- 1 ● I would not want to look like this
- 2 ● Definitely not
- 3 ● No
- 4 ● No
- 5 ● No I wouldn't
- 6 ● No
- 7 ● No I would not
- 8 ● No I would not
- 9 ● No
- 10 ● No way!
- 11 ● No. Would select her body structure but remove the hair
- 12 ● No. I'd rather not, defies normality
- 13 ● No, not the bottom half
- 14 ● No
- 15 ● No

### Question 6

*If it were you would you be worried about what others might think? Yes / No. Please state your reasons.*

*93% (●) said they would be worried.*

- 1 ● Yes
- 2 ● Yes worried what gender identity
- 3 ● I'm used to a stereotype (so if you're not you don't fit onto society)
- 4 ● Yes, its horrible, it's not natural
- 5 ● Yes, absolutely
- 6 ● Yes
- 7 ● Yes, definitely
- 8 ● Yes, definitely
- 9 I don't know, I am a man
- 10 ● Yes, (the hair would worry her) because it's not attractive
- 11 ● Yes
- 12 ● Yes I would be
- 13 ● Yes
- 14 ● Yes
- 15 ● Yes, definitely

### Question 7

*If you were female would you remove the hair from your body? If so from where and why?*

*100% (●) of the participants said they would.*

- 1 ● Yes, arms legs, bikini line
- 2 ● Yes, arms, legs, bikini line
- 3 ● Yes, I would feel part of a group
- 4 ● Yes, all of the body hair
- 5 ● Yes I do
- 6 ● Yes, if I had the option
- 7 ● Yes, no way would I have that sort of hair under my arms.
- 8 ● Yes
- 9 ● Yes, women are meant to be stereotype
- 10 ● Yes.
- 11 ● Yes: arms, legs.
- 12 ● Yes, frightened of being thought of as male
- 13 ● Yes, definitely would
- 14 ● Yes. Its unfeminine
- 15 ● Yes, one hundred percent

### Question 8

*What does her hairiness suggest to you? Do you know what the reasons might be for such hairiness?*

*47% (●) thought the condition to be genetic or hormonal, the rest of them did not know.*

- 1 ● A genetic condition
- 2 I'm not sure what it is
- 3 ● Hormone imbalance
- 4 Does not know the reason
- 5 Have heard of a condition
- 6 Well I'm guessing it might be somebody who is a transsexual
- 7 ● Heredity or something to do with genetics
- 8 ● Genetic
- 9 Masculinity, it's just hairiness
- 10 Non-conclusive.
- 11 ● Hormones
- 12 ● Hormonal imbalance
- 13 ● Hormone imbalance
- 14 Virility, masculinity all mixed up
- 15 A medical reason

### Question 9

***Put yourself in her physical position, how would you feel?***

*80% (●) felt a sense of anxiety, shame or embarrassment, however they felt that if emotionally they had as much confidence as this female they could cope with it socially in the same way.*

- 1 ● Don't want attention. I could not live with that
- 2 She looks quite happy, I have become desensitised
- 3 ● I would not feel part of a group as a female
- 4 ● I would feel very uncomfortable
- 5 ● Sense of shame and embarrassment
- 6 ● Unfeminine, unfemale, unhappy
- 7 ● The need to cover myself up
- 8 ● I feel it would be impossible to meet the public
- 9 If I were to be shaven I would look weird
- 10 ● Not OK, unhappy
- 11 ● There will be times when its very depressing
- 12 ● Vulnerable
- 13 ● I'd do something about it
- 14 ● Upset
- 15 Accept that that's how you are

### Question 10

***What does her form of display communicate to you? How would you interpret her pose and her attire? Who do you think she might be attracted to? (2nd part of question see below)***

*80% (●) said that she displayed / communicated a strong sense of self confidence*

- 1 ● Super confidence
- 2 ● She is confident, she likes it, she feels sexy
- 3 ● She looks quite at ease with herself
- 4 ● That he/she is not abnormal
- 5 ● It's very sexual, invitation
- 6 ● Sexually provocative
- 7 ● She is quite happy the way she is. I would presume sexy
- 8 ● Very provocative
- 9 ● Confidence
- 10 ● OK because her face is attractive
- 11 ● Absolute confidence, vulnerable
- 12 Some strange sexual niche
- 13 Pole dancers?
- 14 I don't care
- 15 ● Sexual display

**2<sup>nd</sup> part of question 10. Who do you think she might be attractive to?**

*When asked who do you think might find her attractive, 60% (●) suggested a man who might have some form of deviant or perverse tendencies.*

- 1 ● Voyeuristic
- 2 ● Confident man, play with stereotype, gender or gender switch over
- 3 There is nothing there that sees herself as a freak
- 4 ● Slightly perverted people
- 5 Invitation to men
- 6 ● Perverted men
- 7 A dog would look sexier
- 8 ● Those who would not conform to society
- 9 The right partner would really get turned on by that
- 10 Did not provide an answer, don't know
- 11 ● People who I don't think many of us know
- 12 All kinds of guys who aren't bothered about body hair
- 13 ● Gender benders, men that are gay or not normal types
- 14 ● A Neanderthal man
- 15 ● Both male or female but in the minority

**Question 11**

***What do you feel is the context behind the image? What do you surmise from the title of the magazine 'Bizarre' in which the image appeared and the accompanying caption 'Hirsutes you Sir'?***

*67% (●) said she was presenting herself as sexual and inviting.*

- 1 ● Voyeurism, men, people are fascinated by people who are different
- 2 Just throws the question 'is it a s/he?'
- 3 She's not trying to disguise the fact that she has a lot of hair
- 4 No idea, I don't know why, I don't really know
- 5 ● Invitation to men / sex, consider her as a sexual object
- 6 ● Trying to be sexually provocative
- 7 ● I would presume sexy
- 8 ● Sort of pornographic element
- 9 Did not seem to understand the question
- 10 Did not understand the question
- 11 ● Pornographic advertising
- 12 ● Sort of calendar, advertising
- 13 ● Making the statement: This is what I am and so be it!
- 14 ● Sex and glamour
- 15 ● She is meant to be sexual

## Question 12

### *Do you know what Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome is?*

*Only 33% (●) of the participants had an idea of what Polycystic Syndrome was and most had sympathy for her concerning the condition, however many (as previously stated by the respondents in the later part of question 9) felt unease or disapproval with her pose.*

- 1 No. Sympathy, slightly but not something you can alter
- 2 ● Yes. I have a friend who has that
- 3 No. Sympathy is not part of what I feel for her
- 4 No. Sorry and slightly less sorry because of attitude
- 5 ● Yes, have heard of it. Yes I do have sympathy
- 6 Oh poor soul, sympathy for the condition, provocative pose still unpleasant
- 7 No. No sympathy cause she doesn't give a damn
- 8 No. Yes, sympathy because something is not quite right
- 9 No. Not influenced by her situation
- 10 ● Yes I do.
- 11 ● Yes I do. I'm proud of her I think good on her.
- 12 ● Yes I do. My sister has got it
- 13 No. Oh dear so it's a hormone problem
- 14 Is it to do with polycystic ovaries? I do have sympathy now, I thought it was a set up, not serious. I thought it was photoshopped with a man's body and a female's head
- 15 Not really, my first thought was hormones



## **CASE STUDY 2 ‘The Red Heart.’**

Demographic distribution of participants as on page 359

A red perspex heart suspended in silver barbed wire the hardening properties of which allow for the trembling of the heart within its structure. Made in 2000.

Please answer as many questions as you can and as fully as possible.

1. What emotional content / context does this image communicate to you?
2. In the context of question 1 does it evoke any past or present experiences which relate directly to you?
3. Do you find the actual form / shape, colour and texture of the heart evocative in any way? Yes / No. Please explain your reasons why.
4. In the context of question 3 do you think that any elements of the heart image refer / correlate to any parts of the human body. If so, which ones and why?
5. How often would you come across the heart symbol in your day to day life? Frequently or infrequently? Where would you see it?
6. Would you agree / disagree that the heart image or artefact says more about the emotional experiences of love than you can or ever dare to say.

Thank you for your participation.

Scilla Speet.

## STATISTICAL DATA CASE STUDY 2 'THE RED HEART'

### Question 1. *What emotional content/context does the image communicate to you?*

100% (●) of the participants recognised that the image communicated the pleasure and pain conflicts, turmoil and contradictions experienced when one is affected by the conditions of love. 67% (●) of the participants sensed a binary relationship. For most this was more often than not occurring at a subconscious level where modes of perception were being prompted by the conceptual binary elements of the design. Though not clearly defined as such, it was nonetheless evident that such processes were taking place as an intuitive mechanism and were being voiced through free association.

- 1 ● Love, barrier, a heart that's protected. I hurt you before you hurt me!
- 2 ● ● Love, hate
- 3 ● An individual trying to protect him or herself
- 4 ● ● Unhappiness, pleasure / pain of loving someone whose life is in danger
- 5 ● Love, conflict, pain and insecurity
- 6 ● ● Violent and non-violent, contradicting itself in terms of message
- 7 ● ● Unconditional love despite the pain
- 8 ● ● There is never a love without pain
- 9 ● ● Hearts in pain, captivity versus freedom, death versus life.
- 10 ● ● The heart symbolises love and pain
- 11 ● ● Love can be difficult, exciting and dangerous
- 12 ● ● Anger, you want / love something and its unfulfillment entraps you
- 13 ● Pain, someone is in love with someone and they can't get out of the relationship because they are going to get hurt even more
- 14 ● Vulnerability, there is a tension there
- 15 ● ● Contrast, peace and happiness/harshness, brutality and pain

### Question 2. *Does it evoke any past or present experiences which relate directly to you?*

Only 27% (●) acknowledged that the image evoked experiences directly related to them.

- 1 I would not say that
- 2 ● Oh yes, definitely
- 3 Non-committal, evasive
- 4 It doesn't remind me or make me think of anything in my life
- 5 Evasive. Not something I would want to relate to for any long time
- 6 Evasive. It makes you think of prison
- 7 ● Yes
- 8 ● Yes, I would say so, yes
- 9 Non committal / evasive
- 10 ● Of course!
- 11 Non-committal /evasive
- 12 Evasive
- 13 Evasive. I've always been the heart breaker
- 14 No, no just self defence

15                      No, not that I can think of

**Question 3. Do you find the actual form / shape, colour and texture of the heart evocative in any way? Yes / No. Please explain your reasons why.**

*73% (●) found elements of the form evocative*

- |    |                         |
|----|-------------------------|
| 1  | ● Yes                   |
| 2  | ● Yes                   |
| 3  | ● Yes                   |
| 4  | ● Yes                   |
| 5  | ● Yes                   |
| 6  | ● Yes                   |
| 7  | Non-conclusive response |
| 8  | ● Yes                   |
| 9  | ● Yes, of course        |
| 10 | ● Yes                   |
| 11 | ● Yes                   |
| 12 | ● Yes                   |
| 13 | Non-conclusive          |
| 14 | No, it's just familiar  |
| 15 | Not really              |

**Question 4. In the context of question 3, do you think any elements of the heart image refer to any parts of the human body? If so, which ones and why?**

*At this stage participants were also given a wooden heart prototype to hold in order to experience its tactility. 93% (●) of them the participants achieved the realisation that the heart form clearly mirrored sexual elements (as relating to the instincts and activities connected with the physical attraction or intimate physical contact between individuals) of the human body.*

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | ● Breasts, bottoms with a narrow waist, testicles   |
| 2  | ● Female, testicular, phallic, erect penis standing above the heart, pubic                        |
| 3  | ● Hour glass figure. Bodice of a dress with the breasts pushed up, breasts, bottom and testicles. |
| 4  | ● Bosoms and bottoms, the glans of the penis  |
| 5  | ● Corseted woman, bollocks  |
| 6  | ● Testicles, female sexual areas  |
| 7  | ● Two balls, buttocks and testicles   |
| 8  | ● Breasts, buttocks and testicles   |
| 9  | ● Breasts, testicles, bum and crack   |
| 10 | ● My ass  |
| 11 | ● Bottom, vaginal crack, breasts and gonads   |
| 12 | ● Men's balls   |
| 13 | ● Boobs or bums, testicles  |
| 14 | No, not at all  |
| 15 | ● Bosoms or buttocks  |

**Question 5. *How often would you come across the heart symbol in your day to day life, frequently or infrequently? Where would you see it?***

*73% (●) of participants said that their encounter with the heart symbol happened frequently*

- 1 ● Frequently, everywhere
- 2 ● Very often.
- 3 ● On a daily basis, an everyday thing
- 4 ● Quite a lot especially lately
- 5 Not interested
- 6 Infrequently
- 7 ● Frequently, you can see them on cards, in florist's shops, on balloons
- 8 It's not something I come across an awful lot in my life
- 9 ● Every day
- 10 ● Many times
- 11 ● Frequently, heart shaped key ring, heart shaped mats people fill their house with heart shaped things
- 12 ● Hearts are overexposed everywhere, very much in vogue
- 13 Not every day
- 14 ● Once a day
- 15 ● Frequently, everywhere on a daily basis

**Question 6**

***Would you agree or disagree that the heart image or artifact says more about emotional experiences than you could ever say?***

*60% did not find that the image said more than they could verbalise, 40% (●) did.*

- 1 Evasive
- 2 Evasive
- 3 ● Yes, to me it seems so
- 4 ● Agree. However I can't really see further than the barbed wire
- 5 No. I find it shallow
- 6 No. I disagree. I'm not thinking it does
- 7 ● Yes, emotionally
- 8 No, I disagree
- 9 Evasive
- 10 I think no
- 11 No. I disagree. [but was evasive]
- 12 Evasive
- 13 ● Oh yes it does, it says it all in itself in so many different ways
- 14 ● Yes I guess it could, yeah about vulnerability and that sort of thing
- 15 ● That can mean many millions of different things

## RESEARCH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2.

I am currently researching for a PhD in the evolutionary psychology of ‘how and why humans evolved the practice of making and wearing body adornment and jewellery’. This questionnaire is part of the research process. Your response will be anonymous and will adhere to the Data Protection Act of 1998. (see Participant Information Sheet provided).

The thesis argues that the overarching drive / mechanism for the above is the sexual imperative. This is comprised of three separate but integrative and overlaying sections: (A) The bio-genetic; (B) The sociological; and (C) The psychosexual. These form the units for analysis.

The images are grouped according to these three categories and are subdivided under relevant headings as they appear in the thesis.

**Section A. The bio-genetic imperative: This section is about how we read and respond to the sensibility of colour, patterns, texture, materials and the composition of form. This covers Case Studies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.**

### **A.1. Visual appeal: organised chaos, the design basics.**

#### **Case Study 10.1**

Bracelet by Peter Chang. 1993. Acrylic. polyester, PVC, lacquer.

Chang uses a variety of plastic materials often salvaged from discarded objects found in the environment.

- Question 1.      What are the first things which come to mind when you see this bracelet?
- Question 2.      What does it remind you of?
- Question 3.      As your eye traces the object, what ingredients do you think makes this work a successful or unsuccessful piece of jewellery?

### **A.2. The psychology of form: replication of sensually corresponding forms.**

#### **Case Study 10.2.**

Necklace by Jacqueline Mina. 1984. “Platinum with 18 ct yellow gold. Each oval unit began as a circular disc to which gold dust was fused. The discs were then passed between steel rollers with slit paper which left a surface impression and distorted the shapes.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore this design has been realised as a partly organic, process led piece. (Collection: The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths)

- Question 1      What are the first things / thoughts to come to mind when you see this necklace?

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<sup>1</sup> Jacqueline Mina “Self Portrait” *Jewellery Studies* vol. 6 (1993): 60.



Question 2 Does it give you a feeling of order or disorder?

Question 3 Can you analyse specific sections and describe how they compose the whole?

### **Case Study 10.3.**

Perfect replicas! Necklace by Jacqueline Mina. 1988. “18ct. yellow gold with platinum gauze fusion-inlay, and platinum-set diamonds.” (Collection: Princess Adela Al Saud).<sup>2</sup>

Question 1 What do the shapes remind you of ?

Question 2 Do you recognise a form of rhythm going on in this piece of work ?

Question 3 Can you describe it ?

## **A.3. The impact of the psychology of materials.**

### **Case Study 10.4**

Vickie Sedman. Rubber Neckpiece. 2005. Silver, silicone rubber: hand fabricated, cast. Material facilitates the essence of an expression or an idea in a piece of jewellery.

Question 1 What does this particular piece of jewellery bring to mind?

Question 2 How does the use of this material give this piece of jewellery its particular characteristics?

## **A.4. Cognitively processing analogies: materials and images**

### **Case Study 10.5**

Rajola. Stickpin, Coral, ivory, and gold. 1990.

Question 1 What does this piece of jewellery bring to mind?

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**Section B. The sociological imperative: this section shows how we communicate *via* collectively shared ideas and symbolic codes. This covers Case Studies 6,7, 8 and 9.**

## **B.1. Dialogue in universal symbols, recognised analogies and concept formation.**

### **Case Study 10.6**

Zoe Arnold. Memory Necklace “is a modern take on the charm, while more sculptural pieces can be displayed on the wall when not being worn.”<sup>3</sup> 2009.

If making an assembly of charms to wear:

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<sup>2</sup> Jacqueline Mina “Self Portrait” *Jewellery Studies* vol. 6 (1993): 63.

<sup>3</sup> Goldsmiths’ Fair Catalogue, 2009. No 19.

Question 1      What rites of passage or what major events in your life would you mark or memorise?

Question 2      What objects or symbols might you use?

## **B.2. Displacement of self: women explore and enjoy the sexual self. Voyeurism.**

### **Case Study 10.7**

1<sup>st</sup> Year CSM Student Michelle Hughes . Head Piece, entitled Maiden Hair. Silver forged and linked chain of Gingko leaves 1997

Question 1      What does the image bring to mind? What do you think might be her age?

### **Case Study 10.8**

3<sup>rd</sup> Year Student. Corset / body adornment. Silver wire formed into body shape and gold plated.

Put yourself in the following positions:

Question 1      If you were female how would you view this image?

Question 2      If you were male how would you view this image?

### **Case Study 10.9**

Rosie Kent. Two brooches entitled Cunnilingus: Modern pleasures. 2007. Can be worn separately or joined together. Silver gold plated, black rhodium plated, citrines.

Question 1.      How and where does voyeurism take place today?

Question 2      What do you think most people like to see?

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## **Section C. The Psychosexual imperative: This section shows how humans communicate and displace anxieties and emotions via an artifact. This covers Case Studies 10, 11, 12,13 and 14.**

### **C.1. The cognitive shift: Sublimation and conceptual jewellery**

#### **Case Study 10.10**

Bruno Martinazzi. Neck Jewellery. 1999. Entitled Quel piegare –Amore. (translated as: the pain of love) 20 carat yellow gold, 18 carat red gold.

The brief for this neckpiece was: What is a kiss? A promise? To evoke the ineffable? (Ineffable meaning; indefinable, indescribable, unspeakable, untellable, unnameable, divine).

In the context of the above:

Question 1      How do you interpret the image / object?

Question 2      Does the image make you feel troubled or reassured?

## **C.2. Conceptual design and use of metaphors**

### **Case Study 10.11**

Slawomir Sewerynowicz and Magda Zienowicz. The Cross Necklace. 2001. Hammered choker, silver, wood, acrylic paint.

In the context of the above image:

Question 1      What does the image bring to mind? Does the image strike a chord with you about any aspects / attitudes in life concerning sex, the body and love?

Question 2      What psycho sexual aspects / restraints / dictates of religion and accompanying social structures do you find the most distressing?

## **C.3. Psychosexual anxieties: This section shows how the sexes view the female body.**

### **Case Study 10.12**

Alen Jones body sculpture / adornment. Exhibited 1997 at The Power of Erotic Design exhibition, Design Museum.

Question 1      If you were female how would you interpret this image?

Question 2      If you were male how would you interpret this image?

Question 3      How does it make you feel?

### **Case Study 10.13**

Aneta Lis-Marcinkiewicz. Cotton Twist, razor blade. 2004, In response to brief: 'Short Message Silver' Competition.

Question 1      How do you interpret this image?

Question 2      How does it make you feel?

### **Case Study 10.14**

Hazel White. Entitled Defence Mechanism. 1995. Silver Cones attached to pubic area.

Question 1      How do you interpret this image?

Question 2      How does it make you feel?

## Demographic distribution of participants.

| Identity              | Gender | Age | Education                          | Occupation                    | Origin     |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1                     | Male   | 35  | BSc. Microbiology                  | Registrar                     | British    |
| 2                     | Female | 54  | BA Textile Design                  | Accountant                    | British    |
| 3                     | Male   | 47  | PG Cert Glass                      | I.T. Technician               | British    |
| 4                     | Female | 50+ | MA. Art History                    | Museum Curator                | Dutch      |
| 5                     | Male   | 46  | BA Jewellery                       | Freelance Jeweller            | Montserrat |
| 6                     | Female | 67  | Comp. School                       | Housemother                   | British    |
| 7                     | Female | 43  | B.Tec. National Dip                | Freelance Artist Fashion      | British    |
| 8                     | Male   | 32  | MA Africanistics                   | Risk Manager                  | Dutch      |
| 9                     | Female | 37  | BA Hons. Spanish and Italian       | Press Relations               | British    |
| 10                    | Female | 40  | PG. Marketing and Communication    | Investment Banking redundant  | British    |
| 11                    | Female | 44  | MA., School and College Management | Manager in a National Charity | British    |
| 12                    | Female | 18  | Comp. Sec School 6th form          | Student A levels.             | Ghanaian   |
| 13                    | Male   | 39  | PhD Organic Chemistry              | Organic Chemist               | British.   |
| 14                    | Female | 25  | BA Hons Jewellery                  | Freelance Jeweller            | British    |
| 15                    | Male   | 51  | HND Mechanical Engineer            | Technical Consultant          | British    |
| 16 yrs old            |        |     | 1 female                           |                               |            |
| in their 20s          |        |     | 1 female                           |                               |            |
| in their 30s          |        |     | 3 male                             | 1 female                      |            |
| in their 40s          |        |     | 2 male                             | 3 female                      |            |
| in their 50s          |        |     | 1 male                             | 2 female                      |            |
| In their 60s and over |        |     | 1 female                           |                               |            |

## STATISTICAL DATA FOR CASE STUDIES 10.1 - 10.14.

### Case Study 10.1

**Question 1. What are the first things which come to mind when you see this bracelet?**

**Question 2. What does it remind you of?**

*93 % (●) of participants were significantly consistent in their perception, conceptualisation and interpretation and were collectively unvarying in themes and analogies.*

- 1 ● Ocean, aquatic, Mediterranean, marine life, mollusc, snail, mosaic tile patterns  
tropical fish, an eye
- 2 ● Pacific ocean, sea shell, a creature
- 3 ● Organic, sea shells, an eye, tropical fish, coral reefs, waves
- 4 ● Snails, reptile skin, an eye, fish, sea creatures
- 5 ● The sea, reptile, sea shell, limpet, a fin
- 6 ● Snail, the sea, squid eye, shell
- 7 ● Snail, eye, fish, pattern
- 8 Reminds me of the 80s
- 9 ● Snail, beach, shells, limpet
- 10 ● Marine life, the sea, a fish a fin, an eye, sea anemone
- 11 ● A snail, an eye, tropical fish
- 12 ● Shell fish, ocean, broken glass, a sea urchin, surf boards, the tropics
- 13 ● Marine life, coral, tropical fish, an eye, reptilian, mollusc, encrustation, the sea  
and waves
- 14 ● Sea urchin, fish, waves or sea, toys, Gaudi kind of architecture; ceramic finish
- 15 ● The seaside, a mollusc

**Question 3. As your eye traces the object what ingredients do you think makes this work a successful or unsuccessful piece of jewellery?**

*87 % (●) of the participants considered the composition of the piece to be successful.*

- 1 ● Successful, elements lead your eye round
- 2 ● A bit disjointed but as a whole it is balanced in an asymmetrical way
- 3 I think its chaotic, disorganised (dispractic participant)
- 4 ● Bitty but it all flows into one another it works. It works as a circle
- 5 ● Successful as it still all co-ordinates as a whole
- 6 ● Successful, I do, yes, it all comes together
- 7 ● The balance is good. I think it looks good
- 8 For me it's not in balance, for me it just doesn't work
- 9 ● I think it works for what it wants to be. Not pleasing to my eye as a piece of  
jewellery
- 10 ● Yes I do think it actually works because it flows. I think it's balanced
- 11 ● I think it does work I quite like it
- 12 ● It does work because they all seem to relate to each other
- 13 ● Different elements flow into each other, there is a harmony about it



- 14           ● It's all got quite a nice balance, including a triangular and curved balance
- 15           ● It fits together quite nicely

### Case Study 10.2 statistical data.

**Question 1. What are the first things / thoughts to come to mind when you see this necklace? What does it remind you of?**

*47% (●) of the participants said the units reminded them of leaves.*

- 1           Something organic
- 2           ● It reminds me of leaves
- 3           Feathers, leaves
- 4           Units all beautifully fitting each other
- 5           Almonds in their shell
- 6           They remind me of petals
- 7           ● Leaf foliage, natural forms
- 8           ● Leaves, feathers and seashells
- 9           ● Leaf like. It reminded me of potato chips
- 10          ● Leaves
- 11          Bling!
- 12          Something that Venus might wear
- 13          Large intestine, the colon
- 14          ● Leaves
- 15          ● Sea shells

**Question 2. Does it give you a feeling of order or disorder?**

*100 % (●) of the participants said it gave a sense of order. All echoed similar perceptions*

- 1           ● Order
- 2           ● Order
- 3           ● Order
- 4           ● Order
- 5           ● Order
- 6           ● Order
- 7           ● Orderly
- 8           ● Ordered
- 9           ● Order
- 10          ● Order
- 11          ● Order
- 12          ● Order
- 13          ● Order
- 14          ● Order, a tidy disorder.
- 15          ● Orderly

### Question 3. Can you analyse specific sections and describe how they compose a whole?

80 % (●) of the participants described how the order of elements composed the neckpiece as a singular unified form.

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | ● Could describe an order of composition “in a sort of very precise way”                 |
| 2  | ● Could describe an order of composition “nicely resolved”                               |
| 3  | ● Could describe an order of composition “it looks very complex”                         |
| 4  | ● Could describe an order of composition “a feeling of cohesion”                         |
| 5  | ● Could describe an order of composition “two similar halves assemble a whole”           |
| 6  | ● Could describe an order of composition “you get a feeling of completeness”             |
| 7  | ● Could describe an order of composition “there is an overall beauty”                    |
| 8  | ● Could describe an order of composition “the left and right side are quite symmetrical” |
| 9  | ● Could describe an order of composition “I see it as one whole piece”                   |
| 10 | ● Could describe an order of composition “there is something luxurious about it”         |
| 11 | ● Could describe an order of composition “it looks unified”                              |
| 12 | Gave a metaphorical order of composition “representing individuality and uniqueness”     |
| 13 | ● Could describe an order of composition “there is a relaxed order about it”             |
| 14 | Could not formulate adequate answer to the question                                      |
| 15 | Could not answer the question  |

### Case Study 10.3 statistical data.

#### Question 1. What do the shapes remind you of?

93 % (●) of the participants said the shapes reminded them of hearts

- |    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| 1  | ● Stylised hearts          |
| 2  | ● Hearts                   |
| 3  | Ivy leaves                 |
| 4  | ● Heart shapes             |
| 5  | ● Hearts                   |
| 6  | ● It reminds me of hearts  |
| 7  | ● Hearts, kidneys          |
| 8  | ● Hearts                   |
| 9  | ● Cushioned hearts         |
| 10 | ● The shape of hearts      |
| 11 | ● Love hearts or leaves    |
| 12 | ● Love and hearts          |
| 13 | ● Heart shape              |
| 14 | ● They remind me of hearts |
| 15 | ● Misshapen hearts         |

**Question 2. Do you recognise a form of rhythm going on in this piece of work? Question3. Can you describe it?**

*93% (●) of the participants could recognise and describe the rhythm taking place in the necklace.*

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Was not explicit  |
| 2  | ● Yes   |
| 3  | ● Yes, but could not define it properly. “a sort of undulation” |
| 4  | ● Yes definitely  |
| 5  | ● Yes   |
| 6  | ● Yes   |
| 7  | ● Yes, could describe it  |
| 8  | ● Yes, could describe it  |
| 9  | ● Yes, could describe it  |
| 10 | ● Yes, but found it hard to describe                            |
| 11 | ● Yes, could describe it  |
| 12 | ● Yes, could not describe it well                               |
| 13 | ● Yes, could describe it  |
| 14 | ● Yes, described it very well                                   |
| 15 | ● Yes, could describe it  |

**Case Study 10.4 statistical data.**

**Question 1. What does this particular piece of jewellery bring to mind?**

*53 % (●) said it reminded them of a centipede or caterpillar, followed by other mixed references to organic forms such as sea anemones and parts of the human body*

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Sphincter or a bowel                                   |
| 2  | ● Coral, a centipede                                   |
| 3  | Spinal columns   |
| 4  | Organic forms, snails                                  |
| 5  | The feeling of rubber                                  |
| 6  | Whale's mouth  |
| 7  | ● Caterpillar, sea anemones                            |
| 8  | ● Worms or a centipede                                 |
| 9  | ● Sea anemones, caterpillar                            |
| 10 | ● Centipede, living organism, artery or a blood vessel |
| 11 | Sea anemone  |
| 12 | Non-conclusive   |
| 13 | ● Centipede or millipede                               |
| 14 | ● Caterpillar or sea urchin                            |
| 15 | ● Sea Slug   |

**Question 2. How does the use of this material give this piece of jewellery its particular characteristics?**

*87% (●) could describe how the qualities of the material gave the jewellery its particular characteristics*

- 1 ● The rubber supports the idea, it's flexible, can expand and contract, is tactile
- 2 ● A sense of wanting to touch, soft against the skin
- 3 ● Material looks fleshy and bloody
- 4 ● You feel it's almost leaking, rubber bits like snail's antenna
- 5 ● Compression and stretching, tentacles as something unrecognised. Reminiscent of something tumescent, sensation of arousal and tentacles of pleasure
- 6 The artist has managed to pull out the rubber into tentacles or tendrils
- 7 ● It has a rigidity and a liquid sort of state
- 8 ● The rubber makes it soft and sort of drip like
- 9 ● It's got that gunge, slimy effect, stretchy rubber, something not worldly
- 10 ● The softness and that kind of pliability, sort of skin
- 11 ● It makes it look like it's quite nice to feel and touch and to play with
- 12 I don't know about the material
- 13 ● Its ductility, a certain sheen, looks organic, animated
- 14 ● The surface of it emphasises hollows and ridges. It makes me think of something phallic and condoms
- 15 ● Silicone is soft and malleable and the rings would give it strength.

**Case Study 10.5 statistical data**

**Question 1. What does this piece of jewellery bring to mind?**

*80 % (●) of the participants made the cognitive shift between object and concept formation.*

- 1 ● Suggesting something quite sexual as well as a flower such as female genitalia
- 2 ● Petals, or is it something rude? You could say it was vaginal or clitoral
- 3 ● They aren't really flowers, or are they? It's very labial
- 4 ● Flowers, but also the female sexual organs
- 5 ● It reminds me of a vagina, it reminds me of an orchid, an orchid is kind of associated with the vagina
- 6 ● It could be a clitoris, I just realised it looks like a flower
- 7 ● Two trains of thought, one a cross section of a flower, the other a vulva
- 8 ● Female organs or a lovely tropical orchid
- 9 Kitsch, I don't know what the orange effect is
- 10 ● Sort of floral / vulva connotations
- 11 I don't know what it brings to mind because I really don't like it at all
- 12 Autumn, but I cannot think of anything else
- 13 ● Female genitalia or maybe a lily
- 14 ● Sexual in the same way an orchid is reminiscent of the female sexual organs
- 15 ● A very clever orchid or some sort of lily, it could be a lady's vagina

73 % (●) of those participants who realised the binary connections, identified the flower as an orchid or a lily.

- 1 ● An orchid but it's kind of like a lily too
- 2 It's very organic, leaves or petals
- 3 ● It's an orchid
- 4 ● It's a lily
- 5 ● It reminds me of an orchid
- 6 ● It looks like a lily
- 7 A cross section of a flower
- 8 ● A lovely tropical orchid
- 9 For me it's gaudy, quite 60s, gilt, excessive, Kitsch, I don't know what the orange effect is
- 10 ● Like orchids
- 11 ● Some kind of flowery leaf thing, a lily, I don't know what it brings to mind
- 12 Autumn, but I cannot think of anything else
- 13 ● Maybe a lily
- 14 ● An orchid or perhaps a lily
- 15 ● Orchid or some kind of lily

#### Case Study 10.6 statistical data.

##### Question 1. What rites of passage or what major events in your life would you mark or memorise?

*Whilst 60% (●) of the participants cited the marking of traditional social events such as marriage, birth, birthdays and death as important, many listed personal life experiences as of equal value, requiring private acknowledgement through the collection of objects which would evoke memories and associated emotions (with the exception of one interviewee who used the scarification on his body as a mark of transition.) Similarly there are many more individuals who would use tattoos for an equivalent purpose.*

- 1 ● Age, birth, childhood and adulthood
- 2 I can't think of anything
- 3 Celebrate that I'm glad I'm still alive
- 4 ● Marriage, death
- 5 My cat's death, mother's death, a friend's death
- 6 ● Having children, moving house
- 7 ● Actually my entire life, marriage, birth, death, separation, closing a door, opening another
- 8 Exams, travels, happy moments, sad moments, learned lessons and remembering someone or something
- 9 ● Birth, weddings and birthdays
- 10 ● Travel, places of interest, big age birthdays like twenty first and fortieth,
- 11 ● Marriage, working as a volunteer, being ill. Getting my degrees, my dad dying.
- 12 ● My baptism, confirmation, finishing my GCSEs
- 13 Escape, freedom from clutches of my family, elders and betters
- 14 Internal events, things that I think are significant to each of us or me
- 15 ● A wedding, my son's birth



## Question 2. What objects or symbols might you use

33% (●) would use traditional and familiar symbols 73% (●) could not conceptualise / compose their own version, leaving 20% as the only ones with original ideas (they were jewellery designers), and one exception to the rule using scarification.

- 1           ● ● Zodiac signs, keys. I do collect bits and pieces, stones, words, photos, mementoes as such
- 2           ● I can't think of anything. It would be organic stuff
- 3           Used personal scarification
- 4           ● ● Rings are such strong evocative symbols
- 5           My cats claw, a whisker, green the symbol of her eyes
- 6           ● I keep hair
- 7           ● I don't have one particular symbol
- 8           ● I would use found objects, stones, small photos, pieces of cloth
- 9           ● ● I would use gemstones, just beautiful stones.
- 10          ● ● I would collect charms or buy jewellery
- 11          ● I never thought about something like that
- 12          ● I wouldn't know what objects, maybe a watch
- 13          ● I would use white doves and black birds as symbols of freedom.
- 14          The eyes are very strong symbols for me. I'd use images of ears, nose, lips
- 15          ● Something musical, a guitar, a small CD

## Case Study 10.7 statistical data.

### Question 1. What does the image bring to mind?

80 % (●) of the participants interpreted the image as having a Roman and or Greek influence providing a sense of mythology, symbolising power, victory and or triumph

- 1           ● Ancient Greece, Gingko leaves in urban spaces, Gingko with clarity of mind. Wreath suggesting celebration or an honour
- 2           ● A laurel wreath, feminine piece
- 3           ● Roman laurel leaf garland, symbolic of victory and personal triumph
- 4           ● Reminds me of classicism or neoclassicism
- 5           ● An empress, a crown of power, authority and control.
- 6           ● Quite Grecian, I thought of Titania from Midsummer Night's Dream
- 7           Some sort of initiation rite. Perhaps a virgin, some sort of forest nymph
- 8           ● Roman times, aristocracy, marking something important
- 9           ● Greek myths, fairy like, like a nymph
- 10          ● Roman times, mythological Goddesses laurel leaf crown, fairies or nymphs
- 11          A bit princess like.
- 12          Units reminded me of birds ready to fly away from family
- 13          ● Roman laurel wreath, something Shakespearean like Midsummer Night's Dream
- 14          ● Roman Greek mythology, Caesar or perhaps Maid Marian
- 15          ● The Romans

53 % (●) of the participants gauged her age to be young, in her late teens or early twenties, however almost all felt she was on the cusp of sexual experience / fulfilment

- 1 Did not stipulate age, presumed her to be innocent
- 2 ● She is young about 20 years old
- 3 Did not stipulate age
- 4 ● It is a young girl, in earlier times it would have been worn by a maiden, not yet married.
- 5 Did not stipulate
- 6 ● I should think about eighteen or nineteen or she may be a bit older about twenty five, sort of virginal
- 7 ● An idea of pureness, perhaps a virgin, a nymph
- 8 ● It reminds me of a girl
- 9 ● She is in her puberty, like a nymph
- 10 ● A nymph young, nubile, all the things we have wanted to be
- 11 She is in her late thirties or maybe late twenties
- 12 About to leave and start her own family
- 13 Perhaps in her late twenties. There is an innocence there, very pleasing
- 14 ● Somebody in their late teens or early mid twenties
- 15 A mature woman maybe forty

#### Case Study 10.8 statistical data.

##### Question 1. If you were female / male how would you view this image?

80 % (●) of the participants viewed the image as a celebration of the female body

- 1 ● Celebration of the female body
- 2 ● Fantastic body, feminine
- 3 ● Arousing yet unobtainable
- 4 ● Sexually erotic
- 5 ● Sexual, being female to do with her fertility, monthly cycle, pregnancy / producing and childbirth.
- 6 ● Sexually quite erotic
- 7 ● Engaging with male visual desire. I don't find it erotic
- 8 ● I think of it as very feminine, it [*the piece of jewellery*] follows her round forms. It's classic more than erotic
- 9 ● Feminine, corsetry, delicate, ornate and sensual
- 10 ● Wow, it's amazing, showing off the female body
- 11 I don't like it, I view it as a step up from page three, it demeans women
- 12 It's saying I want you to be attracted to me but also to the things that make me
- 13 ● Entirely an expression of single female fertility, very feminine, very exhibiting
- 14 ● It glorifies and sexualises the female form
- 15 If you had a very pretty girl with big boobs you wouldn't be able to concentrate on the object

67% (●) of the participants commented on the impracticality of the body piece. Here the last respondent (one of the two jewellery designer / makers) clearly puts this in context, “jewellery in its design can be something purely about the body and not about considering practicalities such as how and when you can wear this item”.

- 1 ● Exploitative and simultaneously unobtainable
- 2 ● You would be limited as to where you could wear it
- 3 ● I would look at that and think ‘that’s uncomfortable’, it’s just really inflexible
- 4 ● I find it painful to look at, parts are digging in, it doesn’t look very comfortable
- 5 Did not make a comment on this aspect
- 6 ● I should think it would be very uncomfortable to wear
- 7 ● I see it as being uncomfortable and constricting
- 8 ● I would be thinking ‘how uncomfortable it would be wearing that’
- 9 ● It’s almost like a chastity belt, visually accessible and physically inaccessible
- 10 ● That looks incredibly uncomfortable and painful to wear
- 11 It’s a sort of chastity thing but there is a lot more flesh than most people have on show
- 12 Did not make a comment on this aspect
- 13 Very exhibiting
- 14 ● The impracticality of the piece
- 15 That’s quite cleverly done, not the sort of thing you would wear in public though

#### Case Study 10.9 statistical data.

##### Question 1

##### How and where does voyeurism take place today?

67% (●) of the participants most frequently listed the television and the internet. This was followed by magazines, newspapers, books and the world about us.

- 1 ● Television, internet, pornography magazines, celebrity magazines, books, newspapers, CCTV, mobile phones
- 2 ● Television reality shows like ‘Big Brother’
- 3 ● On line pornography, television, Channel Four
- 4 ● The media, shows like ‘Big Brother’, newspapers
- 5 ● Internet, television, posters
- 6 ● Internet, television, and in books
- 7 ● Internet
- 8 ● Internet
- 9 ● Internet, red light district, magazines
- 10 ● The internet, the press, the media
- 11 Parts of Soho, films, books
- 12 Declined to partake in this Case Study
- 13 Women’s clothing
- 14 It takes place all the time all around us
- 15 Blue porn market

## Question 2. What do you think most people like to see?

*Those participants' who responded to this follow up question collectively covered a whole gamut of emotionally charged voyeuristic situations, ranging from covert to overt sexual exhibition, fantasised or real, to expressing experiences of the more extreme challenging / confrontational situations, simulated or real, (answers were too disparate to quantify).*

- 1 Real cringe stuff, awkward situations, extreme emotions, embarrassment, ecstasy, grief, all those emotionally charged things
- 2 Unpleasantness and other people's discomfort
- 3 I don't know what most people want to see
- 4 Titillation. I'm not sure that most actually want to see it or be seen looking
- 5 I think people like to see titillation
- 6 I love seeing sexy pictures, men obviously do
- 7 People like to feel power, control and domination
- 8 Situations were a comparison with themselves
- 9 The sensual nude, the semi-nude, couples in intimate situations.
- 10 Sexually related wild fantasies, imaginings, threat of pain, things they would never really touch upon themselves
- 11 Something they would not personally do but would like to
- 12 Declined to partake in this Case Study
- 13 They way women are dressed, I suppose people like to see the human form in some way or other
- 14 Looking at human forms that attract you
- 15 Pretty girls and blokes who can carry on forever

## Case Study 10.10 statistics.

### Question 1. How do you interpret this image / object?

*67 % (●) of the participants could provide a succinct, well defined narration evoked by the content of the image as an emotional dialogue. 20% gave a literal interpretation.*

- 1 The lips could be curled in resignation, it could be submission or a kind of reluctance
- 2 ● Lovers, it's kind of forlorn, like they're about to part company for a while. It's very intense, there is a lot of tension.
- 3 Two lovers very trusting
- 4 ● The lovers look quite sad, there is definitely no laughter there. There is an element of sadness, of troubledness
- 5 ● A type of intimacy, one to one connection, emotionally loaded, a touching of souls
- 6 Two people kissing. It's very tender [*a literal interpretation*]
- 7 ● I see it as a complicit kiss / union / bonding. A sort of *frisson*
- 8 ● They are not really lovers, there is no passion
- 9 ● They are either being illicit or it's so full on they can't really cope
- 10 ● It is almost like a hesitation, not sure whether to pursue the kiss or not, searching

- 11 It looks like a homosexual relationship [*a mainly literal interpretation*]
- 12 ● Two people who care about each other, seeking reassurance as they just happened to meet each other
- 13 ● Sensual intimacy, something almost secretive like a stolen clinch, passionate
- 14 ● Intimate, there is a kind of alliance suggested as though they are in on something
- 15 A man and a woman about to kiss [*a literal interpretation*]

**Question 2. Does the image make you feel troubled or reassured?**

*60 % (●) picked up a certain element of unease or sadness connected with what they saw.*

- 1 ● I basically feel troubled
- 2 ● I think it's slightly troubling, it's sort of sad
- 3 Towards reassured
- 4 ● I would say troubled
- 5 ● It's both really, there is no reassurance and there is no assurance
- 6 Reassured I would think
- 7 I feel really reassured
- 8 ● It's a little bit troubling
- 9 ● Troubled, [*can't decide*] whether it's tragic or kind of intense sexual
- 10 ● Neither troubled nor reassured, there is something very tender in it which I like
- 11 ● Neither
- 12 It's reassuring because of their closeness
- 13 ● It leaves me with mixed feelings
- 14 I think it makes me feel reassured
- 15 Not troubled

**Case Study 10.11 statistical data.**

**Question 1. What does the image bring to mind. Does it strike a chord with you about any aspects / attitudes in life concerning sex, the body and love?**

*87 % (●) of the participants saw it as making a statement which was both provocative and evocative. Participants brought to the fore many aspects of religion that in their mind were not acceptable ?*

- 1 About being crucified. Because you're putting your head in it, it's putting you in that position. Could be an erotic image
- 2 ● It's making a statement about religion. Yes, it's somebody who wanted to show disrespect, it's a provocative piece
- 3 Well I see the crucifixion, it doesn't strike any chords with me because I'm not religious (Took it literally, did not want to engage)
- 4 ● It's symbolising current affairs, suggesting that the ethics of Christianity have been thought through by an empty head
- 5 ● If I were to wear that there would be a blasphemous thing going on and simultaneously there would be truth going on
- 6 ● It's a very distressing picture, someone is suffering a crucifixion of some sort



- 7 ● It's very up front, it's quite a provocative piece
- 8 ● It is questioning religion and Jesus, the question is, what is religion today?
- 9 ● A clever interpretation of the Cross. It's how religion influences the world that freaks me out
- 10 ● A religious icon and wearing it as some kind of penance and sort of the guilt involved in sex. That piece expresses those things
- 11 ● It would offend a lot of people, anyone who makes that is trying to make a statement, to me that goes over the edge
- 12 ● Interviewee wished to decline participation in this question
- 13 ● We can't have a free open and honest society unless we remove the shackles
- 14 ● That's quite confrontational that piece
- 15 ● I would definitely not see the funny side of that, it's definitely more serious than that. I think it could offend some people, it doesn't seem to be the thing to walk around in

**Question 2. What psychosexual aspects / restraints / dictates of religion and accompanying social structures do you find the most distressing?**

*73 % (●) of the participants listed several aspects of religion as distressing*

- 1 I don't know
- 2 ● How religion is used to subordinate women, woman is always the one at fault if there is any kind of carnality going on
- 3 None, I don't find anything distressing (took it literally, did not want to engage)
- 4 ● Current affairs like child abuse and the ordination of women
- 5 ● Trouble and upset, so many wars are fought in the name of religion. The whole biblical thing and beliefs it's all really questionable
- 6 ● Abortion, a woman should have the right to choose and the fact that some Moslem women are not allowed an education
- 7 I don't find it blasphemous or distressing
- 8 ● The idea that homosexuality is wrong or punishable by death, it's horrible
- 9 ● The whole Virgin versus whore thing of Christianity and guilt clinging to it
- 10 ● It's that association with guilt and pain, the denial of contraception
- 11 ● I find the full Burkha with not even slits for the eyes distressing, that you're not allowed as a woman to show your eyes, that is restraint going too far
- 12 Interviewee wished to decline participation in this question
- 13 ● The three major religions do guilt in a big way, it's all about guilt
- 14 ● That aspects of love and of sex and of the body should be denied. I think it's a piousness idea
- 15 ● It starts wars, I don't think you can trust any of them [religions]

**Case Study 10.12 statistical data.**

**Questions 1 and 2. If you were female / male how would you interpret this image?**

*93 % (●) of the participants acknowledged the aesthetically erotic messages the image projected.*

- 1       ● It's powerful in different ways, celebration of the female form, overtly sexualised, highly eroticised
- 2       ● Wonder Woman, I think if you've got a perfect body, strut your stuff.
- 3       ● It's very idealised, very unrealistic image of pinched in waist and very upturned breasts
- 4       ● It's like Barbarella, men would find it erotic
- 5       ● It's very erotic for sure no getting away from it. You are drawn to it immediately
- 6       ● I'm sure for a male it would be sexy, it's not realistic
- 7       This is a contradiction, is in fact adorning, enhancing or exploiting and degrading
- 8       ● Unnatural, for a straight man that could be hot
- 9       ● It's like the make believe fantasy of a woman's form
- 10      ● It's absolutely amazing, an unobtainable idea of a female form
- 11      ● It's a sexual thing, like a kind of Wonder Woman, it's kind of all out of reach, unrealistic
- 12      ● It's maybe how women hope that that's how men think they look like or maybe how men want them to look like
- 13      ● It does draw you in, it's the classical, probably the most popular, for the male, of the female form idealised
- 14      ● It's kind of glorifying the female body in a very voyeuristic way
- 15      ● It's a cross between Goldfinger and Jane Fonda, as a male I would say it's a turn on

### Question 3. How does it make you feel?

*40 % (●) of the participants saw the funny side of humans' hapless attempts to make and meet unrealistic and fantasised ideals, almost as though they were having a laugh at their own expense. There were some further mixed feelings of inadequacy, voyeurism, objectification etc but this was mitigated by the knowledge that in the real world this human body was just unrealistic.*

- 1       It's kind of disconcerting
- 2       ● I think it's quite witty actually, its almost like a parody of the perfect female form
- 3       I don't know, I'm wondering what's underneath
- 4       ● It's slightly silly, though not in the way of funny silly
- 5       Personally it doesn't do anything for me but I can see why one would be fascinated by it.
- 6       I don't like it, it's just false, just like a doll
- 7       It's open to a lot of questioning but I feel quite neutral
- 8       She looks like a hooker, reminds me of human trafficking therefore makes me feel a bit sick
- 9       ● It feels cheeky sexy, fun, fantastic
- 10      It makes me feel very inadequate. It's very cruel, this is a man's idea of a woman
- 11      ● It makes me smile, it makes me think it's a bit of a joke, no one can take it that seriously
- 12      It's probably most desired but probably not achievable

- 13           ● I think it's amusing, it's funny, it's meant to be funny, poking fun, possibly a mockery
- 14           Objectifying the body as something separate from an identity
- 15           ● It's a bit of amusement, it puts a smile on my face

#### **Case Study 10.13 statistical data.**

##### **Question 1. How do you interpret this image?**

*87 % (●) of the participants found it painful / disturbing to look at, read danger, damage and defence*

- 1           ● I don't particularly like it. It looks dangerous, a fetishistic sort of statement, a kind of chastity belt
- 2           ● I just don't like it very much. It seems quite aggressive, it's like a sort of chastity belt
- 3           ● I see danger
- 4           ● It looks very painful. It brings to mind rape and slicing of clothing
- 5           ● It's disturbing, all I can see is damage, rape and pain.
- 6           ● I think it would be very painful to wear, it identifies with womans' circumcision
- 7           ● Putting forward notions of power and defence
- 8           ● A protest against female circumcision. I can almost sense the razor blade cutting into human flesh
- 9           ● It's harsh, aggressive, sadomasochistic
- 10          ● The pain that we endure to be more attractive, plastic surgery, you're cutting yourself to change into something more attractive
- 11          ● I find it uncomfortable to look at, it reminds me of female mutilation, female circumcision
- 12          Declined to participate in this Case Study
- 13          ● I see self harm, self mutilation, servitude, sexual torture, it's very powerful
- 14          This is very violent. In there lies the potential for violence
- 15          ● It's a warning, some things are off limits

##### **Question 2. How does it make you feel?**

*80% (●) of participants said it made them feel anxious, uncomfortable, disturbed,. Many of them visibly shuddered.*

- 1           ● Aimed to provoke some sort of shock value
- 2           ● I just don't like it very much
- 3           ● It makes me feel very nervous. It's a hidden danger like an ancient femmes fatale, the vagina dentata
- 4           ● It makes me feel not very comfortable
- 5           ● It's dark and disturbing
- 6           ● The razor by the vagina, circumcision of women, that's just terrible
- 7           Wearing of minuscular pants, not very comfortable
- 8           ● It gives me a bad feeling, really uncomfortable
- 9           ● It makes me feel dirty and cheap

- 10           ● It makes me feel amused but also distressed.
- 11           ● It makes me feel quite uncomfortable
- 12           Declined to participate in this Case Study
- 13           ● It makes me feel uncomfortable
- 14           ● I find it very violent and disturbing
- 15           Non- committal

#### Case Study 10.14 statistical data.

##### Question 1. How do you interpret this image?

*100% (●) of the participants understood the piece of work to be a statement of self defence, self protection and a form of warning.*

- 1           ● It's a defence kind of statement, a type of armour
- 2           ● Very fetish, very antagonistic, maybe a warning
- 3           ● Unapproachable
- 4           ● It's the ultimate defence
- 5           ● It's a defence mechanism, it's barricaded
- 6           ● Keep off, and it's obviously a warning to men to keep away
- 7           ● Ready to attack
- 8           ● It's off putting, it's holding people at a distance
- 9           ● Great concept, great interpretation of a modern chastity belt
- 10          ● It's sort of like danger, emotional and physiological terms
- 11          ● Defending from rape, sexual attack
- 12          ● It's a clear statement. Maybe protection from men who may not care about your feelings
- 13          ● There is aggression, there is violence there, this suggests sadism, cruelty to a second party, this is defensive
- 14          ● It suggests danger, using aggression as a form of defence, it's hostile, prickly
- 15          ● Some things are off limits

##### Question 2. How does it make you feel?

*53% (●) of the participants (all but one of the females) identified a sense of empowerment and preservation of self.*

*40% (●) of the participants responses (all the males) showed respect and concern about the needs for sexual equality, mutual respect / negotiation and the freedom to be oneself. Perhaps a male version of the same scenario would open new avenues for discussion. They just need an artist to push open the door, who knows where that would take us.*

- 1           ● It's a bit more sophisticated, it's a bit more cool (*male*)
- 2           ● Don't mess with me and maybe if you do I can be very aggressive
- 3           ● OK I'll keep my distance (*male*)
- 4           ● I like the idea of defence, it's giving a certain amount of power to the wearer
- 5           ● That area is protected, you can't touch it (*male*)
- 6           ● It says keep off me, it looks very frightening

- 7       ● It projects feelings of extreme vulnerability but also of being very powerful
- 8       ● It's a strong person. It makes me feel stay away from her (*male*)
- 9       ● It makes me feel it's quite sexual
- 10      ● It's almost like an empowerment. It is like a self protection, I'm looking after  
what's mine, like an ownership, something you need to negotiate
- 11      ● Most men would not want to get close to that
- 12      It's uncomfortable mentally and physically
- 13      ● It makes me feel a bit uncomfortable (*male*)
- 14      ● It's kind of I'm not being available to you
- 15      ● It brings questions (*male*)



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### **Letters**

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