

TOUCHING ABSENCE – VIRGIN MARY PENDANTS AS BODILY IMAGES

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This article is an attempt to articulate a possible meaning of inter-relational space created by pieces of jewellery. The objects focused upon in this alternative approach are Finnish jewellery items, pendants with the image of the Virgin Mary. The significance of these pendants is viewed as something originating from their iconography, materiality and bodily locus. Since a pendant is something on the wearer's body and in the eyes of the beholder, it is something in between. These items occupy a liminal space and integrate things that are otherwise unreachable, just as the Virgin Mary's image on them. I approach the image and the medium from an art anthropological stance: wearing a pendant carries and conveys significance via the continuous ritual of commonplace use. When discussing the symbolically charged space between two persons, I rely upon the psychoanalytical concept of transitional space.

KEYWORDS: jewellery, the Virgin Mary, image, medium, transitional space.

Outside the academic field jewellery can, and normally is, viewed inattentively as something socially symbolic and aesthetic. These two qualities are quite dominant in our thoughts, when we see wedding rings, bracelets and necklaces – if they surpass the limit of our perception at all. We navigate among these items as if they were a natural part of our being, something that belongs or adheres quite naturally to our body. Jewellery is something truly mundane, precious and valuable, and also a matter of taste. Jewellery pieces can have a solely emotional or sentimental significance, which

motivates their use. This particular text builds upon several of the interconnected ideas that I have been working on in my doctoral thesis¹. I aim to analyze the reasons why certain jewellery items are potentially something extremely vital and significant. The bond of the jewellery piece with the body, as well as the

¹ This article is based on my ongoing doctoral research in which I bring together two topics that have so far eluded interest in the academic field. The first is jewellery in general, and the second is the Virgin Mary, specifically in the cultural context of Finland during the first half of the twentieth century.

iconographical extent, is the premise for my conceptual trajectory. I believe that the study of these issues requires us to expand our initial and self-evident conceptions of what kind of an object a piece of jewellery actually is, and how it can be regarded.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Wearing jewellery is to some extent a self-evident bodily practice. We wear jewellery not always acknowledging its meaning because the familiarity or routine fades the nuances embedded and displayed in this symbolically charged act and object. Due to this dimension it is advantageous to approach the subject from an interdisciplinary stance. This enables a piece of jewellery, for instance, a pendant, to be rightly viewed as a polymorphous, multilateral and complicated object, which simultaneously articulates the body by physical contact and also through the pendant's iconography – in this case, the image of the Virgin Mary.

The pendants analyzed in my doctoral thesis are secular ones, ranging from artistic and designer items to simple embellishments. Even though my actual research material is grounded in the first half of twentieth-century Finland, geographical and chronological framing is less significant in the scope of this article. Here, by contrast, I aim also beyond the fixed objects of my research and intend to express some thoughts that are the grounding themes for my thesis. I approach these secular pendants bearing the image of the Virgin Mary as *bodily images*. For its wearer, this object is a touching one, and for a beholder, a viewed one. In both instances it thrives on a fundamental conjunction with the human body. *Bodily image* is actually a very descriptive conjunction of words since it makes palpable the essential viewpoints of my approach. For this approach to be constructive, it must incorporate both the physical and iconographical aspects of the objects in question. Hence the challenge here is to explore the idea of this kind of jewellery as

something that operates on both levels – the medium and iconography.

My approach towards these Virgin Mary pendants as bodily images means that they are images which are hollowed of meaning when deprived of a bodily location. It is actually a glaringly obvious but often overlooked fact that most jewellery items in archive photographs stare back at us in desolation, because they are excluded from ethnographical contexts. The photographs illustrating this article underline this very same solitude – none of these jewellery pieces reveal their wearer, and the person observing them is put in an unnatural situation seeing these pendants on lifeless surfaces. Many jewellery items are inherited or passed on for generations, given as tokens of love and devotion. In the view I have adopted here, a Virgin Mary pendant can be seen as a shared tangible space which fades out the effects of absence – both as a medium and an image. A piece of jewellery is homeless without a bodily locus and mute in the context of a museum collection². At the centre of my interest is a setting, in which a Virgin Mary-imaged pendant is passed from one person to another, and thus mediates something essential between these persons.

I ground my research on the concepts of art historian Hans Belting (b. 1935). His academic work ranges from Byzantine art to art anthropology and the ontological issues of the image. According to Belting (2011), images as all-encompassing phenomena are something that *happen* when the mental image collides with the physical picture. Both states require a medium, in this case a jewellery piece and a body. Both the intangible *image* and its physical counterpart, the *picture*, reach toward a bodily domain – the image's medium enables physical contact and also its social existence. Art historian W.J.T. Mitchell (2005, 85) articulates the image as something that can be lifted off the picture – a

² Ildikó Lehtinen, *Korujen sanomat : ovatko korut ylellisyys vai välttämättömyys?*, Helsinki: Suomen muinaismuistoyhdistys, 1995, p. 109.

picture requires support, since it is something that can be hanged on the wall. The image is “intellectual property”, it escapes materiality. “The picture is the image plus the support [...]”³. The body itself becomes a medium for the mental image and plays a solid role in the absence-presence setting. A piece of jewellery is an exceptional form of imagery since it is something to be kept in close contact, revealed or concealed, often continuing the chain of bodily contact when belonging previously to someone else.

When addressing the space between two individuals, loaded with expressed and concealed symbolic meanings, my conceptual backbone is the work of the British paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1896–1971). In his ground-breaking work on the *transitional object*, he also defined the concept of *transitional phenomena*⁴. The concept is meant to complement the usually inadequate conception of human nature. In this insufficient way of thinking, a human being is comprehended as something with an inner reality, a membrane and an outside, including the simultaneous existence of the conscious and the unconscious. Winnicott suggests that “there is an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute”. This partly illusory space at the boundaries of subjective and objective reality is a result of interpsychological dynamics between two

persons and is expandable to groups that may form if they share similar illusory experiences. This experience originates from the early stages in life, when a prominent object occupies a transitional area. Its status as the creation of the individual is both supported and later undone by another person – this object exists in both psychic and external reality. These shapes of reality form a third space to which both of the previous contribute, and it is this third space where creativity and other intricate symbolically charged actions stem from. It might even be said that the complexity of our being is rooted in this demarcation of inner and outer world. These stages of illusion and disillusion set ground for symbols – objects which are or stand in for something. The transitional object eases the (child’s) transition from subjective omnipotence towards external reality, namely through the use of symbols. As a result, a transitional object is something which is both created by the person’s omnipotence fulfilled in his or her inner world, and also exists in objective reality holding a different status in the eyes of other. The struggle between the inner and outer reality is never-ending and its resting place is an illusory experience, which is often expressed in the arts and religion⁵. The transitional or third space is hence something that overlaps the personal and social dimension and is also a place of negotiation and mutual experience.

MEDIATION AND VITALITY OF THE IMAGE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

It may come as a gentle surprise that pendants with the image of Mary are present even in Lutheran Finnish culture. Devotional pictorial practices in Northern Europe remained important for Christian believers, whether Catholic or Protestant, until the late twentieth century⁶. The Virgin Mary is also a continual

3 W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 85.

4 Donald Woods Winnicott, “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena – A Study of the First Not-Me Possession”, in: *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1953, Vol. 34, pp. 89–97. As a paediatrician, Winnicott worked with children and his scholarly output had a strong clinical basis. His concept of the transitional object is associated with both the infant and the mother, and relies upon their mutual relationship. This object can vary from a blanket to a teddy bear and many other items. For the infant, a transitional object can be found in the transitional area between psychic and external reality. The *good enough mother*, also a concept of Winnicott, to some extent supports the infant’s fantasy that the object is his creation, but at a certain point makes it known that it is also an object of external reality.

5 Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, London: Tavistock, 1971, pp. 2–4.

6 Birgit Meyer, “Mediating Absence – Effecting Spiritual

subject of scholarly research worldwide. The history of jewellery extends thousands of years into prehistory. In comparison to this, the image of Mary is quite a recent phenomenon. Mary's image arose along with Christianity, but the continuity of jewellery has a far more distant vanishing point.

At the time of the emergence of the Virgin Mary's cult during the first centuries AD, the traditions of preceding goddesses were not simply discontinued – rather there was a strong tendency of continuity amidst this change. Many of the qualities of pre-Christian goddesses, such as motherhood and virginity, were assimilated into the character of Mary⁷. Along with being defined through her Son, Mary also had an autonomous status, which was based on the dogmatic acknowledgement of her holy – sublime and corporal – motherhood. The holy nature of her motherhood was evidently recognized in the form of theological dogmas concerning her virginity and assumption after death. For the sake of familiarity some features and attributes of preceding pagan goddesses, as well as celebration dates were incorporated into her cult⁸. This palimpsestic constitution of the mother of the Christian God is pivotal as it has continued until this day. It reveals itself through lived religion, where folkloristic contents are appropriated into theology almost seamlessly, rooting the Virgin Mary into local soils as something which has been there for generations, present in collective memory and cultural reality not only as pictures, but also as mental images.

Presence: Pictures and the Christian Imagination", in: *Social Research*, Vol. 78, No. 4, New York: The New School for Social Research, 2011, p. 1039.

- 7 Michael P. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 6–7, 10. Carroll invokes Lewis Farnel (1856–1934), who stated that a virgin-mother in classical mythology is a retrospective contribution of the reading scholar. The only possible virgin-mother might be Cybele.
- 8 Belting, Hans, Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 33–34.

Jewellery items tend to manifest themselves in various disciplines simultaneously lacking depth or not fitting into the purview of art history. In contrast, the Virgin Mary holds a solid and steady position in art historical research traditions. Her images in various mediums are enigmatic combinations of familiarity and shifting of the iconographical figure, in which collective and intimate overlap. As in the case with icons, the spectrum of the Virgin Mary's iconographical names correlate with her theological role in that certain picture⁹. The Virgin Mary's image reflects her inner characteristics and capacities, one of them being her ability to enable the contact between the beholder and the realm of the holy. Mary's capacity to mediate between an individual and God can be viewed as her most crucial potency, which required her active presence for the devotee. The reciprocal setting of the devotional ritual or practice required physical attendance from the addressing person, who reached for the mother of God via her material picture and the devotee's own mental image.

Mary is an *intercessor* and a *mediatrix*¹⁰, which stems from her bodily origins – she gave a body to God through her own body, and hence is *Theotokos*, literally the God-bearer, in the Orthodox tradition. During the early centuries of Christianity, the Virgin Mary's mediating potency was especially called upon in time of death, when passing from this world into the unknown. She was the one who made the transition more bearable and smooth. In lived religion Mary helped the sinners by channelling God's mercy upon them. As time passed, the array of metaphors of Mary expanded, and they emphasized her transitional capacity: a bridge, a ladder and a neck became the Virgin Mary's symbols among many others. She was the locus of connection, an intersection of one realm and

9 *Ibid.*, p. 281.

10 Catherine Oakes, *Ora pro nobis: The Virgin as Intercessor in Medieval Art and Devotion*, London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2008. On more detailed differentiation of *intercessor* and *mediatrix*, see pp. 19–24.

another¹¹. This locus of connection was not only expressed in descriptions of her characteristics, but also verified by iconographical tradition. For example, the iconographical type *Orans*¹² accentuates Mary's mediating potential.

The Virgin Mary's body has been a subject of theological debates, which manifests itself also in classical Mariology. Her body and gender also are of cardinal significance in Mary's relation to the devotees. Elina Vuola points out (2010: 52–53) that Mary is the one who has access to two-way communication – towards God and towards the worshipper. She is the only person dealing with God himself. Her body gave God a human shape and she is the contemplative devotional access to Him and His kingdom. The Virgin Mary is the liminal space between the holy and the secular. This was the source of her worship especially in mystic traditions¹³. Women mystics were the ones dealing with bodily issues, since they took care of the sick and the dying. This was possible due to their gender, their feminine body, which was present and had importance also in their religious experience¹⁴. The Virgin Mary's bodily proximity and presence in transitional circumstances was a dynamic occurrence. It both resulted from and had influence on the tradition of women taking part and being present in a liminal

taboo state, when the body is in transition – birth, death, and sickness. This was and still is the Virgin Mary's universal potency, which also gained local expressions. Also in Finnish incantations¹⁵ she is needed when human strength is crumbling. Mary is the one whose body and soul has endured the birth and loss of her son, and this universal suffering and maternal longing found echo in women's life experience. I might even say that these tormenting aspects of human life are rarely expressed in collective forms other than religious life, which at its richest accommodates both body and soul.

The role of the Virgin Mary became emphasized during and after the World Wars, even in Finnish Lutheran culture where there is generally no dogmatic emphasis on the mother of God. Her image was appropriated to fit the cultural and historical background, which reflected the Virgin Mary's characteristics and potential¹⁶. She gained a local, very specific importance beside the universal status, unfolding her assimilating and adoptive nature. According to Ruutiainen (2012: 171–173), a piece of jewellery has an ontologically narrative dimension, and in the case of Christian imagery probably even more so. We know that the image of Mary, no matter how recent it actually is, dates back more than a thousand years. These images are a part of our collective memory and culture, which is grounded in material mediation. As Hans Belting notes (1996: 11), Christian images intrigue us with their simultaneous absence and presence – though Christianity continues, it has changed. Also the imagery has a different status than centuries ago. Images of the Virgin Mary have remained present even though religion itself has become fragmented opposed to its previous status as

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–24.

¹² In the *Orans* (meaning praying or pleading in medieval Latin) iconographical type Mary holds her hands raised in prayer. It is one of the earliest representational types of the Virgin Mary, rooted in the pre-Christian era. For more details on the type's variations, see: Bissara V. Pentcheva, "The Blachernai Responds. The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle'", in: *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014 (2006), pp. 145–163.

¹³ Elina Vuola, *Jumalainen nainen : Neitsyt Mariaa Etsimässä*, Helsinki: Otava, 2010, pp. 52–53. In this context a mystic tradition refers to forms of emotional spirituality, which began in the eleventh century. It had an effect, for instance, on religious language, which gained more feminine expressions. There was a strong emphasis on the significance on the Virgin Mary, and ecstatic motherhood became a pivotal form of religious manifestation in women's devotion.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

¹⁵ On Finnish incantations, see: Senni Timonen, "Karjalan naisten Maria-epos", in: *Runo, alue, merkitys: kirjoitukset vanhan kansanrunon alueellisesta muotoutumisesta*, Toim. Pekka Hakamies, Joensuu: Joensuun yliopisto, 1990, pp. 111–148, Martti Haavio, *Suomalaisia legenduja ja rukouksia*, Helsinki: Suomen kirja, 1946.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

the life-defining system of beliefs. These images have a somehow adhering nature – even though they might be unrecognized these days, they remain a part of surrounding imagery and hold their familiar state.

An individual's mental image of Mary may be very vague and varying on the personal level, but it nevertheless tends to be recognizable in the collective sphere. These mental images tend to get loaded with personal meanings and may differ from the collective image. And so the representational object, the Virgin Mary, occurs as an image somewhere in the intersection or overlapping of psychic and external reality, in which the pendants also exist.

IN BETWEEN

Even though inner reality is often more challenging to address, external reality is in this case also wavering and manifold. External reality is something more tangible, like the pendant, but perception always brings it back toward the inner one. The pendant, even though with a collectively recognizable image, is a personal item reaching towards both the wearing and the beholding body. Objects, such as works of art, constitute our social existence. Through such things that we mutually consider quite real, we share mutual ideas, spaces and even emotions. I dare to say that we need these real objects to make our abstract and inconstant inner existence more coherent and possible to grasp. Beside the pendant's image, the physical act of wearing it is of great importance. Physical touch is essential in the Christian tradition both in private and liturgical devotional practices¹⁷. Touch and gaze are problematic phenomena – both in life and in religion they are strategic. One of the strategies of gaze is the underlying promise of touch, because seeing has an element

of desire. It leads potentially to physical touch, but religious, pious gaze is initially a touching one¹⁸. The material image is an interface, at which the beholder's mental image touches the holy via personal bodily and material mediation. Following this path of thoughts it may be said that jewellery is profoundly completing or fulfilling, because it actualizes something we desire. The pendant's touch is real, something that cannot be achieved by the symbolical use of images. It is a bodily image. Images used in Christian contexts have always been a part of multi-sensorial environments and an essential part of life¹⁹. They are interfaces between devotees and God's Kingdom, but the pendants are also interfaces between mortals.

Transitional phenomena as meant by Winnicott widely embrace the questions of creativity, culture and religion. According to Winnicott, the basis of our capacity for a symbolic function stems from the early-stage transitional phenomena. In his view, the crucial matter in symbolism originated from the transitional value of the transitional object itself – its ability to stand in for something or someone. The use of transitional objects is a step toward the development of symbolic function. Real objects as well as experiences can be mediums for similar subjective intentions and significances, and due to that they can take on a symbolic dimension²⁰. As William Meissner beautifully puts it, "The symbolic quality of such experiences and objects participates in the intermediate realm of illusion, which is compounded from elements of external

¹⁷ Béatrice Caseau, "The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation", in: *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages, 500–1450*, Richard Newhauser, ed., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014, pp. 89–110.

¹⁸ David Morgan, *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012, pp. 111–112; Idem, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*, Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005, p. 48.

¹⁹ Béatrice Caseau, "The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation", in: *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages, 500–1450*, Richard Newhauser, ed., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014, pp. 89–110.

²⁰ Meissner, William W., "Religious Thinking as Transitional Conceptualization", in: *Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 79, New York: Guilford Press, 1992, pp. 178–180.

reality intermingled with subjective attributions that express the human capacity to create meaning. [...] The symbolic act, therefore, unites, not only several degrees of reality (matter and spirit), but several levels of human reality (conscious and unconscious, individual and social)”²¹. The human attempt to see beyond the immediate to the level of deeper significance becomes crystallized in the symbolic dimension²².

Winnicott’s almost poetic notions can be smoothly extended to the realm of religious practices. Religion enters life in the form of material symbols, which mediate the relations between persons and abstract systems. Images are fundamental mediators; they are interfaces and objects of belief. Religious contents are fulfilled through images, but it is not only religion that can transcend its essence via pictures and images. Non-religious images accomplish the aims of religious imagery just as well – they also communicate, embody and influence, to put it briefly²³. Even in the case of a picture from the Christian tradition, Christianity does not have exclusive control over the mental image attached to it on the personal and collective level. A pendant with Mary’s image is most likely to become charged with more personal interpretations and significance when seen as a symbolic expression between two persons. This is due to the fact that it is a more personal item than a work of art on a church wall – even though such works can be approached in extremely intimate ways as well. The Virgin Mary pendant oscillates and confuses with its deceiving simplicity. Beyond the personal it undoubtedly has collective meanings as a bond between those who share the same beliefs and use the same or similar imagery.

A person has an impulse to “give relation to the universe”, as Laura Praglin aptly paraphrases the

philosopher Martin Buber²⁴. According to Morgan (2012: 84), interaction with spirits, ancestors and other powers becomes tangible and comprehensible through objects and their mediation. Engaging the senses has a pivotal impact. In her article about the senses in religion, Béatrice Caseau quotes the philosopher Henri Bergson, who stated that “there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses, we mingle a thousand details of our past experience”²⁵. As a medium, an item of jewellery is present to its wearer on a very physical level and may linger in the gaze of another party. In this constellation, the pendant-medium is present through touch and through visuality. However, besides this, it can be something that previously belonged to someone else or has been received as a gift, in which case the presence of the item has even more gravity since it carries the reminiscence of someone else’s skin and body. All of this combined with the multifaceted image of the Virgin Mary leads towards a simultaneously melancholic and consoling constellation.

By means of its medium the Virgin Mary is in the same physical space as the pendant’s wearer. This kind of an object presents an ontological paradox – the medium embeds presence while simultaneously the very object of its representation is absent²⁶. The Virgin Mary is present in a pendant with her image, while she is not physically there – presence is a matter of belief. Also the person to whom the pendant belonged to or was given by is present while actually being

²⁴ Laura Praglin, “The Nature of the ‘In-Between’ in D. W. Winnicott’s Concept of Transitional Space and in Martin Buber’s *das Zwischenmenschliche*” in: *Universitas*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2006, p. 5. Retrieved from: www.uni.edu/universitas/archive/fallo6/pdf/art_praglin.pdf

²⁵ Béatrice Caseau, “The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation”, in: *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages, 500–1450*, Richard Newhauser, ed., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014, p. 91.

²⁶ Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2011, pp. 19–20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

²² *Ibid.*, 181–182

²³ David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*, Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005, p. 55.

lost or away. It is not only in religious contexts that pictures embody simultaneous absence and presence. A pendant also reminds of our own body by breaking its transparency by contact, and also reminds of someone else's body by standing in place of its absence.

The twofold essence, image and picture, raise a question about the internalization of images, of how we embody them into ourselves. Through mental images we invest collective ones with personal meaning which adds to them an undeniable gravity. This is when the body reveals its capacity to function as a living medium²⁷. The inner image is probably the key to the vitality of the Virgin Mary's image. And even though the meanings of religious images are strongly collective, the pendants are charged with personal depth due to their bodily use. Both the medium and its image, Mary, have strong bodily emphasis, which may underlie their endurance. The Virgin Mary, whose role in lived religion carries a strong, universal accent of femininity and motherhood in all its melancholy, is a strong image embodied within us, and we recognize its physical counterparts. Her picture as a pendant is such a counterpart, which is empowered by physical contact, thus being reminiscent of Mary's attendance in liminal states. The pendant itself brings the physical body into contact with inner reality by touching the wearer's skin – this carries a strong resemblance to the function of the devotional image of Mary.

But let us return to the idea of a Virgin Mary pendant received from someone close as a gift or an inheritance. In the latter case the contact of both parties is sustained and lingers on: through this mediating item the physical contact is shared in an illusory manner. The pendant itself, as well as its image, is something far more continuous and lasting than a single human existence. Historically speaking, the pendant is an object type that predates the concept of art, and is in its nature highly functional. It is something

simultaneously both inner and yet real, in the sense of being external, beyond the bodily membrane. It exists socially and also individually, and its symbolical meaning also has this dualistic nature. The Virgin Mary is a part of collective consciousness – but nevertheless it gets invested with personal significance due to Mary's psychological capacity, which navigates seamlessly between the universal and individual dimension of lived experience. Following the path of Winnicott's ideas, this pendant is neither a singularly internal or external object. An internal object would be solely a mental concept, unreal to others. An external object would be totally beyond control, beyond the illusory state of inner reality. The pendant is a possession and, as such, it requires certain dynamics to become this functional image in a medium²⁸. It is a mutual symbol, but it may still mediate separate meanings. It may stand in place of an absent someone or even be that someone, layered with the symbolical gamut of the image of Mary. As symbols in general, the pendant separates and marks the outside from the inside and has an amorphous effect towards the inner.

This mediating wavering motion between the inner and the external is an intermediate area of experience. According to Winnicott (1971, 18–19), "the task of reality acceptance is never completed", and this illusory state is a relief from the strain of relating the inner and outer reality. In this intermediate area lie the roots of the fragile and constantly recurrent relation between an individual and the world. The relation between an individual and something abstract – in the sense of something that is spatially intangible – is constituted quite strongly through material means. In the case of religious experience, images and objects have always been crucial. Scholars of archaeology and anthropology, just to give an example, have proven jewellery to be something historically and socially significant. In the field of art history jewellery is quite absent – there

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16.

²⁸ Donald Woods Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, London: Tavistock, 1971, pp. 8–13.

is something about these objects, which might be apparent and simultaneously difficult to grasp. Putting on a necklace is an act that comes in disguise: the origin of the ritual is lost even though, or because it has been repeated for as long as history itself. There is an undeniable continuity in the physical aspect, and wearing jewellery can be a fragile thread, which weaves coherence into spatial instability. By wearing their mother's or grandmother's pendants, women take part in the solace of continuity and share by means of the medium something which is otherwise lost or impossible – touch.

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JAUDINANTIS STYGIUS:

MERGELĖS MARIJOS PAKABUČIAI
KAIP KŪNO ĮVAIZDŽIAI

Živilė Meškauskaitė

SANTRAUKA

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: juvelyrika, Mergelės Marijos paveikslas, mediumas, tranzitinė erdvė.

Straipsnis yra mėginimas suformuluoti galimą tarpusavio santykių erdvę déka papuošalų – suomiškų pakabučių su Mergelės Marijos atvaizdais. Šie daiktai užima tranzitinę erdvę ir integruoja dalykus, kurie kitokiais būdais yra nepasiekiami. Tyrinėtoja artėja prie tyrimo objekto iš antropologinės žiūros taško ir rašo apie tarp dviejų asmenų simboliškai susiformavusią erdvę kaip tranzitinę iš psichanalitinės erdvės pozicijos. Už akademinių tyrimų ribų į papuošalus galėtų būti žiūrima kaip į socialiai simbolišką ir

estetinį dalyką. Jie dominuoja mūsų atmintyje, kai regime vestvių žiedus, apyrankes ir karolius. Natūrali mūsų būties dalis yra kažkas, kas natūraliai laikosi mūsų kūno. Taigi juvelyrika yra iš tiesų gyvybinga, brangi ir vertinga, kuri tuo pačiu priklauso ir skonio sferai. Juvelyriniai dirbiniai galėtų turėti tik emocinį arba sentimentalų reikšmingumą, kas skatina jų naudojimą. Šis tekstas analizuojant priežastis, kodėl tam tikri papuošalai yra potencialiai gyvybingi ir svarbūs.

Pakabutis, gautas dovanų iš artimojo arba paveldėtas, yra kažkas tēstinio, trunkančio ilgiau nei žmogiškoji egzistencija. Jis taip pat yra kažkas vidinio ir kartu realaus, apčiuopiamo, egzistuoja socialiai ir individualiai, o jo simbolinė reikšmė turi dvigubą prigimtį. Tęsiant Donaldo Winnicott idėjas, pakabutis nėra vien vidinis, bet nėra ir vien išorinis dalykas. Jeigu būtų tik vidinis, tai būtų tik mentalinė koncepcija, nepanaši į kitas. Išorinis objektas būtų visiškai nekontroliuojamas – už iliuzinės sąmonės ribų. Pagal Winnicottą, realybės suvokimo užduotis niekada nėra užbaigama. Ir šita iliuzinė kondicija yra sušvelnintinas įtampos, siejančios vidinę ir išorinę realybę.

Archeologijos mokytojai ir antropologija duoda pavyzdį ir įrodo, kad papuošalai yra istoriškai ir socialiai reikšmingi meno istorijoje. Tačiau jų istorija yra ganėtinai „tuščia“: joje yra tai, kas labai akivaizdu ir kartu sunkiai sugriebiamas. Puošimasis karoliais – tai tarsi apsimetimo, užsislėpimo kitu aktas, kurio kilmės ritualas yra prarastas, nežiūrint į tai, kad jis buvo kartojamas ilgą laiką. Nešiodamos mamų ar močiučių pakabučius, moterys dalyvauja tame tēstinumo ir dalijimosi procese, nors ritualo reikšmė yra prarasta.