

Wish I Could Recognize It Has Been Changed. But I Can't Because the Causes Are Invisible.

Mio Fujimaki
BA Thesis: Jewelry Department, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, 2014

INTRODUCTION

My thesis confronts issues which jewellery leads me to think about and questions that jewellery asks of me. This is not about jewellery itself, but connected to it. This is a collection of my interests, which have a bridge between jewellery. My interests within the field is the dualities and conflicts that are connected to the subject. That is the reason it both fascinates and confuses me. Studying it has also led me to consider that I may be a jewellery hater. Roland Barthes spoke about the gemstones as an infernal object that originates from the place where humanity's mythic imagination stored its dead; its damned and its treasures in the same place. This illustrates how contradicting a subject this is, jewellery is practically useless, it only functions as a decoration. If it is an expensive or luxurious piece it explains the wearer's wealth but at the same time it hides the person behind it. Gemstones shimmer around the body and seduce people, though in fact they are gatherings of ancient dead bodies and excrements. It is read as an emotional object, however often it is spontaneously chosen and worn instinctively. A small pretty object is made with gloves, aprons and a heavy mask to protect its maker, jewellery is unnecessarily not needed. There are some of the dualistic aspects which I find fascinating, in essence this is what jewellery is to me, a symbol of duality which is synchronized with my practical work as well. Considering my work, I am always fascinated by the relation of interior and exterior such as skin and organs, the value of the pieces and the system around which the value is made, and the contradicting aspects of things and phenomena that surround us.

I admire the expression "Less is more". A simple life-style has always attracted me. However, I am a person who surrounds myself with decorations. It is quite difficult to live with a few essential items alone. I am interested in the part of human behavior we have all the basics but feel that we still need more. This act of supplementing does not mean we lack the essential items, adorning is purely about adding. Jewellery is an extra object that is not a necessity, but is needed. What has made an adornment a necessity in spite of its practical uselessness? I approach these contradicting phenomena and the question that follows by investigating the themes, such as aesthetics and its duality, nature, culture, body, cultivation, mind, beliefs and human relationships with objects.

There are three parts in this thesis; *Interior*, *Exterior*, and *The Duality*. The Interior begins with introducing the concept of ancient aesthetics, mainly comparing the ideal image of Japan and the West. There is a clear difference between the Japanese and the Western concept of aesthetics. This describes what was important to my ancestors. Making the body absent, and emphasizing invisible matter are some the key points. I then continue by investigating the invisible matter of objects and their relationship with their owner. I discuss preciousness and personal value, passed on from owner to object. The Exterior is about our surface, how we receive and react to our surroundings in contemporary life and how much it affects the shaping of the body. Analyzing various examples explains how it is having an impossible body ideal. This part is also about our recognition of fiction and reality. I begin the last section by referring to works by artists that are connected to the theme of duality. I describe the hidden essential parts of things and aesthetics, cultivating nature and fashioning the body and its violence—a relationship between the surface and the interior. I consider the subject of jewellery, our physical human bodies and minds, and conduct research regarding its effects on our natural body systems. I compare fresh plants and human bodies to inorganic gemstones, which are all in fact natural resources.

Introduction Image: Burying/Seeding my works in the ground

INTERIOR 1-4

Some jewellery pieces contain a similar phenomenon. *Precious stones* (2005), a piece by Dutch artist Marion van Kousswijk, is a good example. In spite of the title containing the word "precious", the work is made of epoxy. The white, oval shaped object has a smooth surface on the outside, and can be separated into two pieces. When you open it, you understand the meaning of its title. Each object has a relief of a creature inside, one side is embossed and the other side is a concave version of the same creature. In the other words you are not able to see anything from its outside, an observer is only able to see the blank white plastic sphere. This refers to sensitive ancient stones, fossils, and inlays in amber. The small relief of the creature in the core of this pendant, though after you confirm its presence once, it may be enough for you to find it necessary to bring this jewel around your neck. Therefore you do not need it to be opened all the time and you believe in the object's value—although the viewer might not understand why you treasure such a boring white plastic sphere.

Kousswijk asks about the concept of preciousness and value by losing and hiding the essential part of this work. This is a good example of how a person starts to find value in a certain material or object. In terms of value, it could be decided by a market price or a personal story, relation, or connection to the object. These two matters work differently. The former is rather visible to its observer and the value depends on a market and a trend, which is affected by the surroundings of that period, but not its owner. In comparison the latter is only based on your personal reasons, and means that the value will not be shifted by the market value, it only changes with you, following your mood and feelings. Therefore the value is recognizable easily by the owner but not so easily by the spectator.

Image6: Marion van Kousswijk, *Precious stones* (2005)

THE ESSENCE OF THE DUALITY 3-1

The essential part of things is rarely seen at a first glance. This goes for the organs in our body and the roots of plants. Roots are the most crucial part of plants. To sustain their life, they provide nutrients and water from the ground. Roots grow in the opposite direction to the actual flower, following gravity and going deep, spreading under the ground. Although we barely see it, this part has a larger mass than the flower part in general, mainly in order to keep its self-sufficient living circulation system running.

Looking at the work *NATURE STUDIES* by German artist Diana Schere, who studied the art and photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, brings to mind the theme of the essential part of things, value, nature, culture, and its dark side. This work tells us about "duality". Every single beautiful thing has its dark side although it is not possible to recognize it at first sight, neither at the same time as you see the beautiful side. French philosopher Georges Bataille says: "The most beautiful flowers are spoiled in their centers by having worms. Thus the interior of a rose does not at all correspond to its exterior beauty; if one tears off a petal, one finds worms, all that remains is a rather sordid tuft."⁹ The remark to make about this work is that the image shows both the "above" and the "under" part of the flower in one picture. This is a scenery we do not see in our daily life since the roots are normally covered. Although we know flowers would never exist without their roots, it is easy to forget about their presence simply because it is hidden from our eyes. For instance, we do not think about roots or millions of worms under our feet when we walk on the grass.

Image5: Diana Schere, *NATURE STUDIES* (2010-2012)

WE ARE TOMATOES OF THE DUALITY 3-4

The work *boer 2011* from Belgian artist Hilde de Decker questions value, nature and culture which leads me to think about my own body. Is it created by nature or culture? Decker grew vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers and aubergines and dressed them with silver rings. She exhibited pots with vegetables and a green house inside of the gallery space. Although the vegetables were deformed from having rings around them during the growing process, they seemed pretty well-grown. The vegetables adjusted their bodies to the environment, and each vegetable developed its own unique form according to what type of ring it had. These daily consumed vegetables express their individuality much more clearly than usual, wearing the silver emphasises individuality more than being naked. This image of a tomato reminds me of the human figure which we care for, decorate and dress so as to cultivate our own nature.

The Japanese philosopher Kiyokazu Washida comments on this issue in his book *Labyrinth of Fashion*.¹³ He believes that the human body does not have an initiative but a trend does. Although fashion seems to follow our natural bodies, it is actually asking us to deform our body. We shape our bodies to fit into a outfit, not vice versa. Agree with his opinion and I realize that my body is made by my culture, the media and the fashion. All these factors dictate the ideal image of the time. It is almost impossible to imagine what kind of body I would have obtained if I had grown up in different surroundings. Even everyday clothes are a soft correction item for the physical body and the mental state. We see commodities everyday and receive it as a model of our body, which we need to fit in to. It reflects the ideal body image of the period which we are unconsciously being exposed to through these products.

However, it is still not so easy to state clearly that my body is only created by "culture". There are still a lot of aspects that I am unaware of within my body. In fact, we know almost nothing about our bodies. Also it is evident that human beings are a part of nature in the same way as other living creatures. But humans are afraid of the unpredictable power and actions of nature, and have always tried to control it in different ways. This condition applies to our own body as well. It is too overwhelming if we let our bodies be totally free. Humans tend to create discipline, rules and restrictions to control the unknown. We cultivate our body ourselves in order to forget about a fear and coincide with our closest nature which is indeed within ourselves. Therefore in this sense the body is not a culture but a nature.

Back to Decker's work. *"boer 2011"* also shows an interesting contrast to conventional jewellery materials. Gemstones versus organic living substance. This poses the question of the value of long-life materials. Although gemstones are natural, they are one of the hardest and infinitely unchanged materials. In general they are considered precious and expensive in opposition to the tomato which is also a natural material. French theorist Roland Barthes argues about gemstones as: *"They are 'inhuman' and as such 'inert', because it comes from deep under the ground, where humanity's mythic imagination stored its dead. (...) the stubbornness of the thing to be nothing but itself. (...) Diamond is like the sterile sun emerging from the deepest part of the earth, non-productive, incapable of rotting down, hence incapable of becoming the source of new life."*¹⁴

I understand that gemstones are considered a symbol of eternal life, however for me it is also a symbol of death. I especially like the phrase that Barthes uses "incapable of rotting down", because this switches the strong point of the gemstones into their disability. Diamonds shine on women's fingers or around their necks, though they are made out of piles of death and excrements from ancient times. In comparison, tomatoes are vulnerable, rotting easily, inexpensive, and do not in general seem suitable for adorning yourself with, however they are living, fresh and edible. They goes through your body not on top of it. I imagine people wearing gemstones on their body so as to emphasize their body's freshness, and even to celebrate our limited life span. We are not gemstones but we are vulnerable tomatoes. We can be a resource of diamonds but not vice versa, and we have an ability of recreation.

Image3: Hilde de Decker, *boer 2011*

INTERIOR 1-1

The Western basis of recreation of the human body. It follows the figure of the body, therefore material is cut into curves and constructed into a 3D form, much like a sculpture. In contrast, the Japanese kimono has only straight lines and the whole garment is constructed with the same width of the fabric, except for the collar parts. This explains that the ancient Japanese did not have a concept of projecting silhouettes of the body onto the dress. Japanese kimono makers constructed the parts of the kimono in an economic way: with barely any fabric wasted (Image 1), and with the possibility to re-size and reuse it later.

When the kimono is finished, it is still not a completed garment. Since a kimono has no fastenings, items such as strings and belts are necessary, but the wearer is also required to have the knowledge and skill to wear it. In principle the kimono depends on the wearer in order to be a practical wrapping for the body. This doesn't apply to traditional western clothes. In his book *Aesthetic of Being* published in 2011, Hidemasa Yatabe describes his difference and calls the kimono the "dependent dress" in comparison to the Western "independent dress". This concept of the dependence of the kimono reminds me of an aspect of the relationship between the wearer and jewellery itself. In my opinion, this is because jewellery depends on the wearer in order to function as an adornment. Liesbeth den Besten argues: *"(...) without man, jewellery only partially serves its function. (...) More than any other functional object, jewellery is related to people."*¹⁵

In *Aesthetic of Being* Yatabe is investigating issues such as Japanese posture and gesture, the way of walking, standing, sitting, and the ancient ideal image of being. He explains the Japanese characteristics by comparing them with western characteristics, and introduces the antecedents and antecedents of the two cultures. Through these researches, Yatabe points out how all of these aspects are connected to our traditional culture, our mind, physical body and lifestyle.

Image2 (Top): Patterns of the kimono and Western dress

Image2 (Bottom): Items you will use for wearing Kimono.



A SIGN RECEIVED EXTERIOR 2-1

An Italian semiotician Umberto Eco argues that a physical system without any semiotic purpose could also be a pertinent signal, and it can be a stimulus that does not mean anything but evokes or elicits something. The sign is not a fixed semiotic entity, but rather the meeting ground for independent elements. Eco mentions that there is no sign, but only "sign-functions" exist. I introduce his argument because this is how we perceive our surroundings as signs for ourselves. It is our natural instinct to do so, constantly and unconsciously we are exposed to an "ideal" image of our body although it is not meant to be received as that. From sources such as media, advertisement, magazines, celebrities and many other things, we perceive them as signals for our body image. It is reasonable that these media use "extraordinary" body figures in order to make their impression stronger, and this minority body image becomes the majority image in the field of advertisement and in the eye of the public.

Digital artist and researcher Nickolay Lamm, who studied marketing at the University of Pittsburgh, shows what the Barbie doll would look like with the average measurements of a 19-year-old woman. (Image 7) A 3D printed "real" sized doll shows how different the Barbie doll is from real human proportions. The difference between these two dolls are obvious, the real average figure is shorter in height, has wider shoulders, waist, thicker thighs and arms, with a more lively facial expression. Although the doll company did not intend to set this figure as an ideal body for American girls when they became teenagers, it gives a strong ideal image to little girls' minds. Japanese philosopher Kiyokazu Washida argues about our nature of creating "anonymous standards" in our minds, and the instinctive detector of checking the body image against comparing it to our own. Consequently, the thing which has no intention of shaping our physical body could be a factor in deforming the body and the mind. The company have purely made a beautiful doll for selling, which has turned out to have a mental effect on its consumer's society. Their "perfect" figures and features are innocent destroyers of our mentality. In other words, it could be considered that we are all furnished with this self-destructive system inside of us.

Image7: Nickolay Lamm, Normal Barbie (2013) <http://nickolaylamm.com/>



FASHIONING THE DUALITY 3-2

Another theme from this work is about a culture, which applies to human beings as "fashion". Here it means the culture is cultivation on that plant and the fashion is centered around shaping the roots with the pot. The plant is photographed on a beautiful colored background with appealing lighting. It's clear that the plant is taken from its own habitat and placed in the studio with a lot of care. This is the same when people take their portraits, we make everything clean and tidy, put the all things behind, and stand in front of the camera. Hence this type of photograph has a polished and unusual atmosphere. In this case, the circumstance is even emphasized by the outline of the roots, which takes the shape of an hourglass pot. This portrait shows an invisible pot that might have been there right before the photograph was taken. Without having the pot, the photo portraits cultivated nature and restraint. This invisible pot has forced the roots into a certain shape, instead of allowing them to grow and spread around in the ground. Having a certain form that gives shape can be seen as a "restraint" in the example of the flower though it might not be so. Since the plant does not have a mind nor nerves, it simply follows its environment, in this case: a curvy pot. Even after it is removed the form is kept, which tells that there was a pot that made this trace. In this way the history of the cultivation of the plant is explained.

The pot is just a container and keeps soil for the plant, though it could deform its appearance aggressively. If the plant had grown naturally, its roots would have spread around under the ground without having any specific form. Since we know this fact, the photograph gives the impression of invisible force, aggressiveness, and the violence of fashion and culture to the viewer. This is even emphasized by the contrast of the fragile dandelion flower and the trace of aggressive restraint refers to the restriction of items on the human body - such as corsets and ancient Chinese foot binding which is an example of harmful body modification.

Ancient Chinese foot binding is an old custom whereby young girl's feet are bound tightly in order to prevent their further growth, and as well as making feet into a certain form which was considered "beautiful" at that time. The basic principle is the same as growing the plant in the pot, simply placing the living and growing creature in the rigid vessel. When a girl reached the age of 3, all but the first toe of both feet were broken and bent back, after which each foot was bound with strips of cloth tightly for around two years.¹⁶ The bound feet stayed smaller than a palm, which meant a deformation of the bone. This makes women with bound feet barely able to run, and it is even a challenge to walk upright. The feet lose their original function and become decorative objects, which are often dressed with beautiful decorated tiny shoes. Although this type of harmful body modification no longer exists, our contemporary fashion culture still relates to a similar principal. In contemporary society we have almost no visible violence correction tools but it nevertheless exists invisibly, and effects people both physically and mentally.

Image9: X-ray photo of bound foot (9/23) http://www.infobabel.com/Chinese_Footbinding



Conclusion

Investigating the issues that jewellery led me to think about, brought me to explore the field of aesthetics, the body, the nature, and fashion in connection with invisible matters such as signs, mentality, beliefs and interactions. In the end I feel that this was all about researching my roots, the roots of my aesthetic and how I was shaped. Although here I say "my" roots, it is important for all of us to consider those invisible aspects of our daily life in relation to the visible matters. This is because I believe that it will be a key for our future aesthetic of being. Being harmonious both mentally and physically, with nature and culture, visible and invisible matters.

Studying ancient aesthetic and contemporary Japanese aesthetics explains that our focus has been shifted from internal to external matters and showcases both problems and questions caused by that. In addition, because of the technological development, fiction and reality became closer, and difficult to distinguish from each other. Also I understand the concept of science is applied for almost every organic institution these days, and this makes us treat ourselves as inorganic organs. This brings confusion and a shift on our perception. Although the system of receiving a sign is a natural reaction for human, this has the side effect of destroying or making the body and mind inharmonious and inhuman.

Just like the concept of jewellery, the human is a very contradicting being. This is fascinating and the biggest reason why I believe in dealing with invisible matter, but is also in confronting the duality of ourselves is important. In order to understand more about our environment and ourselves, we may well need harmonized nature, culture, body, surroundings and mind. This will not be accomplished only with data and numbers. Jewellery becomes almost a monument of human behavior to me because of its instinctive and dualistic phenomena. It is not only about if it looks beautiful or not, it is about **Wish I Could Recognize It Has Been Changed. But I Can't Because the Causes Are Invisible.** BA Thesis: Jewelry Department, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, 2014

Image3: Hilde de Decker, *boer 2011*

INTERIOR 1-2

As we can clearly recognize from (Image2), wearing a kimono requires several strings, belts, and even a towel around the waist, which makes the body outline look like a cylinder. This is a significant contrast to the typical Western hourglass silhouette. As I mentioned earlier, I believe that the Japanese did not have a concept of shaping outfits according to human body figure. The focus was more on wrapping and covering, rather than showing off the body. The garment is tightly closed around the neck. The length is all the way to the ankles, the sleeves are long and the waist has many layers around it. It shows off the complexity of the textile, but hides the body shape of the wearer, and almost makes the body appear to be absent. If an outfit is a reflection of a culture and it's ideals, what was the Japanese ideal at that moment? What does it mean to make a body invisible? Or in other words, what was the focus of my ancestors, if not the physical body?

Yatabe claims in his book: *"The kimono does not have a stable losing such as a zipper and buttons, so if the wearer's posture and movement is not good then the dress would whispere. Therefore wearing a kimono means one's attitude and behavior becomes appropriate to it."*¹⁷ I feel exactly the same way when wearing a kimono. By wearing it, my body movement is restricted, and my mental outlook changes. When you are wrapped up in the garment, it is deemed inappropriate to walk with big steps. Instead you must walk with rather small steps. The clothing controls every bodily gesture. This physical change makes you aware of the presence of your body, but also changes your mental attitude. The wearer adopts a kind of modesty. Therefore, this outfit is a reflection of Japanese culture, and an image of their ideal figure connected to it. Putting on a kimono shifts the wearer's character and behavior, and this is the aim and essence of a wearing one.

Comparing sculptures from ancient Greece and Japan also explains differences in ideal images. Ancient Olympiads were often depicted completely naked. This tells us that the ancient Greeks believed that the sophistication of human beings is displayed through our physical body. Its anatomical structure and the silhouette. When we observe these ancient Greek marble statues, it is apparent that they are not only depicted naked, but often have a lively athletic posture. This emphasizes the beauty of the body and its dynamics. Here the body is a symbol of physical power and athletic ability, because maintaining it shows the subject's daily effort, dignity, and mental strength. It was seen as crucial by the ancient Greeks to have a well-maintained body. This is directly connected to their ideas at that time to aim to be a heroic, independent being. Therefore a beautifully balanced, well-muscled body is a mirror of a good soul and mind.

In stark comparison, a Japanese Buddha statue sits passively. The body is wrapped in many layers of clothes, its eyes are shut halfway, and there is often a circular object behind its chest. This image reminds me of the feeling of wearing a kimono. Enveloping the whole body so that it is almost completely covered displays the attitude and the aura of the person. The Japanese focus is not on the physically visible body itself, but is centred around spirit, attitude, atmosphere, and the ephemeral, or invisible. The ancient Japanese try to showcase these invisible things by covering up visible matters, in this case the human body.

Image5: Left- Ancient Olympic statue, *Diobolus Lameleott* (BC450), Greece
Right- *Maitraya* 宝篋印 (67-7) Kyoto



IMPOSSIBLE BODY EXTERIOR 2-2

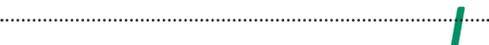
Naturally, similar things have happened in Japan, but with another layer of issue. As a Japanese person, I have to admit that my culture is very much affected by Western culture. This means that our body image is also influenced by that. This could be explained by describing my own childhood idol. *"Beautiful Girl Fighter Sailor Moon"* (Image8) was my favorite animation when I was a child. As implied by the title, this became my idea of "beauty". My favorite character is the one standing in the middle, with blonde long hair, big blue eyes, bright white skin, a small face with a shy way and lean long arms and legs. These characteristics are undoubtedly from a Western figure although the main characters are all Japanese. Strong girls who wear "sailor" type child uniforms.

This animation became a huge trend among elementary school girls. By watching this, unconsciously this icon became my "freak" ideal beauty. It is natural to wish to be as close to your own ideal image as possible. In my case this was a character from an animation. This is the closest ideal figure I remember. This is only one example of how much we are affected by Western figures, although it is obviously impossible to obtain the body structure and facial features of a European, for Asians. However, the tricky part is that little girls do not know about biological impossibilities, neither that these images are fiction, and they will keep this impossible ideal in their mind. What was one of them and believed that I could be like that someday in my future. No one told me that those characters, models, and celebrities are "exclusive" people, and that I was not able to be like them.

Again, from the maker's point of view, this animation was just made for entertaining Japanese girls with a fascinating story and characters. But intentions aside, this had the potential to become one's "ideal" figure of beauty. In other words, the ideal becomes "European" in this case. As an Asian child it was no problem to have that image in my mind, but as you grow up you slowly recognize your own limitations, but still you try to stick to that image or at least try to find alternative ways to get as close as possible. Since this idea festers for so long, it is not easy to give it up. Nor is it easily distinguished. We form complexes based on our ideal image.

These fantastical images of ourselves, I call them "fantastical" because of their physical impossibility, are almost like a religion or fetish. This is not intended by the maker nor the spectator. German theorist Hans Belting said: *"The human being is the natural locus of images, a living organ for images, as it were. (...) Only within the human being, that images are received and interpreted in a living way."*¹⁸ Often they are naturally crystallized in the mind of the viewer without our awareness. I was gradually seated in the mind and rarely questioned, and if it is so from childhood it is rooted deeply into us. In addition to this, we are constantly surrounded by thousands of visual images and objects which have the potential to be a factor that affects our ideal image, but they are rarely pointed out. This is because these are made in order to fascinate an audience. Therefore they need to be beautiful or outstanding, and can not simply be an image of a "normal" or "average" body. However, humans have a natural system that receives media's images as a sign, and unconsciously start to compare their ideals with their own bodies, those images should be chosen and used really carefully. Otherwise, the majority of people will always aspire to the body images that are impossible to reach. However these images look "impossible" and that is where our system of perception falls somewhat. As you can imagine, no human would ever aspire to be the beautiful, seductive sofa that a fashion model sits on in a magazine, but we do wish to be like her.

Image8: Naoko Takeuchi, Manga/Animation: *Beautiful Girl Fighter Sailor Moon*



PHYSICAL AND MENTAL OF THE DUALITY 3-3

As you can imagine from these examples of Chinese foot binding, it is about aesthetics but also it deals a lot with controlling the human attitude. Comparative to the physical body correction, how much can the "inner" be affected by its "outer"? Through explaining my own experience, I would like to draw a rough image on this issue. Obsession is a great trigger for all human beings, to even has the power to change one's personality and perspective. "Eating disorders" are a good example of this, since they have an association with obsession, controlling and the fear of one's mentality.

In my case this conscience is driven by fear, the fear of gaining weight. There was no fixed ideal image in my head but a vague but strong fear. I was not diagnosed with an eating disorder, since I never thought of myself as having problematic eating habits, there fore I never went to see a doctor. But after I had an internship with the artist Christoph Zellweger, I suddenly recognized that I was close to that. Zellweger is a Swiss artist, who works within fields of art and design who deals with the body adornment of today and the issues of body and aesthetics, both from a clinical and a domestic point of view. By following his research I was confronted with some symptoms, and recognized that I fully understand and agree with a lot of aspects that are typical for eating disorder patients. It was surprising and shocking, since I had never considered myself to have that kind of mental problem. To me, my symptoms were just the customs of my culture.

I then started to think about the feelings connected to that time, and compared them to my current situation. My friends were always worried about me and my diet, however I considered this worry as a disturbance of my weight loss, and felt like they were trying to make me fat. They were my friends but at the same time they were enemies and a disturbance. Everyday was like a struggle for controlling myself and the most difficult part was dealing with my surroundings. Since you have a lot of rules and restrictions about food, de-socializing yourself is the easiest and best way to follow your own laws. This makes a big impact on one's mentality, social activity, attitude and eventually your personal character. It means that you tend to avoid social events such as going out, going to dinner etc. because these activities are not spontaneous and about control. You want to know exactly what you are going to eat, how it is made and how big the portions will be. Of course this means that there is suddenly no pleasure and enjoyment connected with eating, it is only full of concerns.

By dealing with one's own mental restrictions, habits and rules, the person eventually changes their personality, behavior and even their character. However the person concerned will not recognize the changes that they are experiencing, since it is a gradual shift in one's mind that is more clearly recognized by outsiders. As I mentioned before, it becomes your culture and a habit it becomes your "nature" in the end. There is only one said: "A custom is a second nature". Although you started shaping your body only because of your outward appearance, it actually changes your inner character as well without your conscious effort. Luckily I had an opportunity to see myself from another perspective. I felt like a bar of my culture, however I am affected by the environment that I was raised in.

It is not so easy to draw a line between where your characteristics are beyond "normal" and when they are symptoms of a disease. However, one person told me another that their personality and habits are extraordinarily and sick. Also it is hardly recognized by the person themselves since it is a part of their characteristics and personalities. Although it is hard to see a boundary between "symptoms" and normal characteristics of the person, our degradation of the body has the potential to be a long term over mental illness. Or that level has the potential to change personal characteristics. Below, I have displayed the result of my "symptom check" which I tried online. This raises the question: whereas is the boundary between the "illness" and "normal" characteristics of one person as well as the recognition of incomparable characteristics, although the result shows that there are eating disorders? do not see myself as having one of it is because I know that if I did, I would not be able to stop the behavior. Accepting the symptoms and admitting the problem is the first step towards being cured, people who suffer from eating disorders do not necessarily want to be cured, as becoming means losing weight.

Image6 (Top): Christoph Zellweger, *Body* (2013) <http://www.infobabel.com/Body>
Image6 (Bottom): *Body* (2013) <http://www.infobabel.com/Body>



INTERIOR 1-3

Similarly to Japanese clothing, there is an object which uses hiding as a method to reveal the invisible matter—covering something up to put the emphasis on the essential part of the thing. "Omamori" is a general term for a type of amulet in Japan. The size is normally only half of a human palm or smaller, and it is most commonly sold at shrines. It's a tiny fabric bag, with delicate embroidery, and attached to a string. Although this bag is closed, it seems to contain something inside. Using this string, the owner can either tie the bag to personal belongings, or hang it somewhere visible. "Omamori" means "protection". In Japanese, its name explaining the function of the object. There is a general "omamori" but also many other kinds for specific issues, for instance passing an entrance exam, easy childbirth, safe trip, or marriage.

Personally, I have never opened the bag before, and have never heard of someone who has done. Therefore, I do not know what is actually inside. The power of protection is covered with the fabric. You can carry it with you, however you will never see it. This is an object which depends on the beliefs of its owner. It only functions when the holder believes in this invisible "function". Without this trust it becomes a simple textile object. Even with trust it does not change visibly, and it is not possible to confirm its function. Therefore, the person provides the meaning for this object, as well as its purpose and reason to exist. In this sense the object depends on its holder, and the holder depends on the security of the magical power of this object. Without this interaction the object cannot be activated as "Omamori". This is a crucial element for this kind of object. I believe in this and respect it, but also have a fear of it, which is the reason why I have never opened it before. I am afraid it will lose it's power if I open it. Opening it would mean that you are curious about the inside, and could suggest that you don't fully believe in it. So by opening it I would feel that I was showing my doubt about the power of the object, and see it as a disrespectful attitude towards the object itself.

"Semamori" is also a similar kind of phenomenon. It is the name of the stitches which can be found on the back of Japanese children's kimonos. It literally translates as "back protection". Usually these stitches are made by mothers in order to keep demons away from their children. This tradition is simply based on a phrase of language, in Japanese "seam" is literally called "sawing eyes". Unlike the kimonos for adults, there is no sewing line in the back of a child's kimono because of its structure. This made people consider that children's kimonos lack "eyes" on their backs. This made our ancestors afraid that their child could be taken away, grabbed by their back, while no one was keeping an eye on them. In order to prevent this, the extra stitches, or "eyes" were applied. These stitches are made without any knots, and often the end part was left un-fastened. This is a system for protection. If a demon came to capture a child, he would supposedly pull the thread. Since there is no knot on the stitch the demon would only pull the thread loose, and so the kimono and the child would be safe. Although it originates from a simple phrase of language, it has actually stimulated functionality. Putting meaning into minimal stitches and something enclosed in a bag makes this special power, which is activated by the owner's belief. This is an important element for both of these objects in order for them to function as they should.

Image4 (Top): Omamori

Image4 (Bottom): Semamori



EXTERIOR 2-3

Since my childhood, technology has developed rapidly, and this stimulates and changes the ideas about what our ideal facial features are today. They are half real and half-virtual, standing on the border of make-up and magic, depending on technology. I will now demonstrate two examples, that both explain how obsessively the Japanese of today are attempting to obtain bigger and more European-looking eyes. The first example is about a trend of wearing "circle lenses" by young females in Japan. The circle lens is a contact lens that has a black colored rim on its edge. The lens does not have any color in the middle part, and is the same as a normal lens but with a ring on its edge. Therefore, it enlarges the wearer's pupil. This makes one's entire eye look much bigger than usual. The majority of people wear these lenses not for medical use, but as a fashion item. This lens is categorized as a "color lens" which is normally intended to make Asian eyes lighter, like European eyes, though this circle lens should appear as natural as possible, the aim being "natural beauty". They are not supposed to look odd or unusual, it is better if one person cannot recognize that the other is wearing them. This is brand new technology and a new trend—to aim to become a natural born beauty.

Another example is the "automatic eye enlargement" function of a photo sticker machine known as "Purikura" which can be described as a fancy version of a passport photo machine. It is quite popular amongst young Japanese women to take photographs in this machine, and then exchange them with their friends. Although it is not suitable for your official document papers a lot of people use it as their profile picture on social media websites, as the photos have a good quality of printing and lighting. In addition users are able to draw, write messages, and add decorations on top of their photos after they are photographed. These machines used to be simple, without any decorating function nor "correction" system. However, nowadays there are no machines without an "automatic correction" system. This system changes the user's facial expressions by enlarging the eyes, but without notifying the user. So on a daily basis, young Japanese females face their digitally manipulated portraits.

Since it is no longer a choice for users if they wish to make their eyes bigger or not, but a favor from the machine, you can imagine how much this function was requested from users in the past. This was our wish, our desire and therefore this function was developed. Considering those two examples, it is clear that the current aesthetic trend is being a "natural" beauty, which is assisted and developed by technology. We are able to adjust ourselves without having an actual correction on our bodies. Consequently, technology allows us to get closer to our ideal image—although it is literally only in a photograph. This creates an even bigger gap between reality and fiction. The body itself is not modified but our excess gets closer to our wishes, and going further without the body. Our actual body starts to separate from the owner, and exist as a fictional version of ourselves. Therefore, the mind also starts to be separated from its body. Our perception of the body becomes more objective and inorganic in one sense. This may not be physically harmful, nor able to deform the body, but there is a chance of deforming our minds and perceptions. Only the separated body image exists as a perfect imaginary being; I wonder what kind of effects this has on people.

Footnotes

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- Hidemasa Yatabe, *Aesthetic of Being—Techniques of Japanese Body* (Chuo Koujin Shinsha, Tokyo, 2011) Self English translation. The original title: たたりまいの美学—日本人の身体技法
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- Kiyokazu Washida, *Labyrinth of Fashion*, P.20, 22 (Self English translation. The original title: モードの迷宮)
- Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images*, Translated by Thomas Dunlap (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, Princeton & Oxford), P. 37
- George Bataille, *Visions of Excess Selected Writings, 1927-1929*, Translated by Allan Stoekl (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1985), P.12
- Akira Ishiyama and others edited, *Encyclopedia of Fashion* (Bunka Shuppankyoku, Tokyo, 1979) (Self English translation. The original title: 服飾辞典)
- "Eating Disorders are a group of serious conditions in which you're so preoccupied with food and weight that you can often focus on little else. The main types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder. Eating disorders can cause serious physical problems and, at their most severe, can even be life-threatening. Most people with eating disorders are females, but males can also have eating disorders. An exception is binge-eating disorder, which seems to affect almost as many males as females. Treatments for eating disorders usually involve psychotherapy, nutrition education, family counseling, medications and hospitalization." <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/eating-disorders/basics/definition/con-2003372>
- There are the typical characteristics and behavior of eating disordered people. http://www.heguldige.org/mental/anorexia_signs_symptoms_causes_treatment.html
- Kiyokazu Washida, *Labyrinth of Fashion* (Chikuma Sh