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# Head jewellery – a theory of the theory of jewellery

Entries missing from dictionaries often make just as strong a statement as those contained in such works. One would seek in vain in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* [Historical Dictionary of Philosophy] or any other standard philosophical reference works for the headword 'jewellery'.<sup>2</sup> At first glance, that is hardly surprising. Jewellery would seem to have so little to do with thinking, let alone with philosophical cogitation, that *SchmuckDenken* [ThinkingJewellery] can stand as an original name for an original conference. However, everything looks entirely different at second glance. This second glance reveals that philosophical thinking – at least in the West, which is our sole concern here – from its pre-Socratic beginnings developed in close association with 'jewellery' and has only gradually freed itself from that association. This unadorned thinking, however, has undergone a crisis – renewed encounters with jewellery might reveal escape routes from this crisis.

### The birth of philosophical thinking from the spirit of adornment

As everyone is only too aware, Western philosophy began with the philosophers known as the Presocratics:<sup>3</sup> Greek thinkers in the then newly settled coastal areas of Asia Minor and southern Italy who managed to look behind the horizons of their own culture so that they were able to formulate thoughts on the origin or the cause of all things (*ἀρχὴ πάντων: archē pántōn*). The corresponding question of where everything comes from and in what everything consists, of course creates problems. One is how to answer the question. With 'water', 'air', 'fire', etc ...? Another problem and one that is not in the slightest easier to answer is how the question should be asked at all. At the time investigated by the Presocratics there was not yet a standardised expression for that 'all'.<sup>4</sup> Instead of such an expression, enumerations of the various parts of the world (e.g. sky, earth, water) circulated along with generalising adjectives such as 'the whole' and, naturally, 'all', which remain devoid of content. Our expression 'world' designates a specific term, as polysemic as it may be. From the lack of an expression of that kind before the Presocratics it can be inferred that there was no corresponding term before those philosophers. With their query about the 'Origin of all things', the Presocratics were, therefore, not trying to explain something which in and of itself was probably already well known. On the contrary, what they also wanted, and were primarily concerned with, was finding a term for something that did not yet have one.

How is such a thing possible? In the line of reasoning Ludwig Wittgenstein advanced against the possibility of a private language, he demonstrated:<sup>5</sup> efforts to grasp what has previously escaped comprehension must always link up with what has already been understood and the way it is expressed in language. With this, a realisation is linked in each case that what has not yet been understood is already implicitly contained in what has been but has not yet been recognised

as such. Hence it is necessary to find a link in one's own language, whatever that may be, and the culture associated with it. The Presocratics found that link in – jewellery.

In so doing, they were not seizing on a peripheral phenomenon of their time but landed, as it were, right in the cultural mainstream of their era. Presocratic philosophy became established in the early sixth century BC. As art and artefacts attest, that century especially, like the early fifth century BC, is notable in the Greek cultural landscape for 'enthusiasm for jewellery'.<sup>6</sup> Top quality jewellery products of that time include wreaths and diadems. Such pieces of jewellery were not only worn as ornaments; they were definitely also used in ecstatic cult rituals in which the meaningful presence of the divine was manifest.<sup>7</sup> For the Presocratics, this head jewellery became the paradigm of beautiful and useful structures which they believed they recognised in what was large and whole – that is, in what we today call 'world'. That is why they gave what was thus designated the name that had previously been used in Greek for jewellery: *kosmos*.<sup>8</sup>

At that time, this word was certainly polysemic. It was used not just for jewellery but also for 'order', in particular orderly, decorous conduct.<sup>9</sup> However, a passage in Heraclitus that is considered obscure documents the deliberate application of the word *kosmos* to jewellery, thus consciously attaining bold metaphorical usage.<sup>10</sup> There it says the *kosmos* was created neither by men nor gods. The most surprising thing about this statement is the first part of it. Seriously, who would have believed more than two and a half millennia before *The Matrix* that this world was created by human beings (or by their machines that had got out of control)? This passage becomes less puzzling, however, when the original meaning of *kosmos* is borne in mind. Jewellery is, and there is no way round this, primarily something that is made: in the sphere of concrete experience by human beings and in the realm of myth by gods. Just because philosophical thinking was so closely aligned with jewellery, it had to divest itself of undesired associations linked with it.

Why, then, did the Presocratics even resign themselves to using the word *kosmos* if it might occasionally turn out to be so ambiguous? Evidently because its usefulness far outweighed its drawbacks, i.e. because they could express the object of their studies with this word rather than with any other.<sup>11</sup> They wanted to understand 'all' from its origins as a – however relative and dynamic – entity, which ran through the widest variety of experiential fields as their immanent structure; as the entity of a cogently coherent, hence also beautiful, structure, a beautiful structure that elicited amazement through its holistic character. All that is in the word as the Presocratics used it and even more so in the cultural reality shown in the jewellery of their time. Even though their explanations for the world seem in part very mechanistic: it is a beautiful, astonishingly ornamental mechanism they are describing.<sup>12</sup>

World is, in Presocratic thinking, imaginable as a beautifully structured entity, that is, primarily through the conceptual link with jewellery. Thus was linked a

coincidence of opposites which had previously existed in the various individually designated parts of the world. These opposites could now be understood as the different parts of one and the same structure. A coincidence of opposites of this kind generates for those who experience it – and what is more, actively produce through their own conceptual work – an overwhelming feeling of beauty.<sup>13</sup> Hence the Presocratics not only speak of beautiful jewellery or, with its aid, about the world; they also experienced their own thinking as a manifestation of that beauty. Through that thinking they succumbed – at least in the estimation of their successors<sup>14</sup> – to the intoxication of the beautiful, jewel-like cosmic order they recognised.

### The gradual separation of jewellery from philosophical thinking

Presocratic thinking was called into question down through the history of philosophy and, with it, the link between jewellery and philosophy overall. It was dissolved by two crises: the Eleatic-Socratic crisis and the Cartesian crisis.

The Eleatic-Socratic crisis (fifth century BC) begins with the insight that perception is not always trustworthy and that critical thinking must, therefore, keep a safe distance to the experience built on that perception. Detachment of that kind is, however, only possible if the fascination emanated by perceived beauty can no longer enthrall. That is why the Eleatic philosopher Parmenides complains of 'buzzing ears' and 'dazzled eyes'<sup>15</sup> and wants to occupy himself henceforward only with what is thinkable as truly existing rather than with what is sensorily perceptible.<sup>16</sup> Socrates in the Platonic dialogues provides another plausible motive for this momentous change in thinking:<sup>17</sup> drunk on beauty, the Presocratics not only created a system for explaining the world but also propounded several theories, contradictory ones, for each of which it was claimed that it was entirely empirical. In view of this confusion, Socrates took 'refuge in thought (or dialogue)'.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, the object of philosophical observation is no longer unmediatedly the – sensorily experienceable – world; what is now at stake are statements about this world. In those statements the deceptive beauty of the *kosmos* is only reflected in a watered-down form, like a solar eclipse, which can be potentially blinding when reflected in a puddle so that it can, therefore, be viewed without the threatening loss of reflection potential. In the self-preoccupied thinking, another world is even discernible, a purely imaginary *kosmos* with a different kind of other-worldly beauty. Thus the world, as far as philosophy is concerned, is split into a sensorily perceptible version and one that can only be grasped in thought. In this way philosophical thinking has further distanced itself from the beginnings of the use of the word *kosmos* – from a sensorily experienceable, ecstatic and unobjective handling of jewellery.

Aristotle in particular subsequently attempted to make amends by emphasising that the content of the conceivable world, the 'ideas' or 'forms', were to be

encountered in fact in the sensory world, specifically as the basic pattern of living beings sustained over time and space.<sup>19</sup> However, that thinking caused philosophy to once again abandon jewellery since thenceforward what counted as the primary key to understanding the world was no longer a cultural product but rather the biological sphere, the natural environment with its flora and fauna. The Stoic school of philosophy did renew the Presocratic talk of the world as a beautiful, really divine, order. That order was now, however, exemplified by the soul adorned with virtues rather than jewellery in the narrower sense of the term, to which no particular value could be conceded because it was a physical object.<sup>20</sup> In late antiquity Neoplatonism did resort to the use of metaphors from the field of architecture, notably temple architecture, thus retrospectively referring to the ecstatic-religious origins of the talk of *kosmos*, but ceaselessly emphasised that the essential was played out in a supersensory, purely spiritual, indeed supraspiritual sphere.<sup>21</sup>

The alliance between philosophical thinking and jewellery, was not, therefore, re-established in the same way after the Eleatic-Socratic crisis. In addition, rhetoric usurped the keyword 'jewellery', using it to mean 'stylistic devices' in the service of politically oriented persuasion – and not the formation of philosophical conviction. SchmuckDenken and, what is more, flowery oratory, came to be in the province of the competition rhetoric, rather than philosophy. Rhetoric, in turn, became in late antiquity the domain of Christian theology as speaking with flourishes about God, which also appropriated the keyword *kosmos*.<sup>22</sup>

The already loosened link between jewellery and philosophy was entirely destroyed in the Cartesian crisis. In the seventeenth century René Descartes sought for an absolutely irrefutable basis for solid knowledge in the face of numerous competing philosophical, religious and political stances.<sup>23</sup> To lay bare this foundation, he used the tool of methodical doubt: he revoked all convictions whose validity he could rationally question. Among those convictions were first all those conveyed via sensory perception. The senses can deceive and in individual cases there is no certainty about whether they might not be doing so again. Moreover, our conviction that we live in a world that can be sensorily perceived might prove to be a deliberately induced deception. Descartes believed, therefore, that the certainty he sought could only be found in the existence of the doubting ego, which was always thinking and doubting so that it could not cast rational doubt on the conviction 'cogito, ergo sum'. The existence – and with it also all the beauty – of the external world, not to mention that of the jewellery found in it, remained at first excluded as dubious until Descartes was able to be sure of it again, albeit in a problematic way: since he found pre-existing in himself the idea of God as an infinite being, he concluded from this the existence of God because such an idea could only be endowed by a God that really existed. If God existed as an infinite being, then he would also be good because he would be lacking nothing and, because good, he would also be truthful. Thus God becomes an epistemological policeman safeguarding us from being deceived



in our fundamental insights. For Descartes, however, those insights were mathematical. Hence the external world again became reliably comprehensible because it could be mathematically modelled. That is why this world came to lose the character of a kosmos in the Early Modern age.<sup>24</sup>

As a model, jewellery had, therefore, been detached from the paradigm of mathematical structures. The empirical beauty of jewellery no longer played an unmediated role in philosophical thinking. As what cannot be grasped in mathematical terms, beauty, moreover, as a whole – and that includes beautiful jewellery as well – subsequently became the opposite of philosophical thinking. Just because philosophical thinking is constituted in the withdrawal into itself, it experiences itself as outstanding, i.e. as sublime, and incisively distinguishes in the aesthetics of an Edmund Burke<sup>25</sup> and an Immanuel Kant<sup>26</sup> between the sublimity of thinking and beauty, which is embedded in the sensory world and therefore tends to be uninteresting because it is at best the mere appearance of a moral order. Nietzsche did, linking up again with the Presocratics, attempt to justify the world as an aesthetic phenomenon yet this was done as a 'Dionysian' countervailing force against Western thinking, which had by then become entirely bereft of adornment.<sup>27</sup>

### Now what?

The word 'jewellery' derives from Greek *kosmos* and does so in two senses: first, as a piece of jewellery, later as *kosmos*, the world in the form of an adorned whole. Jewellery was, like the world, a miniature version of delight in life, and life was lived joyously then, at least more matter-of-factly than it is today. That state of affairs remained until thinking changed and people distressed each other and let themselves be so distressed that their thinking changed.

It became necessary to think increasingly abstractly and at some point in the so-called Modern Age people began to rationalise. That had consequences and they are shown, for instance, in the fact that European monarchs put aside their wigs and their jewels and ordered the gold leaf to be struck off their palaces.

And not only did the gold quota sink. Art, too, became increasingly unadorned, meaning: art was at some time no longer wall adornment but rather art in the modern sense: provocative and critical and nonconformist and so forth – modern, albeit anything but beautiful.

The beginnings of modern thinking can be traced, like the beginnings of modern art, back to somewhere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At some point then everyone began to ogle things such as beauty in art or aesthetics and in the shadow of this development, individuality and self-actualisation. Such psychological phenomena flourished – and the word 'beauty' declined. By the twentieth century things had reached the point that the word 'beauty' played no role in theory or in mundane praxis (replaced, however, by the uniformity of nonconformity). That's what it says in the annals of art history.

### The question arises: how does this story continue?

As far as the word 'beauty' is concerned, some things have changed. Beauty is booming at the moment, not only at theoretical events but also at book launches and art exhibitions. In everyday life beauty has become a real menace for anyone who doesn't look like Kate Moss or Superman. It has become entirely normal to starve oneself to a skeleton or to undergo plastic surgery for beauty's sake. By now there are even clubs that decide membership on the basis of aesthetic criteria. Beauty has come to be equated with achievement or inner values. And that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago because it is seriously politically incorrect. Like talking about beauty, which not all that long ago was regarded as antiquated or even fascist. Beauty is booming again. Even though no one can say what it actually is.

Dürer said long ago that he could not state what beauty was and even he was not the first to do so. Opinions on beauty are legion and beauty is something different to each era. What Rubens found beautiful about buxom females wouldn't have made it past the preliminaries on *Germany's Next Top Model*. What our neighbours think is beautiful music often sounds pretty awful to us. If the police call to force the neighbours to turn it off, we are pleased but the neighbours aren't. And as far as opinions on the beauty of jewellery are concerned, there is no need to even leave home. When a mother and daughter cannot agree whether jewellery is there for the purpose of replaying the Walt Disney version of *Cinderella*, the chasm between the various definitions of beauty yawns deep indeed.

The above and other differences of opinion are one of several problems facing anyone attempting to define beauty, let alone jewellery.

Another problem is that it is allegedly impossible to speak about beauty because there are some experiences that defy description. Such experiences can at best be felt but cannot be rationally grasped, hence cannot be really put into words: flowery waffle, certainly, but definitely no theoretical examination. Bad for a theory of jewellery and bad for designers. After all, they are supposed to construct what is called in psychology a sense of beauty, but how are they to do this?

For this description problem there would be a systematic theoretical paradigm of aesthetic perception or the sense of beauty. That model of human information processing functions, to put it precisely, like a blueprint of the human soul, like a master-detail in artificial intelligence programming. The paradigm in question comes from an institute for theoretical psychology devoted to the creation of artificial intelligence on the basis of psychological structures, with which it can boast greater success than the IT experts, who aren't so keen on such things as art and the like.

This model integrates the alleged indescribability of beauty and describes it as the necessary half of human information processing. The other half consists in words, and beauty can be talked about with them if one only knows how,

namely, with the aid of psychology: beauty is then called intuitive pattern recognition with high resolution and a low selection threshold, to be divided into discrete levels ranging from fascination to ecstasy.<sup>28</sup> Sounds indeed rather functionalist but it does show that beauty can be talked about. And the paradigm also shows, on the basis of beauty, how the human psyche functions. For beauty is important, very much so. Human beings need beautiful things. And if, for whatever reasons, a person can no longer find anything beautiful, that person falls ill. Not as acutely ill as when one has flu or been through a car crash but one does fall ill and that illness can even be terminal. Beauty is, therefore, a sort of fuel for the human psyche. Beauty is the pivotal concept of human consciousness. No consciousness and no proverbial humane soul without beauty.

Beauty is, therefore, just about the most important concept related to humanity. It is closely followed by the concept of affiliation, that is, something like a feeling of community. Such feelings are induced in two ways, either via a community or via everything that is not communal. Observers of sublime things such as mountains or oceans are a classic example of non-communally oriented seekers of affiliation feelings. Viewers of art works or designer jewellery also belong to this category. Affiliation with a prospect of feedback through something communal (such as other people) or affiliation without any prospect of personal feedback (for instance, in the case of mountain massifs or surf): those are the two possibilities for empathic fusion with whatever might be concerned. Highly problematic for a theory of uniformity: both possibilities function via their own language of forms. It is clear that communal values are communicated by standardised symbols or the like but so are individualistic values. So much for the debate about uniformity! The only question left to raise is the one about the faces of overt or covert uniformity. Again, a difficult matter for designers, in this case because their education has, for various reasons, consistently eschewed rationally orientated knowledge in the form of philosophy, social theory or ethics, partly because, when the relevant course curricula were drawn up, such subjects were not deemed necessary and partly because there has not hitherto been any orientation course and best not speak of the other reasons. So designers are also educated, even in their complete training course, to feel but not to speak, let alone think. Psychologists call their thinking, when they even bestow the accolade of the term 'thinking' on this mindset, 'the logic of aesthetics' – and, *entre nous*: psychologists with a rationalistic bias mean by that more or less the absolute opposite of logic and common sense.<sup>29</sup>

The above paradigm does show, on the other hand, that the logic of aesthetic feelings of psychology, however one may choose to evaluate it, is only one side of their systems-theory coin. Not only does every designer but every person in fact needs both for mundane psychological reasons and, from the standpoint of systems theory, both sides of consciousness, the rational and the 'other'. Even every psychologist needs both. Or one becomes at best a blinkered specialist. Or one becomes frustrated or melancholy. Or bored. Or one's own work becomes

tedious, both for oneself and for the viewer. Or one becomes schizophrenic and megalomaniac. All these phenomena occur on the middle level (of three) of the sense of beauty. And symptomatically always tend to seek to pinpoint conceptually the momentary state, be it in the form of bathetic poetry or specialist conferences – which doesn't mean to say that all participants in symposia such as SchmuckDenken at Idar-Oberstein are bored or megalomaniac. After all, in principle, it's always everyone else who's mad. Whatever: everything that takes place in the way of creative ordering in this field is nowadays branded 'creative' and, therefore, dogmatically and traditionally, 'individual', meaning nonconformist. But it isn't. The formulae for intuitive discovery of patterns in this field are absolutely conformist and, no matter how individual they pretend to be, they are so conformist that in turn things again begin to be boring.

Unfortunately, that also holds for some of the texts on jewellery design. How could it be otherwise: all texts on every sort of design yield more or less wholly to this logic-of-aesthetics process of creative pattern invention. And jewellery especially does have certain characteristic qualities that make it difficult to write about anything other than the aesthetic aspect of it. For jewellery is, like art, more or less non-utilitarian and non-functional. Car or furniture designers at least design something one can drive or use for stowing away one's keys, but jewellery?

And that would leave us again stuck at the same problem. As has already been said, being only on the middle one of the three levels of a sense of beauty is not to be recommended. That's true here too: do you know what happens to the minuscule artificial intelligences at the Bamberg Institute for Psychology when they get too involved with their aesthetic perception?

Put simply: over the medium term they fade away, like the designers. Too much aesthetic perception of the self or empathy with oneself makes one blind for others – with the corresponding negative consequences. Empathy with others and the capacity for seeing something other than the self result in positive consequences and are, therefore, regarded (to a certain extent) as a sign of intelligence. It's like the difference between Göring and the Dalai Lama. Incidentally, both of them great fans of gemstones, who daily ran them through their fingers or still do. Thus traits in common with, concomitantly, great differences in the appraisal of roast pork or humanity, let alone humorous detachment from the self and one's work.

As for today's designers at a far remove from the great doings in the world, it can be contended that their best security, their privilege of being permitted to preoccupy themselves with such a pure aesthetic, can become their most effective caltrop.

For fairness' sake, it should, however, be said that not only designers but their competitors as well are beset with this problem of unilateral thinking: academics hawk rational learning and increasingly specialise. That leads to the same symptoms but with a different indication: in both cases it results in drowning in

individual items of information that cannot be subsumed under any single term. That is the information theory definition of schizophrenia, in both cases. Either too many aesthetic stimuli without rational appraisal or too many rational items of information devoid of emotion. Both go wrong. And in fact in the same way, no matter whether the items of information to be processed tend to be standardised or individual or academic or aesthetic. So the texts of academics and designers are not only tellingly similar; the consequences of the world views associated with them, whether standardised or individual, designer or psychologist, academic or non-academic, are the same. By now there are hardly any descriptions of the level three sense of beauty, of beauty and meaning. And that means in fact: where there are fewer such descriptions, there is also highly likely to be less meaningfulness and happiness. But more and more psychopaths. And people looking for the meaning of life. Actually a logical consequence. The new debate about beauty and the fact that conferences such as SchmuckDenken are indications of a new quest for meaning – in the form of beauty, in the form of the proverbial real beauty and a new combination of rational knowledge and knowledge based on the logic of aesthetics.

In fact, just the right time for designers to work out a theory, now that the term 'beauty', as we have said, is again socially acceptable. In addition, abstract art is currently losing more and more points to concrete representationality. In parallel, the designers' market value is suddenly just as high as the artists' used to be.

At the same time, the rationalism that was branded here at the beginning as the inspiriting daemon of the ancient idea of jewellery has lost a great deal of ground. The school system has deteriorated, no one reads books anymore and everywhere there is so much visual input that there is no longer any room for intellectual input. Bad for writers, great for designers. Especially for those who still read and think, hence enjoy a massive market edge.

What all that means is:

- 1) Now is not only just the right time for a theory of jewellery but also:
- 2) Now is just the right time for the original definition of jewellery as 'kosmos'. The holistic view is once again in demand and more important than it has been for a long time, a grand alliance of word and aesthetics or, in other words, of meaningfulness, or in yet other words, of beauty. That is easy to prove, not only with specific mundane phenomena but also with systems theory.
- 3) As has already been shown, it is in fact not even relevant how individual or standardised the pieces of jewellery concerned are. Apart from the fact that both forms function similarly in systems theory, society today does not leave all too many options. For nowadays society consists by definition of nothing but individualists, masses of them, almost by now a uniform mass of individualists. That can be evaluated or perceived as one chooses: all individualists as well as all conformists are looking for the same thing: a sense of beauty at the highest level, according to the paradigm, level three. Then there are

various ways of living out this emotion: conformists as a rule prefer very loud reactions, which are commonly known as ecstasy; individualists tend to like it quieter. But what both have in common is: both are seeking beauty, meaning, soul and happiness.

Hence three ingredients are recommended for the theory of jewellery sought here: a scientific basis and a philosophy with values extrinsic to pure aesthetics and both translated to the concrete object, an experiment in beauty, meaning, soul and happiness.

- 1) The scientific basis is intended to mediate between various discourses, a linkage of natural sciences, the arts and humanities *and* aesthetics.
- 2) Philosophy is intended to place ethical values along the continuum between Göring and the Dalai Lama and I recommend clearly close to the latter because: if Western philosophy, modern psychology and common sense are right, their soul and their design probably function better if they are at least somewhat nicer and less culture-vulturish about art than Göring.
- 3) As far as the objects of design and each concrete piece of jewellery are concerned: each concrete act for beauty, meaning, soul and happiness frees the designer from being caught up in the unresolvable impasse between the necessity for a good philosophy and the waffle associated with it. Also similar is the relativity of standardisation and individuality. Each piece of jewellery made in the above mentioned way, i.e. with thinking, feeling and humanity – let us call it with mind, heart and backbone – with a feeling that, for correctness' sake may not be named, each piece of jewellery like that is good. With the possible exception of knuckledusters. If you as a designer have worked out what beauty, meaning, soul and happiness mean to you and inject that into your work, then the result is a blend of rationality and the logic of aesthetics – which is necessary for something really good/new. You have to know what you really want and not just in jewellery but also in life. You should actually know what you should want.

When you combine these three components, you have a viable theory of jewellery and at the same time an instruction for jewellery that adorns the kosmos and is itself a kosmos. Thus the flowery periphrasis.

Put in psychological terms, the linkage of ratiocination and what are known as affiliation concepts, that is, in plain English, communal thinking, is the premise for intrinsic motivation. It in turn enables you to experience specific levels of the feeling for beauty, which again make it possible for you to be happy people – and also to give your clientele a piece of that happiness. To go back to the beginning: jewellery at first served a basic orientation in the world and today is still contributing to the good life, for designers and their clientele. A feeling for that good life is the quality criterion in any design theory, not the number of words it encom-

passes. For a theory like that you really don't need many words, just the right words – and the jewellery to match. If you can do that, you are creating an entirely new kind of jewellery that transcends the current possibilities of jewellery, a sort of talisman of the new thinking – for that is where this new linkage of values, theory and aesthetic is headed. But something of that kind is important; real beauty is important. So that is why your work is also important, according to the current opinion of a woman who is a psychologist, and, after all, pretty much everything psychologists have to say is believed nowadays.

For important things are important. For a very long time jewellery was a purposeless translation of aesthetics, something very beautiful. Thus the definition of recent years. Aesthetics as sublimity that may not be named was, for instance, *the* concept promulgated by Lyotard et al. If, however, one eschews utopia over the long term, entirely different problems arise! And that is why our post-Lyotard era needs a different kind of beauty. In future the definition of jewellery must have the following emendation appended to it: jewellery is aesthetic if it refers to something that lies outside itself. That is as old as it is new and functions like detachment from one's own person and work – and is regarded as a sign of intelligence.

A new theory, therefore, would not only be potentially intelligent. It would also mean: if you really do fight your way through to a theory of this kind, you are thus casting aside important principles hitherto important to design and art theory, for instance, the modern belief in the singularity of pure art – but to ask a stupid question: why not? Even Beuys said: every revolution begins with a stupid question. With a why. Such as: why are artistic honours being sanctimoniously lavished on the current best in jewellery? Many designers are delighted when their jewellery is compared to art. Or even equated with it. That's like an old woman who glows when she hears she looks like a young girl. Both a woman like that and some design would be worthy candidates for the Beuys question, or even a revolution.

And in this revolution, in my opinion, jewellery happens to be potentially the best storage medium for new values. Because jewellery is so small. Unlike art, jewellery is always reproached with being small. The current art market, after all, calculates value according to size. And indeed not by virtue of intrinsic greatness but by means of chauvinistically exact metrical norms, according to which jewellery hardly matters at all. Or on a tape measure. Art is great, jewellery small. That's one thing.

The other thing is that we are living in a world devoid of overarching social designs. Every individual nowadays has to draw up his or her own concept for living, little individual life designs. Little. Little like jewellery for jewellery is also little. Well, what a coincidence.

That means: the contemporary attitude to life cannot really be accommodated anywhere else as well as it is in jewellery. Just because it is small. Thoughts are small, too, but added up, like little pixels, make a big picture. Correct details

result in a good whole, freely according to the old new philosophers' postulate of good being as the good life, from a multitude of little moments. Then something really great emerges from many small things, be it for designers or for design in general. Then the designers' hour that exponents of media studies have been prophesying for some time now will truly be at hand and then the eternal wait for this hour would finally be at an end.

#### Notes

- 1 For 'headword': German 'Lemma' ('that which is peeled off, peel, husk, skin, scale'): 'headword in a work of reference (dictionary, lexicon)'. German source: *Duden. Fremdwörterbuch* [Dictionary of Foreign Words], 7th ed., Mannheim 2001. For the use of the word 'lemma' in English: Complete OED 1st ed., 20th printing, for definition 2 b: 'The heading or theme of a scholium, annotation or gloss.'
- 2 In *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 8, Basel 1992, this gap yawns, of all places, between 'Schmerz' ['Pain'] and 'Goldener Schnitt' ['Golden Ratio'] – that is, exactly where 'Schmuck' would have fitted perfectly.
- 3 Cf. Th. Buchheim, *Die Vorsokratiker. Ein philosophisches Porträt*, Munich 1994; Christof Rapp, *Vorsokratiker*, Munich 1997.
- 4 Cf. R. Brague, *Die Weisheit der Welt. Kosmos und Welterfahrung im westlichen Denken*, Munich 2006, pp. 19–25.
- 5 Cf. L. Wittgenstein, ee 258 ff. der Philosophischen Untersuchungen, in: L. Wittgenstein *Tractatus logico-philosophicus. Tagebücher [Diaries] 1914–1946. Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1984 (Werkausgabe. vol. II), p. 361f.
- 6 B. Deppert-Lippitz, *Griechischer Goldschmuck*, Mainz 1985, p. 115.
- 7 Cf. R.A. Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery*, 2nd ed. London 1980, p. 123f.
- 8 Cf. on this and for the following J. Kerschsteiner, *Kosmos. Quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den Vorsokratikern*, Munich 1962.
- 9 Cf. Greek-English Lexicon (H.G. Liddell / J.R. Scott), ed. H.S. Jones, Oxford 1940 et passim, p. 985.
- 10 Heraclitus, B30. Cf. on this R. Brague (see n. 3), p. 32f.
- 11 Cf. R. Brague (see n. 3), pp. 29–40; H.S. Kragh, *Conceptions of Cosmos. From Myths to the Accelerating Universe: A History of Cosmology*, Oxford 2007, pp. 13–16.
- 12 Cf. for instance Anaximander, A10 (the world as a configuration of concentric circles); Anaximander A11 (the earth compared to a column segment); Anaximenes, A14 (the fixed stars fastened like broad-headed nails to the crystalline firmament, where they are arranged in pictures); Anaximenes A15 (the sun compared to a broad, flat – ornamental – sheet); Heraclitus, B31 (comparison between fire as the cosmic principle and gold); Parmenides, A37 (structure of the world comparable to a configuration of wreaths).
- 13 Cf. S. Voigt, *Das Geheimnis des Schönen. Über menschliche Kunst und künstliche Menschen oder: Wie Bewusstsein entsteht*, Münster 2005, p. 124f.
- 14 Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 95D–99D; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I 3, 984b 15–19. Aristotle calls the Presocratics – with a single exception – intoxicated 'babblers'. His exception is Anaxagoras, who, just because he had already derived the kosmos from a superordinate cause, reason. Plato and Aristotle do, however, agree that Anaxagoras did not really make the 'rational principle' practicable.
- 15 B7.
- 16 B3.
- 17 Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 99D–100A.
- 18 Cf. *ibid.* 99E5.
- 19 Cf. S.M. Connell, 'Toward an Integrated Approach to Aristotle as a Biological Philosopher', in: *The Review of Metaphysics* 55 (2001), pp. 297–322.
- 20 Cf. R. Brague (see n. 3), pp. 137–96.
- 21 Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* 6, 10, 75.
- 22 Cf. Karl-Heinz Uthmann, *Christus, Kosmos, Diatribe. Themen der frühen Kirche als Beiträge zu einer historischen Theologie*, Berlin 2005.
- 23 Cf. R. Descartes, *Meditationen über die Grundlagen der Philosophie*, Lat.-Ger., Hamburg 1992.
- 24 Cf. R. Brague (see n. 3), p. 237 f.
- 25 Cf. E. Burke, *Philosophische Untersuchungen über den Ursprung unserer Ideen vom Erhabenen und Schönen*, Hamburg 1989. [English: Edmund Burke: *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757)]
- 26 Cf. I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Hamburg 2001, Book II: 'Analytik des Erhabenen'.
- 27 Cf. Thomas Böring, *Metaphysik, Kunst und Sprache beim frühen Nietzsche*, Berlin-New York 1988, p. 242 f.
- 28 Cf. S. Voigt (see n. 12), pp. 56–8.
- 29 Cf. S. Voigt (see n. 12), p. 68, p. 175.