



THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

Department of Fashion and Textiles

Faculty: Fashion

AGONY FOR BEAUTY'S SAKE

(Examining man's self-inflicted torments in
achieving the ultimate ideal of beauty)

by

NORA KEELY

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

"Dress reflects not society at its best, but at its most mundane, because it is devised to appease the vanity of the moment".¹ (Wilson, Documentary, October 1988).

It is this vanity that I intend to explore and the extremes that people will go to for their particular idea of beauty. Beauty is not always measured in terms of economic wealth - I believe more accurately assessed in terms of human suffering. Binding various parts of the body, tattooing, scarification, cosmetic surgery, all cause physical pain, yet all have been endured in beauty's name. Styles may differ but the impulse to reshape the body is constant. The perfect body ideal may vary from generation to generation, from class to class and from year to year, with people learning ardently to desire what fashion desires. It is a world of plastic and illusion we live in, some of the most unpleasant operations are performed in striving for a particular ideal of beauty, e.g. cosmetic surgery, sex changes, tattooing, etc.

"The greatest provocations of lust are from our apparel".²

Fashion is essentially an aphrodisiac which is used to cover nature's bare facts with the use of artificial aids to sustain an illusion and a particular ideal of beauty.

We are constantly sending out sex signals, whether consciously or subconsciously, positive or negative, aggressive or passive, but how we dress, undress, mutilate or deceive, reflects psychological and sexual attitudes about ourselves or what we want others to see. We dress, not to conceal the body for modest reasons, but to attract sexual attention by concealing it, altering and mutilating it. It is then that deceit becomes a necessary truth in "beauty" which is echoed throughout history and is still being practiced in our 'civilized' present-day society.

"Dress" has the same purpose for both animals and humans, but it is humans who have discarded natural plumage for an artificial one, possibly to save us from anonymity and give us some form of identity and status. It is unusual to think we live in a democracy where everyone wants to be equal - male and female, black and white, rich and poor, but very few want to look similar as it would leave us as a nonentity in a herd void of any individuality. Naomi Wolf, in her book 'The Beauty Myth', asks: "Are women the pliable sex, innately adapted to being shaped, cut and subjected to physical invasion".³ This question echoes my own queries on the extent people, and in particular women, will suffer to obtain an ideal of beauty. What is so important about constantly looking young and beautiful and virile? Is society so superficial that an individual is accepted purely on their exterior and cosmetic qualities? Should it

actually matter what a person looks like as long as they feel beautiful? I would not question people wearing make-up, losing weight, dressing up, having cosmetic surgery or being fanatical about their body, face, nails, hair, etc., or choosing to ignore adornment altogether. However, I do object to the lack of choice people have in a society that dictates how they should look, act, smell and walk.

The real harm is when someone feels invisible without the use of cosmetics, if they feel ugly or fat because they do not work out, if a woman needs to starve to keep her job or lover, or if a person feels the need to attract a lover to have an identity. It is then that beauty hurts. Both men and women have been victims of fashion whims through different periods of history. In reality, women have suffered a great deal more than men whether it stems from personal, social or national standards.

Clothing, dress and beauty ideals have always been used to indicate sex, age, economic status, social position, occupation or profession, rank and class and geographical and cultural origins. Always presenting a favourable image which is aimed at both the opposite and similar sexes. There is a subtle, underlying message in achieving or attempting to achieve a particular ideal of beauty and that is that the fires of virility are still burning and that all is alive and well within the libido. Essentially, status appeal is sex appeal.

The topics I will be discussing are of a diverse nature, ranging from different periods of history, with a mixture of cultures and societies. I will be dealing with beauty ideals from the very restrictive to the semi-restrictive: as diverse as the topics may seem, there is a common denominator, i.e.

"Does an ideal of beauty merit such pain and suffering?"

and

"Why do people go to extremes for such an ideal?"

C H A P T E R 1

Cranial distortion through both permanent and artificial means. Facial adornment which will involve dealing with cosmetics, piercing, scarification, etc., and the roles these play in extreme beauty ideals.

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Striving for an ideal of beauty is a reflection on a form of behaviour accepted by most people in a society regardless of how extreme that ideal may be. Take, for example, the deliberate elongation of the cranium as a process of beautification. Unlike other operations on the body, head deformation must be done at birth while the child's head is still malleable and easily reshaped. This shape was obtained by either compressing the head between two pieces of wood, massaging, or binding the head with strips of bark. The idea of a long, beautiful and graceful head need not be a permanent alteration but could also be practiced and admired on a temporary basis, e.g. the shaving of eyebrows and hairline, head dress, wigs and coiffures.

It is an ideal that is not restricted to one society or culture, but a variety, and not one particular period, but throughout history. Head shaping was practiced in pre-neolithic Jericho and by the highborn Greek and Roman families. Egyptian royal families also displayed elongated skulls. (See Figs. 1 and 2).



FIG. 1.

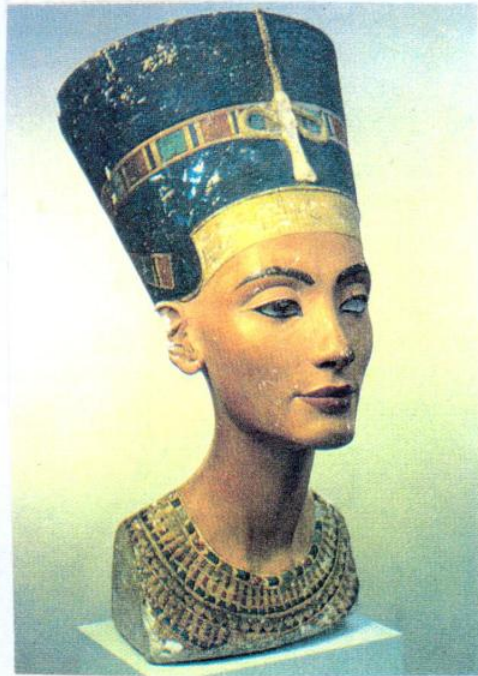


FIG. 2.



SWIMMING POOL

ROAD



W

1000

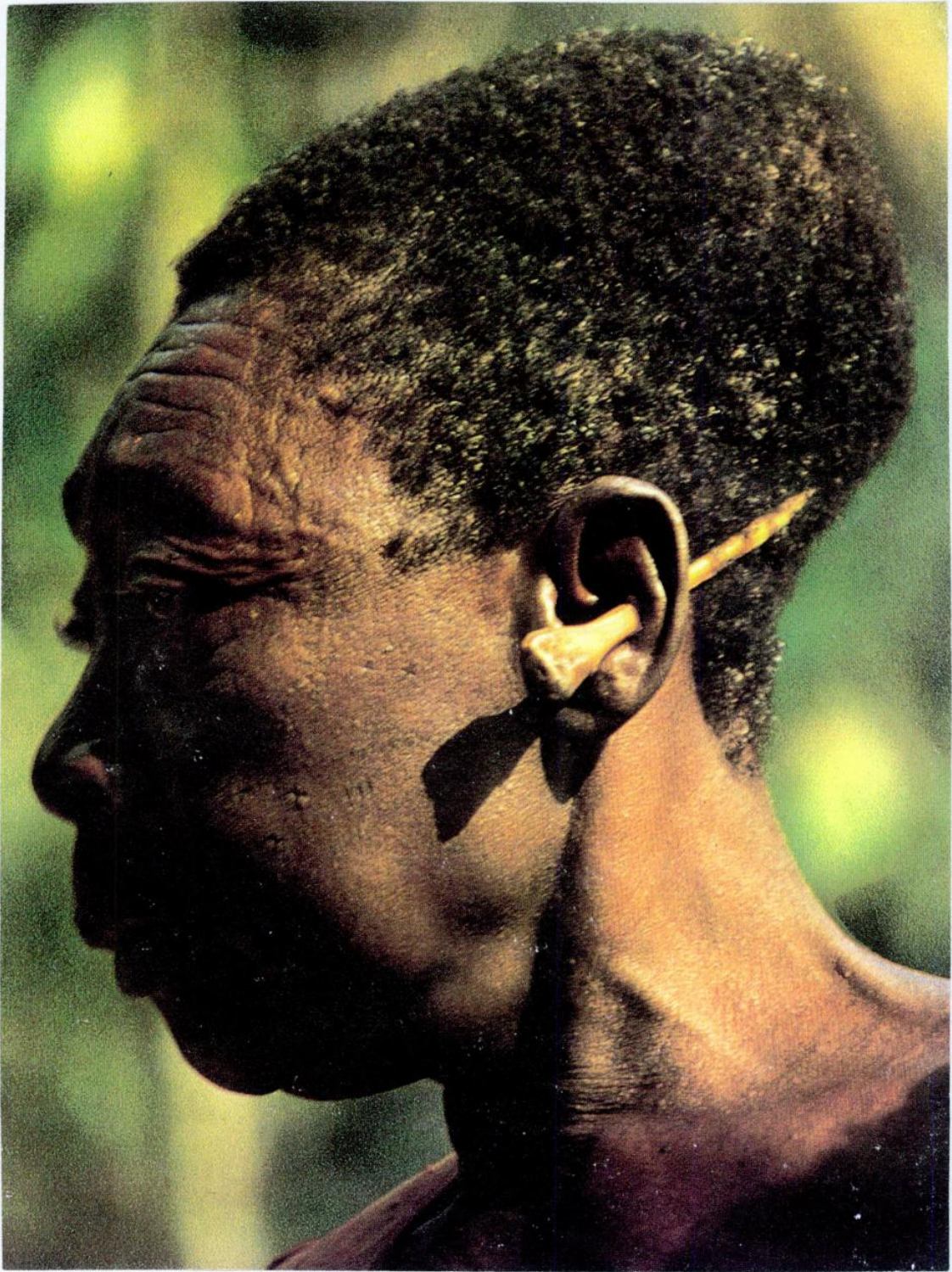


FIG. 3.



SECRET

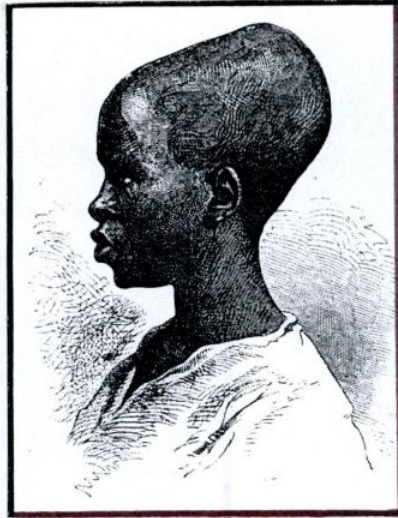
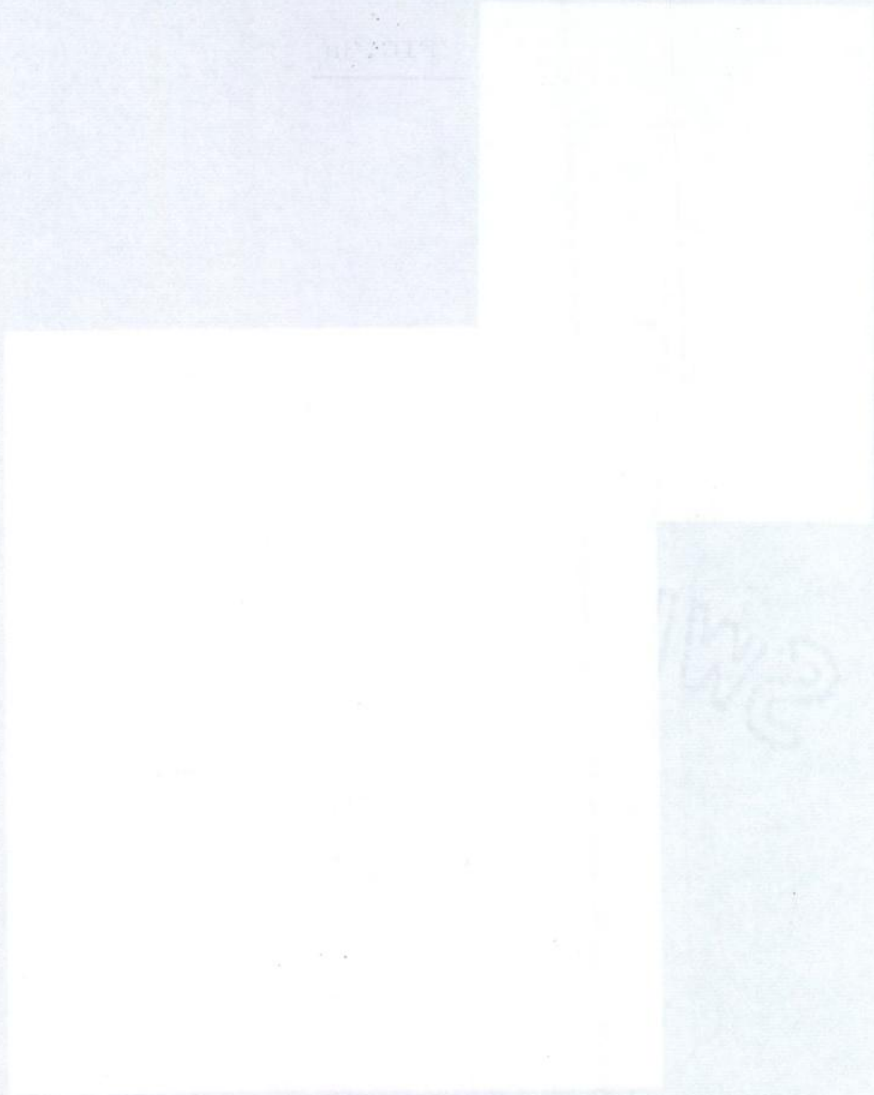
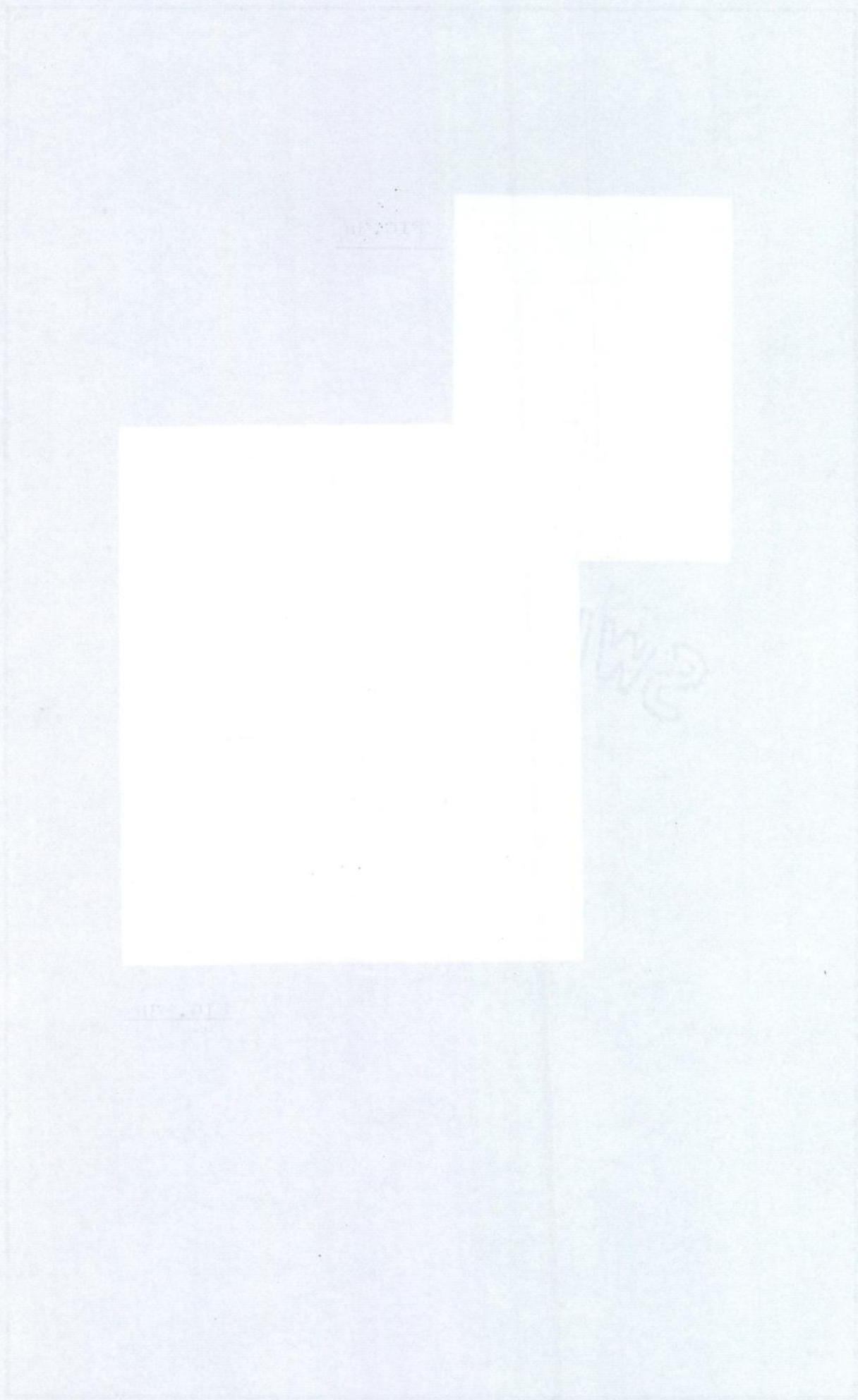


FIG. 3a



FIG. 3b



W/C



It was practiced up to the 18th century in France and in the 15th century in northern Europe, which is evident in portraits by Memling, Van der Weyden and Van Eyke. The extremity of wigs/coiffures reached its zenith in the 18th century, when the visual effect of the head was heightened and elongated. The Mangbetu tribe* in Africa deliberately elongated the cranium (see Fig. 3) for aesthetic reasons up until 1950, and anxious parents in Hitler's Germany massaged their babies' heads into the dolichocephalic* ideal of the master race.

It was believed in the 17th century that a round head did not have enough room for memory and, as a head stretcher at the time wrote, "let it therefore be longer so that behind it may be elongated like the end of a gourd and then indeed a spacious court is opened where memory can rest". Particular head shapes also served as marks of regional identity in France. French cranial* deformation was caused by a 'bandeau' worn by children and babies which resulted in a circular depression from the upper part of the frontal region. This restriction prevented the forehead from growing upwards, so the skull became flattened, extending behind into a more phallic shape. However, the linen bandage used, apart from depressing the skull, also deformed the ears. The bandage was seldom removed and was the cause of lice, skin infections and ulcers.

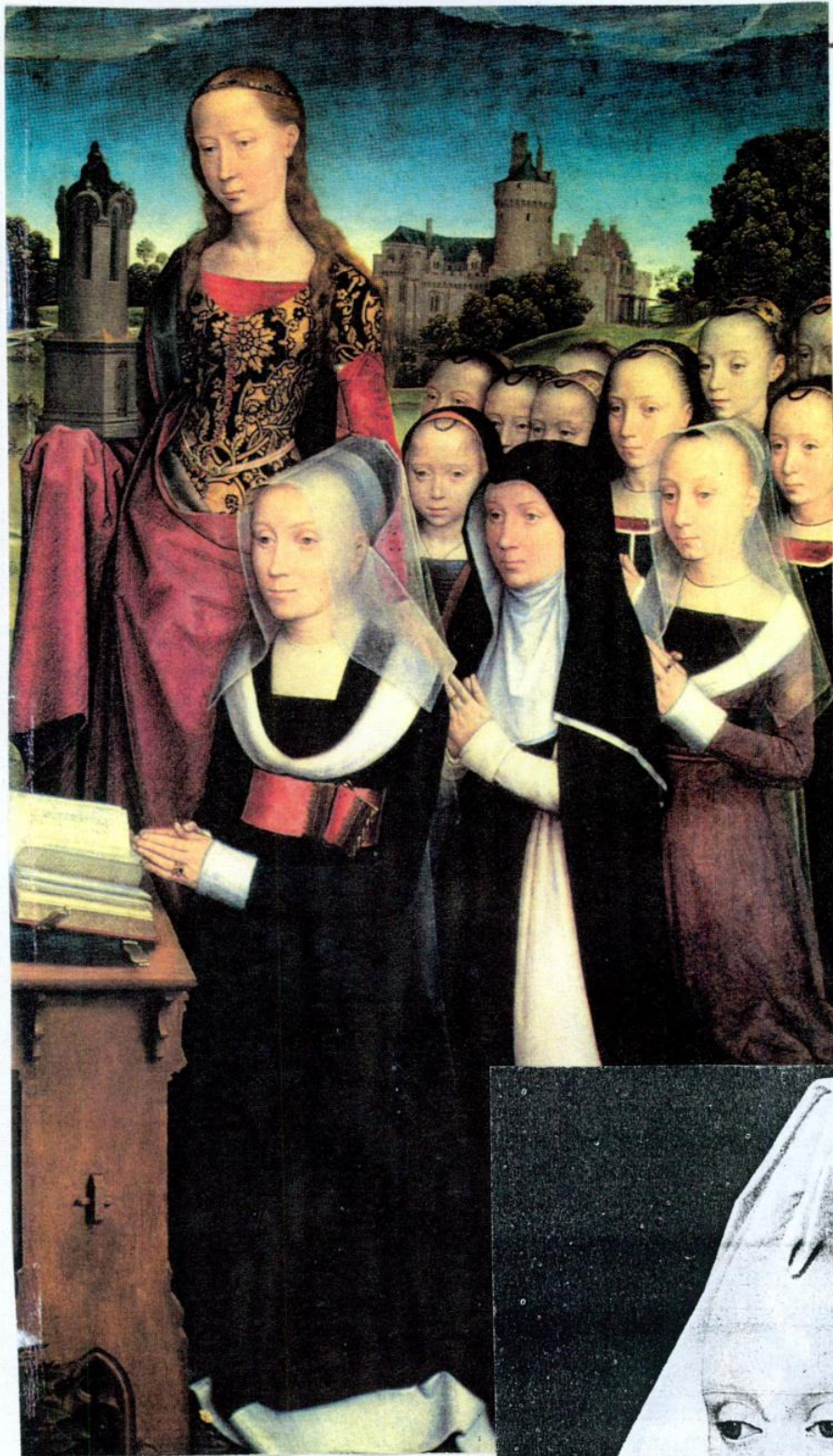


FIG. 4



FIG. 5



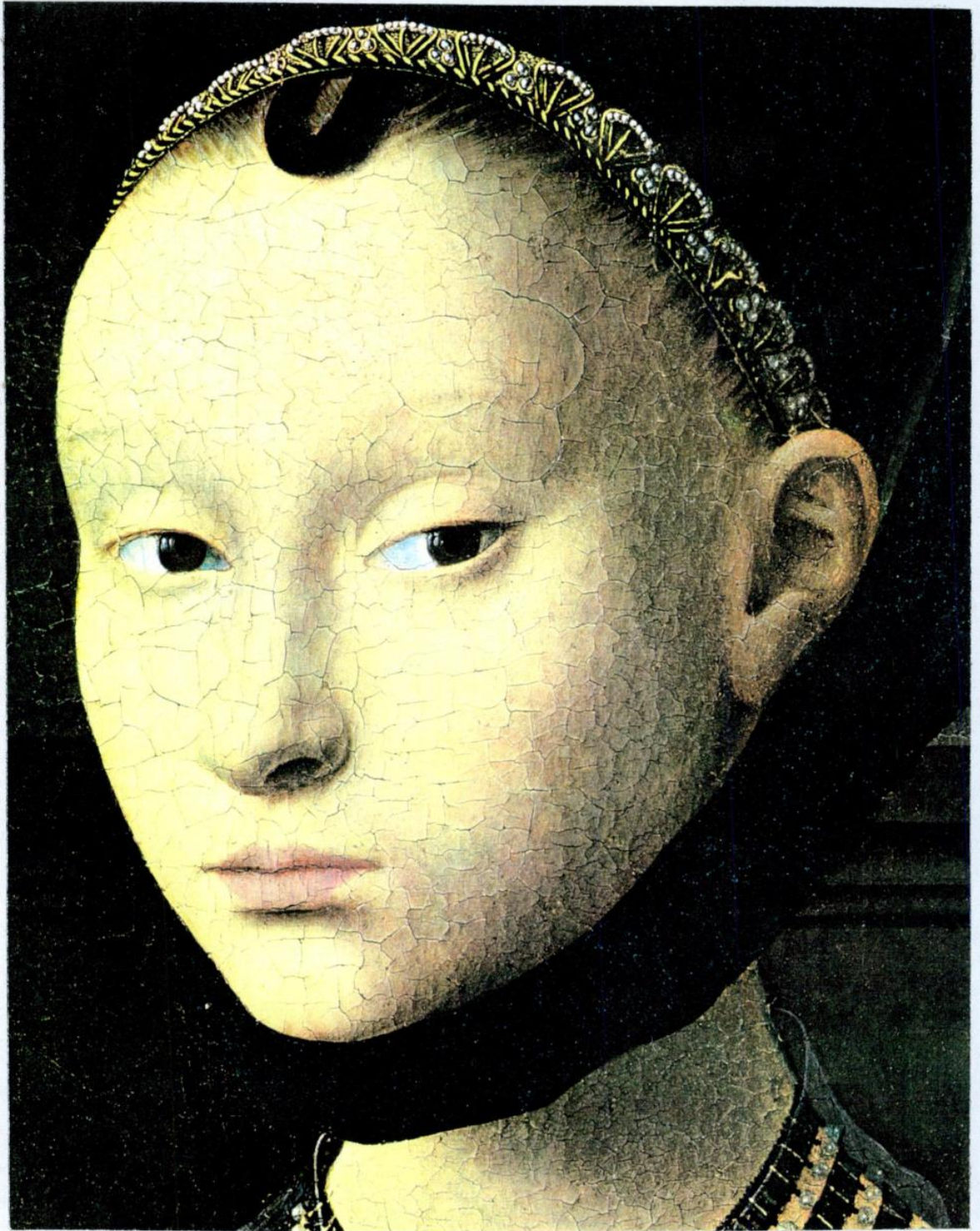


FIG. 6



Ladies of the 15th century affected a lozenge shaped look, very similar to that of the Mangbetu tribe in Africa (Fig. 7). A portrait of a lady by R. Van der Wyden (Fig. 5) displays a young lady in the latest mode who has plucked her eyebrows and front hairline to obtain this idyllic shape, as does Fig. 4 by Jan Memling and Fig. 6 by Christus. (Also notable from these portraits is a luminous quality to the skin, which was obtained by the hazardous make-up at the time and which I will discuss further on). This lozenge shape was also emphasized by the head dress worn at the time or, as with the Mangbetu tribe, the chignon hairstyle (Fig. 9) accentuated this elongation. Further efforts by tribes resulted in sandwiching the child's head between two boards which were tied together with cords, or binding the child's head tightly with strips of bark. (Fig. 8). Although practiced and achieved in different ways from the permanent to visual illusion, why should such a variety of people from different cultures and periods in time arrive at the same ideal of beauty? Perhaps there is something, a desire stemming from our subconscious, an innate longing and attempt by all individuals to exhibit some form of sexuality, more than a superficial or cosmetic quality - a desire that we are subconsciously aware of to a certain degree. What other possible reason have individuals for altering the appearance of the head into a more phallic resemblance, which is also obvious from the hairstyles and coiffures of the 18th

FIG. 7

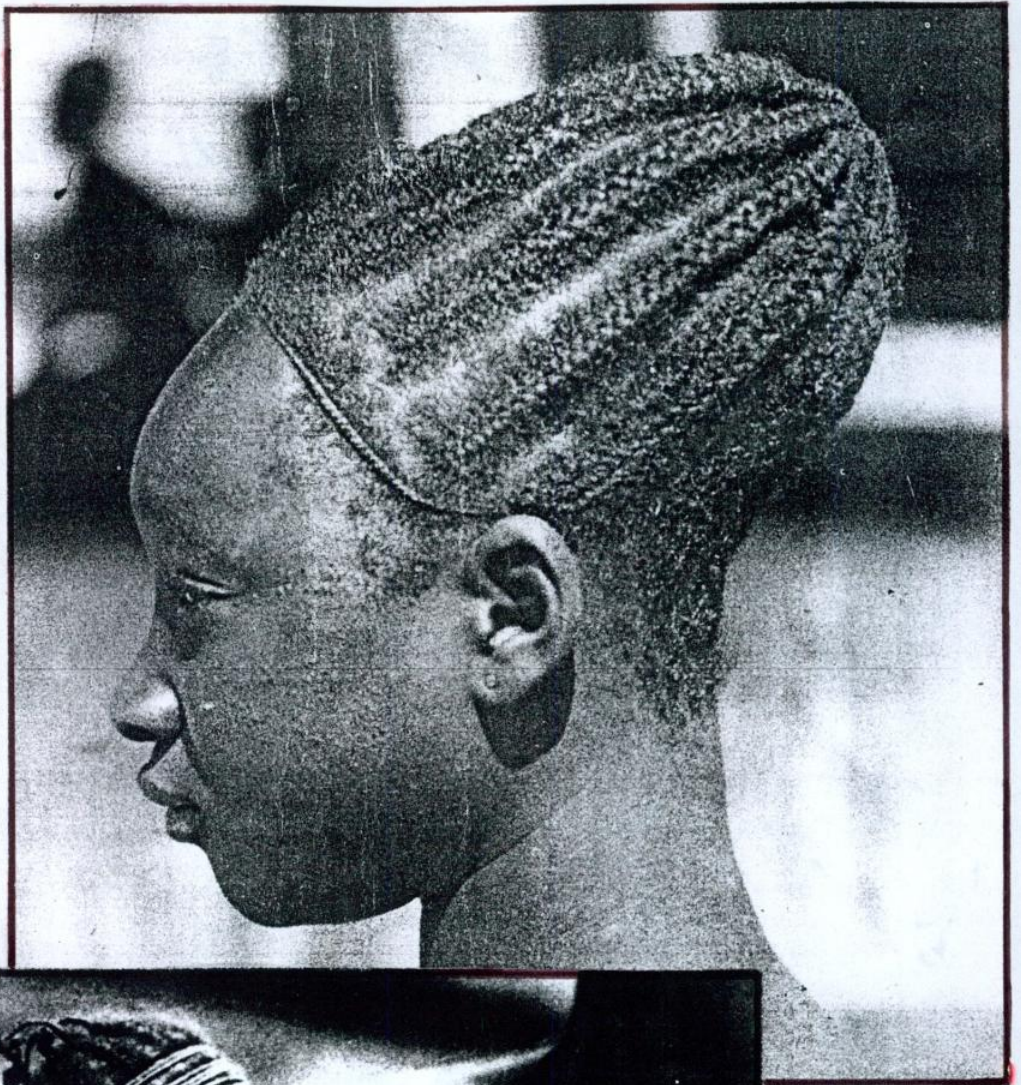
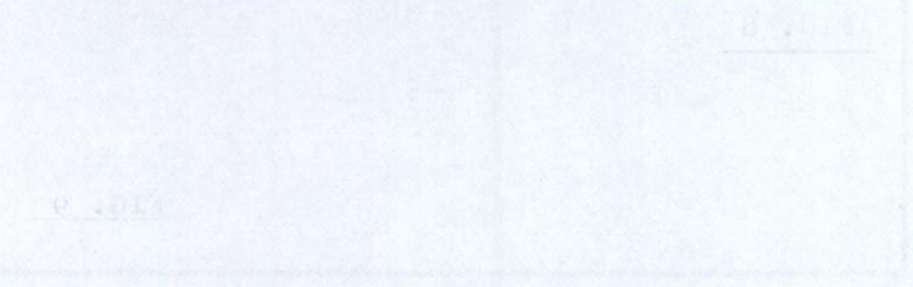
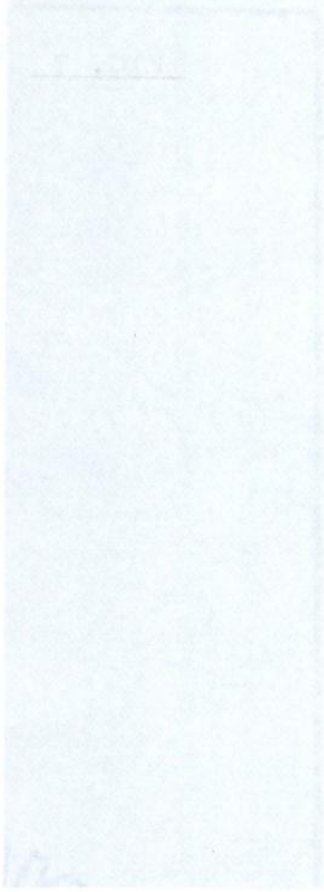


FIG. 8

FIG. 9





century, emphasizing the elongation of the head for both aesthetic and status reasons.

"Give Chloe a bushel of horsehair and wool
Of paste and pomatum, a pound,
Ten yards of gay ribbon to deck her sweet skull
And gauze to encompass it round.

Of all the bright colours the rainbow displays
Be those ribbons that hang on her head.
Be her flounces adapted to make the folks gaze
And about the whole works be they spread.

Let her flaps fly behind, for a yard at the least.
Let her curls meet just under her chin.
Let these curls be supported to keep up the jest
With a hundred instead of one pin.

Let her gown be tucked up to the hip on each side.
Shoes too high for to walk or to jump.
And to deck the sweet creature complete for a bride
Let the cork cutter make her a rump.

Thus finished in taste, while on Chloe you gaze,
You may take the dear charmer for life;
But never undress her, for out of her stays
You'll find you have lost half your wife."

A contributor to "The London Magazine", 1777.⁴

This particular satire epitomizes the pomp and frivolity of women's fashions in the 18th century and this was echoed in the coiffure and wigs of the time. I will deal mainly with the later part of the 18th century, as never before was there such a crescendo of excess which could scarcely be imagined a few years before, or decades later. (See Figs. 10 and 11).

It was during the reign of Marie Antoinette that the most grotesque and ridiculous hair styles caught the imagination of the court. Enormous constructions were elevated on top of the head. Women combed up their



FIG. 10



FIG. 11

100-10



SWH 100-10

BOND



100-10

powdered hair (natural or false) to cover a horse hair pad, worn on the crown of the head, with rows of curls at the back, the entire monstrosity being kept in place by pins and pomatum*. As head dresses became more intricate, women often resorted to wigs and when frizzed hair became popular with women, there arose further possibilities for decorating the head. Creations reaching two feet high took on an extraordinary variety of decoration. Coiffures were often allegorical and represented romantic poems. Baroness Oberkirch's* coiffure had flowers standing in a vase of water. Madame de Lauzen* carried entire dramas on her head - a hunting scene, ducks in a lake, miniature models of Paris, etc. (See Figs. 12 and 13 as examples).



'Chien Couchant'

Fig. 12



'A la Zodiaque'

Fig. 13

Widows sometimes requested tasteful representations of tombs with cupids playing with torches. Topical head dress was always popular. For example, a l'inoculation represented the discovery of vaccine and the 'balloon' style came from the Montgolfier brothers' balloon experiments. Every coiffure had its own name.

The desire to be admired for physical beauty has always played an important part in fashion and success in attracting the opposite sex has been admired and envied, but for what purpose will a woman go to an extreme ideal of beauty which is both uncomfortable and unhygienic and yet is one that disgusts the opposite sex?

In August, 1768, a letter appeared in 'The London Magazine' from a horrified gentleman who had witnessed the opening up of an elderly aunt's hair, which she had confessed had not been opened for nine weeks.

"When Mr. Gilchrist opened my aunt's head, as he called it, I must confess its effluvias affected my sense of smelling disagreeably, which stench, however, did not surprise me when I observed the great variety of materials employed in raising the dirty fabric. False locks to supply the great deficiency of native hair, pomatum with profusion, greasy wool to bolster up the adopted locks and grey powder to conceal at once age and dirt, and all these caulked together by pins of an indecent length and corresponding colour. When the comb was applied to the natural hair, I observed swarms of

animalcules running about in the utmost consternation and in different directions, upon which I put my chair a little further from the table and asked the operator whether that numerous swarm did not from time to time send out colonies to other parts of the body? He assured me that they could not, for the quantity of powder and pomatum formed a glutinous matter which, like time twigs to birds, caught and clogged the little natives and prevented their migration".⁵

Nests of mice were also recorded and a long armed ivory scratcher became a necessary implement.

In 1775, the head dresses continued to increase in height and to become more eccentric in design. As a practical matter, these coiffures presented a considerable number of problems. Women were forced to travel in a kneeling position with their heads hanging out the windows of their carriages (see Fig. 14). Coiffures became so high that doorways had to be enlarged. A man named Beaulard invented a mechanical coiffure which could, when circumstances required it, be lowered a foot or two by touching a spring.

Another example of how this extreme ideal affected men at the time is a letter printed in 'The London Magazine' in February, 1768, by an anonymous "Lothario A*** N".

"As a principle aim of ladies in their dress is to attract the regard of men.....I would acquaint them,

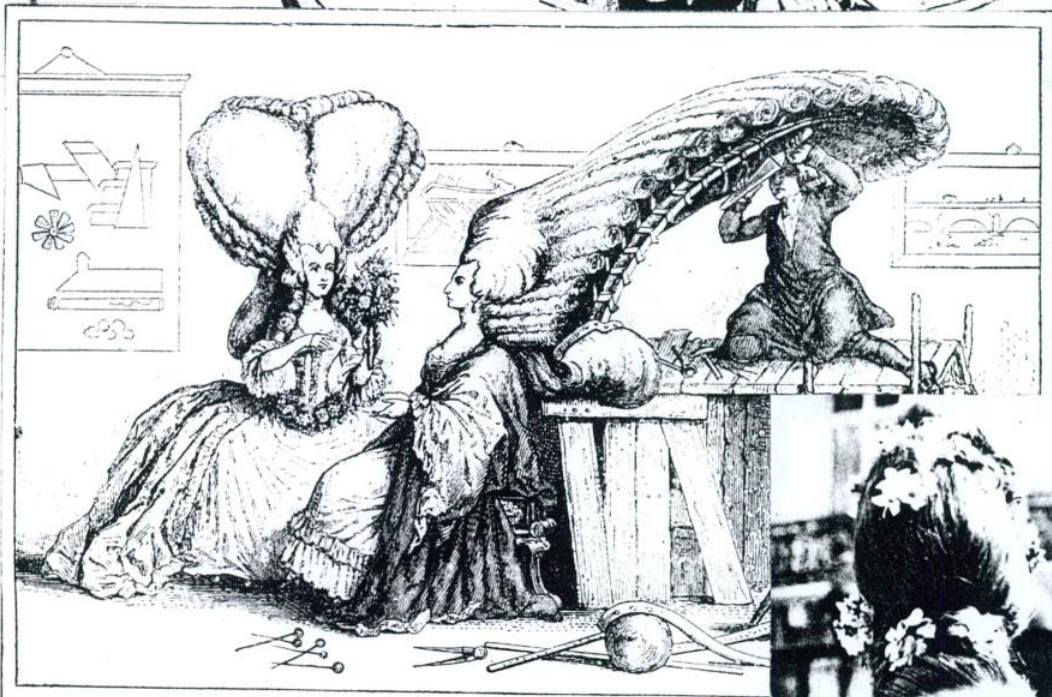
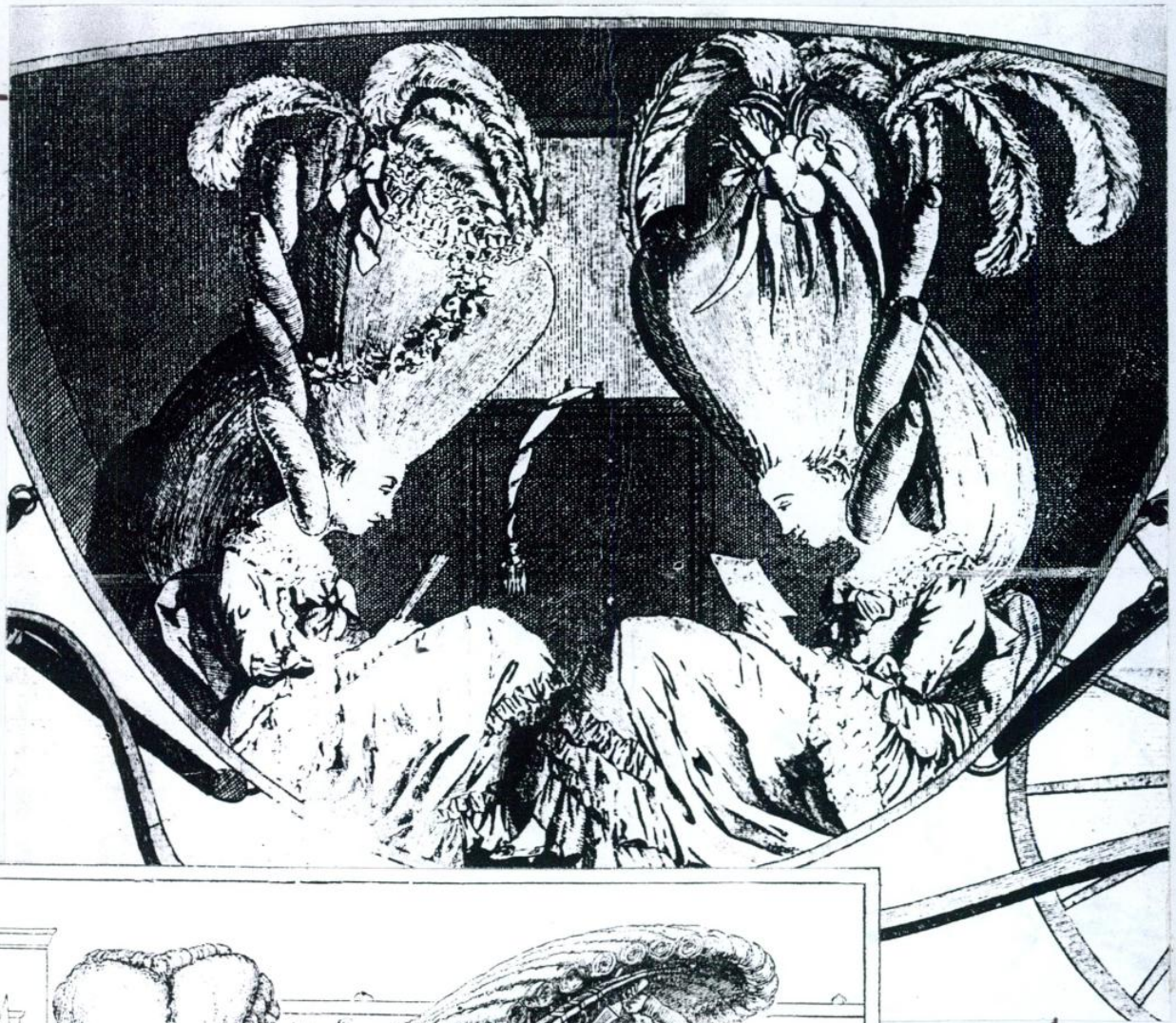
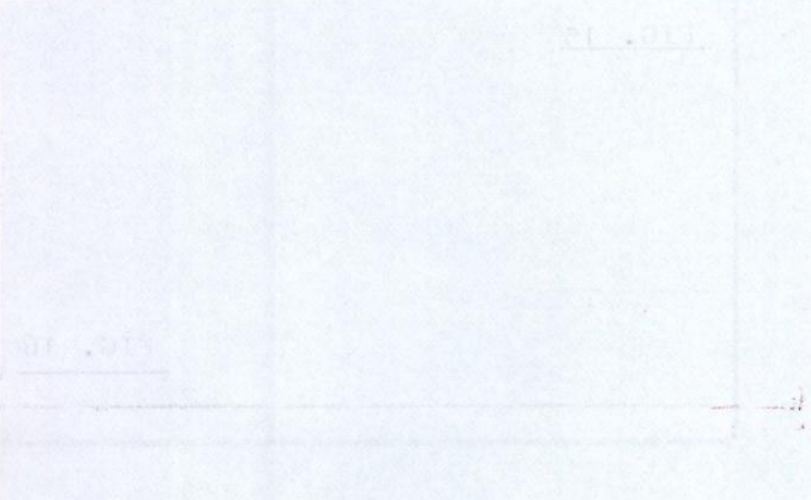


FIG. 15

FIG. 14



FIG. 16



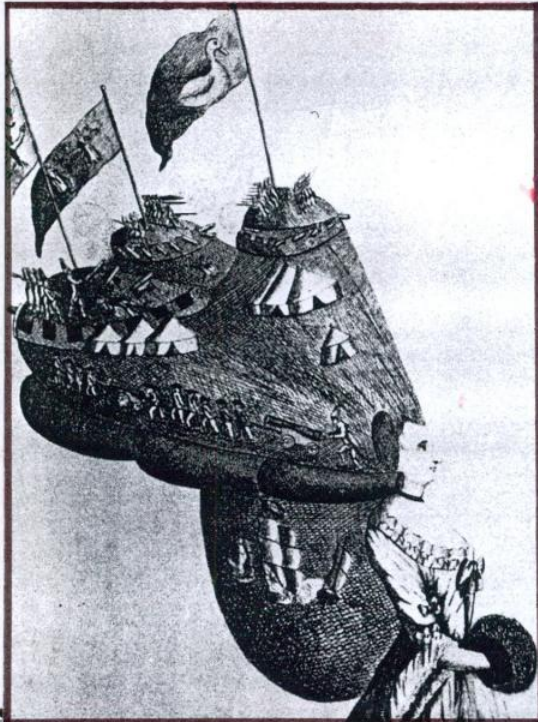


FIG. 17



through the trumpet of fame, that men are not fond of the present enormous and preposterous head dress which seems to be the centre of all their pride, with the addition of pearl powder and carmine, to destroy the natural beauty and sweetness which I and everyone else must own to be most engaging".⁶

Perhaps another reason why people go to extremes in ideals of beauty is to display their wealth and finery within their own social structure and this is evident by the extravagance of coiffures and the rivalry between women in the bourgeois society. Even though it disgusted or horrified men at the time, it helped in decorating society or a husband's house. It was one of a compilation of fine ornaments that money could buy and afford to sustain, e.g. high, tiny shoes, corsets, paniers and wigs, which also aided in the helpless, dependent image of women which has prevailed through history.

The wigs, which were very large, made the face look smaller and, encompassed by such a mass of hair, made the face a focal point, as did physically altering the head back, but in either case there was a strong need for make-up and facial decoration, as a naked face was not aesthetically pleasing. The make-up used in the 15th to 18th centuries, as I have previously mentioned (see Figs. 4, 5 and 6), was extremely detrimental to one's health. The whiting for the face had a mixture of lead and

sulphur which in turn caused skin irritations, lead poisoning, pimples and dimples, which in turn had to be filled in with more foundation. The sulphur also caused the skin to blacken, therefore extra whitening had to be applied. The consistent use of lead also made people prone to Alzheimers disease. Charcoal was used to blacken the eyes and this caused further eye diseases and irritations, like watering and swollen eyes. Ironically in their attempt to make themselves more sexually appealing, they in fact became more hideous to look upon.

How far have we developed today? Perhaps the choice is wider, but if science had not developed, would we still be enhancing our beauty with lead and sulphur?

"Fashion: ridiculous modes invented by ignorance and adopted by folly".⁷ Smollett*.

This view is reflected through history right up to the present day, as during Glaucoma* week, 1992. The Pat Kenny Show featured an eye specialist who stated that continuous use of eye make-up, and/or sleeping without the removal of such make-up, would lead to developing glaucoma. " And what of those people who cannot be seen in public without their make-up on"? A few drops of belladonna in the eyes enlarges the pupils, which is known to be sexually attractive, but this 'enhancement' for a while robs the eyes of their natural protection against bright lights. I have also come across eyedrops called 'visine' which are extremely effective in reducing

the redness in bloodshot eyes, which seems unavoidable to those late night socialisers. But this type of beauty aid reduces the blood flow to the eyes, which makes them naturally fresh looking. In fact, extensive use actually damages the blood vessels in the eyes and eventually causes the eyes to be permanently bloodshot.

Why do people endure such pain, discomfort and possible illness in an attempt to attain eternal youth and beauty or a high social standing?

The dressing up of the naked body is purely to heighten sex appeal. This dressing up is achieved in a number of ways from clothes to body paint, from tattoos to scarification, which generally go towards accentuating some of the erogenous zones. It is a chance for men to exaggerate their male characteristics and women their female qualities. Face and head decoration, like body improvement, is blatantly sexual, usually emphasising erogenous zones. Maori women* tattoo their lips and chin to make themselves more attractive. (See Figs. 18 and 19).

Against darker skin, tattoos are unnoticeable so some tribes use scarification to enhance their beauty. As with body decoration, the breasts, buttocks, penis, thighs are all emphasized by tattooing and scarification. (See Figs. 20 and 21).



FIG. 18



FIG. 19

18

19

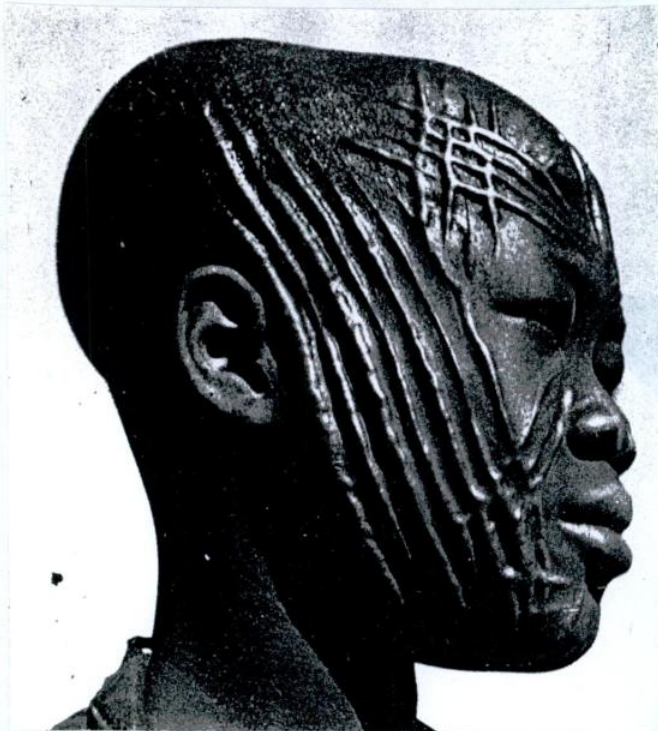


FIG. 20



FIG. 21



20

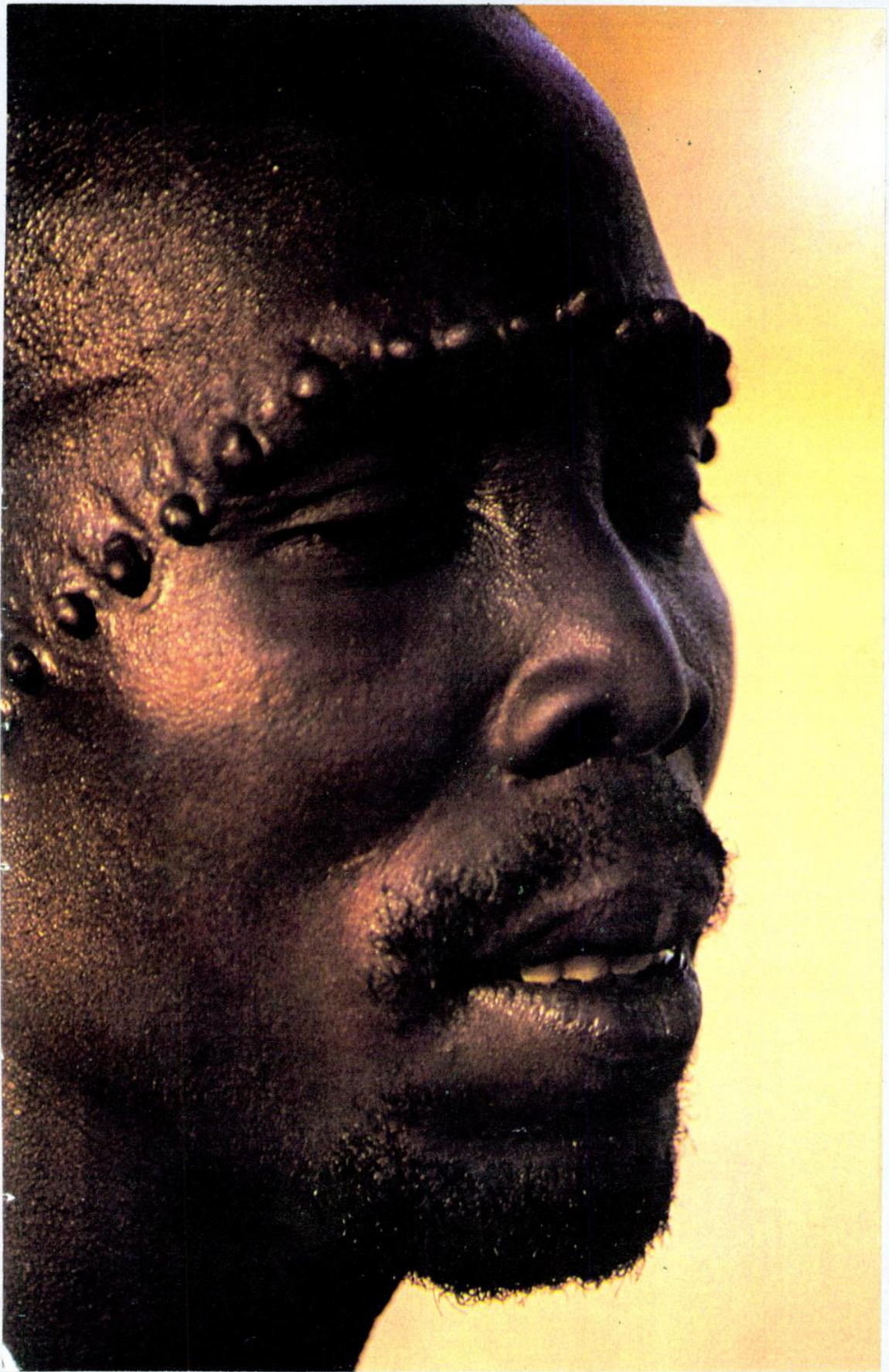


FIG. 22

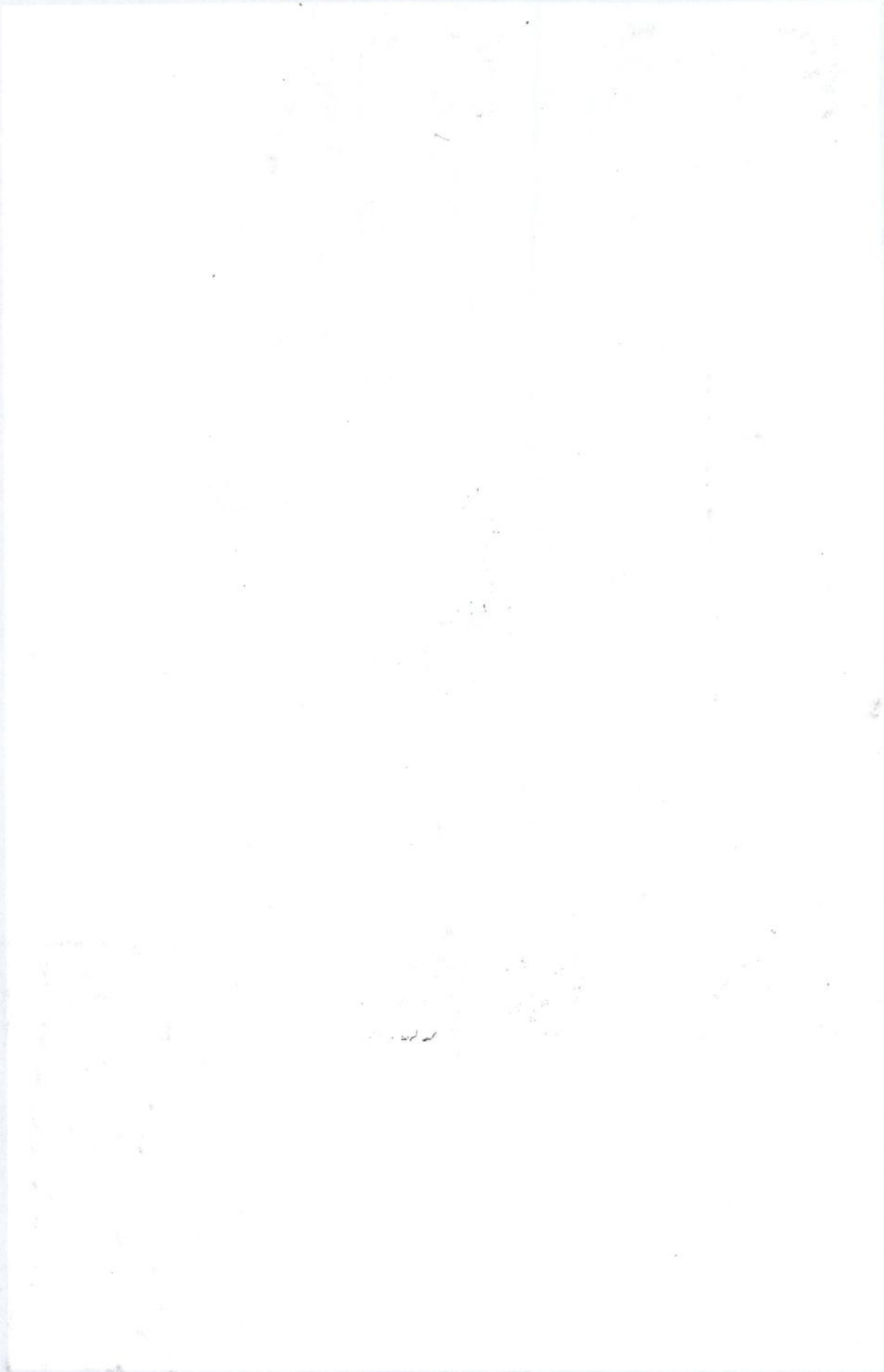




FIG. 23

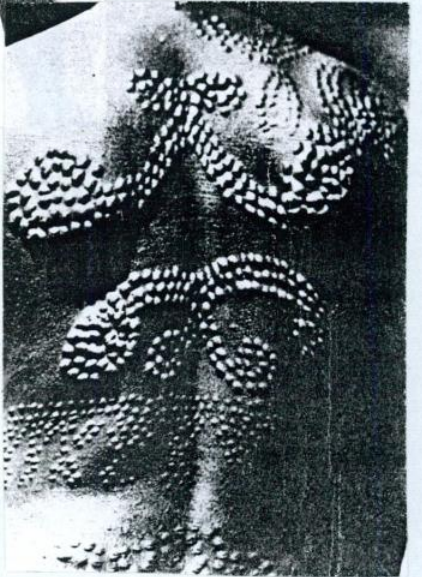


FIG. 24



It is ironic how some forms of piercing are accepted in our society, but when practiced in excess either here or abroad it is frowned upon. Many tribes in Africa and Latin America participate in excessive piercing. Although some are for religious or superstitious reasons, they are also practiced for aesthetic and beauty reasons.

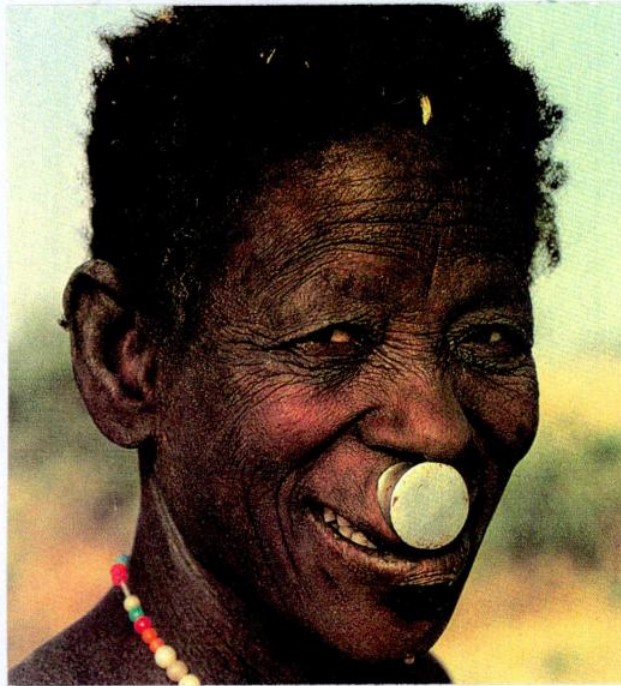


Fig. 25

The lip plugs are considered an essential part of the Kichepo* woman's adornment and even today they would consider themselves undressed without them. The lips, nose and ears of the Lobi* and Kirdi* girls are pierced during childhood so that ornaments can be worn later to enhance their beauty and show their tribal identity. Initially, the holes are made by the child's mother with a thorn and gradually enlarged with wisps of corn or millet stalk up to 2 cm; then a lip plug is inserted made from clay, stone or metal. Sara women from Chad

It is true that some forms of plastic surgery are performed in our society and when practiced in moderation they are not harmful. Many times in Africa and Latin America, plastic surgery is performed in excessive quantities. Although some are for religious or superstitious reasons, they are also practiced for aesthetic and beauty reasons.



25

The lip buds are considered an essential part of the African woman's equipment and even today they would be considered essential equipment without them. The lips, nose and ears of the African and African woman are designed during childhood so that ornaments can be worn and to enhance their beauty and show their tribal identity. Usually, the holes are made by the child's mother with a sharp and aesthetically engraved with rings of iron or will be filled up with wax. Then the lip buds are inserted into the holes. (African women from Chad)

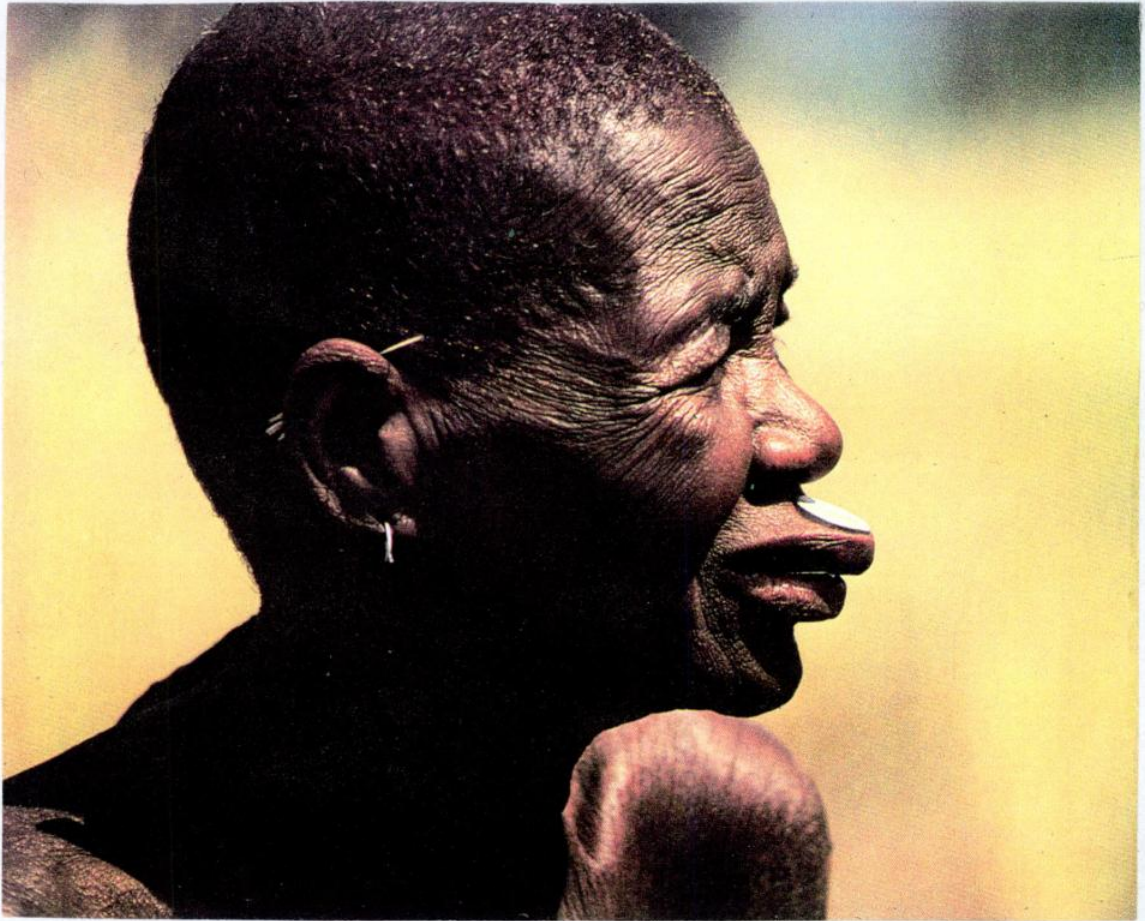


FIG. 26

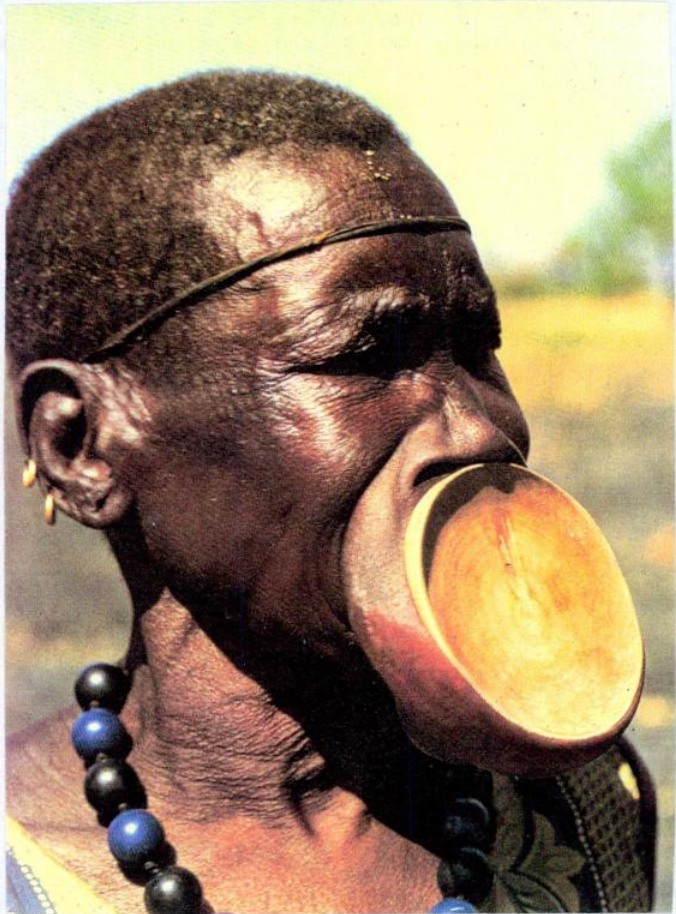
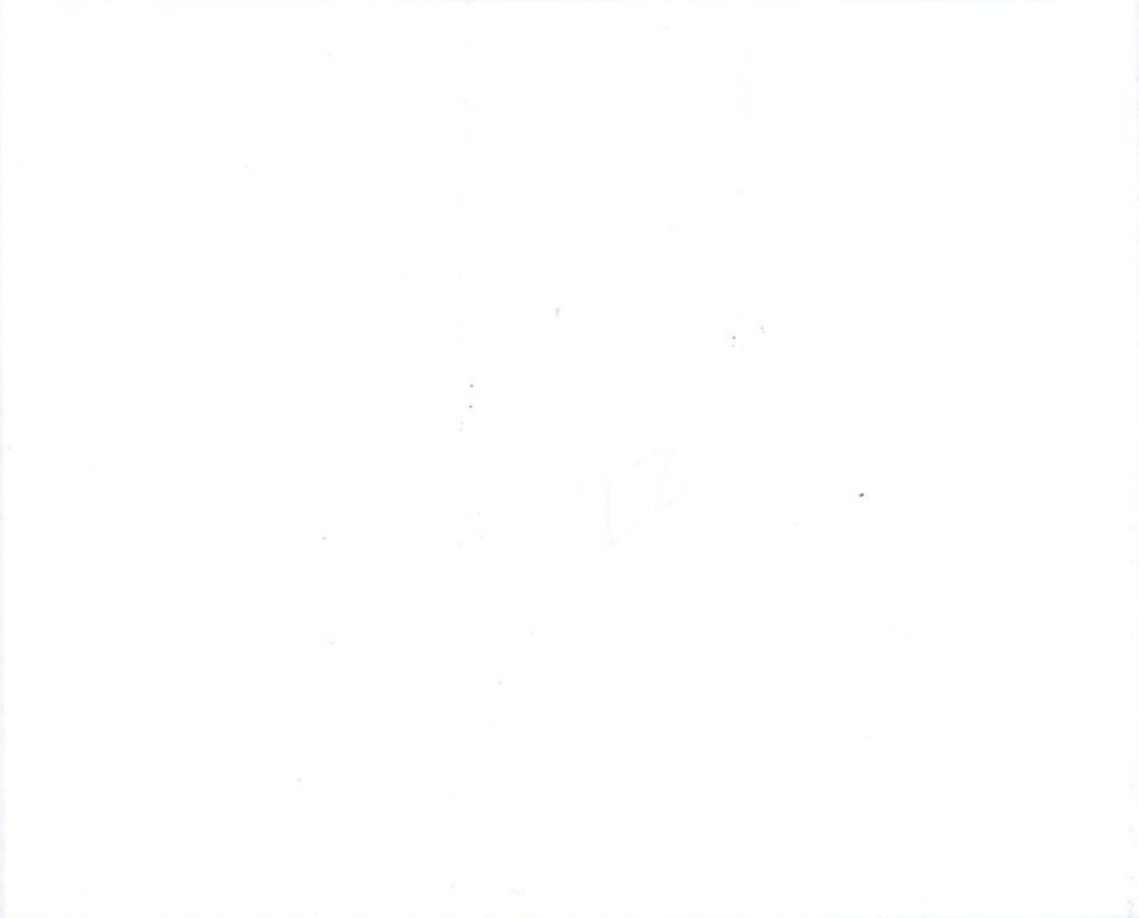


FIG. 27



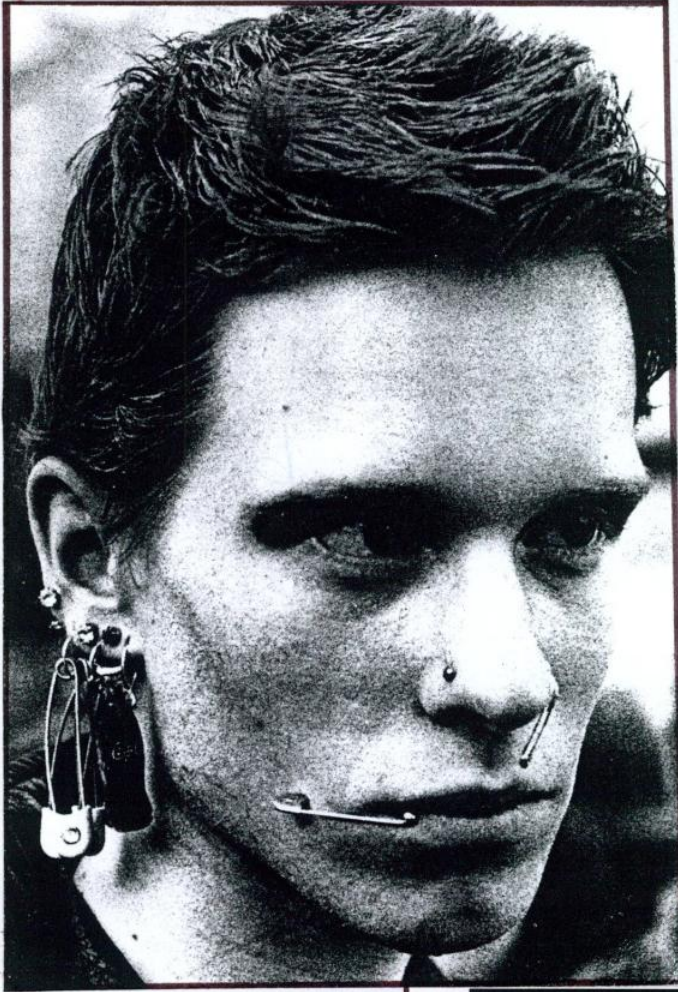
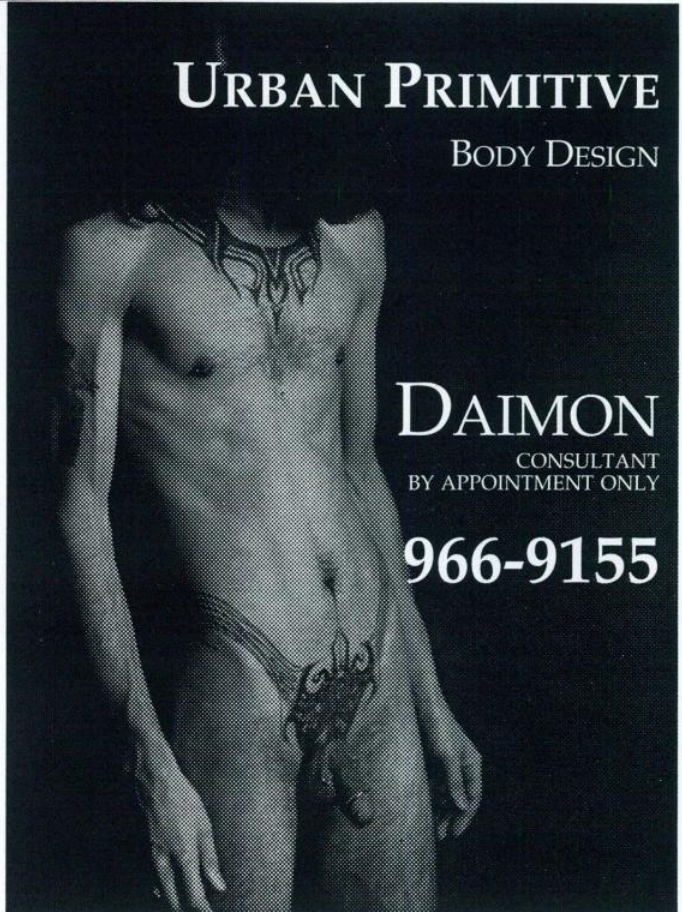


FIG. 28

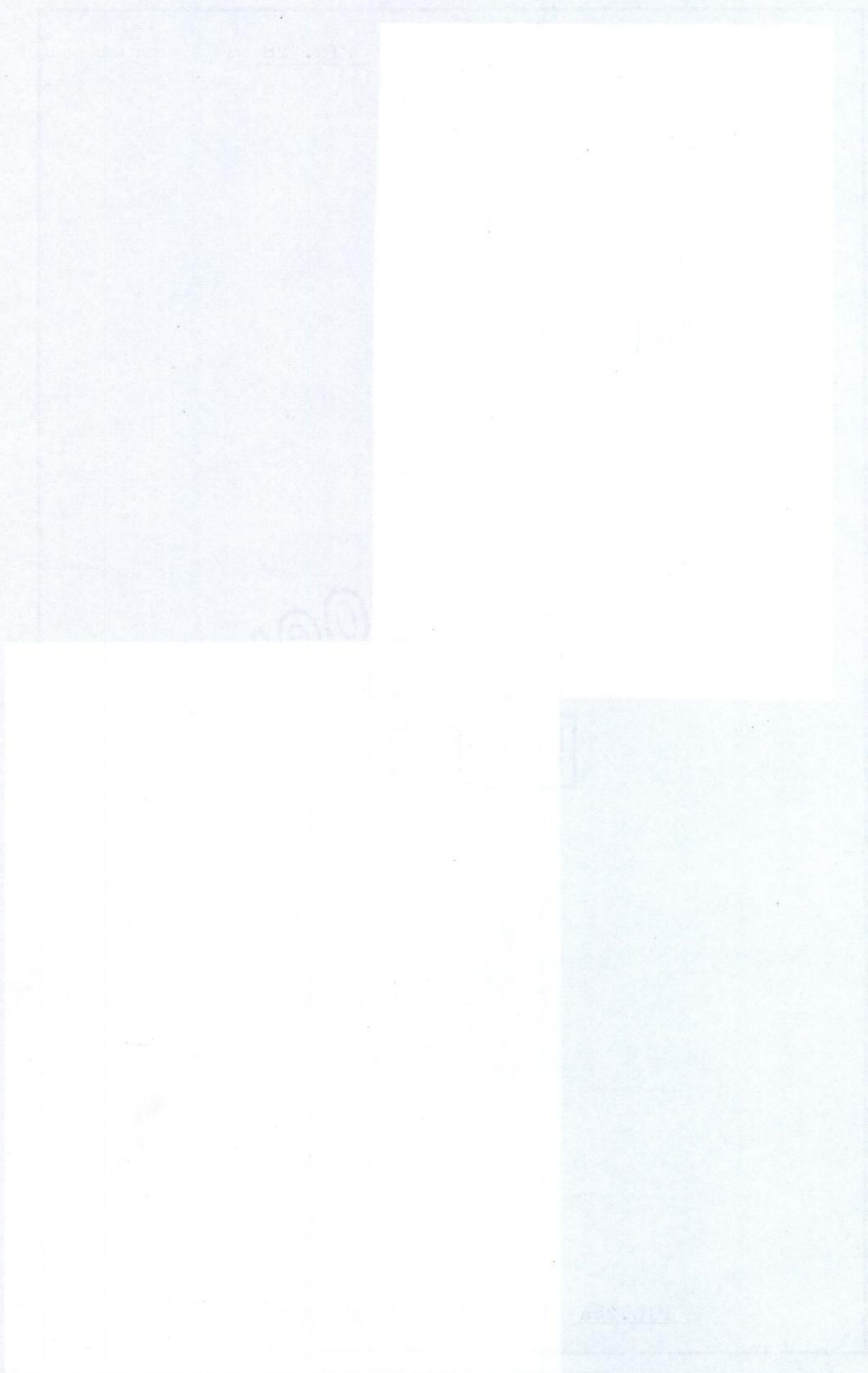
URBAN PRIMITIVE
BODY DESIGN

A black and white photograph of a man's torso, showing intricate tattoos on his chest and abdomen. The tattoos are dark and feature complex, tribal-like patterns. The man is standing with his arms at his sides.

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FIG.28a



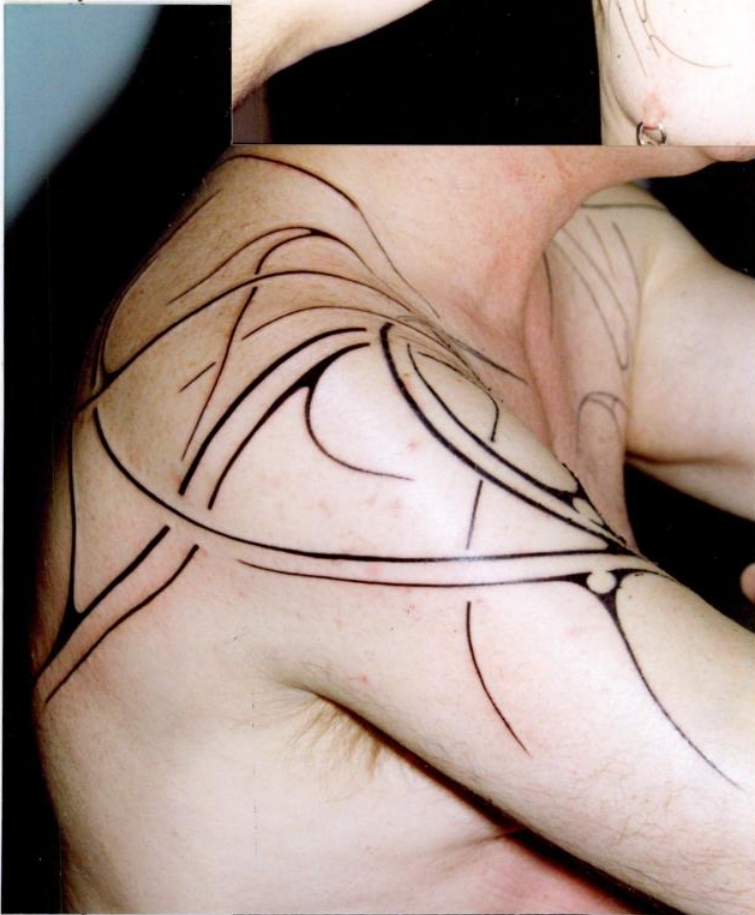
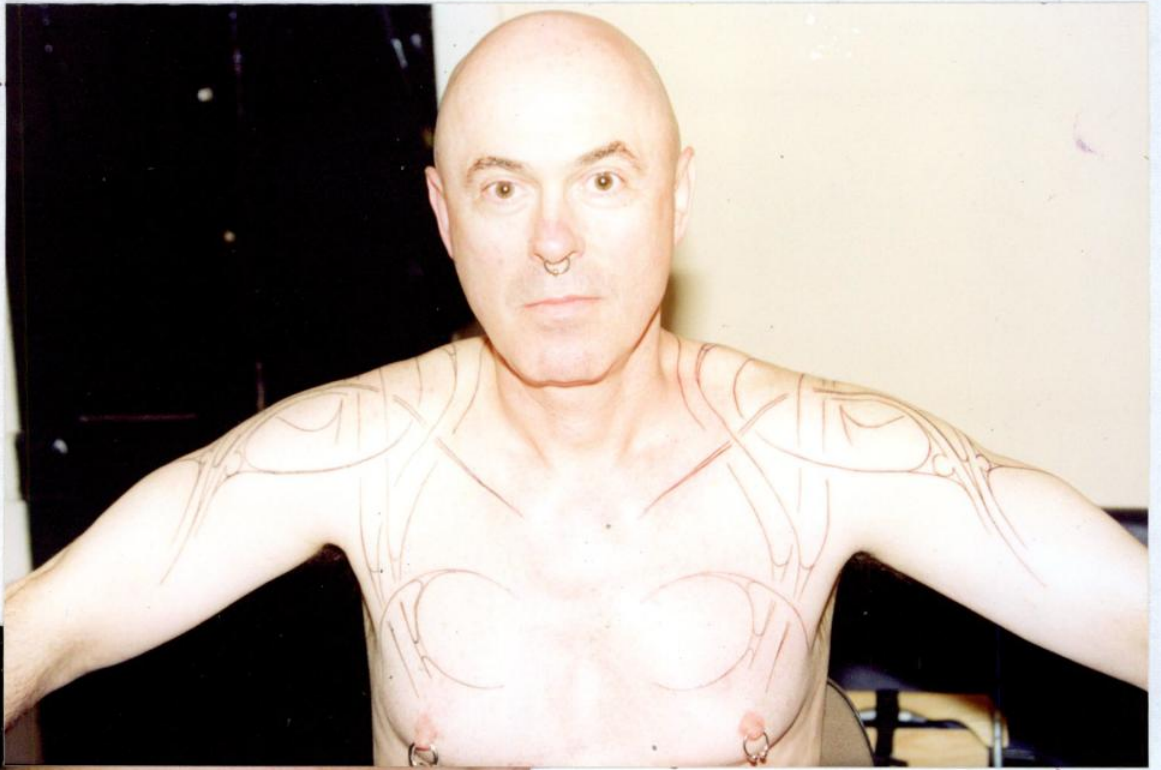
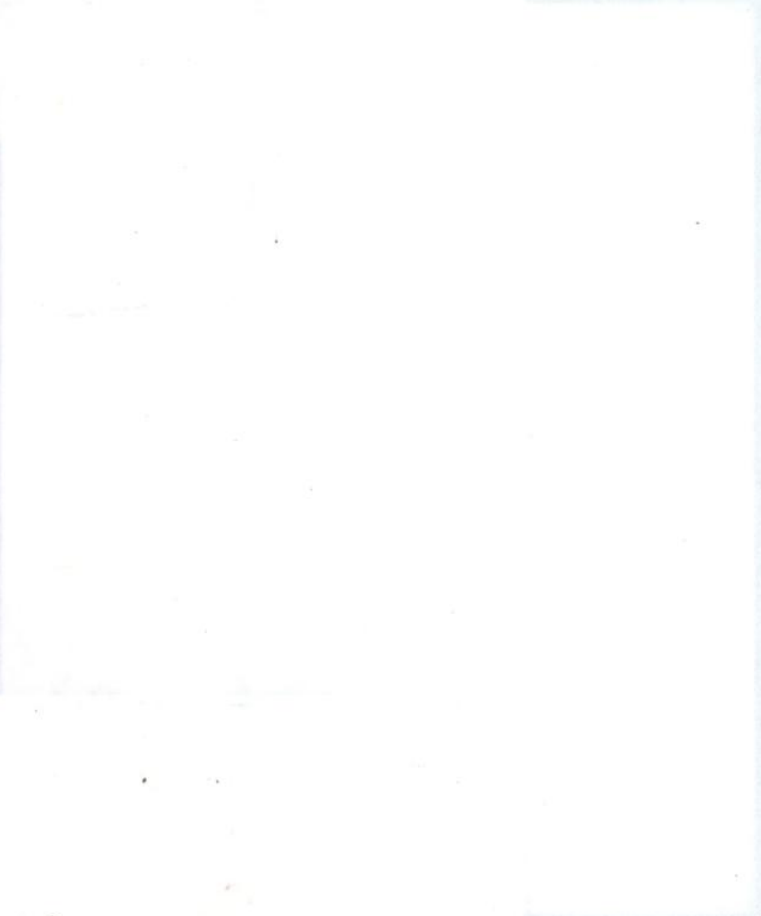
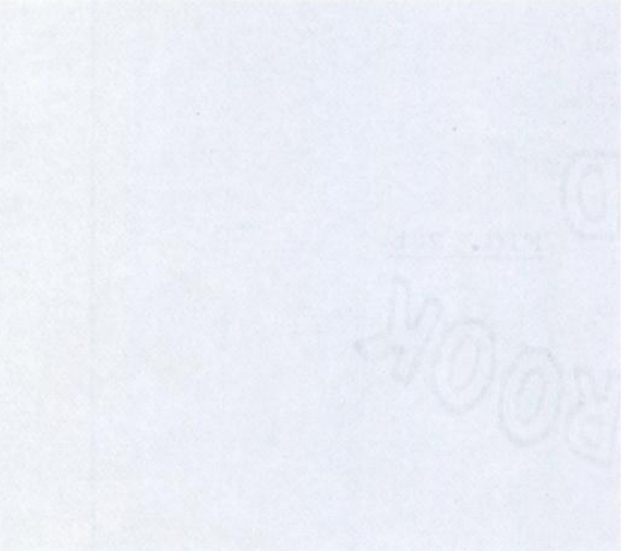


FIG. 28b





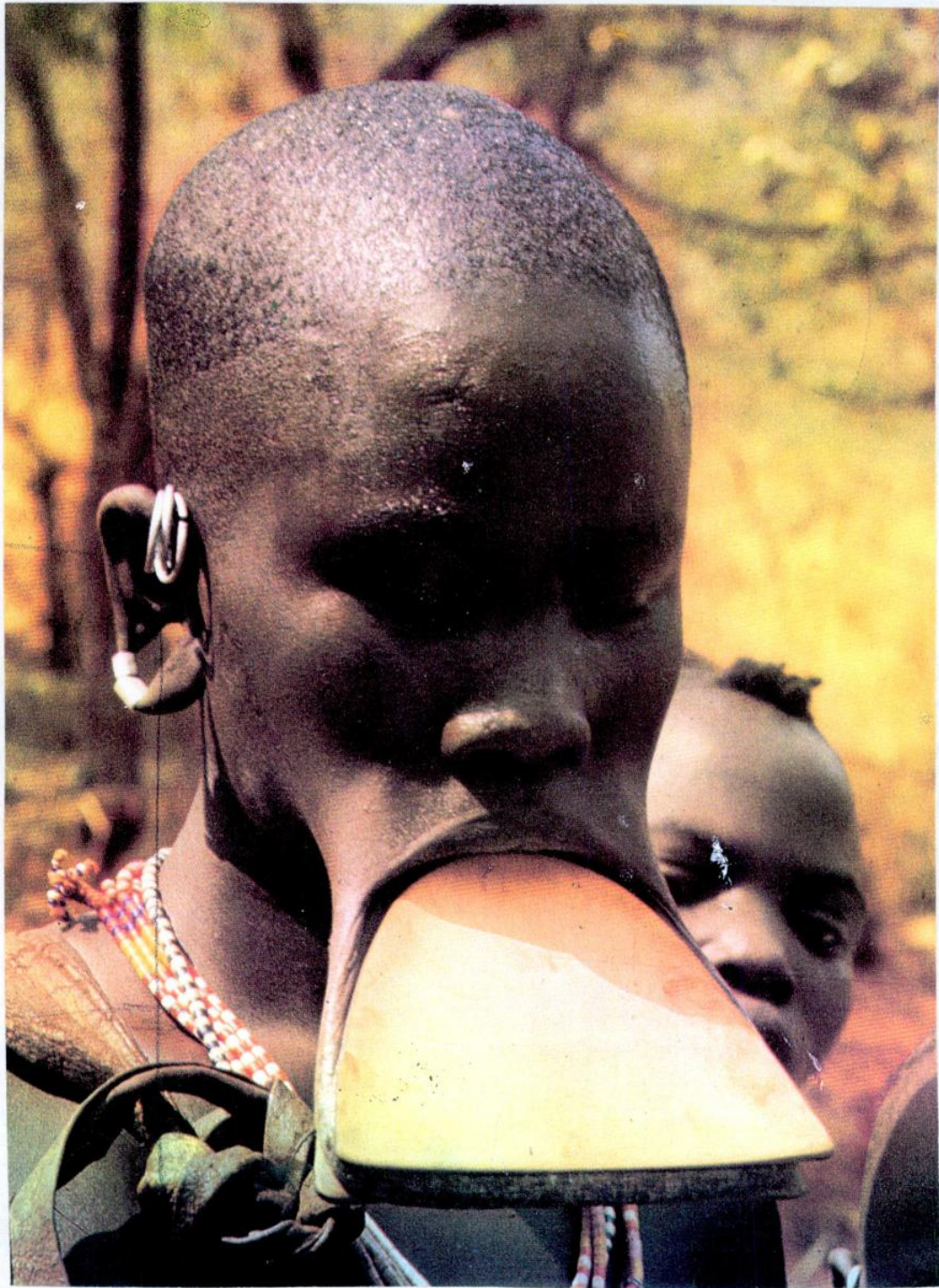


FIG. 29



wear large lip plugs, making speech practically impossible (see Fig. 27), a practice which horrifies and disgusts western society, as does the neck binding by the Padaung women from Burma (see Fig. 30). The binding can never be removed as it would result in asphyxiation due to the weakened neck muscle which cannot support the head.



Fig. 30

On the whole, westerners regard self-mutilation as a sign of psychopathology and have always taken a poor view of its manifestations in both our own and exotic societies. Perhaps it would be as well to have a closer look at our own practices and attitudes to ideals of beauty before we judge others.

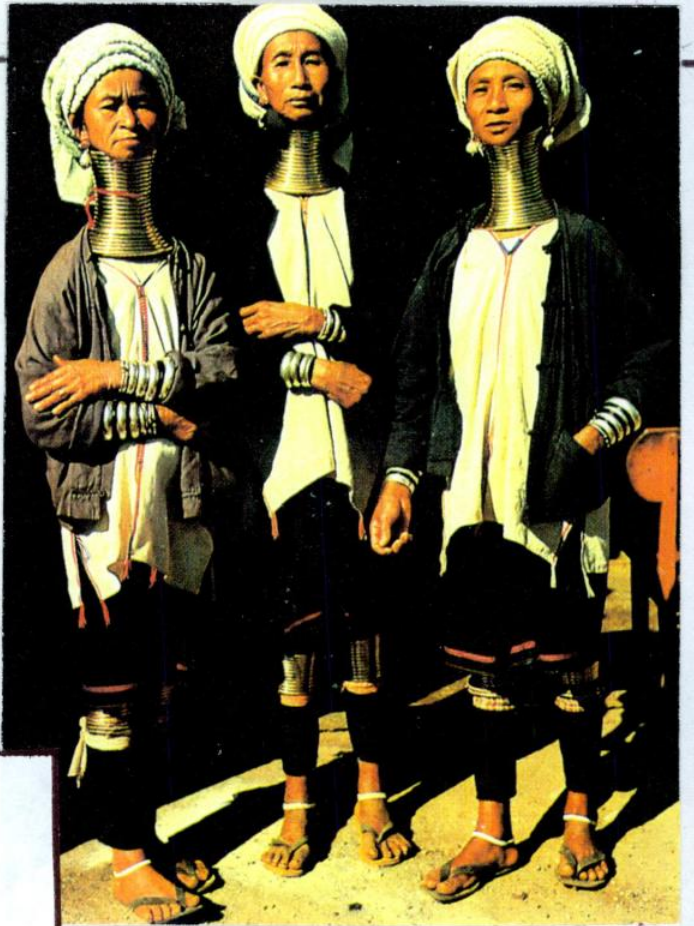


FIG. 30a

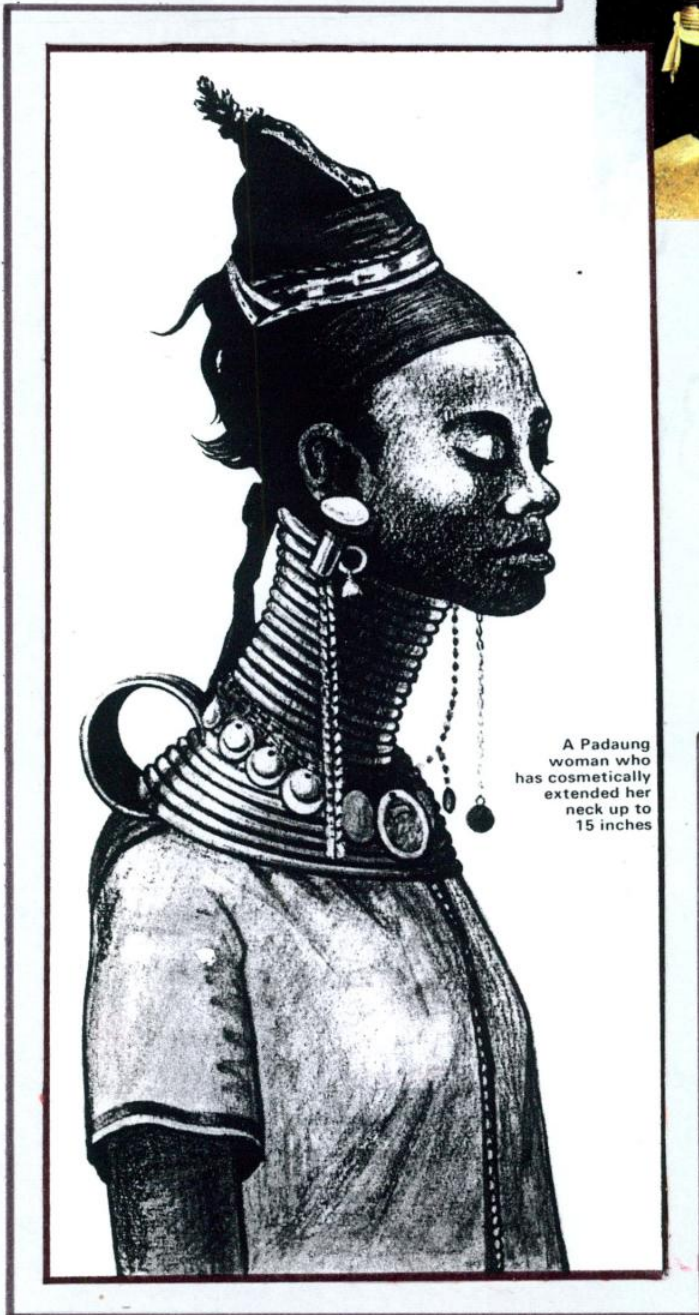
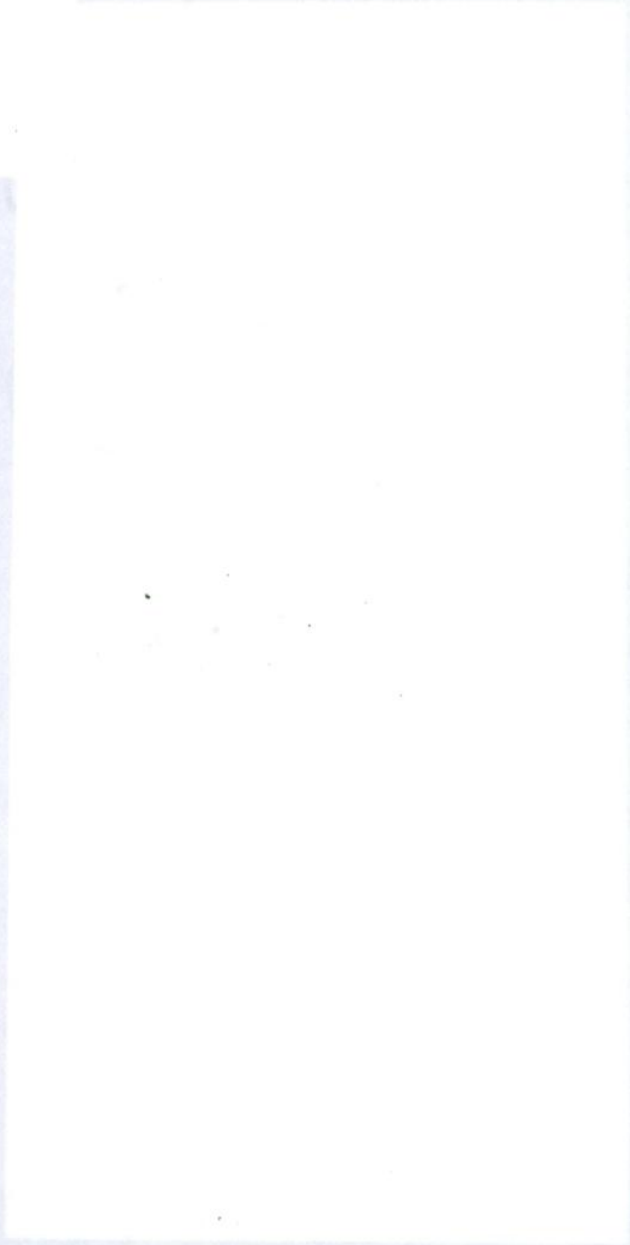
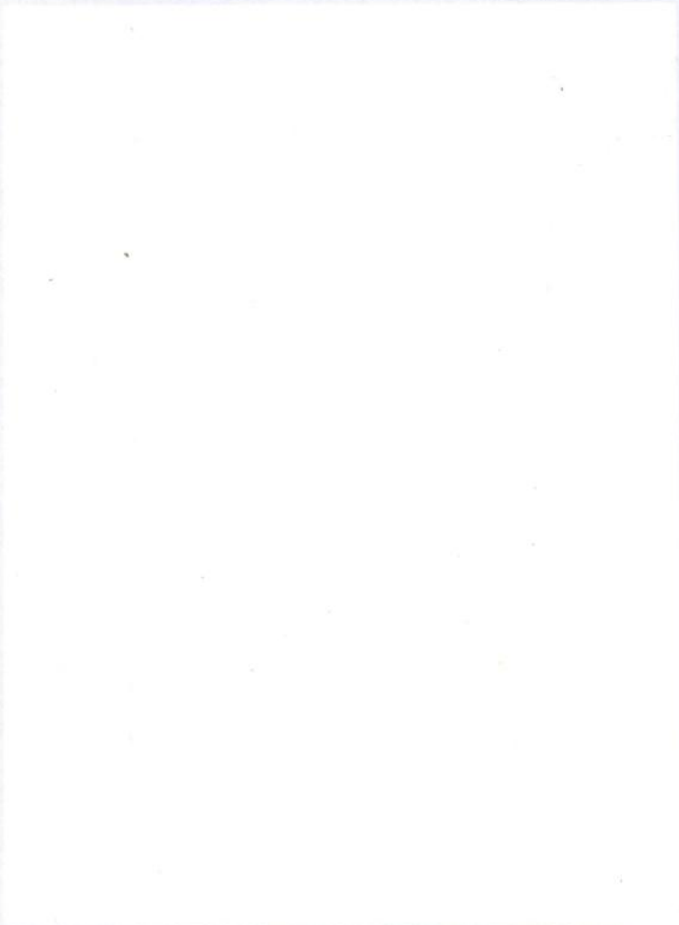


FIG. 30b

A Padaung woman who has cosmetically extended her neck up to 15 inches



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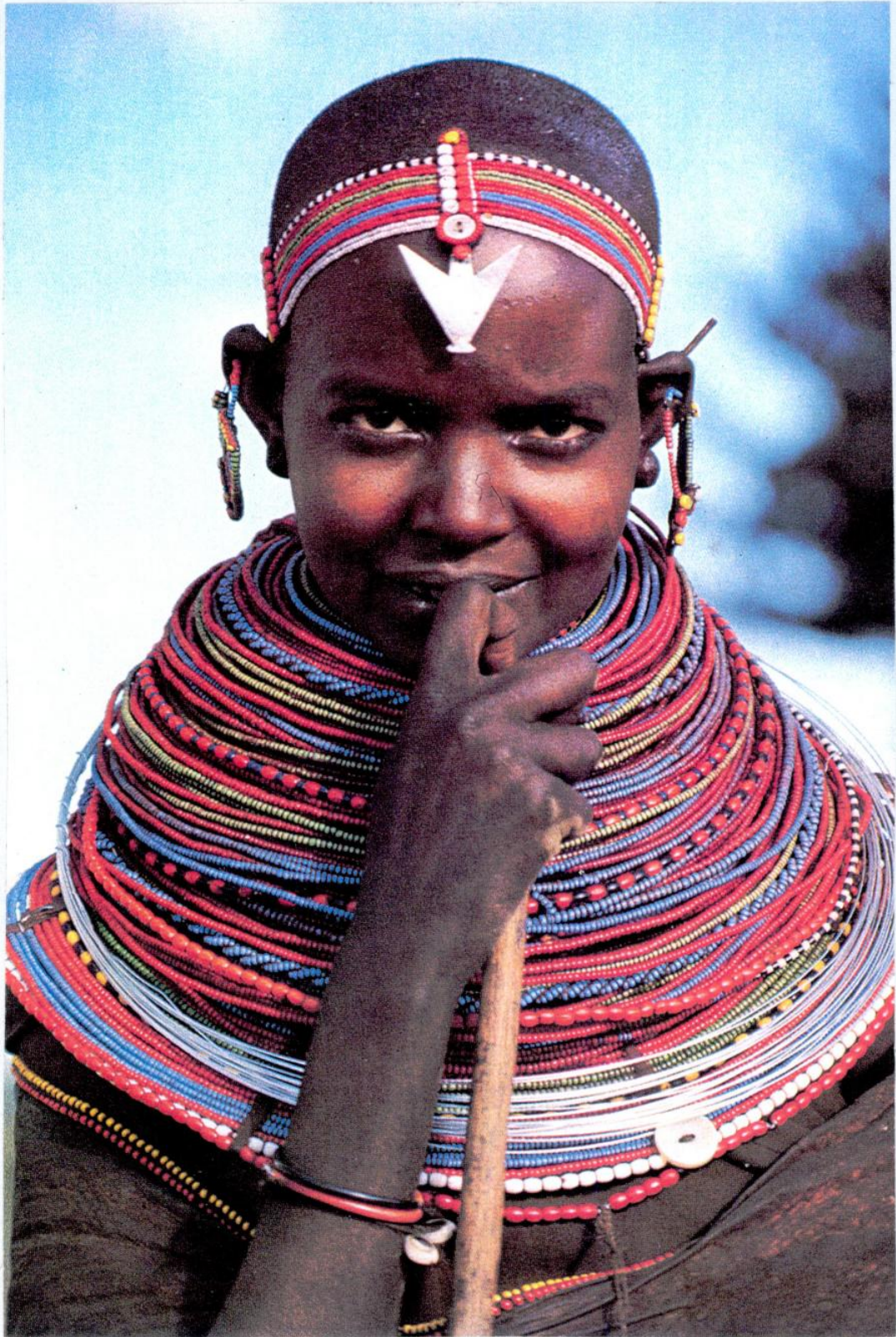


FIG. 30c



11.11.11

CHAPTER II

The silhouette of the torso and how in beauty's name it has been altered by permanent and temporary means.

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A parallel to the distortion caused to the necks of women in Padaung or the feet of women in China would be the distortion of the torso through tight lacing. The best example known to the majority in the west for reshaping the body into a sexually attractive vessel would be the use of the corset. This was, perhaps, one of the worst kinds of self-mutilation "undergone for the purpose of lowering the subject's vitality and rendering her permanently and obviously unfit for work."⁸ Thorstein Veblin.

For what possible reason will a person choose such restriction over comfort?

The dress of the bourgeoisie was contrived to show in every detail the fact that the wearer could not possibly do any manual labour, which is evident in beauty ideals throughout history. Take, for example, the Chinese bound foot, the poulaine*, the elegant feminine bonnet, the high heeled shoe, the skirt that hampers its wearer at every turn and, above all, the corset. Corsetry was introduced in the 15th and 16th centuries. At first, the bodies were simply tightly bandaged, but later the bandages were reinforced by small boards about two inches

wide with strings attached for tight lacing. Along with this sadistic attempt to alter the natural contours of the waist and abdomen, women placed lead or wooden plates on their breasts, called busks, to make them more flat chested, which resulted in making nursing impossible.

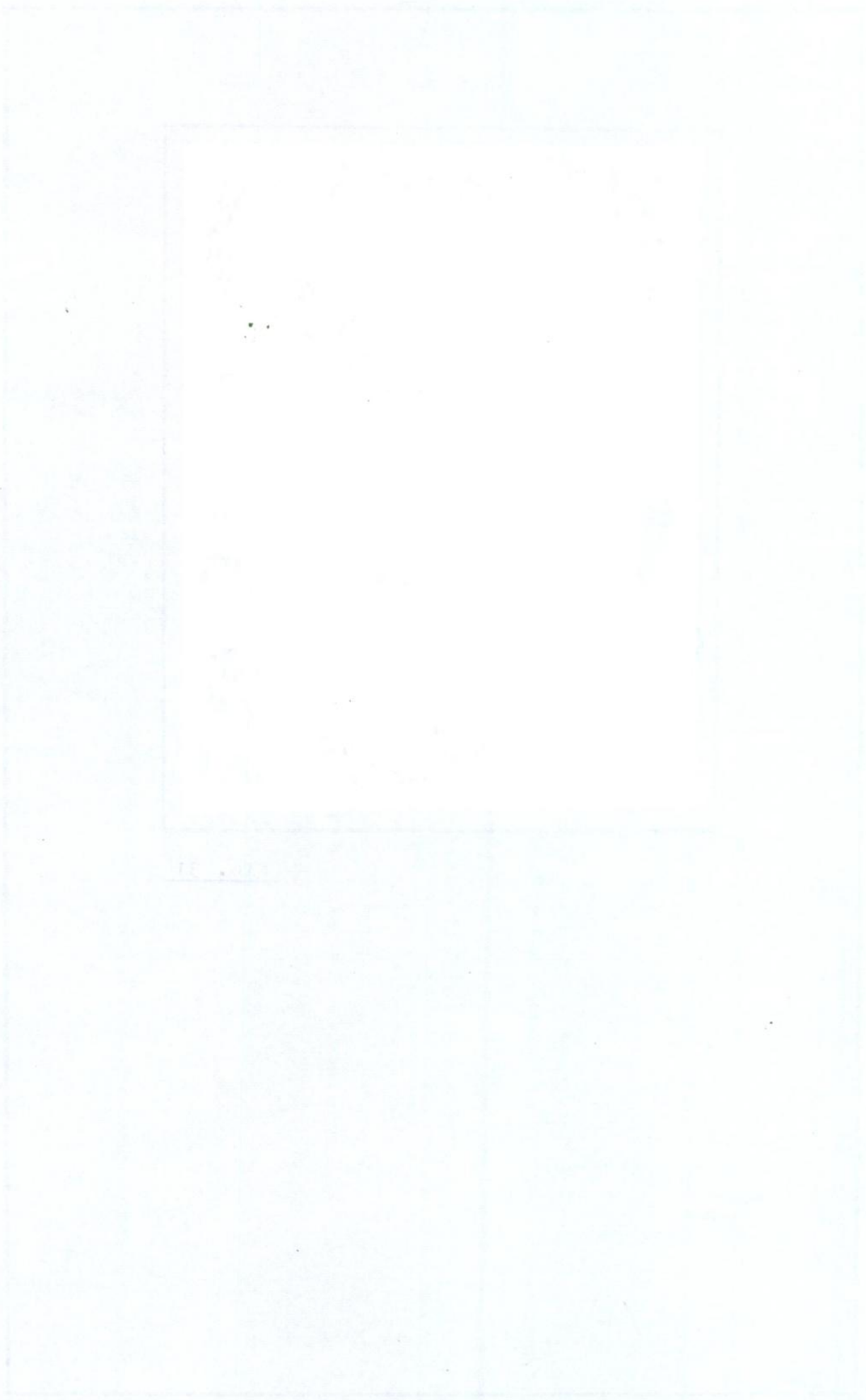
We have the same results in breast reduction by cosmetic surgery today, where tissues are removed and the nipple has to be replaced, thus the function and sensitivity of the breast disappears. Ironically, in order to attain an ideal female beauty, the reality is that an important feminine quality is lost.

At the time of the corsets and busks, the deformation to the body was so severe that many women fainted when the constrictions were removed and some were often forced to keep the apparatus on in bed. In the 18th and 19th centuries, corsetry had reached such a stage that shortly after birth, a leather belt was firmly tied around the baby's waist. When the child's growth snapped the stitches, the belt was replaced by a second, equally tightly sewn. These constrictions gave a disproportionate width to a woman's hips and shoulders and this became the ideal female form (see Fig. 31), enhancing the ideal sexual walk.

Women proclaimed their social ambitions in costumes of lavish magnificence and fundamental to the shape and fit of women's dress at this period were stays, hoops and



FIG. 31



busks. English stays were more rigid than those worn in France, but the aim of both was to achieve a long, slim line with a small waist and raised bust given roundness by the bones placed laterally across the front. To flatten the back, straight bones were also placed across the shoulder blades.

In comparison to this feminine 'slender' line, men were subjected to padded calves, waisted corsets and padded shoulders. It was in the rococo period that coats and vests became shorter and the lower parts of the legs were clearly visible. They were no longer covered by frills to the knee. The unfortunate man who could not show off muscular calves had to resort to buying a false pair and wearing them beneath his stockings. (See Fig. 32).

Another absurd male fashion was the 17th century peascod belly (see Figs. 33 and 34). This was stuffed with flax or hemp pluckings and is believed to have originated from armour. As bizarre as these ideals were, they were not injurious to health. However, nowadays it may not be as superficial where men can 'naturally' pad themselves with drugs (steroids etc.) and excessive body building (see Fig. 35 and 35a).

Stays or corsets in the 1850's and 60's were short, lightly boned, but often stiffened by cording or quilting. In the 1870's the corsets grew longer, moulding the hips, and were more rigid.

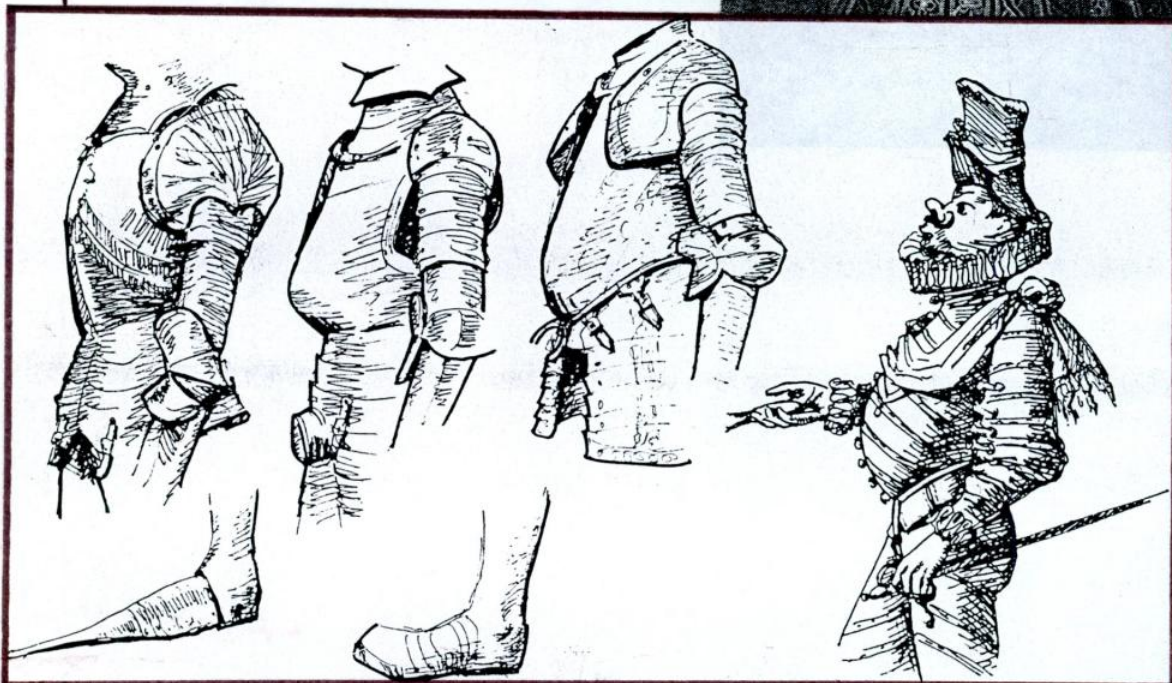


FIG. 32



FIG. 33

FIG. 34



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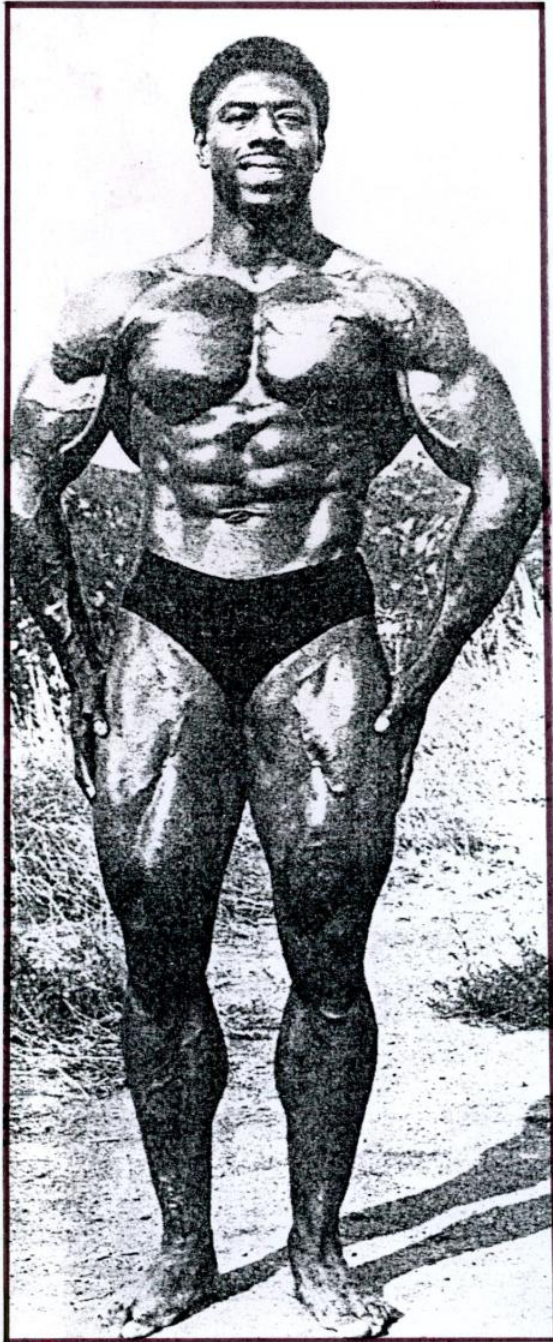


FIG. 35

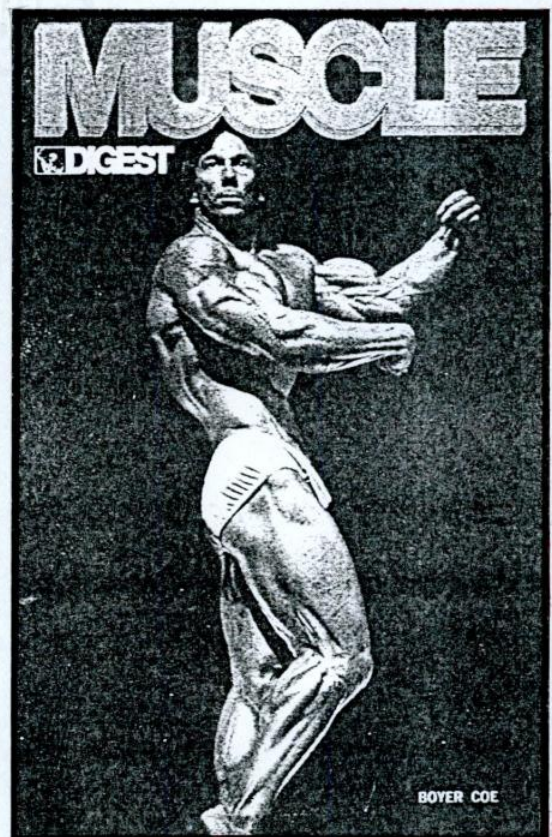
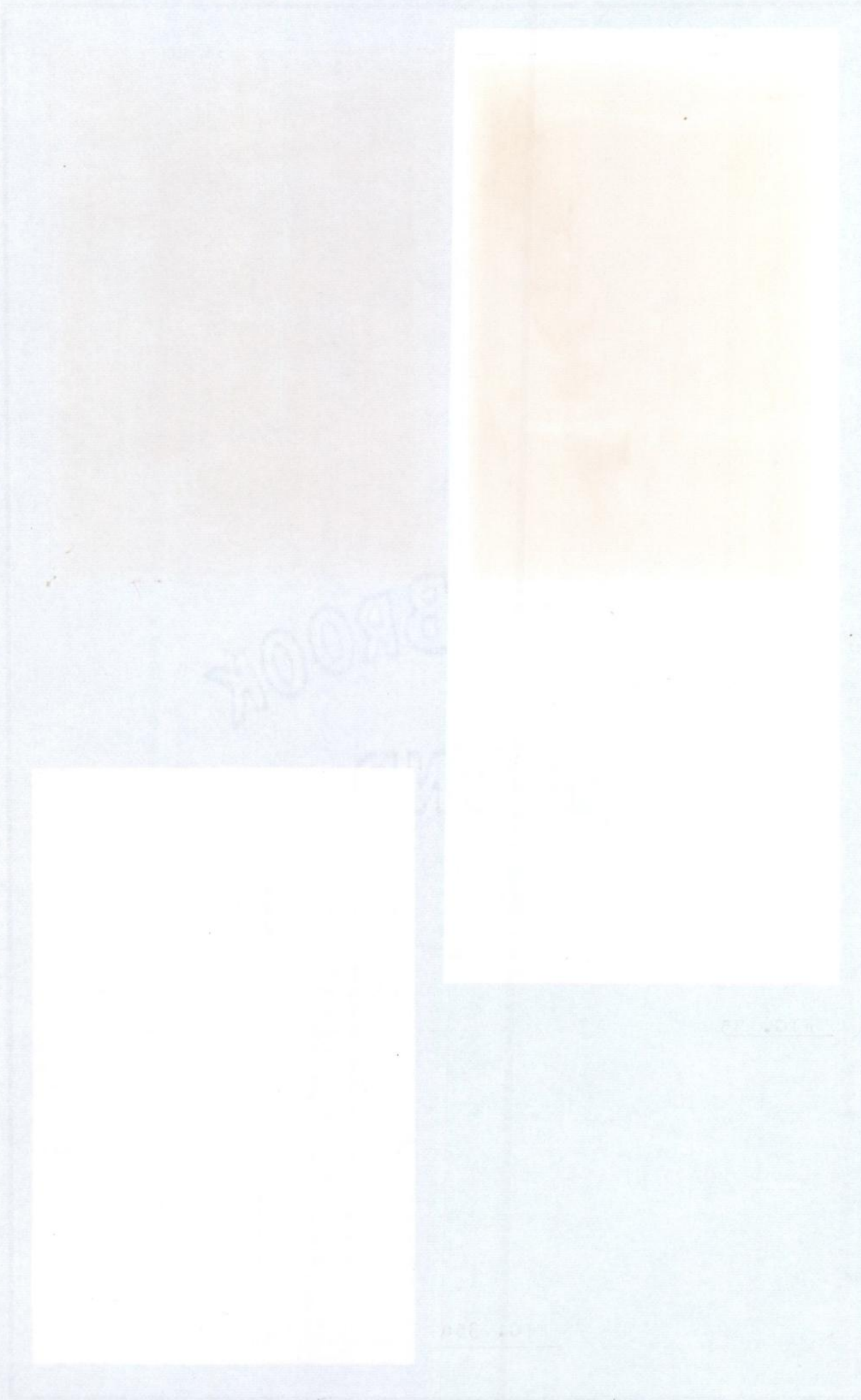


FIG. 35a



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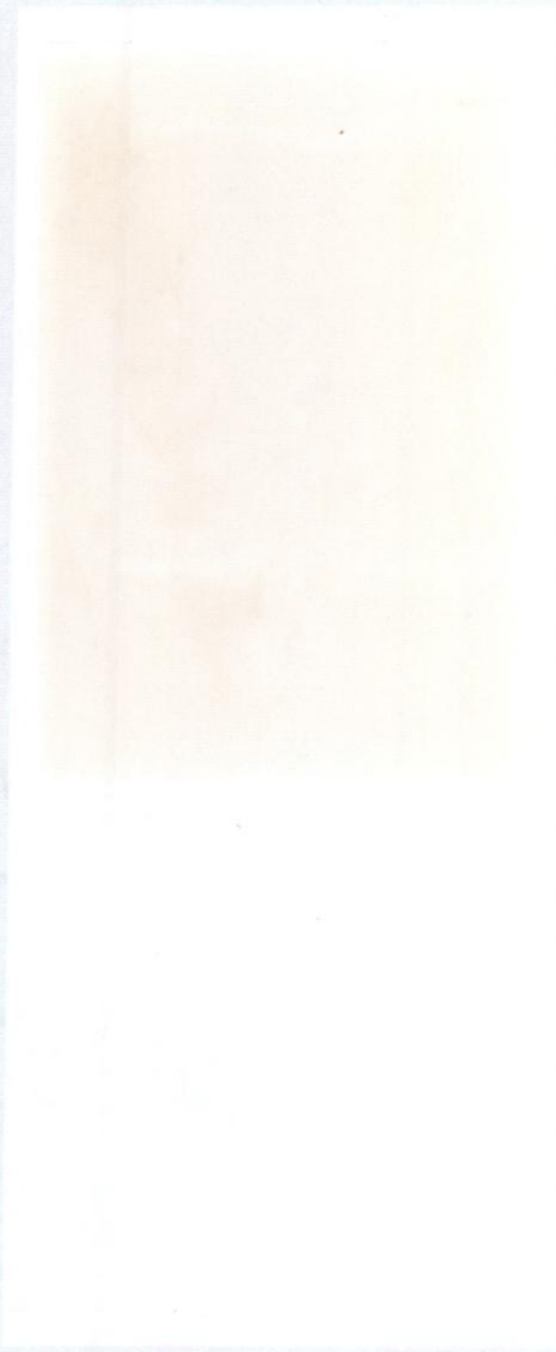




Fig.36



Fig.37

The corsets of the 1880's were masterpieces of engineers' art, crafted from strong metals. Wire forms were clamped over the bosom and a steel bustle protruded in the rear. The hardware was laced together with canvas and whalebone, padded with horsehair and stiffened gauze, delicately covered with lawn and embellished with lace. Over, around and under this elaborate construction, a lady wore cotton or silk stockings, a stocking supporter, a corset cover, a chemise and three or four petticoats. Over all of this went the dress and at the time, due to the sudden affluence of the period and the frenzied scramble for social elevation, women's costumes were brilliant, gorgeous and fantastically opulent. However, as decorative as the over garments were, the corset remained extremely rigid. The front gradually



The covers of the 1850's were masterpieces of engraving
and created from wood blocks. The forms were
stamped over the book and a steel plate produced an
the text. The hardware was laced together with canvas
and ribbons, padded with horsehair and stuffed goats
hair. The covers were bound with leather and embellished with lac-
over around and under this elaborate construction.
The covers were often made of silk or velvet and a steering apparatus
a corner cover, a spine and three or four leather
over all of this was the dress and at the time due to
the end of the century of the period and the leather
was made for social elevation. Women's dresses were
bright, gorgeous and fantastically colored. However,
as decorative as the over garments were, the covers
remained extremely plain. The front usually

straightened over the stomach, pushing the surplus flesh out over the hips and bottom, evolving into the S bend of the 1900's.

The constriction of the waist and chest by the corset resulted in a deformation of the body and its internal organs, often leading to pulmonary disease, varicose veins, hallucinations and regular spells of fainting. The corset pushed the liver partly upwards and downwards. While upwards, it pressed into the lungs and when downwards, it pressed into the abdomen, making breathing practically impossible (see Figs. 39 and 40). It gave way to the heavy bosom, large voluptuous hips and tiny waist, all of which were much sought after. Women at the time had the opportunity of having both lower ribs surgically removed to construct the wasp waist, but this caused much pain and bother, since these particular ribs are floating and can be easily pressed in with the aid of the corset, only to puncture some vital organ.

The danger of stays was apparent as early as 1665, when John Evelyn's* two year old daughter died and the surgeon who examined her body found the breast bone pressed very deeply inwards and two broken ribs. Why then did women proceed in wearing and developing such a contraption? Was a high social standing and beauty ideal so important to be at the expense of one's health? Why would people inflict upon their children painful and possibly fatal



FIG. 38



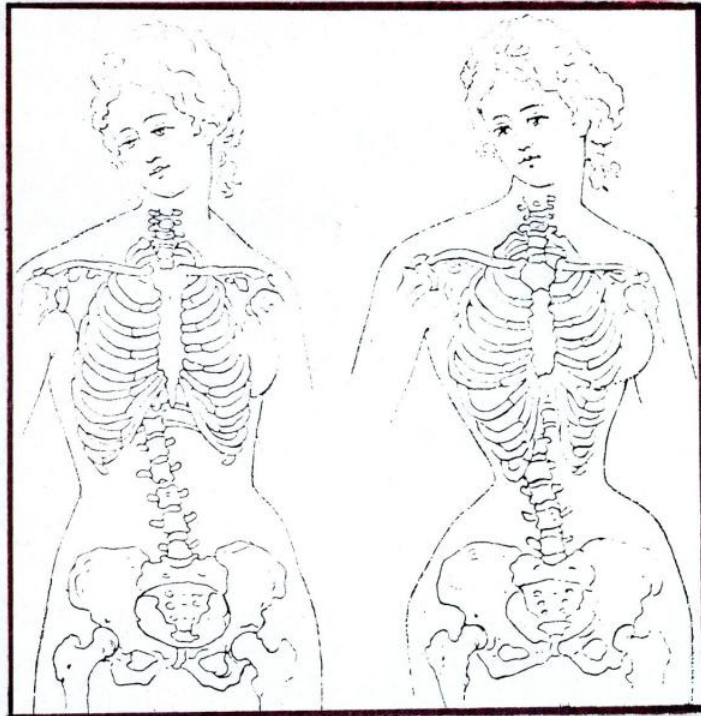


FIG. 39



FIG. 40



Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, appearing as a faint, mirrored watermark or bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.



Faint, illegible text located below the smaller white area, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.

practices mainly to accentuate a child's beauty and develop their potential sex appeal?

The lack of freedom and the cruelty of such ideals was even apparent in 1840 with the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood attempting to return to nature and introduce freedom of movement into clothing. However, every effort of reform was attacked, with women who participated in such ideals accused of losing their feminine charm (see Fig. 41 below).



Fig.41

The French word 'corset' was introduced into the English language at the end of the 18th century as a refinement for stays. Even today, the word corset is very rarely used but it has been superseded by names such as body shaper, control garment, roll-on, girdle and body garment which manufacturers claim 'hug' not 'squeeze' the body

into shape (see Fig. 42). It has been with the aid of the corset that women have maintained their slender line, a line which has prevailed throughout history. This is evident, even today, where people become fanatical about exercise and work out a modern solution to a consistent ideal. If science had not developed to such an extent in fibre and fabric technology, i.e. latex, lycra, would women still be trapped in the metal contraptions of the 18th and 19th centuries.

What of medical technology, where people and doctors were allowed or instructed to experiment and torture humans? The flaying of Sisamnes can be seen as an example (see Fig. 43). Compare this to the removal of layers of skin in cosmetic surgery to rejuvenate skin and create a more youthful appearance. What of the human experiments on the unfortunate prisoners of war in the Nazi concentration camps and the Vietnam war? What I find ironic is the similarity between these forms of torture or gruesome human experiments and some forms of modern beauty therapy.

Cosmetic surgery is considered by health services as a form of psychotherapy, as our outward appearance affects our social existence. I feel there is a distinct difference between a person who has cosmetic surgery, performed to obliterate a deformity from birth or through an accident, and the person who takes it to extremes purely for vanity reasons.



ISN'T IT NICE TO LIVE IN A TIME WHEN
WOMEN AREN'T BEING PUSHED AROUND SO MUCH ANYMORE?

Women have spent the last ten centuries conforming to their lingerie. Fortunately, lingerie has finally gotten around to conforming to women.

M A I D E N F O R M

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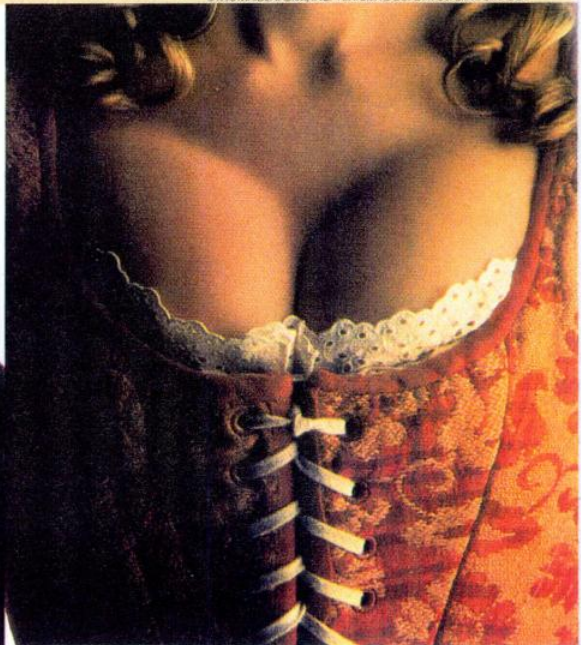


FIG. 42



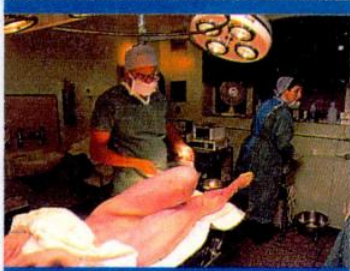


FIG. 43



Whatever the reasons or the magnitude of the person's need for such an operation, the practices of beauty ideals in the 'primitive' society is outshone by the painful lengths to which our 'civilized' society goes. "Naturalness today is sought and achieved by brilliant surgery"⁹. Lips can be enlarged or reduced, ears clipped back, noses made smaller, cheekbones made higher, breasts can be enlarged, uplifted or reduced, fat can be transplanted or removed, lines and wrinkles disappear: there is eyelid surgery and abdominal re-shaping (re-shaping being the operative word as the body, with the aid of silicone etc., is plumped, sculpted and moulded like clay into an ideal of beauty - see Fig. 44).

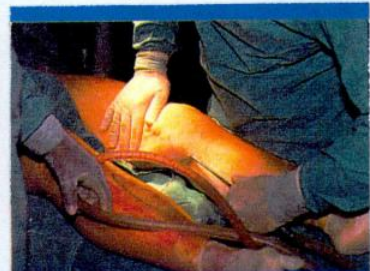
I consider the ultimate form of body mutilation to be the transformation from one sex to another where, with a combination of surgery and hormones, the physical nature of an individual can be reversed to suit his/her own psychological needs and ideals. On February 4th, 1993, FM 104 mentioned in their "It's a Strange World We Live In" slot that the youngest ever sex change had been performed on a 14 year old girl in China, where there are at the moment long waiting lists for such operations. Perhaps this is due to the law in China allowing only one child per family but the tabloids are also full of such stories and it is this continual bombardment by the media on such practices that has affected our perception of mutilated beauty ideals. The stigma on cosmetic surgery is slowly disappearing, as with tattooing and



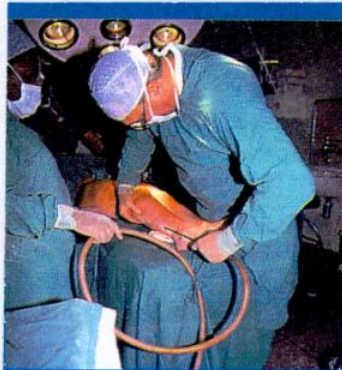
1 Before the operation the patient is cleaned with antiseptic and the surgeon marks on the skin with a non-toxic ink the areas he is going to suck out. This helps him determine where to insert the canula. The body's appearance while standing has been studied carefully - skin moves sideways and down once a patient is lying down.



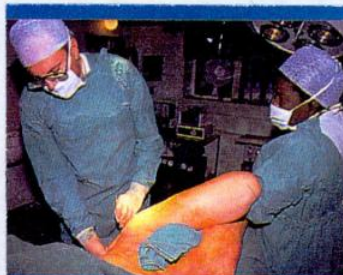
2 The areas to be worked on by the surgeon are coated in an iodine solution which sterilises the skin prior to the operation. In the picture (above) you can see the patient's flat stomach. This is the result of an earlier liposuction operation.



3 An incision is made with a scalpel into the calf through which the surgeon then inserts the canula. This is ferociously jiggled around to break up the fat cells underneath before the fat can be removed. Watching an operation like this, it is almost impossible to believe that the patient genuinely cannot feel a thing.



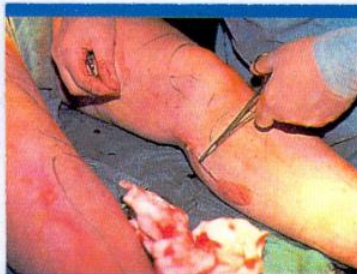
4 A nurse assists the surgeon by holding the tube through which the fat is sucked up and away from the patient. The fatty liquid is yellow in colour, tinged with blood - too much indicates a patient is losing blood and can sometimes mean a transfusion is needed.



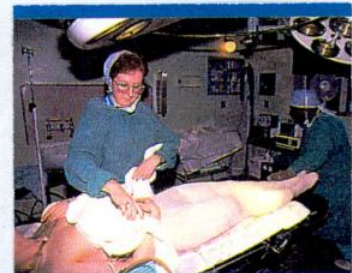
5 This patient is also having fat removed from the sides of her thighs and buttocks, so the surgeon needs help from a nurse to move the patient around the operating table.



6 To make suction easier, the surgeon gets hold of large areas of the fatty tissue and manually stimulates it along with the canula to facilitate removal of the fat.



7 When the suction is finished, the surgeon may need to stitch up the incisions. Often though, as in this case, only one stitch is needed. Sometimes the incision is small enough to be left to heal underneath the special elasticated bandages which a patient wears to minimise uneven pits and wrinkles.



8 Bandages around the area that has been worked on need to be tightly wrapped to prevent fluid collecting beneath the skin, which can lead to infection. Over these the patient wears special reinforced nylon and elastic tights. A gap is left for going to the loo - they must stay on for seven days.

FIG. 44

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FIG. 44a

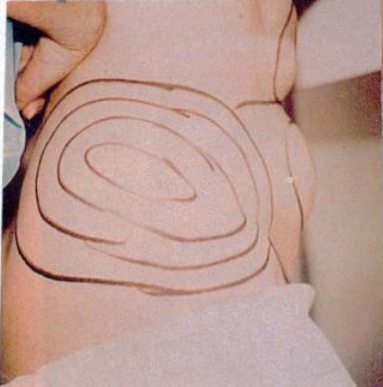
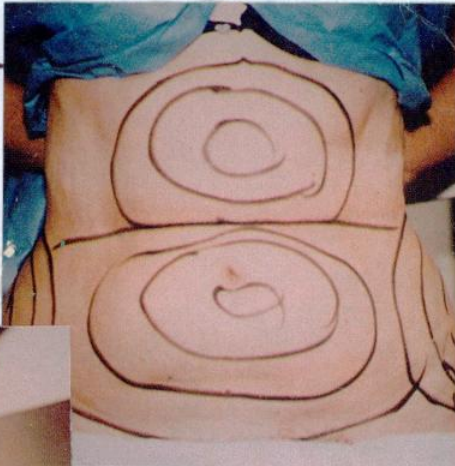


FIG. 44b



*welcome back
waistline!*

FIG. 44c



FIG. 44d

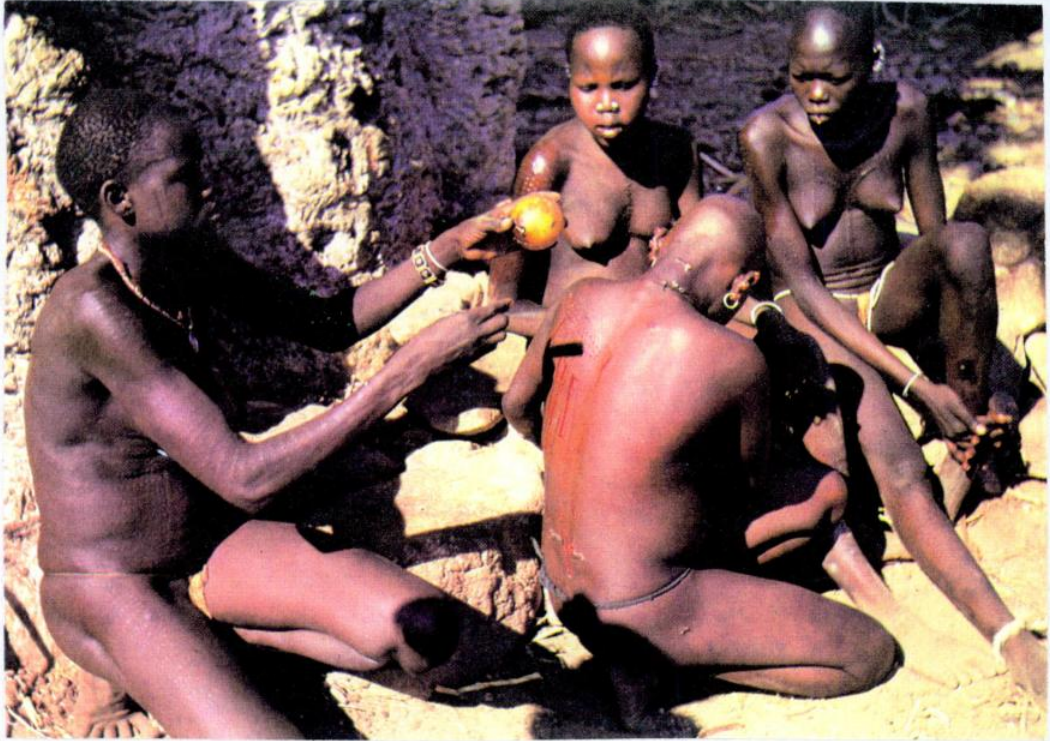


FIG. 45

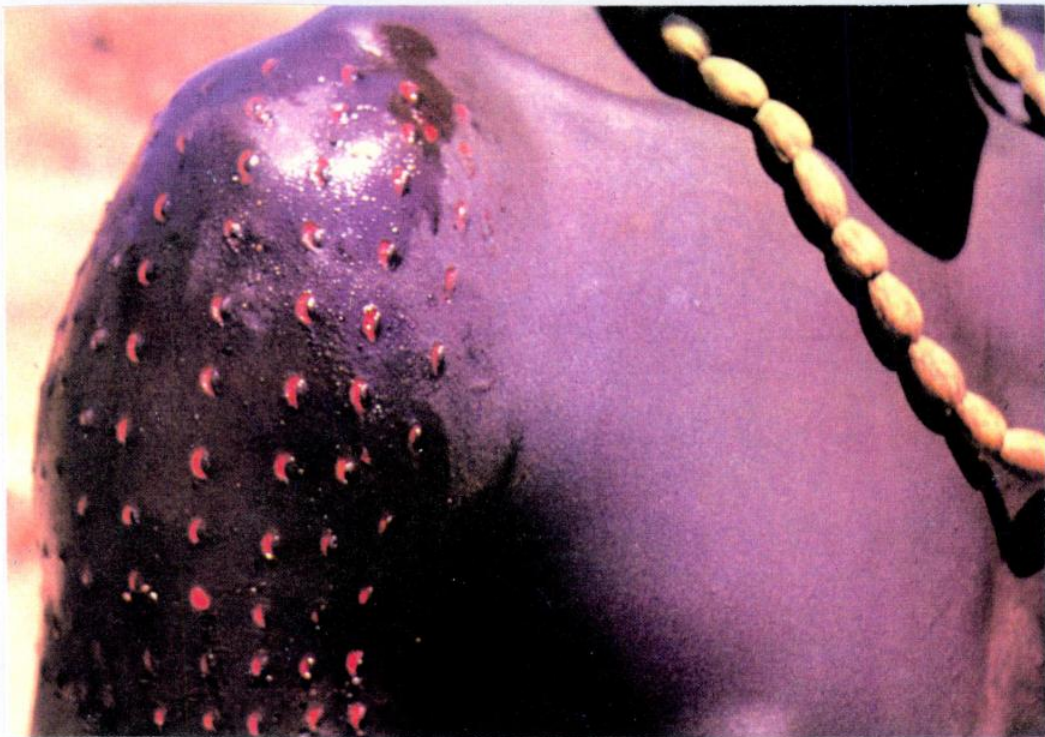


FIG. 46



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scarification. In certain parts of the world like Melanesia and Africa, nubile girls are tattooed/scarred for both aesthetic reasons and as a sign of recognition of their future biological role. Frequently, it is their erogenous areas - breasts, belly, thighs - that are tattooed or scarred (see Fig. 21). The Japanese associate tattooing with sexual arousal. It is difficult to figure out whether tattoos and scarification breed fanaticism or vice versa. There is certainly a renaissance in both these permanent forms of body decoration. Why should people move away from their own culture seeking an identity and adopting a more painful and permanent practice? "They don't want some pre-determined design, of a flash card; what they want is a ritual, a badge that re-affirms their individuality in an anti-individualistic world."¹⁰ Daimon - Urban Primitive.

Perhaps they do need a particular changing or focal point in their lives, maybe they need something to talk about, draw attention to. If that is the case, perhaps it is a subconscious way of avoiding their own personality shortcomings.

In our western society, tattooing is bound by no class and although predominantly associated with degeneracy and low life, e.g. gangs, prison inmates, prostitutes and junkies, it has been practiced by aristocracy (Lady Randolph Churchill, Tzar Nicholas II, Peter Fonda, Sean

Connery, Cher, Beatrice Dallye, the list is endless) as a form of shock appeal, and to shock can often be in vogue. Take, for example, the tattooed symbols on garments by Schiaparelli in the 1930's, the tattooed models (see Fig. 47 and 47a) by Versace or the tattooed hosiery by Calvin Klein in the 1990's. The media also plays an important part in this renaissance with articles such as 'The rage for tattoo' in W Magazine, or advertising campaigns by denim company Wrangler with their latest 'Be more than just a number' sexy jeans wear (see Fig. 49). Many believe that tattoos aid sexual arousal; some Japanese men tattoo their genitals with the design becoming visible when the penis is erect. It is no mystery that the penis has always been a centre piece for body decoration, an object for ritual as well as aesthetic attention.

The Dayaks* pierce the penis and insert objects into the foreskin, as some males have adopted in our own society. In societies where the penis is not mutilated, attention may be called to it by such devices as penis sheaths (see Fig. 50) or cod pieces (see Figs. 51 and 52).

In the 14th and 15th centuries when jackets got shorter, the pubic region became visible and in order to maintain decency, the Church insisted on a modest covering. This modest covering soon developed into the elaborate cod piece and the wealthy introduced the fashion of covering

VOGUE

PT
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The best
of a
great new
season

changing gear

Out of bed with
NAOMI CAMPBELL

the style
is in
the mix



RATES

\$110

FIG. 47



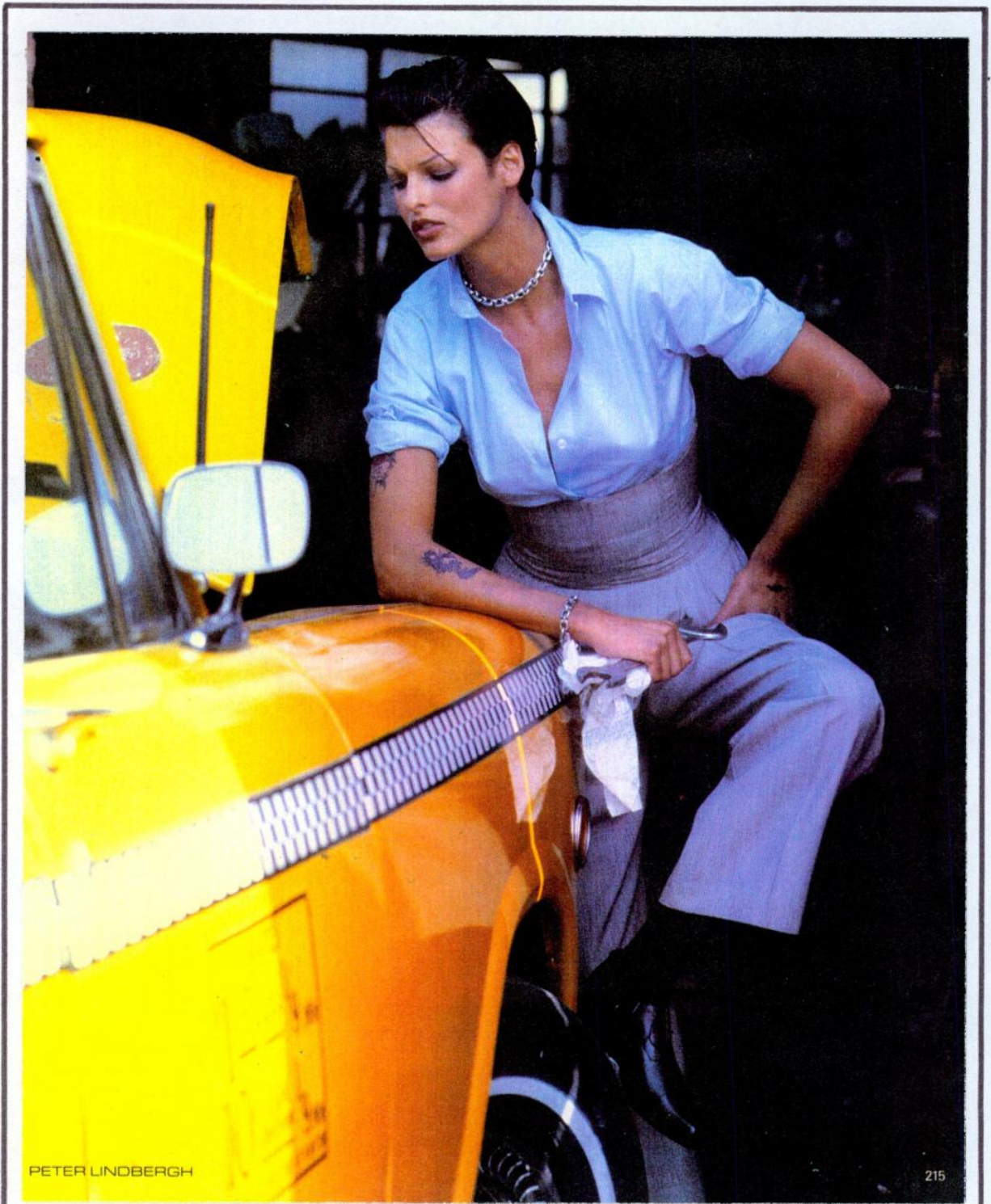


FIG. 47a





FIG. 48





FIG. 49



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FIG. 51

FIG. 50

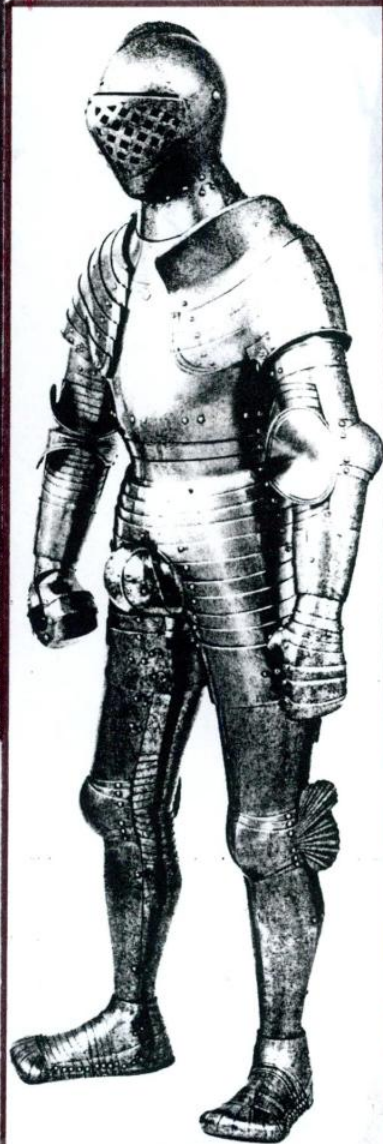
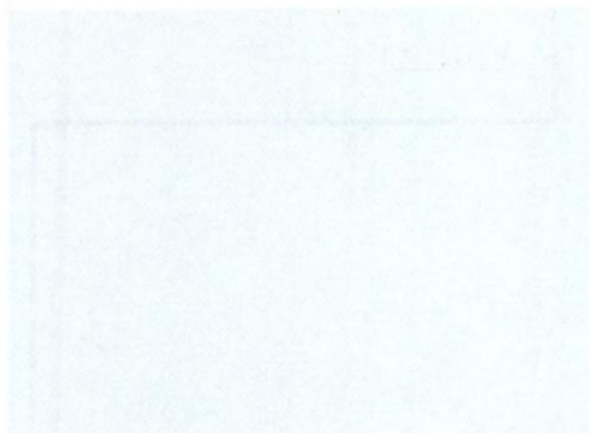
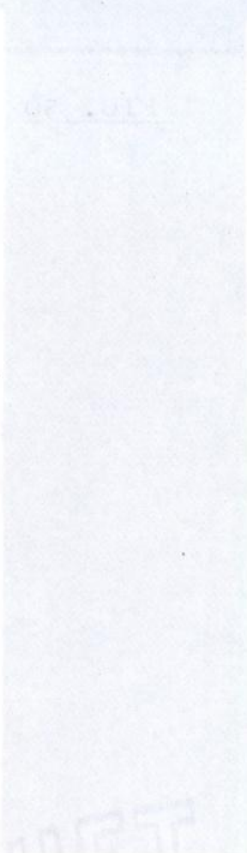


FIG. 52



the crotch with a variety of multi-coloured fabrics, jewellery and ornaments.

Females also mutilate their genitals in the name of beauty, piercing nipples and clitoris for aesthetic purposes. Despite the damage we willingly inflict on our own bodies, it is difficult to understand certain customs in other societies. Cliterectomy, although largely practiced for religious and social commitment and maintaining female fidelity, is also practiced for aesthetic reasons by many ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, Mali, Northern Nigeria and parts of Ethiopia, Egypt and Somalia, as it is believed that female genitalia is ugly to look at or touch. There are three forms of female circumcision, with the most extreme called infibulation, where the clitoris and outer lips of the vagina are removed and the inner lips cut back. The wound is then sewn up, leaving a match stick size opening for urine and menstrual blood. That so many women should consent and perpetuate their own and their children's physical abuse is shocking, especially when one considers the health and psychological problems to be so complex and painful: pelvic and urinary infections, painful neuromas on the excised clitoris, infertility, cysts and abscess around the vulva, difficulty in urinating, the collection of menstrual blood in the stomach, frigidity and depression, all for an ideal of beauty?

What is so important that any person should go through such horrific practices? Why should the uncut female genitalia mean social ostracism and be as serious an obstacle to courtship and marriage as the unbound foot was in China?

Ideals of beauty, whether under the disguise of modesty, protection or status as mentioned in my introduction, all stem from sexual attraction, a sexual game where everyone plays their role - women the beautiful and men the powerful. Throughout the ages, women have sustained more pain and suffering than men, playing the weaker, more dependent and fragile sex. Why are beauty ideals carried to such extremes and for what possible reason?

Neck binding, infibulation, foot binding, corsets - although worn and perpetuated by women were, and are, symbolic of male dominance and female subservience and that such barbaric practices were, and in some cases still are practiced is a sad reflection on society as a whole, both female and male.

C H A P T E R I I I

The feet, legs, the erotic walk and their relevance as beauty ideals and the various methods through which they have been attained.

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"It goes without saying that the erotic principle has, for almost the whole of human history, been the dominant factor in female dress.....The function of fashion is to increase the erotic appeal of the female body by constantly shifting the emphasis from one part of it to another". James Laver.¹¹

I have dealt in previous chapters with particular body parts that have been mutilated, altered and 'enhanced' in beauty's name and the sexual connotations of such deformities. I will now proceed down the body to the legs and feet and the exalted position in beauty and sex appeal that the foot has been privileged to hold. It is a particular fantasy and fetish that has infiltrated reality. Perhaps the main reason for this is the major role the foot has in erotic play throughout the world. Men and women have always chosen the discomfort and 'pleasurable' pain in footwear foot deformation rather than appear sexless in comfortable, sensible shoes. The foot has, at one stage or another, become a social, cultural or national fetish. Prostitutes world wide have found ways to use their feet in entertaining and attracting clients. In some societies in Siberia and

eastern Russia, whether a woman is naked or not, if her feet are uncovered it is regarded as obscene. In other cultures, women's feet are regarded with such sexual potency that it is seen as a crime of passion to remove a woman's shoe. In China, there have been reported cases of women committing suicide after their naked lotus feet were gazed upon by men.

It is this foot fetish that reached a national obsession and lasted for over a thousand years, that I will now focus on. The Chinese lotus foot changed the appearance of the natural foot (see Fig. 53), and can only be compared to the deformation caused to the western foot and torso through the use of high heels.



Fig. 53

Western Russia, whether a woman is naked or not, is not
felt and unneeded it is regarded as obscene. In other
countries, women's feet are regarded with such regard
and they had to be seen as a crime of passion to remove a
woman's shoes. In China, there have been reported cases
of women committing suicide after their naked feet had
been gazed upon by men.

It is in this foot fetish that reached a national expression
and lasted for over a thousand years that I will now
focus on. The Chinese foot fetish cannot be separated
of the natural foot, see Fig. 21. And the way to
compare to the distinction found in the western foot
and come through the history of the foot.



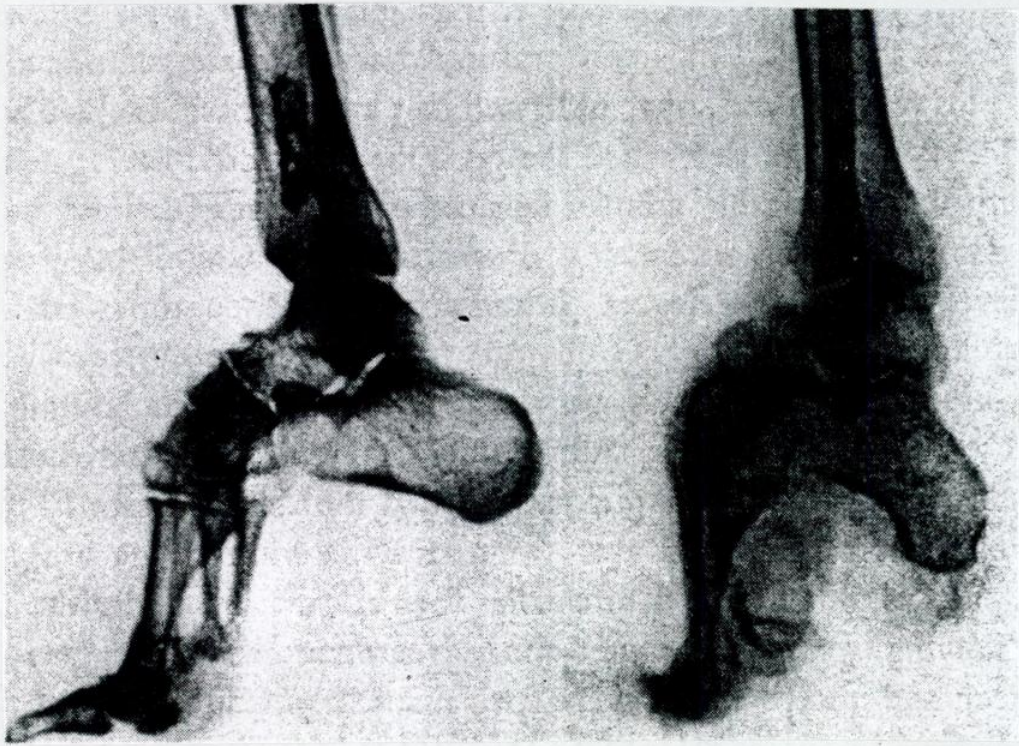


FIG. 54

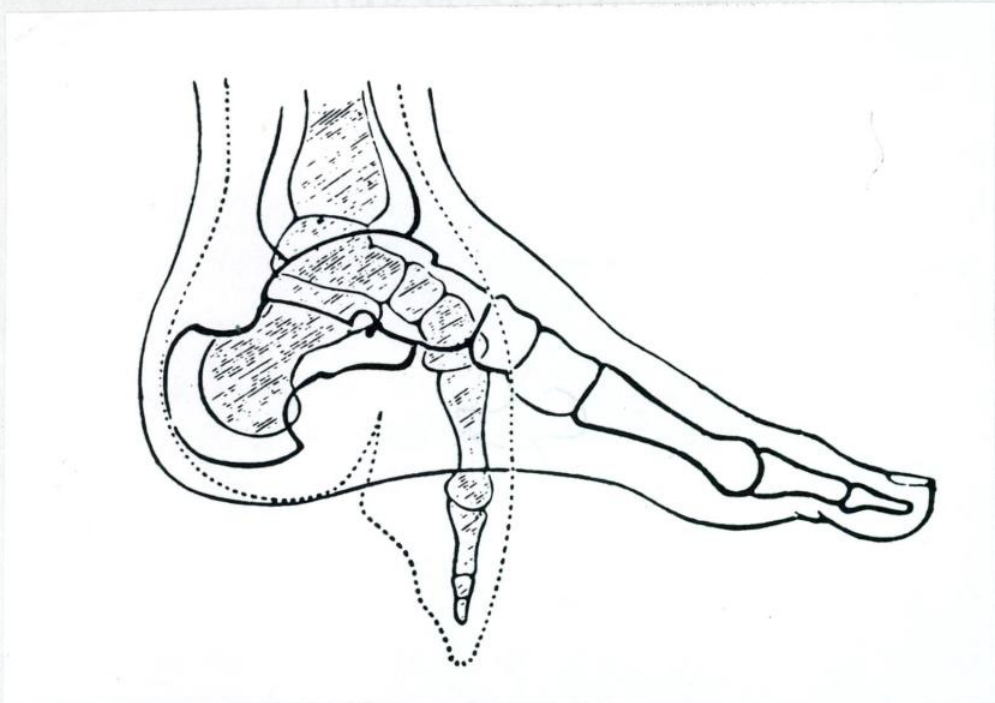


FIG. 55



51



As a measurement of beauty, the size of the lotus foot was regarded as more important than the beauty of a woman's face. A Chinese bride's shoes and feet were on display for friends and family, where the bride would prove how tiny her feet were by measuring them against a two-inch spoon. If the poor bride's feet were regarded as too large, then she and her new family were held in contempt and ridicule. The binding process began at the age of 5 or 6 and some-times as young as 3 or 4. As the girls grew older, the bandages were tightened and the foot shrank to a fraction of its size. The restriction of blood circulation and the constant pressure from the bandages helped the foot to shorten to as little as three inches (see Figs. 54 and 55). The big toe remained unfettered, as it was necessary for balance when walking. The other toes and heel were brought as close together as possible, curled underneath the ball of the foot. The instep created a deep cleft under the arch, becoming soft and fleshy. The lotus foot was believed to enhance sexual power, developing thighs and sexual organs. It was used in love making as the soft fleshy cleavage under the arch was seen as the equivalent of the labia (see Fig. 56 below).

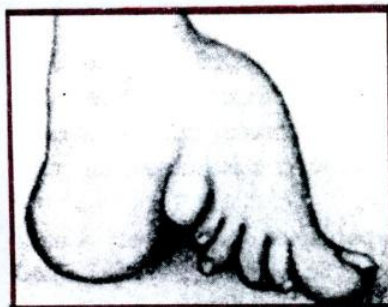


Fig. 56



FIG. 57



FIG. 58



FIG. 59

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SWIFT BROOK

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There was a strong belief that the foot binding caused the woman's blood to flow upwards producing voluptuous buttocks and a many-folded vagina. Men found the bound foot as sexually arousing as western men would find the mouth, breasts and neck of a woman. It has been reported that some men even fell victim to this ideal of beauty. The adopted boys of adult homosexuals and transvestites copied the female lotus, squeezing into lotus-like shoes and adopting the sensuous walk. This erotic walk has always prevailed through history, whether it was aided by the high heel, heavy anklets or foot binding. This gait, attained through permanent or temporary means, also emphasized the fragility and dependency of the female sex.

A woman's feet were the possession of her husband and only he could touch or look upon them. The bandages that bound the feet also served as supports, as binding prevented muscle and bone development. They also wore trousers with supports to strengthen their ankles and had the added bonus of covering their stick like legs, which was another side effect of foot binding. It also reflects, as I've mentioned before, the dominant male role and subservient female role in Chinese society, and with women hobbled to such an extent branded them members of the leisure class. It was obligatory for aristocratic women to have their feet bound; if not, they were open to social ostracism.

There were earlier reports of Chinese foot binding dating back as early as 1100 BC. Empress Taki ruled China at the time and she introduced the practice of swaddling women's feet so that all women could resemble her. She had a club foot which by itself demonstrates the deformed appearance of the bound foot. So why did foot binding come into existence and be practiced with such national fervour for so long?

Sexual attraction is an innate quality within every individual but varies from personal experience and social customs and therefore can be manipulated through learned behaviour. What people find sexually attractive and beautiful in the opposite sex is not biologically determined, but depends on his or her environmental influences, and it is for this reason that people, and particularly women, will endure painful practices to obtain attention from the opposite sex.

Let us take, for example, the erotic walk of the woman. The motion in the walk affects the whole female figure, especially in high heels. The ankles and legs, the rhythmic sway of hips and buttocks, the grace in posture, the angle of feet, the spring in the step, are all on view. It never fails to give men an erotic lift when observing such performances. Women have more erogenous zones than men, which are set in motion with their walk. Throughout history, this gait has been admired and practiced with various types of footwear to aid in this

sex trap. The chopines of 16th century Venice were extremely high sometimes reaching 2 ft. (see Fig. 60), with it becoming necessary for an escort or maid to support a lady so that she might walk. However, this practice was abolished by law as it was believed to displace the womb and cause further ailments. Platforms, the lotus foot, high heels and stilettos, all to different degrees influence the sensuous walk of a woman (see Figs. 61, 62 and 63).

It is interesting to note that Karl Lagerfeld made a comeback on the platform shoe in the fall of 1992.

Even certain tribes, like the Wadobee*, perfected this sensual walk with the use of heavy gold anklets, which are also a symbol of status within a tribe. The weight of these anklets gradually pushed the skin downwards, resting in folds over the ankles (see Fig. 64).

Whether the foot was bound or encased in dangerous foot apparel it has affected or 'perfected' the sensuous walk. Shoes have aided in rendering the female stance unstable and therefore added to men's feelings of superiority, but I believe both sexes are playing their parts in a game, where men adore to see this fetters-type walk by women and women cunningly use it, knowing the erotic fascination it holds for men. This walk, regardless of century and culture, has prevailed due to owning a great erotic power. What I find fascinating is that for this

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) in the case of a linear operator. It is shown that the system (1) has a solution if and only if the right-hand side of the system is orthogonal to the null space of the operator. This result is then extended to the case of a nonlinear operator.

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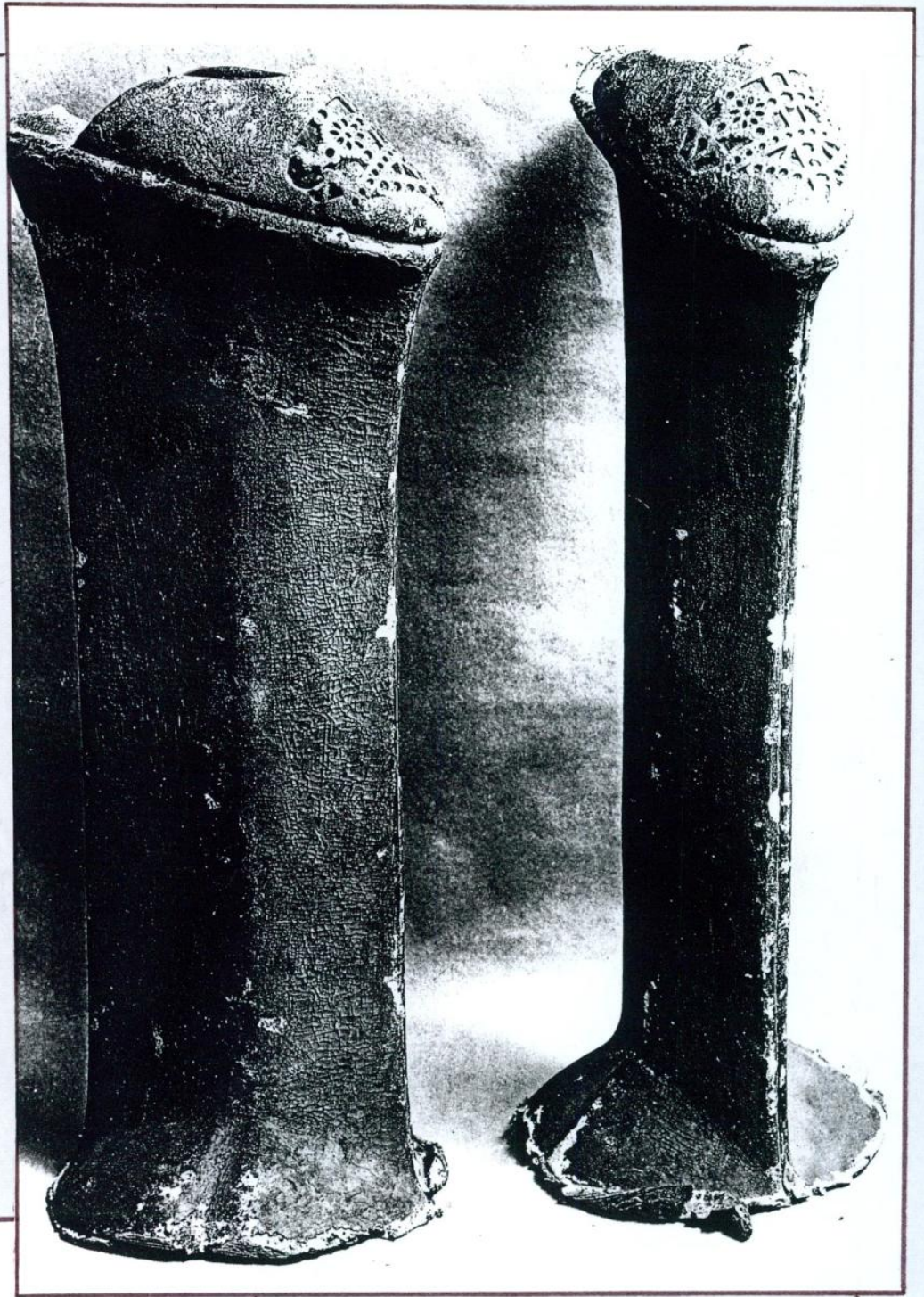


FIG. 60

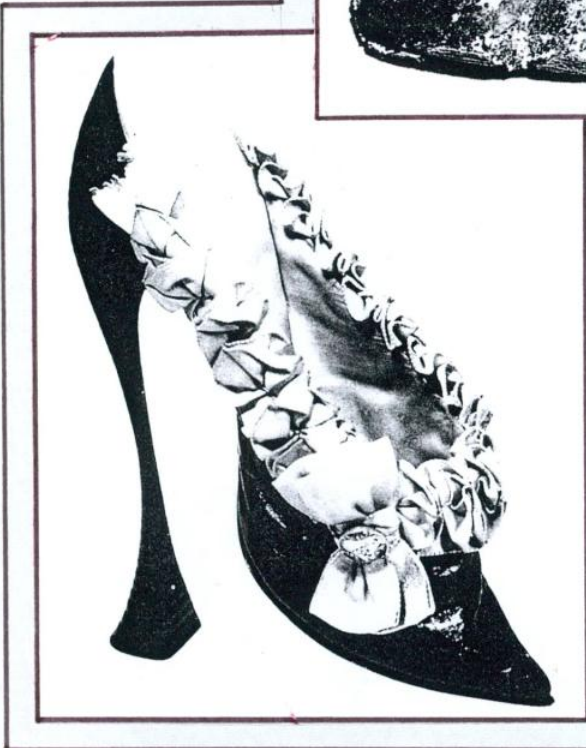
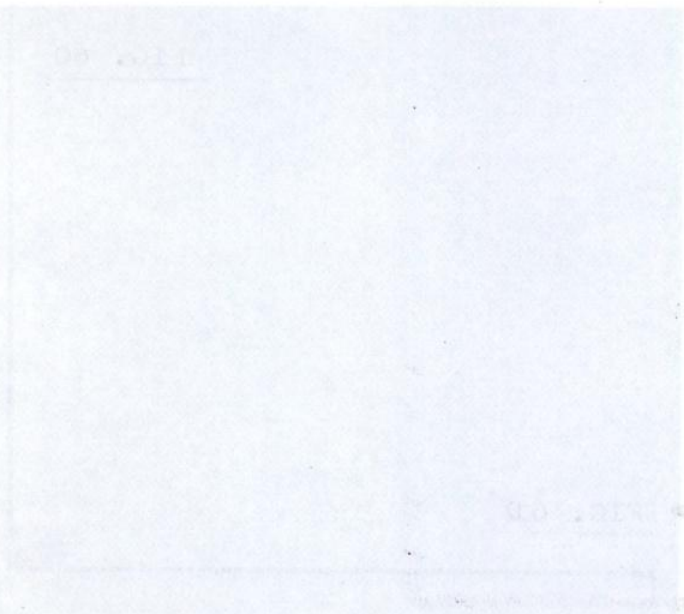


FIG. 61



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FIG. 62



FIG. 63

62

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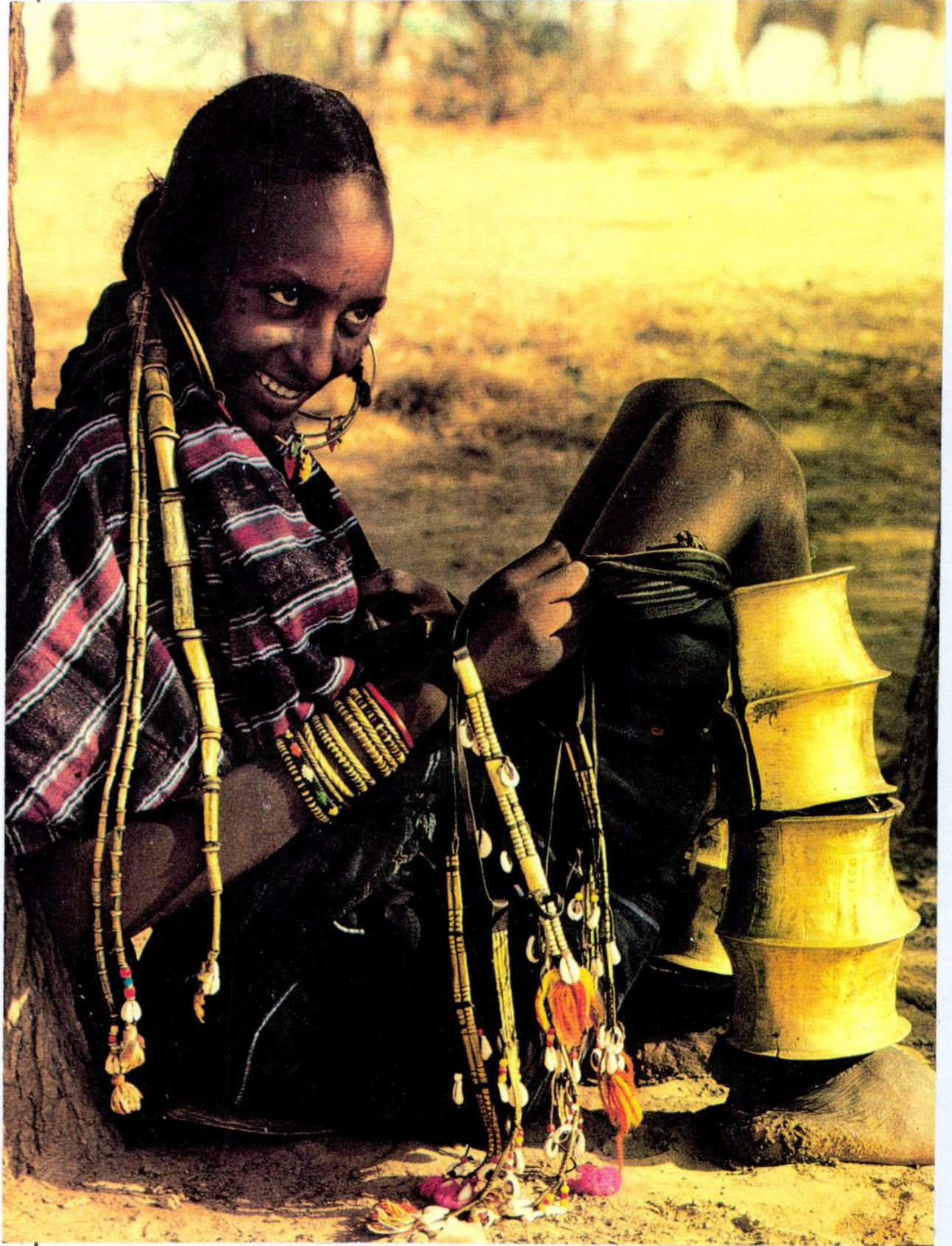
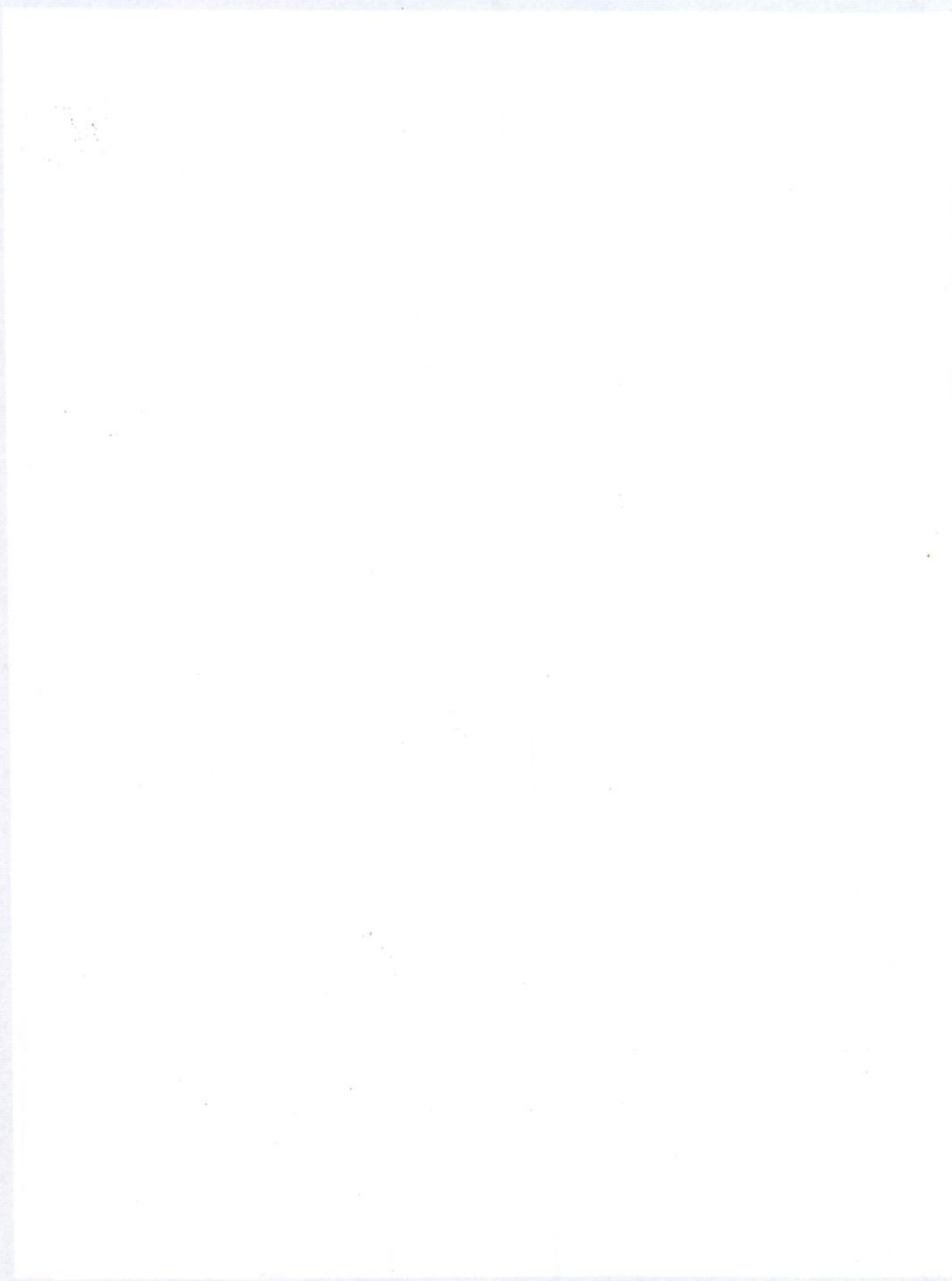


FIG. 64



ideal of beauty, such pressure and pain is endured through the various methods from platforms, chopines, foot binding, reaching another extreme in the amputation of the two smaller toes to fit into the small, slim, pointed high heels, etc.

The foot has also been used and abused to echo more sexual symbols as noted with the lotus foot, where the big toe resembled the phallus and the cleft the vagina. These symbols need not be reflected so blatantly or to the detriment of the foot, but may be reflected in footwear. The 13th century European poulaine male shoe (see Fig. 65), which had a turned up toe, gradually became longer, reaching up to 12 to 14 inches. The shoe had to be stuffed with cork to keep it erect and to avoid tripping was attached by chain to the knee or waist. This did not physically alter the foot but it did affect the walk. Some men had tips designed as an erect penis, aiding in under the table titillation. Like the cod piece, the poulaine, with its penile exhibitionism, came under the attack of the Church so the tips of the shoe had to be restricted to 6 inches for common folk, and a little larger for nobles.

As with other erogenous zones of the body, the feet and legs have not escaped permanent decoration accentuating this fact. Through the use of scarification or tattooing the back of knees, inside of thighs, ankles and the overall shape of the leg have all been victims of beauty

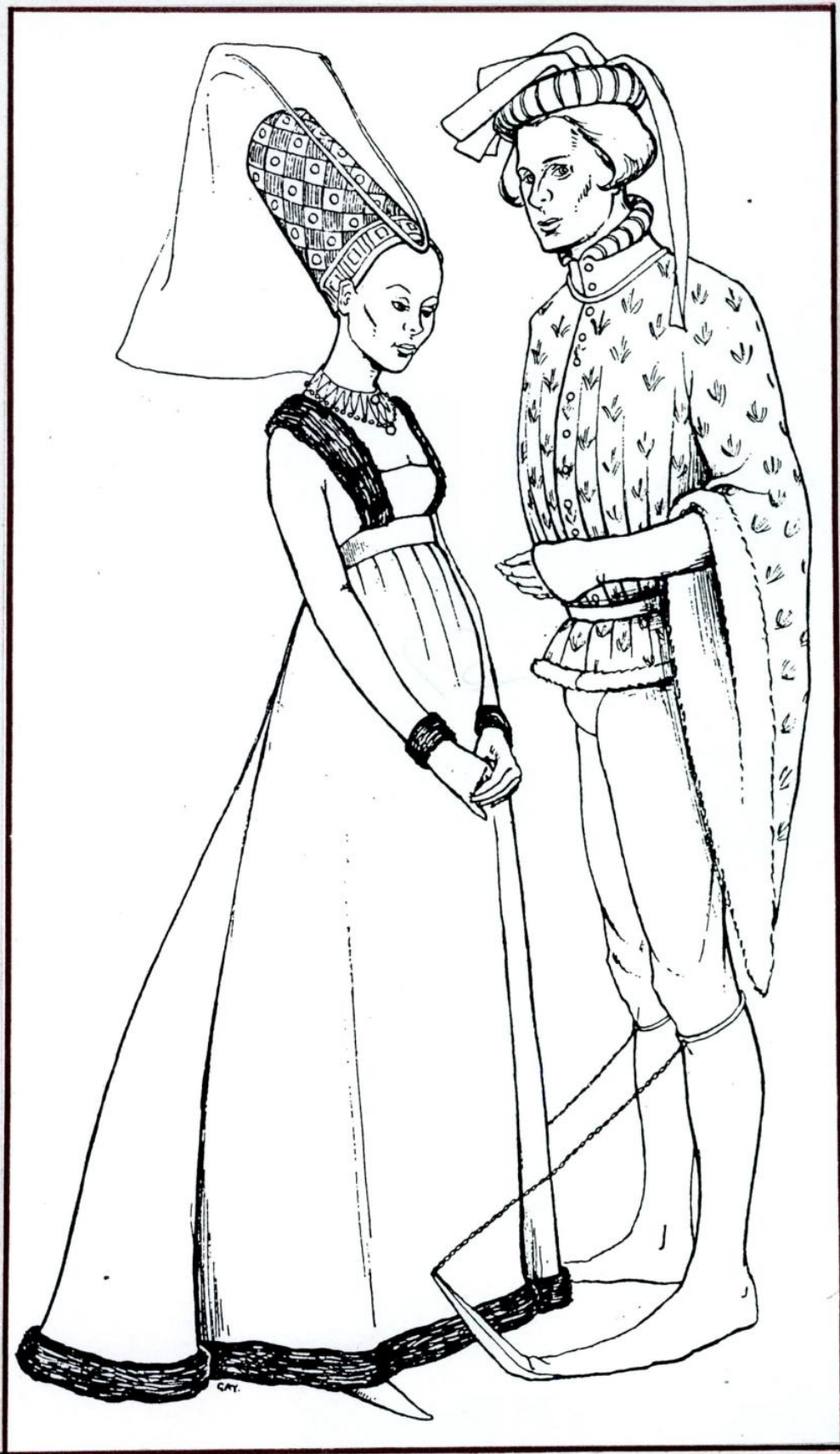


FIG. 65



659

HP



ideals and the accentuation of such ideals has been anything but painless. In some societies it is seen as a transience in life, a change to a different or higher level of sexuality, a ritual stating the present sexual state of an individual. The Japanese, when tattooing, take the shape of the leg into account, making particular areas more prominent than others. Prostitutes may have a snake tattooed, coiled around the thigh about to take refuge. Certain tribes accentuate the thighs by clarification or emphasize the backs of knees by contrasting the scars above and below to the smoothness of the back of the knee (see Fig. 66).

In my conversation with Daimon from Urban Primitive, he told me about a young couple who were getting married and decided to get tattoos on the ankles rather than exchange rings as a sign of their permanent love. They felt it was different, something unique to them, and was an area that sexually aroused them both. Later on the lady came back to get her tattoo extended. (See Figs. 67 and 68). Both these business cards are extremely suggestive, making tattoos synonymous with sex. Note the position of the male and female foot in Fig. 67 or the high heels, tights and studs in Fig. 68. Both are subtly suggesting that tattoos are extremely sexy and emphasize the beauty of the foot and leg.

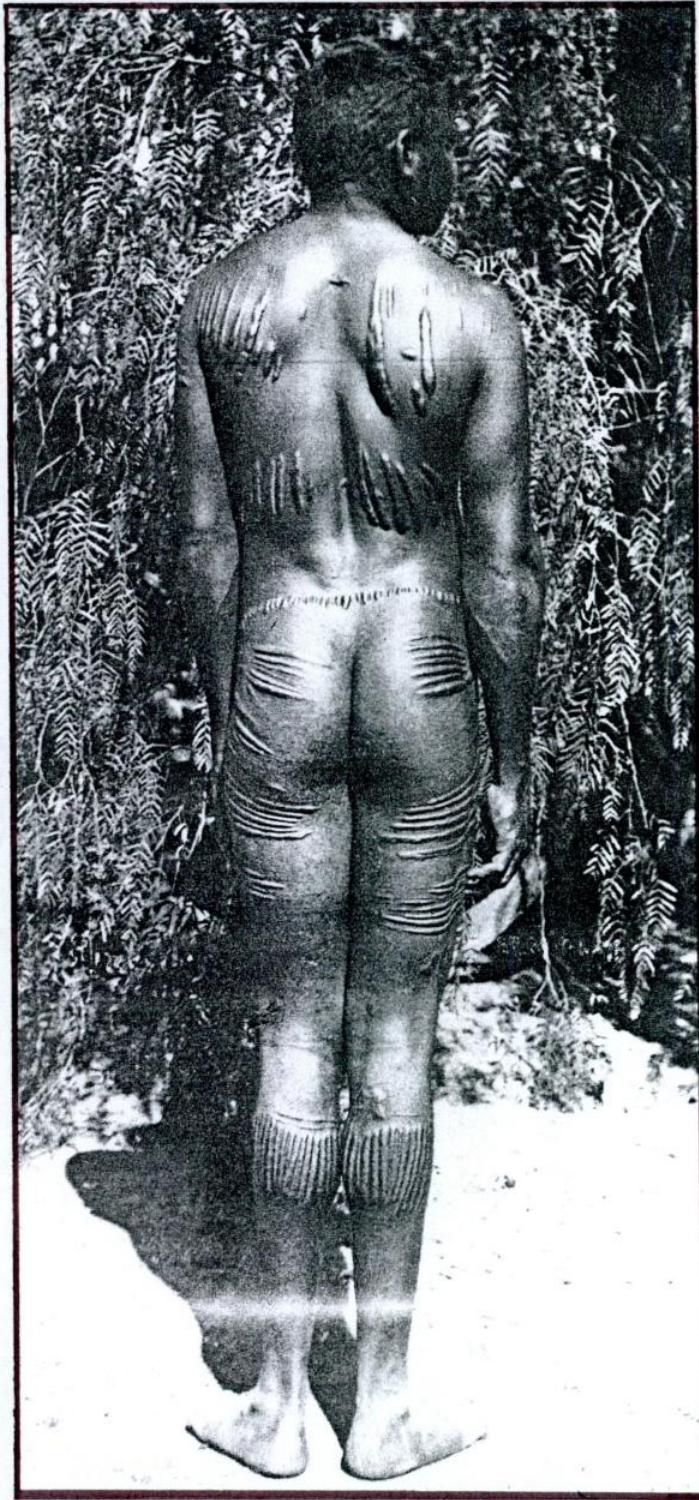
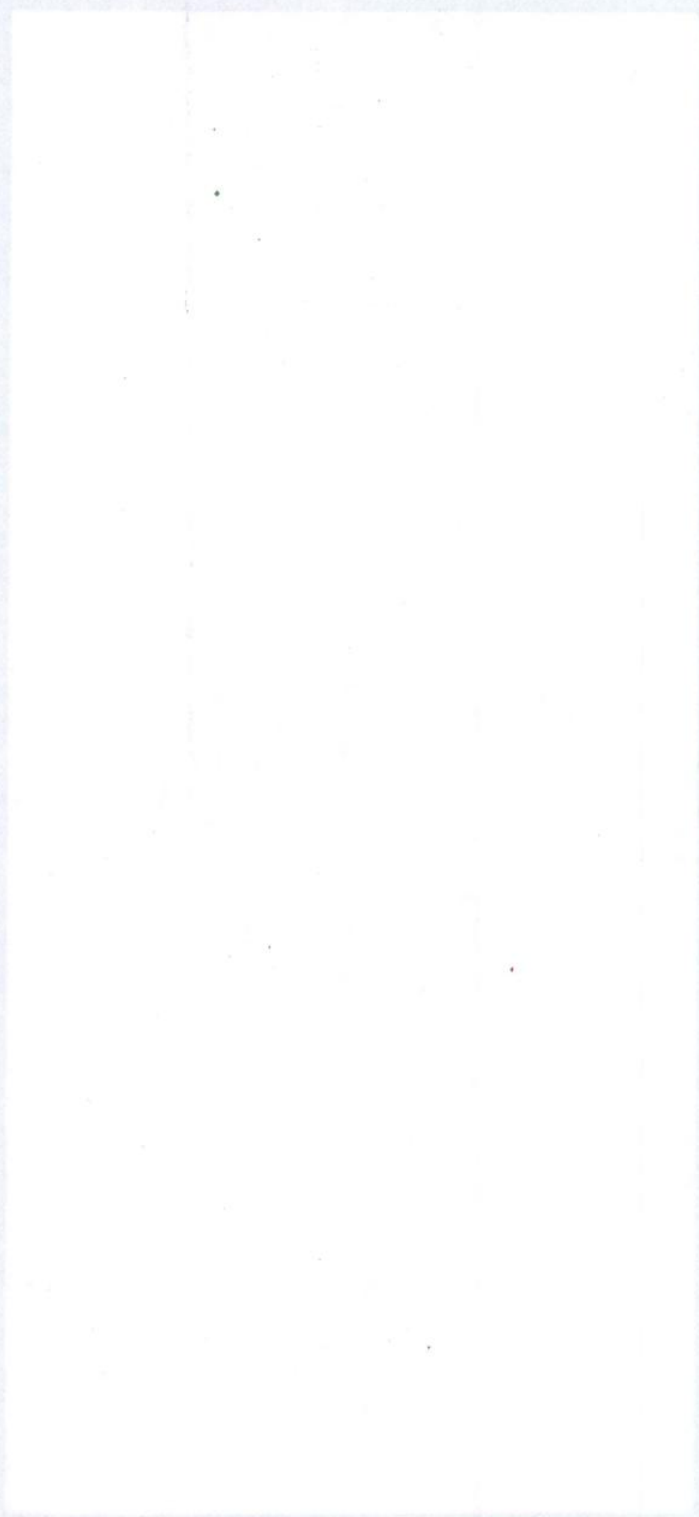


FIG. 66



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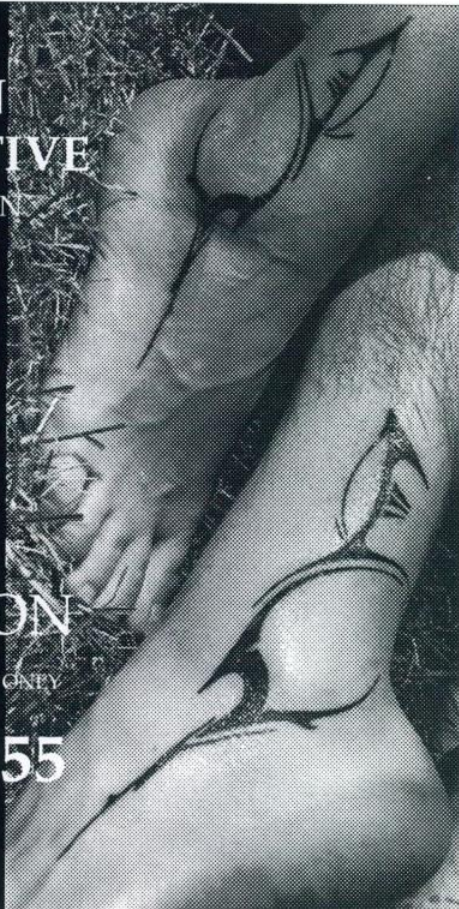


FIG. 67

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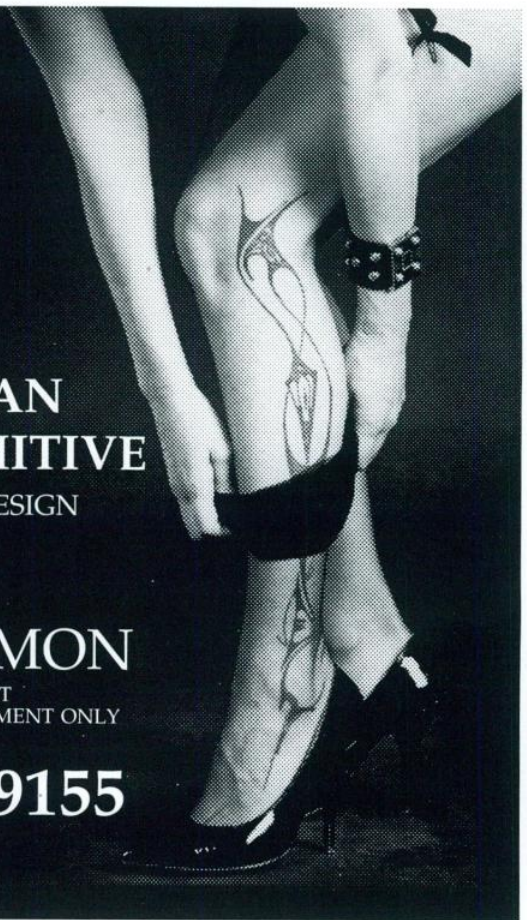
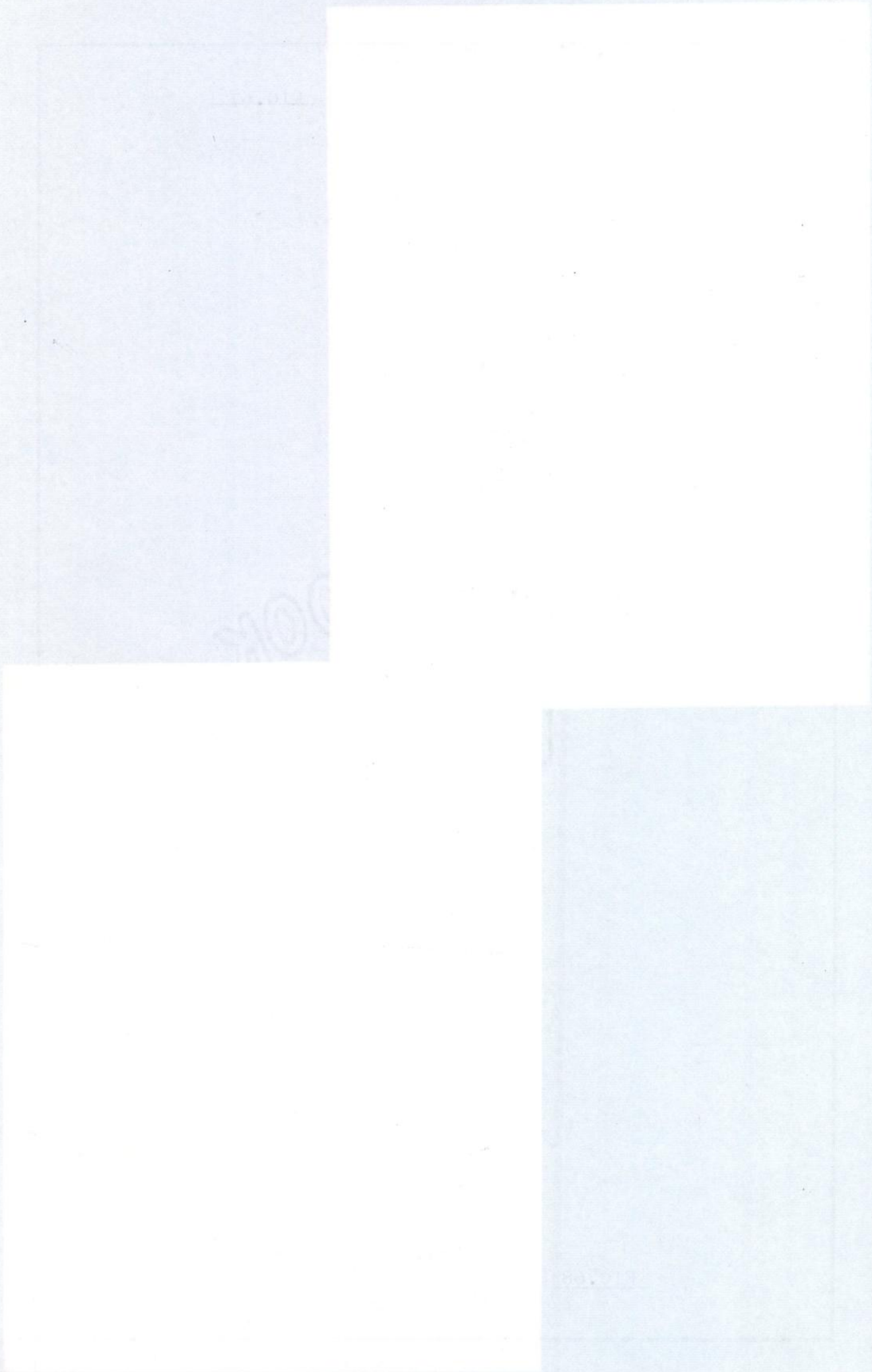


FIG. 68



"The clothes you wear can often reveal what you want people to think of you".¹² Dr. Joyce Brothers.

Or perhaps see of you. Even in western society today, the legs and buttocks can be totally covered yet be revealed through tight fitting jeans or leggings. However, these tight articles of clothing can make men sterile, affect the circulation of blood, cause varicose veins and stimulate the development of thrush, etc. with females. So why do people continue to wear them?

"God bless Lycra" was a comment made by a male colleague of mine, while observing a young girl in tight fitting leggings, and that is the sole reason an individual will continue to wear clothing tight enough to be a second skin - a covering that hides practically nothing, yet is titillating enough to be sexually attractive. Subtle but not blatant.

The overall shape of the leg also falls victim to the scalpel. Beauty ideals are moulded and reshaped by cosmetic surgery. Women who cannot shift unwanted fat by dieting often turn to cosmetic surgery for liposuction*, in which deposits of fat are sucked out of the body (see Fig. 44). This excess fat from thighs and buttocks etc. can be transplanted to other parts of the body, reshaping nose, face or breasts. This transplanting of fat in large volumes creates a dangerous possibility of the fat calcifying into hard lumps masking

and preventing tumours being detected, and also causing blood clots etc.

The media again have a strong impact on our perception of such mutilation. Take, for example, the advertisements from current women's magazines claiming that new instruments make liposuction safe (see Figs.69 and 70). However,

"I will leave that to your own discretion".

SWIFT BROOK
BOND

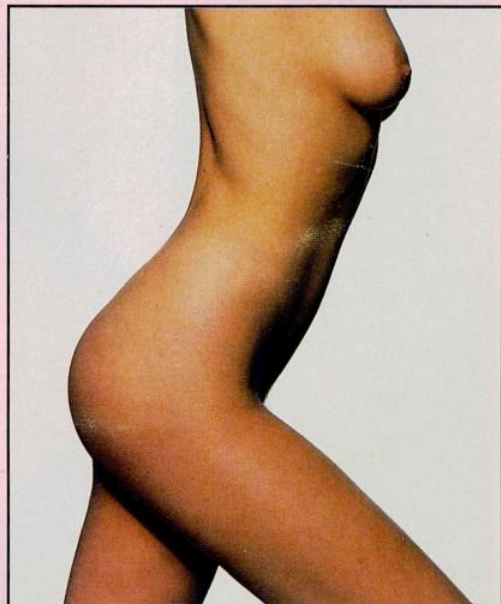
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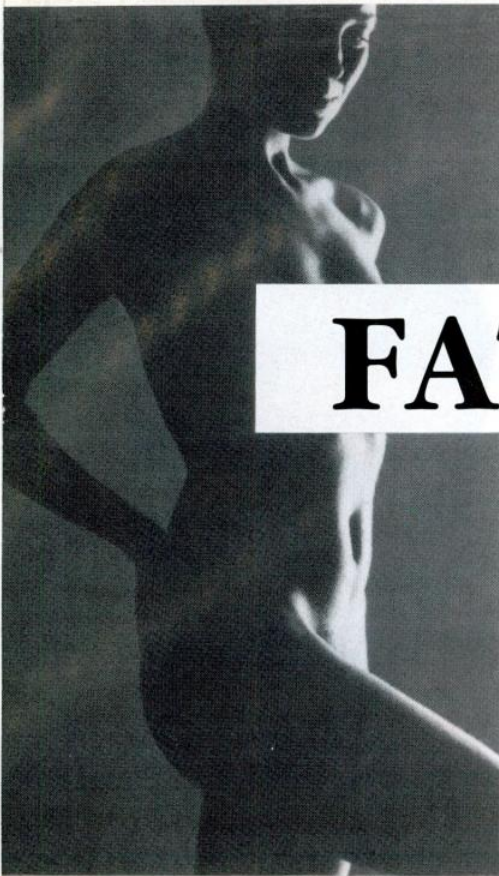
MAKING FACES

Women who cannot shift unwanted fat by dieting often turn to cosmetic surgery for liposuction, in which deposits of fat are sucked out of the body. Now special equipment is available that can remove fat from the face, as well as from larger areas like the stomach and thighs.

These Mercedes instruments, which are being used for the first time in this country at the National Hospital for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery at Bromsgrove, Worcs, turn surgeons into sculptors. The tubes used to withdraw fat have much finer bores than those used in conventional liposuction, so fat can be moved from one part of the body to another, reshaping noses, faces or breasts.

Transplanting fat conventionally in large volumes can cause problems. If body fat is used for breast augmentation, for example, there is a danger that the fat will calcify into hard lumps, which could mask tumours. This is less likely to happen with Mercedes instruments, because smaller groups of fat cells can be transplanted.





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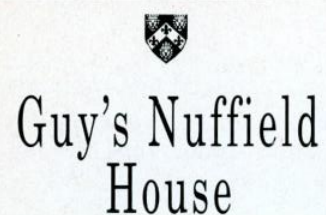
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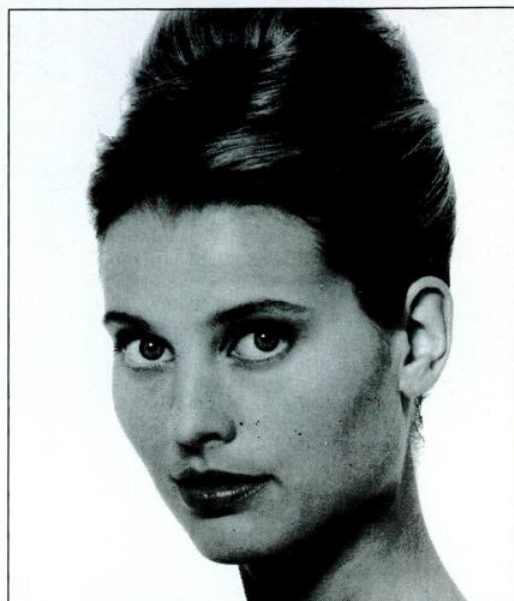
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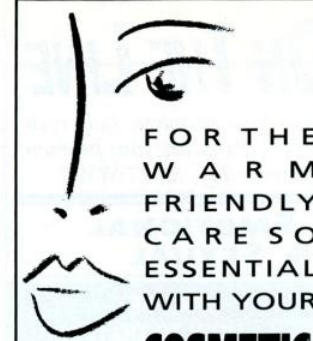
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C O N C L U S I O N

"Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only the relations of men and women, but the relations of women to themselves. This phenomenon prevails through high art and low culture and through the centuries. The images of women are created by men to the shape of their own desires, needs and fears. Women, historically dependent on men and in the power of men, manipulate and exploit those fantasies to their own advantage. A nasty situation and a stressful one."¹³

It would, therefore, seem that our beauty ideals are dictated to us by the deepest subconscious and conscious desires of the opposite sex. Men are attracted to women mainly on an aesthetic level" because, being male, he is more interested in what he sees than what he hears."¹⁴ Women are attracted to men mostly on status level, either personal or social. Therefore, men's ideals of beauty are mainly to enhance his social status and therefore his sex appeal.

This view may be regarded by some people as a 'feminist' remark but it is certainly not intended that way. As I have shown in my thesis, both sexes have been victims of beauty whims throughout history even to the present day. I am simply showing that it was mainly women who have been the primary victims of beauty ideals and, in direct

contrast to nature, women have had the main burden of presenting an attractive and sexually arousing image.

This view is also reflected in James Laver's idea of the Hierarchal principle and the seduction principle,¹⁵ where men's ideals of beauty help function his relationship to society, both in his own dress and that of 'his' woman. Take, for example, coiffures, paniers, corsets, chopines, foot binding, neck binding and cosmetic surgery - and even in today's society, where the wife of a young enterprising company executive should be the perfect hostess, both beautiful and fashionable (the ideal accessory), thus making women's ideals of beauty help function in, if not be integral to, her relationship with man.

This raises another question - whether 'good looking' people have an advantage over plain people in attracting the opposite sex. I believe they do, not only in the art of attraction but also in the game of life. There is a genuine prejudice in favour of attractive people, adding to the belief that aesthetically beautiful people are more desirable and more interesting. Simply by looking at these 'ideals of beauty', sexual chemistry is ignited and it therefore, becomes obvious why we all try to project an image of a better looking, more sexually attractive person, whether it be to the detriment or discomfort of our health.

As with other societies, sexual attraction is deeply embedded in our culture, where we learn from childhood to associate beauty with good and ugly with bad. Take, for example, the fairytale characters Cinderella and her ugly sisters Snow White with her ugly stepmother and Sleeping Beauty with the Wicked Witch - goodness and beauty victorious over ugliness. So, from the beginning of our childhood, we strive to be the perfect sexual beauty and be the envy of all who try to aspire to such ideals.

It is also important, and a major reflection on social and beauty ideals, to realise that the sumptuary laws* in clothing have always been ineffective: that the constant bombardment and outcries by the Church, state and puritan moralists, who throughout the ages have tried to control fashion and more directly, sexuality in fashion, have always ended in failure. The impulse to impress socially and therefore sexually springs from the very depths of the psyche, so all efforts by Church, state, moralists and feminists to take the sexuality out of clothing and dress was and is in vain, as the 'Lust of the eye'¹⁶ will always continue to exercise its ancient control.

The later decades of this century have demonstrated a major change in the approach to beauty ideals. In the past, the extremes of outward appearance were more apparent. However, I feel it has become more deeply imbedded within our society - psychologically, a form of brainwashing which is constantly bombarding the public

through the media. This is particularly true of cosmetic companies, who attempt to manipulate people's fears and insecurities to sell their own commodity and rake in massive profits at the expense (both economically and mentally) of the public. There are numerous examples of such manipulation. Take, for example, Menner Skin Bracer, an aftershave for men. "A delightful aftershave lotion. Cooling, refreshing, mildly astringent. A pleasant, easy to use deodorant. Use skin bracer any time of the day or night - it peeps you up. And the intriguing aroma wows the ladies."¹⁷ Or the GLH advertisement (Great looking hair!) where a virtually bald man sprays a dark lacquer on his few remaining hairs, claiming to thicken individual hairs and so give the impression of superfluity. Max Factor also claim that their new colourfast lipstick looks fiery bright for hours and hours, has a stay-on lustre that won;t fade or blot away, and makes men go mad after you - and this advertisement finishes off by saying "But careful - don't start anything you can't finish".¹⁷

These advertisements are stating that in order to smooth your relations with the opposite sex, these products are a must. These are just some examples of the consistent bombardment of brainwashing inflicted on people by the media. One only has to observe any perfume advertisement to notice the subtle message behind the image, where it seems all so simple: there is no inconvenience, no plastic surgery, no torture, but with

just a drop the very essence of woman, her allure and beauty, is captured, and you can have it all neatly bottled and packaged.

It is interesting to notice that the main areas of the body on which ideals of beauty have focused are mainly the erogenous zones and it seems it has been necessary to decorate, mutilate and partially conceal these parts to further enhance their erotogenicity as it stimulates sexual curiosity. I suppose these ideals of beauty and the various ways they are achieved can be especially sexy when they call attention to a particular area, or the naked body beneath. Sex magazines such as Penthouse or Playboy have brought visual sexual arousal to a fine art, where the models are seldom entirely naked and usually can be seen wearing some titillating item, e.g. garter belt, G string, ripped or wet shirt, and of course the high heel.

The purpose in striving for an ideal of beauty for women it seems has been to make them more sexually attractive, but at the same time has been repressive, both psychologically and physically (which is interesting when compared to other societies, e.g. tribal, where the aim has a sexual and ritual base, but is not as psychologically repressive). This would also seem to reflect the intimate needs and desires of men. Since we have primarily lived in a patriarchal society, it would seem logical to deduce that men are the instigators of

such ideals, but they are not and they cannot be the main focal point of my wrath as women have perpetuated these ideals in an attempt to manipulate and attract the opposite sex and thus enhance their own social status. It is a vicious circle, a game "where every man must play his part".¹⁸ I do feel it is slowly changing, with women beginning to emphasize the ideal male physique. However, this is not the solution. It will not be until women are fully emancipated and we live in a society that neither sex owns and both share that there can be a compromise and balance of beauty ideals, where neither sex will be sentenced to an aesthetic ideal that is either psychologically or physically repressive.

Beauty ideals have always been achieved and practiced in various ways, from the very restrictive to the semi-restrictive, and it is an innate longing to exhibit some form of sexuality and to attract the opposite sex that makes people endure and pursue these ideals to the extremes. It would depend on the psychology of the individual whether the reasons and magnitudes of aspiring to such ideals of beauty merit the pain and suffering involved. However, the majority of beauty ideals stem from the hidden desires and dreams of the opposite sex and, in striving for these ideals, people are attempting to escape from reality; ironically, a reality we have created by striving for such ideals, thus creating our own living nightmare.

A P P E N D I X

CHAPTER I

Mangbetu Tribe

A tribe situated in northern Zaire, Africa.

Dolichocephalic

The long-headed - having a breadth of skull less than 75% of the length. The Arian ideal.

French Cranial Distortion

In France, apart from a narrow belt of land north and south of the Loire, there was a universal custom of deforming the head up to the 18th century. The deformed heads became characteristic of certain districts and served as marks of regional identity.

Pomatum

Ointment for the hair consisting of beef marrow, hazelnut oil and lemon juice.

Baroness Oberkirch

Madame de Lauzen

Exerpts from personal diaries quoted from 'Fashions in Hair' by Richard Corson, London, Peter Owen Ltd. 1965.

Smollett

Tobias George (1721-1771). Scottish novelist. Two of his well known works are 'Roderick Random' and 'The Adventures of Peregrine Pickel'.

Maori

Tribe living in New Zealand.

Kichepo

A tribe who live along the Ethiopian border.

Lobi

The Lobi tribe retreated from the threat of Islam deep into the forest regions where the three lands of Upper Volta, Ghana and Ivory Coast meet.

Kirdi

The Kirdi tribe took refuge from Fulani slave traders among the great pinnacles of lava formed by the volcanic chimneys of the Mandara mountains in northern Cameroon.

Glaucoma

A disease of the eye characterised by gradual impairment or loss of sight.

CHAPTER II

Poulaine

A boot or shoe with a very long pointed toe, also known as crakows.

John Evelyn

1620-1706. English diarist whose famous diary covers nearly 70 years.

Dayaks

The Dayaks live on Borneo, one of the largest islands in the world. Borneo lies astride the equator, south east of the Malay Peninsula.

CHAPTER III

Wadobee

The Wadobee tribe live in central Niger, parts of Nigeria and Cameroon. They travel in small family groups in search of grazing land for their cattle.

Liposuction

Liposuction works by removing fat cells which, once siphoned off, can never return: therefore, when fat returns it is concentrated in areas not treated and can leave an uneven hummocky effect. An incision is made in the skin with a scalpel, a canula (large hollow needle) is then inserted, which is attached to a long rubber hose leading to the medical vacuum machine - working on the same principle as a vacuum cleaner. Although revolutionary methods are being claimed daily, surgeons still stick to the basic vacuum method. Because liposuction promises so much, it is becoming a booming business worldwide. Numbers of operations are difficult

to gauge, but the Harley Medical Group, one of the U.K's leading clinics, carried out 1,342 in one year.

CONCLUSION

Sumptuary Laws

Pertaining to or regulating expense. These laws were primarily to prevent people from dressing above their station. Take, for example, the enforcement of these laws in 1362 by Edward III, in 1482 by Edward IV and during times of war and recession.

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