

No added preservatives: the attempt to hide the changing face of ageing, and the faceless freedom of nature.

The beauty industry is booming, as it has done for many hundreds of years. We are told that this is all about people “gaining confidence in themselves” through the ability to change the way they look, but what this actually reveals is far more than a pimple on the chin or teeth that don’t seem straight or white enough.

Essentially the nature of not wanting something to be a particular way and therefore conceal it through whatever form of interaction is a cover-up operation. When we talk about someone “looking their best” or “making an effort” it is part and parcel of social etiquette to cover yourself up in all the “right” places, in order to be attractive or to get attention or power, but it is all a strategy of concealment.

This is not a promotion for the “let’s go natural” or even for “growing old gracefully” approach, which in itself can be a fashion of not doing what everyone else is doing in order to buck the “system”. There is no judgment here, merely pointing out what it’s really all about rather than continually hiding from it.

The bulk of hair and beauty products are aimed at women and particularly those who are moving into middle age. It is here that the “problems” kick in most strongly, there is a feeling that the skin on the face and the rest of the body is not what it used to be and that one needs to “shape the image” of what other people see and more importantly what “you” see in the mirror. Then there is the younger generation who have learned what the expectation is and what is “presentable”, “sexy” or “cool” and they then attempt to re-create this in order to look unique or outstanding or “beautiful”.

This definitely does have an effect, but it is only as deep as the make-up itself. It expresses something directly which is what a person wants you to see, they are covering up natural expression in order to present in a way which has a different effect and something they like. But this is the deception of not feeling okay about simply being “nakedly” what one is, without the requirement to be anything else. Many women suggest that make-up is about self-expression, it is their own artistic expression of themselves and this is exactly true, for it is the “self” that is expressing, not the true nature of the person underpinning the “self”. The “self” is the image or the illusion and so it wants to represent what it wants to be. Nature has no interest in any of this, it has no notion of wanting to affect people artistically. This is all a masked ball of deception, the “artist” argument is something which hides fear.

"Society is a masked ball, where everyone hides his real character, thereby revealing it by hiding."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Attempting to stop or slow down the ageing process is all the rage, whether it be with superficial cover-ups, deep and life-changing surgical expressions, or drugs like HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) which attempt to hold back the tide of natural change for as long as possible, or until a secondary illness develops through employing those methods. Fundamentally this is exactly the same as King Kanute on

the beach telling the waves to get out of reach. It's all about control and an attempt to hide from a world full of judgment and the ideology of separation and so the pursuit everlasting youth.

The main belief which is at the root of all of this is that "I own my body" and also interestingly that "I have a face". Douglas Harding's amazing and inspiring investigations into the nature of reality continually point out to us that in our lifetime we have never, ever seen our own face. We can see the mirror image but the mirror image is back-to-front and it's at a distance away from us, so too is the video image of ourselves on a screen though the "right" way around. The point is that an image of "me" is always at a distance from where I am viewing.

And so in a way "looking-out" into the world from where I sit has no face involved. I'm not looking through two eyes, I'm looking through an empty visual field. This "glassy essence" as Shakespeare called it is the same for everyone, no-one in fact has ever seen "themselves" in a mirror, what they see is an image which seems to relate to actions "I" perform. But this is not actually "me" in the mirror, for "I" can't be in the mirror as "I" am at centre, far from the mirror. The point of this is much better explained by the man himself here: <http://www.headless.org>, which is that what "I look like" is not for "me" naturally, it's for whoever is looking, and as "I" can't be them, the mirror acts as a substitute to see what someone else is seeing. However I can't live in the idea of constantly looking at myself in the mirror, this would in a sense be a displacement of the centre into the image in the mirror and this is exactly what people call "vanity". However what vanity is based upon is not a judgment but a situation of anxiety of being judged and of feeling the need to cover-up in order to engage with the world, or else there will be judgment involved and people will decide that what is presented is not enough.

The use of make-up and artificial enhancements is all about visually "breaking the ice", if you look a certain way then people can get to know you without being "affected negatively" by what you look like. However this in itself is the problem, the number of relationships based on an initial connection and the realization that this connection was only about the make-up/cover-up is considerable. Interestingly many women continually attempt to "keep up appearances" of this image for much of their married lives. Let's not call this kind of relating "skin-deep" because the skin is a perfect reflection of what's going on in the body, it reflects the health of the internal organs and it radiates health, or not, depending on the person. So to cover up the skin has nothing to do with so called skin-deep connection, it's far more superficial than that. It is essentially to do with an illusion that is presented, like a fake fly that a fisherman dangles to try to catch a fish. It's not real and therefore what comes of it is anything *but* what is expected, in fact produces the opposite effect, including the disappointment when what is beneath the surface is revealed.

It isn't so much the insecurity upon which the cosmetic industry is based, but more the ideology that we are supposedly "responsible" for our appearance and that this is something we need to take care of. The point that Harding makes so often and so well is in fact that the appearance is actually for someone else, it isn't for "me". What "I am" truly for "me" is simply the empty space that is faceless, it isn't in requirement of anything, it just is this. This is what "I" truly "am", "I" therefore can't see "myself" in the mirror for what "I am" is actually invisible, it is something that is intimately the

experience of being, and it isn't something that even has a face. Interestingly, when it comes down to it nothing belongs to "me" at all, as this visual field I look out of is a hollow vessel which essentially life is looking out of, there is no "me" in sight.

While this seems to be a "mind-bender" in fact it's simply what's going on in reality when we forget the idea of what "I think I look like" and instead just LOOK. This is very different and it has *no added preservative*, it is essentially the expression of that which has eternalness because it is timeless and formless and it is living through this body. The nature of this is very different from the illusion of what "I think I look like" from the 3rd person perspective and then applying make-up or focusing on this with "self"-consciousness. This is the dis-ease of the human and the resultant expression is the inability to relate freely unless things are "fixed", such as making one's skin flawless, one's lips full, breasts firm, this part tighter, that part more smooth, this less crooked. The whole point is that if confidence is "assumedly "gained" through this, then in fact it is confidence of the falsest kind. No confidence is available through one belief or another, as in the end all belief is false. When we go beyond belief to a situation where there is nothing but what it *is*, whether there are warts, spots, skin irritations or ageing lines, these are seen and celebrated, just as seasonally nature is in celebration of autumn and summer equally and then there is no attempt to hide.

Those men and women who want to stay young into their later years of life are simply being led by the dominant warped-masculinated ideology that seems to rule everything. The nature of the older person is with the nature of the female, the nature of the indigenous person and the nature of the child, it is the energy of the yin which is colonized by the ideology of focusing only on the surface and illusions within the "self", which is a very small window from which to view reality. It is like looking at all of nature through a straw and believing one is understanding it all.

The tunnel vision of viewing life through an illusion of believing oneself to be something else is a major problem. The less covering-up there is, the more that simply beautiful expression is realized to be a whole expression. This includes the surfaces, which radiate health when there is such, which can continue well into old age, but it will not radiate when there is ill-health which is also the truth of what's going on. The hidden world of cosmetics and marketing can package anything to make it "seem presentable" but why do we constantly hide from one another? The sense of separation is only increased through the illusions and games people play, the nature of nature does not hide, even the camouflage colours of the chameleon have nothing to do with hiding, for the chameleon is just being what it is, there is no cover-up, no attempt to hide, there is just what there is. Perhaps if you had skin that changed colour on interaction with a new surface you might find it may clash with your leopard-skin pill-box hat....as Bob so perfectly describes it:-

Leopard-skin pill-box hat,
Bob Dylan

*Well, I see you got your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat
Yes, I see you got your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat
Well, you must tell me, baby*

*How your head feels under somethin' like that
Under your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat*

*Well, you look so pretty in it
Honey, can I jump on it sometime?
Yes, I just wanna see
If it's really that expensive kind
You know it balances on your head
Just like a mattress balances
On a bottle of wine
Your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat*

*Well, if you wanna see the sun rise
Honey, I know where
We'll go out and see it sometime
We'll both just sit there and stare
Me with my belt
Wrapped around my head
And you just sittin' there
In your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat*

*Well, I asked the doctor if I could see you
It's bad for your health, he said
Yes, I disobeyed his orders
I came to see you
But I found him there instead
You know, I don't mind him cheatin' on me
But I sure wish he'd take that off his head
Your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat*

*Well, I see you got a new boyfriend
You know, I never seen him before
Well, I saw him
Makin' love to you
You forgot to close the garage door
You might think he loves you for your money
But I know what he really loves you for
It's your brand new leopard-skin pill-box hat*

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19/7/2012