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## The semiotics of visible face make-up: The masks women wear

Madeleine Ogilvie  
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THE SEMIOTICS OF VISIBLE FACE  
MAKE-UP: THE MASKS WOMEN WEAR

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Submitted for the award of: PhD, May 31st, 2005

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## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

# ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the ‘sign’ of visible face make-up and examines how women consume appearance in everyday life in contemporary Australia. Using a semiotic framework, it presents a novel new method for interpreting and gaining increased meaning into an everyday consumption phenomenon.

The purpose of the study is to gain insights into why women wear make-up. It seeks to provide understanding of what this medium signifies to women and what the ‘sign’ of make-up symbolises to the female individual. It explores how visible face make-up affects the way women consume appearance in everyday life, how they feel about themselves, and the role make-up plays in defining their own self-identity.

The study utilises an interpretivist approach and uses a qualitative methodology in the form of phenomenology. The theoretical framework used to underpin this research is semiotics and this study examines the sign of make-up using two different semiotic perspectives previously not used together. The significance of this process is that by combining these perspectives a richer and more in-depth understanding is derived.

The study consists of two phases. The first phase of the study examines the visual codes of make-up within Australian society. Observational data over a ten year period from 1990 -2000 is examined using a range of mediums. A ten year time span is selected to enable representation of the shifting paradigm within the culture and to identify residual, dominant and emergent codes within Australian society. These codes are mapped using a semiotic technique adapted from Levi-Strauss to provide a contextual picture of society’s view of beauty and beauty images during this time-frame. The maps present a window to the norms and values of the day and highlight the ideological

platform that pervades society during the period. The semiotic maps also provide information to assist with sample selection for a more narrow focus in the second phase of the study.

Phase two of the study takes a more narrow focus. Through the use of photoelicitation and in-depth interviews, the experiential dimension of face make-up is explored further. A judgment sample is used. Thirty-one Caucasian women aged thirty and over were given disposable cameras to take four photographs of their face in four different settings. The photos were then used as projective stimuli for phenomenological interviews. This enabled the researcher to capture the women's histories, motivations, beliefs, behaviours and experiences about wearing make-up. In addition, seven projective stimuli of different make-up outcomes were used to explore these issues further. The relevance of this phase of the study is that it provides insights into how individuals are socialised to the customs and codes of the sign of make-up and, how through these experiences women gain meaning and mould their consumption behaviours.

Findings suggest that women wear make-up to adhere to a strict societal appearance code and from this code they derive secondary benefits such as power, status, sexual allurements, and increased self-esteem. The use of make-up is extremely ritualistic and harnesses the properties of myth and magic to create powerful transformations. Make-up itself is a liminal product that is consumed during these transformations.

Finally this study questions the contemporary theory that sign 'indexes' are not culturally inscribed, and suggests that consumer culture plays an important role in shaping and creating the learned experiences that form these indices. This thesis challenges a long held view in semiotics, and presents evidence to suggest that from a marketing perspective, consumer culture has a large impact on shaping the indices of many contemporary signs. It concludes that contemporary consumer culture challenges

the foundations of the old philosophies, and that the modern day sign, so often driven by marketing, forces a rethink of these semiotic perspectives and how they are used to interpret the sign.

# DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief;

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*This thesis has been a journey – it has been a long and arduous road, with many mountains to climb, rivers to cross and beautiful landscapes to fill my senses. Now as it nears its completion, I would like to thank the following people for enriching this journey and joining me on its path.*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION -----ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

1.0	INTRODUCTION-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
1.1	BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
1.2	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
1.3	PURPOSE OF THE STUDY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
1.4	RESEARCH QUESTIONS -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
1.5	OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE CONTEMPORARY CAUCASIAN FACE--ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

2.1	HISTORY OF MAKE-UP -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.1.1	PREHISTORIC EUROPE-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.1.2	BIBLICAL EUROPE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.1.3	RENAISSANCE EUROPE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.1.4	ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.1.5	17 <sup>TH</sup> - 18 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY -----	16
2.1.6	19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY -----	18
2.1.7	20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY -----	21
2.1.8	CONTEMPORARY APPEARANCE -----	26
2.2	THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.3	CONSUMPTION OF APPEARANCE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.3.1	SELF-DECORATION-----	
	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>	
2.3.2	IDEALS OF BEAUTY-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.3.3	MODELS FOR CONSUMING APPEARANCE.-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.4	TRANSFORMATION OF SELF -----	
	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>	
2.5	RITUAL AND MAGIC -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
2.6	SUMMARY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>

## **CHAPTER THREE: SEMIOTICS - A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING SIGNS -----ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

3.1	SCIENCE OF SIGNS -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.2	THE DYADIC PERSPECTIVE-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.2.1	COMMUNICATING THROUGH DIFFERENCE-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.2.2	METAPHOR AND METONYMY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.2.3	MYTH -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>

3.3	THE TRIADIC PERSPECTIVE-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.3.1	FALSE SIGNS-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.4	ADOPTING THE SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.4.1	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK PHASE ONE-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.4.2	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK PHASE TWO -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
3.5	SUMMARY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY-----</b>		<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.1	SELECTING THE METHOD OF INQUIRY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.2	FLOW OF THE RESEARCH -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.3	PHASE ONE OF THE STUDY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.3.1	DESIGN -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.3.2	PROCEDURE-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.4	PHASE TWO OF THE STUDY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.4.1	DESIGN -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.4.2	PROCEDURE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.5	DATA ANALYSIS -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.6	TRIANGULATION -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.7	LIMITATIONS -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.8	ETHICAL ISSUES -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
4.9	SUMMARY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNICATING THE SIGN - FINDINGS PHASE 1 -----</b>		<b>ERROR!</b>
BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.		
5.1	DISCOURSE OF COSMETICS-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
5.1.1	ANCIENT REMEDIES -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
5.1.2	ILLUMINOSITY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
5.1.3	SPARKLE AND COLOUR-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
5.2	CODES OF MAKE-UP -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
5.3	COSMETIC MAPS-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
5.4	FURTHER QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
5.5	SUMMARY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX: EXPERIENCING THE SIGN – FINDINGS PHASE TWO -----</b>		<b>ERROR!</b>
BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.		
6.1	ADOPTING THE CODE – REFLECTIONS OF SELF IN SOCIETY -	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
		<b>NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.1.1	ADOPTING THE CODE OF SOCIETY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.1.2	POWER -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.1.3	SEXUAL ALLUREMENT AND THE SELF -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.1.4	SELF-ESTEEM -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>

6.2	RITUAL-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.2.1	THE RITUAL ARTEFACT -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.2.2	THE RITUAL SCRIPT -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.2.3	PERFORMANCE ROLE-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.2.4	AUDIENCE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.3	TRANSFORMATION -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.3.1	RITES OF PASSAGE -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.4	SIGNIFICATION-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.5	PEIRCEAN ANALYSIS-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.5.1	ICON -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.5.2	INDEX -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.5.3	SYMBOL-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
6.6	SUMMARY -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION - THE MASK UNVEILED-----</b>		<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.0	PHASE ONE – COMMUNICATING THE SIGN-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.1	POWER / STATUS -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.1.1	RELIGION -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.1.2	FEMINIST POWER-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.1.3	ECONOMIC POWER -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.1.4	COMMUNICATION POWER-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.2	PHASE TWO – EXPERIENCING THE SIGN -----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.2.1	RITUALS-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.2.3	TRANSFORMATION-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.2.3	MAGIC-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
7.2.4	NORMALISATION - NOT VICTIMS BUT ACTIVE PLAYERS-----	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION-----</b>		<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>CHAPTER NINE: REFERENCES -----</b>		<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
9.0	TEXT REFERENCES-----	241
9.1	COLLAGE REFERENCES -----	256
<b>APPENDIX -----</b>		<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
APPENDIX 1: METROPOLITAN PERTH -----		263
APPENDIX 2: PICTORIAL PROJECTIVE STIMULI -----		264
PLATE 1: ANNA MURDOCH MANN -----		265
PLATE 2: ‘IN YOUR FACE’ -----		<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
PLATE 3: ‘NUTRIMETICS GIRL’ -----		265

PLATE 4: 'JAPANESE GIRL'-----	
<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>	
PLATE 5: MHENDI GIRL -----	266
PLATE 6: NEW GUINEA TRIBAL BOY -----	
<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>	
PLATE 7: 'BACKSTAGE' -----	266
PLATE 8: 'INNER SPACE OUTER SPACE' -----	
<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>	



## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*And now, unveil'd the toilet stands display'd;*

*Each silver Vase in mystic order laid.*

*First rob'd in white the Nymph intense adores,*

*With head uncover'd the cosmetic pow'rs.*

*A heav'nly Image in the glass appears,*

*To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;*

*Th' inferior Priestess at her altar's side,*

*Trembling, begins the sacred rites of Pride.*

*Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here,*

*The various off-rings of the world appear;*

*From each she nicely culls with curious toil*

*And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil. ...*

(From *The Rape of the Lock*, Alexander Pope in Corson 1973:194)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Face-painting and decorations have been linked to symbolic meaning for many centuries. From the dark kohl used on Egyptian eyes (Corson, 1972), to the mhendi hennas used by Indian women (Sumita, 1999), or even the white face powders and red lipsticks used globally today, make-up has been used as a symbolic medium since its early beginnings. Consequently, it seems appropriate to try to understand and explore the meaning of these different masks worn by women in society using semiotics, - a philosophy designed explicitly to analyse signs and symbols.

The drive to decorate the body and face has its inception in prehistoric days when initially man used it to camouflage his form from predatory animals and to induce fear into threatening opponents (Corson, 1972; Polhemus, 1988). As time progressed, body painting and tattooing became linked to identity, being used to mark clan membership, as an artefact in ritual celebrations and worship, and as a medium to allure and attract the opposite sex. The role of make-up as a symbolic medium has ancient origins and, whilst the meaning and symbols painted on faces may have changed over the centuries, the myth and mystery associated with facial adornment has not (Guiraud, 1973; Noth, 1990).

This study explores the rationale, experiences and signification of women's face make-up in Australia with a new methodological approach that combines two different semiotic philosophies through which added meaning and understanding of this everyday phenomena is unveiled.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The contemporary cosmetic industry remains one of the fastest growing global markets. In the US, facial cosmetics sales grew 13.3% from 1997 -98 (Janoff 2000).



Despite the economic downturn of the nineties in the Asia-Pacific region, cosmetics and, in particular, make-up remains an enormous industry (Bucalo, 1999).

The cosmetic industry is defined as haircare, skincare, personal hygiene and make-up (Bucalo, 1999, p. 32). In 1997 this sector was valued at \$34.2 (US) billion in the Asia Pacific region alone. Despite the economic difficulties of many Asian countries, the cosmetic market in this zone continued to grow. The make-up component of this market expanded from \$US 4.7 billion to \$US 5.3 billion over the 1993 –97 period, representing a growth rate of 3.1%. More specifically, in Australia the make-up industry increased from \$US 219 million to \$US 275.9 million between 1993 –97. This represents a rise of 26% over the five year period (Bucalo, 1999). Australian statistics confirm these findings with a rise in the Pharmaceutical, cosmetic and toiletry retailing index of 20.5% between September to December 2004 and a continuing rising trend of 3.8% over the previous years sales (ABS:8501.0, 2005). In addition, recent industry research on unit sales of cosmetics indicates an increase in the size of the market with pack sales of foundation, lipstick/lip-gloss, and mascara accounting for over 60% of this revenue (Roy Morgan, 2005).

As the category of make-up is so diverse and continually expanding it is not feasible to examine the total sector. Therefore, because the face is such an important vehicle in daily communication (Bouissac, 1998; Liggert, 1974), this study will be limited to visible face-make-up alone. It is this area that offers the richest symbolism and, hence, provides the most suitable grounds for semiotic analysis.

## 1.2 Significance of the Study

Make-up is an integral part of most women's lives and represents a significant financial market. Therefore, for cosmetic marketers to have meaningful

dialogue with their customers, they need to understand the consumer behaviour behind the use of this medium. By having a clearer understanding of the rituals, myths and emotions generated from wearing face make-up, marketers will be better placed to communicate more successfully with the consumer. Given the significant rise in the Australian make-up market over the last five years (ABS:8501.0, 2005; Bucalo, 1999), these insights will offer cosmetic companies a unique opportunity to maximise the effectiveness of their promotional campaigns and provide useful knowledge that can benefit future market segmentation within Australia.

The semiotic literature in consumer research also suggests that, from an individual perspective, research is extremely limited (Mick, Burroughs, Hetzel & Brannen, 1999, 2004) and work that explores semiotics from the point of view of the individual's perception and experiences is scant. Furthermore, semiotic analyses that combine the dual philosophies of the dyadic concepts of Sausurre and the triadic approach of Pierce do not exist (Mick et al., 2004). Consequently, this research provides valuable knowledge to the field of semiotics, as well as to consumer research by combining both these philosophies and investigating the usefulness of this new methodological approach.

Finally, by having information that provides a clearer understanding of why women wear visible face make-up, and what it represents to them, marketers can gain insights into what our culture has codified as 'normal' (Guiraud, 1975; Gottdeiner, 1995; Hawkes, 1977; Mascia-Lees & Sharpe, 1992; Noth, 1990,). Armed with this information, they will be able to have a better understanding of the important aspects of consuming appearance in everyday life and, how this shapes and moulds women's ideals of identity and its construction.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain insights into why women wear make-up. More specifically, its intention is to provide understanding as to what this medium represents to women and what the 'sign' of make-up symbolises to the female individual. The study seeks to explore how visible face-make-up affects the way women consume appearance in everyday life, how they feel about themselves, and the role make-up plays in their perception and image of self.

Whilst much has been written about the use of make-up as an art form, its history, and how other people perceive the conspicuous consumption of products such as cosmetics (Belk, 1977; McKeachie, 1952), little research into how women experience appearance in their daily lives has been documented (Beausoleil, 1994). One of the objectives of this study is to explore the link between consumers' beliefs about appearance and their specific goals and uses of cosmetics. In so doing, it endeavours to identify the reasons why women wear make-up and provide information about the attributes that influence the consumption behaviours surrounding cosmetic products.

As the application of make-up is an everyday ritual for so many women within Western Australian society, further study of this vehicle and the messages it communicates within our culture is important. Semiotics serves as a useful framework to explore the meanings behind this consumption ritual and the signification that the 'sign' of make-up holds for women. Whilst a plethora of work has been conducted on the individual topics of consumer research in fashion, beauty and self; research specifically focusing on the semiotics of face-make-up does not exist. Indeed, Mick et al. (1999) discusses the need for more qualitative work in the area of consumers' intentions and desires in fashion communication, and in particular, into the personal and intimate meanings of fashion.

Therefore, to achieve this purpose and give guidance to the project, the following research questions were formulated to explore the everyday phenomenon of make-up.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The initial goal was to gain an understanding of the current discourse of make-up within Western Australian society and, utilising a dyadic semiotic philosophy, explore the communication aspects of this phenomenon. Therefore the first research question is:

***What are the codes of women's visible face make-up within Australian culture?***

To explore this question the study aims to identify the codes of visible face make-up evident within Australian society over a ten year period (1990 –2000) using the framework of metaphor /metonymy, and to map these codes using an adaptation of the semiotic model designed by Levi-Strauss (Penner, 1998; Valentine, 2000).

Using a Piercean semiotic framework this study also seeks to explore and better understand the sign of make-up. What does this sign represent to the individual and what symbolism is attached to the visible make-up that women wear on their face? Consequently, the second research question is:

***Why do women wear visible face make-up, and what is the signification of this medium to the individual?***

The final research question seeks to obtain information to define women's attitudes, perceptions and experiences about wearing make-up and how this influences their consumption of appearance in everyday life. What emotions does the wearing of make-up generate? How does it impact on their lives? How important is it in their daily routines and in what way does it influence their perceptions of themselves and their surroundings? Therefore, the third research question is:

*How do women experience make-up in everyday life and what role does it play in women's perception and image of self?*

## 1.5 Operational definitions

The scope of this thesis is limited to the face and will study only visible make-up, markings and adornments of the face. This will be defined as colour cosmetics and include products such as lipstick, eye-shadow, blush, mascara, eye-liner, foundation and powder (Fabricant & Gould, 1993), as well as facial tattooing to achieve the effects of these products. While it may not be possible to discount hairstyles, the study will specifically concentrate on the face and the visible make-up and adornment used on it alone.

# CHAPTER TWO: THE CONTEMPORARY CAUCASIAN FACE

*“Throughout recorded history cosmetics have been used to create the beauty ideal of each passing age and for centuries a daily routine of beauty care has been an accepted ‘ritual’ within a social context” (Gunn, 1973:19)*

## 2.1 HISTORY OF MAKE-UP

This chapter reviews the literature with particular reference to women’s facial appearance over the centuries. It begins by discussing make-up from an historical perspective and the influence this has on contemporary consumer behaviour. Following on from this, a review of the concepts of beauty from a variety of positions is presented, including the use of make-up as a tool to mark feminist rebellion and its use as a transformation vehicle. This chapter then concludes with a review of the contemporary marketing paradigms in relation to appearance research and discusses them in the context of their impact on visible face make-up.

### 2.1.1 Prehistoric Europe

From as early as 100,000BC, human beings used make-up in the form of body painting and tattooing. In these prehistoric times, mankind was vulnerable to the elements

and imposing forces of nature. Surrounded by wild animals, harsh elements and the need to fight to survive on a daily basis, camouflage became an important factor in daily existence. Consequently, one of the first reasons for using body paint was to camouflage the human form (Corson, 1972), and remnants of this form of camouflage still exist within some societies today, including the Australian Aborigine, the African Tribesman and the North American Indian (Gunn, 1973).

From these early beginnings, the practice of using body paints and dyes for camouflage expanded to incorporate more symbolic and protective purposes. For example, in order to gain some of the strength and attributes of the animals around him, man painted representations of the most fearsome and powerful creatures on his body in a belief that this would assist him to emulate them and their powers. Body painting and tattooing gradually diversified over time to include ceremonial worship of deities, and the adornment process played a pivotal role in these ceremonies (Corson, 1972; Gunn, 1973). Initially, the early images of the animal spirits worshipped were used to represent a clan or tribe. However, as their use increased, these forms of adornment came to represent other dimensions, and began to also include statements about the individual's role and status within the community (Gunn, 1973).

Consequently the role of make-up as a symbolic medium has ancient origins, and whilst the meaning and symbols painted on faces may have changed, the myth and mystery associated with facial adornment has not (Guiraud, 1973; Noth, 1990).

Make-up has been used as a sign/symbol for thousands of years because of the symbolism attributed to colour. As primitive people feared the dark and derived safety from the light of day, red and yellow (symbols of the sun) had a special emotional significance for many people. Red paint or dye was often used to represent blood; black

paint signified night or more sinister implications; and white colours were used to represent the underworld, death or some spiritual dimension (Gunn, 1973).

In these early days make-up had a threefold purpose: firstly, to camouflage and to provide safety from the environment; secondly, to stimulate fear in an aggressive confrontation; and thirdly for spiritual and social reasons (Angeloglou, 1970; Gunn, 1973). Gunn (1973) purports that it was when man became aware of the impact that colour had on emotions that the use of face and body painting methods diversified significantly.

Indeed, make-up, as part of the everyday lives of women, has undergone significant cultural changes throughout the ages and often appears to reflect the society's contemporary outlook. As the codes of make-up throughout history have changed, make-up practices of the day could often be observed to act as a mirror or social barometer of the society and its values. Therefore, a brief review of the history of make-up will demonstrate this phenomenon as well as how make-up practices are linked to status, politics, religion and ritual.

### 2.1.2 Biblical Europe

Make-up can be traced back to early artefacts found in Egyptian tombs. The Egyptians were great lovers of make-up and it was used prolifically by both men and women. They rouged their cheeks and lightened the skin with a yellow ochre powder, or darkened it with orange tint paint. The yellow was used by both men and women, whilst the orange was reserved for men alone. Special attention was given to accentuating the eyes with the use of Kohl – “ a black, grey powder made variously of powdered antimony (stibium), black manganese oxide, burnt almonds, lead, black oxide of copper, carbon,



brown orche, iron oxide, malachite and chrysocolla, a blue green copper ore” (Corson, 1972, pp. 9-10). This was applied heavily using saliva and sticks of ivory, silver or wood.

Multiple colours were used in adorning the eyes, with black, grey and green being used to line the eyes, and green, aqua, turquoise, terra cotta, black and shades of brown to colour the lids. To further dramatise the eyes, when eye-shadow was used, it was applied to both the upper and lower lids with different colours being used on each. The colours used depended on personal preference and the time of the day, with green malachite being one of the most popular pigments used. The Egyptian painted face also included eyebrows that were darkened with Khol or alternatively removed completely and reapplied in painted form (Angeloglou, 1970; Reynolds, 2003).

This eye make-up was not only decorative but also offered some medicinal value in protecting the eye against the sun, dust and sand during hot weather. These early cosmetics contained hydrosilicate of copper which was considered a useful remedy for suppurating of the eye induced by glare (Angeloglou, 1970).

During this period, the manufacture of cosmetics was strictly regulated and restricted to professional cosmetic producers alone. Prior to this point in Egypt, only the priests were responsible for cosmetic preparation and they kept their formulas secret, thus commodifying make-up so only the more affluent of society could afford it (Corson, 1972).

The Assyrians were on par with the Egyptians in their use of cosmetics. Women and men whitened their faces with lead paint, darkened their eyes and eyebrows with antimony, and reddened their cheeks and lips with rouge. Indeed, the origins of lipstick date back to this era, a fact substantiated by artefacts found in Ur 5,000 years ago (Pallingston, 1999). Similarly, the Babylonians, Persians and Syrians all wore face paint and darkened their eyes. Cosmetics were used so prolifically in these times that even the

Hebrews, on occasion, would paint their faces. Israelite cosmetic palettes of marble that date to the eighth and ninth century BC confirm this practice despite the Hebrews strict beliefs about making graven or symbolic images (Entwistle, 2000; Gunn, 1973). According to Corson (1972), Jezebel, who in the Old Testament “painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window” (2 Kings IX:30) and earned notoriety in the Bible as the ‘painted lady’, was following a trend not uncommon to the times. Interestingly, she may only have painted her eyes with kohl to appear seductive, unlike the Syrians, Egyptians or Sumerians of the time who would have applied face make-up much more extensively.

## Greece

Initially the Greeks wore little make-up. The Greek ideal of beauty was one of purity with physical grace, where natural physical form was considered to be more important (Angeloglou, 1970). The Greek courtesans, or hetaerae, in contrast would use cosmetics liberally as a mark of their trade in seduction (Gunn, 1973).

By the late fourth century B.C. in Greece the use of make-up was common place. Women used a variety of washes and paints to colour their face. The white was usually white lead and the rouge was made “from either vermilion, mulberry, seaweed, and paederos, a root similar to alkanet. Later cinnabar (red sulphide of mercury) was used as well as white lead. Orpiment, a compound of arsenic, was used as a depilatory” (Corson, 1972, p 78). This toxic cocktail resulted in destroying the woman’s complexion and, at times, may have caused premature death. Unfortunately its use continued for the next 2,000 years as lead became the most common cosmetic used to whiten the face.

Corson claims that a painted marble head found from 530 BC depicts the facial make-up of the time and bears great resemblance to the make-up of the 1960’s:

*The eyebrows are painted black and are fairly close together. ...The upper lid is shadowed with a reddish brown and the lower edge of the bone above with a sort of jade green. The upper lid only is lined with the same green, which extends beyond the eye at both corners. The lips are painted with a brownish red, and the whole cheek is rouged with the same shade of red (Corson, 1972, p. 38).*

Similarly, the natural pale ethereal look that would emerge in the early 1800's has striking similarities to the nymphish look of today. History demonstrates that trends in make-up are repeated, with common themes emerging, vanishing, and re-emerging again.

### Rome and Early Christianity

In Rome, during the reign of Nero, cosmetics appeared to be reserved for the aristocracy. Travelling entertainers did rouge their cheeks and lips, however working class women's use of cosmetics was extremely limited. One of the interesting trends to emerge from this time, from the higher classes of society, was the 'plastered' face popularly known as the 'domestic face'. This was frequently the only face the husband ever saw and consisted of an intensive beauty regime where the women would bathe in ass's milk and then cover her face in poisonous white lead. Following this, she used fucus, a purplish red paint to rouge her cheeks and lips, then darkened her lids, lashes and brow with antimony, and accentuated her veins with blue hue paint. In conjunction with this regime, assortments of herbal extracts were used to colour nails, bleach freckles or hair, and to improve the complexion, with pumice stone being used to whiten the teeth (Corson, 1972).

In the early Christian period, despite the many objections from churchmen to the practice of women painting their faces, adorning the face with cosmetics continued with

little deterrent. In their writings the church documented how, for three to four centuries after the birth of Christ, women would whiten their faces, necks and breasts with a thick water-soluble lead paint. They would also redden their lips with magenta, colour their eyelids, and darken their lashes and brows with a Kohl-like substance (Reynolds, 2003).

In a backlash against the decadence of the Roman Empire, early Christianity was stern about self-indulgence and did not want to be reminded of a corrupt decorative society. The use of cosmetics fell from favour (Angeloglou, 1970). As Angeloglou (1970, p 36) argues, “the lack of personal adornment became a power symbol reinforced by ever increasingly rigid religious attitudes to cosmetics and even cleanliness”.

### 2.1.3 Renaissance Europe

It was not until the first Crusades that the parochial societies of Britain and Europe were re-introduced to consumption behaviours forgotten during the Dark Ages. The soldiers returned from their eastern destinations with perfumes, unguents, cosmetics and recipes with associated beauty practices that their wives readily embraced (Angeloglou, 1970).

In the past, potions and medicinal concoctions had been manufactured by the domain of witches; cosmetics had not entered into their repertoire. However, it was only a matter of time before replicas of the eastern cosmetics brought back from the Saracen wars were reproduced by these elderly women and the idea of cosmetics returned to Northern Europe (Angeloglou, 1970).

There was a revival in the use of cosmetics during the Renaissance and, in spite of the strict mandates of the Church, personal adornment once again gained favour. Corson (1972, p. 95) claims that “a variety of paints and washes were available and widely used... Women in both city and country used cosmetics freely, unaffected by satires and

sermons and the unfortunate effects of poisonous ingredients”. In Venice, even a secret society dedicated to discovering new make-up methods was formed, with notable figures such as Isabella Cortese and Catherine de’Medici being involved. Catherine’s realm of influence is believed to extend to the use of cosmetics in France where she demanded that they be used at court despite complaints by the Church. Interestingly, the ladies of the time followed Catherine’s lead as opposed to that of the poets or prelates (Corson, 1972).

Lead continued to be used on the face often with one coat over the other and was extended down over the neck and bosom. Physicians began to warn of the dangers of using poisons on the skin, not only white lead but also the mercury sublimate that was used at the time to remove facial flaws (Gunn, 1973).

The Church remained focused on the demon of paint regardless of the amount of dirt that it covered. Their complaints were met with little action by women until, in the late fifteenth century, Savonarola<sup>1</sup> persuaded women to “publicly pitch their paints into the fire” (Corson, 1973, p. 100). Savonarola reinforced his edict by having the Medici enforce a complete prohibition of cosmetics, yet the woman of the day rebelled against this proclamation and in a short space of time the cosmeticians returned to their craft.

#### 2.1.4 Elizabethan England

Under Elizabeth I, make-up became more permissible in Britain. Elizabeth was fashionable in her use of paints and used them more prolifically the older she became. Lipstick became a popular grooming aide (Pallingston, 1999). It was made by using fucus (red mercuric sulphide) for the aristocracy or, for the less affluent and the poor, blending

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<sup>1</sup> Giroamo Savonarola was an Italian religious and political reformer who was born of noble family at Ferrara 1452. After joining the priesthood he became influential in deciding policy of the time and instigated notable events such as the ‘Bonfires of the Vanities’. He fell from favour and was hung and burned in 1498 when power passed back to the Medici.

cochineal with gum Arabic, egg white and fig milk (Angeloglou, 1970). 'Ceruse', a compound of white lead and vinegar or powdered borax, was used for whitening the face, while cheeks were reddened with ochre and sulphide. The practice of enamelling became popular with the face, once painted, being covered with egg white to create a ceramic porcelain finish. Cosmetics were also manufactured from a variety of animal and plant extracts such as pigeon wings, honey, eggs, lilies and ground-up shells.

By the time of the Restoration, face make-up had become permissive within European society. No longer did women need to paint their faces in secret, because the use of cosmetics had become firmly established, particularly among women at court. Murkerjc (1983) explores the rise of consumer culture during this time and the conspicuous consumption among Elizabethan nobility. Here the ingredients that characterise a consumer culture become evident, and consumption for 'envy avoidance' is replaced by consumption for 'envy provocation' (Belk, 1995).

*"Ladies of the court of Charles II painted freely. They used a face wash prepared by boiling gum benzoin in spirits of wine, then adding fifteen drops of the tincture to a glass of water. This was supposed to draw the blood to the surface and give the skin a rosy glow. To whiten the skin, some women dusted the pulverised ash of pig jawbone over a light coating of poppy seed oil" (Corson 1973, p 157).*

The dynamics of consumer culture will be expanded upon in the context of the nineteenth century where the rise of the supermarket and the proliferation of advertising marked an important social change in Western societies.

### 2.1.5 17th – 18th Century

With the backdrop of the industrial revolution during the seventeenth to eighteenth century, the fashion trend of make-up changed yet again. Late seventeenth to early eighteenth century saw the use of patches, paints and powder. The fashionable look was of a more oval face with hair drawn back off the face, full red lips, and the use of small black silk patches shaped as moons, little stars, hearts and an assortment of other shapes. Patches served a useful purpose in covering the pitted scars that had been left on the complexion by smallpox. At this time, only the milkmaids retained flawless complexions because of their immunity to this disease. This was because cows possessed antibodies against smallpox and, hence, the milkmaids developed these antibodies in the course of their daily, close contact with these animals (Gunn, 1973). Today, similar face adornments based upon the Indian practice of Mendhi are adhered to the face in a fashion comparable to patches. Small stick on jewels to simulate a ‘maharani princess look’ are worn glued to the face as patches were, and this trend has recently experienced a resurgence in popularity in make-up fashions (Simita, 1999).

By the eighteenth century, an image of painted porcelain with powerful curls and lavish fabrics took hold until the French revolution. Make-up was considered an essential item for the lady of fashion, although contrasts between the French and English existed at this time. The French court whitened their faces, darkened their eyebrows, and used rouge extensively, while prostitutes strived for a natural look. Alternatively, in London, the prostitutes rouged blatantly and women of aristocracy and higher class attempted to imitate nature with a more natural look, though often they resorted to cosmetics as their youth faded (Reynolds, 2003).

At the end of the eighteenth century, rouge became more popular again and the fashion was for bright red lips, magenta cheeks on a chalk-white face. The rouge was

applied so that it extended from cheekbone to jawbone in a triangular pattern (Corson, 1972). Around this time, a puritan ground-swell against cosmetics and particularly lipstick emerged with the British Parliament passing a law in 1770 condemning the use of lip paint and cosmetics (Ragas, Kozlowski & Vienne, 1998). The law stated that “all women regardless of age, rank, or status, who seduced or betrayed into matrimony any of his Majesty’s subjects by the use of perfume, paints, artificial teeth, wigs, stays, hoops, high-heeled shoes” (Meyer, 1977, p. 66-67), may well find their marriages annulled and themselves being tried for witchcraft. This puritanic and moralistic approach to cosmetics was also reflected in the colonies of Pennsylvania and by the New England puritans who were morally opposed to the use of cosmetics.

Sumptuary laws, which limited the use of luxuries by outlawing or restricting them to specific groups of society, reached their pinnacle in sixteenth century England and by the early nineteenth century sumptuary laws began to fade. These laws were significant as they were used to mark status or to stigmatise and marginalise specific social groups (Belk, 1995). In regards to fashion and make-up, sumptuary laws were particularly important as they marked an attempt to maintain fashion as a sign of status and, to prevent the rise of consumer culture through the mimicking of these fashions by the general public (Miller, 1987). The laws were also used to enforce puritanic, patriarchal behaviour codes as demonstrated by the laws passed by the British parliament and the New England puritans preventing the use of cosmetics.

With the advent of production and merchandising, these laws collapsed as everyday individuals embraced new and novel goods and strived to emulate the fashions of nobility and the higher class. Servant girls were instrumental in this process as they mimicked the styles worn by their mistresses. However, as Belk (1995) argues, resistance



and rejection to this permeation of consumer culture continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century from various religious and philosophical groups.

### 2.1.6 19th Century

Consequently, the nineteenth century saw make-up become more deceptive and less pronounced, with a more natural look becoming popular. Heavy make-up with blatant rouge was reserved for theatrical performers and the more elderly who continued to enamel their faces and colour their cheeks. During this time women continued to use cosmetics and paint their faces but did so deceptively and in secrecy. A pale ethereal look came into fashion. According to Corson, the 'Psyche' look became extremely popular and was based on images within Gerard's *Psyche et l'Amour*, a religious mass book of the time. With the use of face-whitening lotions, women would strive to replicate the figures within the book, '- pale, slender, delicate, spiritual, slightly indisposed and given to attacks of vapours' (Corson, 1972, p. 292). They used ghostly white face washes and large quantities of river powder to achieve this ethereal image. At this time cosmetics were also popular with men; women's make-up routines were copied and, even exceeded, by the dandies<sup>2</sup>, who whitened the backs of their hands and rouged their palms.

The nineteenth century is also credited with the rise of consumer culture. Belk (1995) asserts that the central principle of a consumer culture is the "belief that unbridled access to things leads to unbridled happiness" (p. 1). Added to this premise is that it is a culture where 'envy avoidance' of consuming an object is replaced by 'envy provocation' (Belk, 1988). Others, (Gabriel & Lang, 1995), argue that consumerism is a mechanism to achieve freedom, power and happiness; and that issues such as style, taste, fantasy and

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<sup>2</sup> Male courtesans and nobility who wore large, white coiffured wigs, fine clothes and heavy face makeup to symbolise their beauty and status in court.

sexuality have come to the forefront of this discourse. Another key factor driving these elements of consumerism during this time is the advent of the department store. Borrowing from the ideas of the Crystal Palace fair in 1851 and similar other fairs, the first department store was opened in Bon Marche, Paris in 1852. The department store changed the way people felt and viewed consumption, and this perceptual shift was significant in developing a consumer culture (Belk, 1995; Williams, 1982). Shopping now provided a feeling of delight and fantasy. It provided spacious and often luxuriant settings as well as additional services such as restaurants and other facilities. Shopping became an enjoyable, indulgent past-time that provided the masses with the choice and range of goods that normally had been reserved for the upper classes.

Added to this powerful vehicle to socialise women to a vast array of products was the increase in advertising and mass media. As advertising evolved from the basic type face of old it began to include different sized lettering, pictures and fiction that harnessed the fantasies of the everyday person. Advertising provided the instructions for consumers aspiring in social class and highlighted the desirable intangibles they perceived they needed to consume to get there (Belk, 1995).

## Victorian Era

Objections to this display of consumerism and perceived decadence, saw a shift in attitudes during the Victorian Era, with the more obvious and artificial make-up of the past being replaced by a more subtle, natural and deceptive application of cosmetics, or the use of none at all. The Victorians' ruddy wind-swept skin was considered virtuous but was often hidden from daylight by women remaining indoors in their bedrooms or parlours for the most part of the day (Angeloglou, 1970; Reynolds, 2003). Prudery and prohibitive moral standards would not tolerate female vanity and consequently absolute

secrecy was required in the pursuit of beauty. This may explain the success of the charlatan 'Madame Rachel' who assured her customers complete privacy and anonymity as they arrived at her beauty parlour. She charged exorbitant prices for concoctions and cosmetics that only clients with a large purse could afford. She fell into disrepute when she attempted to blackmail the widow of an Indian army officer and was sentenced to gaol for five years. Even though beauty parlours had their reputation thrown into disrepute, Mrs Frances Hemming opened a salon in 1886 under the name of Cyclax (Angeloglou, 1970). Her products were expensive but of an excellent quality and she quickly gained the clientele of the affluent, who arrived veiled in their carriages where they were quickly ushered into a private cubicle to ensure that their identity was not revealed.

At the end of the century, women began to emerge from the confines of Victorianism to embrace a more open approach to cosmetics. Attractive and talented actresses such as Sarah Bernhardt and Lily Langtree were instrumental in helping to create this different image of feminine beauty (Angeloglou, 1970).

### 2.1.7 20th Century

By the twentieth century, cosmetics were once again in vogue and were used freely and openly within society with no moral stigma attached to their use. Attitudes to make-up were varied with many embracing it, others firmly opposed to it, and yet others who felt it was alright as long as it was not visible (Bordo, 1991; Corson 1972).

Cosmetics became big business with early American entrepreneurial women setting up beauty parlours and manufacturing the first commercial cosmetics. Between 1890 and 1920 the cosmetic industry was almost completely dominated by women as they produced, advertised and sold products (Peiss, 1996 & 1998). Peiss argues that the

character of beauty culture began to change. Consumer culture gained momentum from the continual communication of the mass media and, at the same time, male-operated companies began to set up and manufacture cosmetics. These organisations were hugely successful and displaced many of the earlier female entrepreneurs. They spent large amounts on advertising and linking marketing strategies to drug stores, convenience stores and other retailers as well as pioneering the first product placements in movies. Western women began to indulge in make-up, mimicking the images that appeared in advertising and began to use lipstick, rouge and mascara liberally. This relaxed use of make-up was considered to be more than a beautification process and became a significant statement about personal freedom and rejection of the male-dominated doctrines of the past. Women envisaged make-up as creative, fun and culturally liberating (Bordo, 1990; Peiss, 1998)

## Second World War

During the war years, cosmetic companies concentrated on supplying lipsticks cheaply to war workers to help the war effort and maintain the morale of women working in the munition factories. Indeed, lipstick became so popular in the United States in 1942 that 98 percent of women were using lipstick with only a limited assortment of lipsticks to choose from (Allen, 1981, p. 51). Despite this, it was not until 1950 that a cosmetic manufacturer's lipstick advertisement went to air on television as a major sponsor. Apparently, cosmetic executives believed that this modernised and newly created form of visual promotion had a wonderful advantage over any other form of advertising that had been performed previously; and it was seen as the equivalent of a one-to-one beauty demonstration to the customer en mass (Williams, 1974).

## Post War Cosmetics

In 1949-50 a new 'doe-eyed' look became popular. Eye make-up became acceptable just as lipstick had done in the 1920's with the use of shadows, eyebrow pencils and liners to create surreal effects. With the focus now on eyes, new products of eyeshadow, eye pencils and mascara flooded the market place in a variety of different shades as these products were readily consumed and used extensively by women of the day. The trend was for a lighter skin, darker lips and little to no rouge. So, in addition to the resurgence in eye make-up, came a new demand for cake powder and compacts (Corson, 1972). The cosmetic industry was flourishing and, because of the new social acceptance of make-up, it continued to expand as it moved to embrace a younger teenage audience.

In 1952, Revlon launched one of the most successful advertising campaigns in history when introducing a new lipstick and nail polish called 'Fire and Ice'. This seductive advertisement had remarkable reach and was targeted to communicate with every user of cosmetics throughout the United States. It featured a dark haired model in a silver sequin dress with a red cape in front of a glittering backdrop and included a catchy questionnaire which women would answer to determine if they were made for 'Fire and Ice'. There were fifteen questions such as: 'do you close your eyes when you are kissed? Do you think any man really understands you? Have you ever danced with your shoes off?' (Meyers, 1977, p 74). If women could answer yes to eight of the questions, then the advertisement claimed that they were made for 'Fire and Ice'. Needless to say, to attain the seductive qualities promised from the advertisement, most women hoped to score at least eight. According to Vice President Martin Revson, hope is what Revlon were selling and what every woman was searching for (Corson, 1972; Peiss, 1998). This was the beginning of a new era for advertising glamour, and sex appeal took precedence over

quality. As Meyer (1977) claims, "...the name of the lipstick was no longer a description of a colour but a promise of excitement and allure" (p. 74).

Revlon take credit for making cosmetics an essential ingredient of contemporary fashion by bringing out new colours every six months. They identified that in the past colours had lasted too long and recognised the opportunity of selling more product. They therefore endeavour to match colours with new styles as they emerge. This is not always an easy task and requires them to anticipate future trends and directions by observing and monitoring women's changing moods in society.

During the post war decades, the trends identified often came from film. For years women were represented as glamorous painted wax dolls. However, with the introduction of more foreign films, and actresses such as Ingrid Bergman, a more natural look took over. "Eyes and eyebrows were accented but not painted, lips were lighter, hair was more casual, and even a few imperfections, such as freckles, were sometimes allowed to show" (Corson, 1972, p 540). The girl-next-door look became popular and seemed achievable for many. At the same time, Avon exchanged glamour for neighbourliness and began to carve a successful empire from knocking on people's doors (Meyer, 1977).

In the sixties the 'natural' look was revived once again in reaction to extensive cosmetic use. The naturalness was relative however, with eyes still being emphasised and a plethora of products to remedy where nature failed. Brown lipsticks began to be replaced by pink and gold tones and lips were painted in a manner that gave them the appearance of a permanent smile with the upper lip being extended up at the corners (Meyers, 1977).

In line with this natural look, rouge was used to create a natural exuberant healthy glow. The new rouges, now called 'blushers', were applied all over the face and came in a variety of forms from brush on powders to frothy creams. These blushers were blended

subtlety up over the extent of the face including the brow into the hairline, under the chin and onto the neck.

A short burst of wild and extravagant make-up-use took place in 1970, rivalling even the decadences of Rome. Hair and multi-colour face-painting to match clothing became the fashion. However, this wildly extravagant make-up of the early seventies subsided to more subdued tones as natural foods and natural cosmetics came into vogue. The belief that beauty came from within, as well as from outside, gained momentum as women scrambled for a variety of self-improvement remedies derived from better diet, yoga or transcendental meditation. A debate about natural versus synthetic products, as well as their safety and medicinal value, raged. Cosmetic manufacturers were quick to launch products to capitalise on this mood change. Products based on natural ingredients such as cucumber, avocado, strawberries and wheatgerm were used extensively. Corson (1972) also claims that there was scientific evidence to prove the effectiveness of these old remedies, giving weight to the recipes of the past.

In the seventies the names of products show a preference for simplicity with products having a medicinal value, vitamin benefit or herbal purity being more saleable than those with the exotic allure of the East. Romantic names gave way to those with a practical clear meaning during this feminist age in an endeavour for make-up to shed itself of the glamour image of the earlier 20th century. Names such as 'Blush on', a rouge by Revlon, and preparations simply described as 'glosses' or 'shiners' replaced the evocative names of the past such as 'desire' or 'midnight passion' (Meyer, 1977).

This post-war period also marked a rise in globalisation and the spread of multinational American-based companies into post war Europe and beyond (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2005; Peiss, 1998). At this time, trade barriers were minimal and many products proliferated unchecked with no competition into these markets as consumers

craved and acquired products that improved their morale. Finances permitting, these products were quickly embraced by female consumers and demand for them was perpetuated by the spread of advertising material and the glamorous pictorial images represented within them. These cosmetic messages and evocative depictions proved fanciful and alluring to a poor and battle-hardened audience and were symbolic of a better life. Consequently, make-up quickly standardised throughout the Western world as mass media provided global reach with messages and images of the relevant fashion trends.

### 2.1.8 Contemporary Appearance

Glamour was back in the 1980's with rich, deep colours in use. The cosmetic image was one of perfection with a flawless, almost plastic complexion. Large amounts of foundation, bronzed blushers and deep, rich-coloured lipsticks were the norm (Pallingston, 1999). An offshoot of this time was the emergence of the 'shock rockers' and 'Gothics', who painted their faces a stark white and used heavy dark eye make-up and black or very dark lipstick to create a more sinister appearance (Polhemus, 1988). In reaction to this mood of the eighties, there was once again a swing to a more natural and ethereal look in the nineties, - a theme that is explored further within the findings of this thesis.

Also during this time the use of tattooing and body peircings gained popularity. Tattoos ranged from permanent body pictorial tattoos, to cosmetic tattooing such as permanent eye and lip liner, to the more ritualistic hennas used in mehndi (Batra, 1999; Camphausen, 1997). The trend now is for the removal of these permanent tattoos inscribed on bodies in the 1990's with plastic surgery, and, the increasing use of non-



permanent tattoos have found a niche that prevents the painful complications that may be linked with this procedure.

In the 1990's to current times there has also been a rise in the anti-aging market as baby boomers move deeper into middle age. In America alone the cosmetic industry is valued at twenty billion dollars, the slimming market at thirty three billion dollars and the cosmetic surgery market rising rapidly at three hundred million dollars per annum (Green, 1992). These figures demonstrate the increasing popularity of plastic surgery and less invasive cosmetic procedures such as chemical peels and collagen injections in creating the contemporary appearance. The cosmetic surgery market is expected to expand even further in years to come as baby boomers have been considered a generation that would not accept physical deterioration associated with age willingly. This rise in cosmetic surgery and procedures has been in part brought about through the influence of the fitness movement (Hamel, 1990) as this generation fight to remain fit and young for as long as possible. The most popular procedures are nose jobs, eyelid lifts, and face lifts. While cosmetic procedures such as chemical face peels, collagen injections and 'Botox' offer women a less invasive way to fight the signs of age (Hamel, 1990; Masci, 1998) and have increased dramatically in use in recent times.

From this historical account of make-up trends, it is evident that make-up has drifted in and out of favour over the centuries, and often been reflective of the ideological and political thinking of the time. One such time that has had massive implications on contemporary cosmetic consumption, and how women perceive their appearance, was during the 1900's in America. During this time the feminist movement used cosmetics, appearance and what they perceived as the normalisation of the female form as a vehicle for their ideological and political platforms. This important time and its ramifications on face make-up are discussed in more detail in the next section.

## 2.2 THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The feminist perspective is quite different in its philosophical outlook on cosmetic consumption and, once again, make-up is the source of a battle ground where these differences promulgate. In this section, the importance of cosmetics and their significance on the feminist movement is discussed from a predominantly North American stance, because this is where the feminist movement's impact on cosmetics from an historical, literary and social context is most relevant in this study's discussion of contemporary facial make-up.

As the historical perspective of cosmetics demonstrates, make-up has been heavily influenced by the changing social landscape. A time of particular note was during the 1900's when the role of women in American society and societies' perception of gender changed when women undertook a more public identity than they had in the past (Vinikas, 1992). Women were more commonly in the work force and, during the First World War, their contribution outside the home increased significantly. Women also gained the vote and, in line with these structural social changes, moved away from the traditional role of mother and homemaker (Vinikas, 1992).

The massive rise in cosmetic use and sales in the 1920's can be linked to this social realignment of the gender role, but it was also aided by the increasing use of advertising messages targeted directly at women. The impact of advertising on grooming habits during the early 20th Century was enormous and has been compared to similar agents of socialisation such as religion and education (Vinikas, 1991).

In this time of radical social change, besides advertising, another means for postulating a certain female appearance code was the beauty pageant. Cohen, Wilk and

Stoeltje, (1996), claim that the beauty contest was instrumental in defining a ‘normalised’ female appearance that was valued as beautiful.

*...beauty pageants help ‘naturalize’ beauty. By promoting a specified look of beauty, contests narrow notions of diversity, decreasing the range of possibilities for diversification and for individual expression. They also allow small special interest groups to speak for the majority. (Cohen et al., 1996, p 7)*

In this way, beauty pageants came to represent and depict a form of national femininity that became part of the fabric of the American culture. The ramifications of this and the impossible body images that they encouraged women to aspire towards formed the basis for key political debate amongst American feminists.

Feminist movements, offended by the representation of the female form, found voice, and in 1922 a women’s league attacked the Miss America pageant claiming it was insulting to womanhood (Cohen, et al., 1996). Despite this initial outcry, in the following years, advertising continued to link cosmetics even more tightly with women’s identity and the female form, depicted with “...images of flawless female beauty - mostly youthful, white, and increasingly sexualized” (Peiss, 1998, p 260), continued to be used widely.

This initial debate was silenced by the demands of a country at war. The importance of cosmetics during the second World War was manifested by the American government trying to decrease production by twenty percent under the guise that materials, such as metal for compacts, were needed for the war effort. However, this was rescinded because the important role cosmetics played in keeping up the morale and motivating the women who worked in the munition factories was recognised. During this period some cosmetic production decreased, while items such as lipstick were considered

essential and reflected the important role women had come to play in the workforce (Peiss, 1996).

The concept that a woman needed to look good while doing a man's work was quickly harnessed in advertising messages. The idea that taking care of the appearance also gave men something to fight for was promoted widely and became part of the popular thinking of the time.

From 1940, Revlon made a concerted effort to engage consumer segments and targeted advertising to different demographic groups such as housewives, students or other groups of women (Peis, 1998). The 'Fire and Ice' advertisement was significant because it began a trend of tapping into the sexuality of the ordinary American woman. From this point on, cosmetics and sexual allure became much more blatantly linked in the advertising dialogue promoted to American consumers.

A swing back to the natural look after post-war artifice and a change in the political climate encouraged women to be involved as political activists and the earlier ideals of feminists resurfaced. Some women protested about being enslaved to commercialism and young American women mounted an attack on the beauty industry and beauty ideals. As Peiss (1998) discusses, the literature of the time began to reflect the rising resistance against the beauty industry when authors began to blame mass consumer culture, including women's magazines and advertising, for "deflecting women's aspirations and limiting their roles in society" (p 260).

Contemporary 1940's American critics attacked the cosmetic industry and the patriarchy behind it, claiming that women's obsession with beauty and appearance was manipulated by a male-dominated capitalist society and was the means by which men maintained control over women personally and politically. As such, so they argued, women were relegated to objects of male visual pleasure (Bordo, 1991; Peiss, 1998).

Economic necessity forced the cosmetic companies to embrace the negative impact on their industry caused by the feminist movement, with the development of a whole new range of natural products and cosmetics used to create a pure look. The contemporary attitudes to make-up had changed yet again. As Peiss (1998) argues, the practice of beautifying was now perceived more than a means of defining status, politics and sexual attraction, to now include the ability of self-definition.

*...Cosmetics offer aesthetic, sensory and psychological pleasures to those pressed by the obligations of home and work. And women still perceive beautifying as a domain of sociability, creativity and play. ... Making up remains a gesture bound to perceptions of self and body, the intimate and the social – a gesture rooted in women’s everyday lives” (pp 269-270).*

A second wave of contemporary feminist writers such as Naomi Wolf (1992) argue that women are still losing the battle for equality through the standardisation of beauty ideals. Wolf (1992) claims that mass media images of today enforce normalised beauty ideals of young, thin and sexually provocative females which pit woman against woman, young against old in order to competitively succeed. Where value is based on male approval, and young women suffer erotic degradation as they mimic and conform to these sexual stereotypes.

## Normalisation

Normalisation of the female form is not just limited to cosmetics. Bordo (1990 & 1991) argues that women’s preoccupation with fat, diet and slenderness has also led to one of the most powerful normalisation processes known. She believes it has led to a life of self-discipline and constant monitoring so as to ensure there is no departure from the norm, and only self-improvement within the boundaries of the norm are acceptable.

The normalised image of beauty is one of a “tighter, smoother and a more contained body profile” (Bordo, 1990, p88). This represents the individual’s ability of control, - to keep the body tight, control desires and transformations that are not within the accepted state of appearance and/or behaviour. In this way body and form still indicate one’s social identity and place within society.

Bordo claims that, today, excess body fat has come to represent a weak character and lack of will which demonstrates an individual’s lack of control over latent and infantile impulses.

“Fat being perceived as indicative of laziness, lack of discipline, unwillingness to conform, and absence of all those ‘managerial’ abilities that, according to the dominant ideology, confer upward mobility” (Bordo, 1990, p. 95).

Society demands adherence to the appearance code in both face and body appearance. Those not fitting the normalised appearance such as anorexics and the obese are judged harshly. Interestingly, the obese are judged more harshly as the claim of ‘fat and happy’ is considered a rebellion against society. Therefore, these individuals are cast out and scorned. Only those who, through some inadequacy, are unable to achieve the normalised goal gain sympathy and acceptance within society as they demonstrate their persistence in striving to obtain the normalised form (Bordo, 1990).

A similar analogy exists with adhering to the make-up code. Those not conforming are labelled and categorised as more masculine if they are not wearing any make-up, and rebellious and irresponsible if their make-up is considered ‘way-out’. It is only those individuals who demonstrate that they wish to conform to the appearance code, and those who try to, who gain support and acceptance from society.

Bordo (1990 & 1991) claims that gender codification of slenderness itself exists, and that, in times of change, bodies become more sylphlike and resemble more an

adolescent boy as patriarchal order endeavours to reassert control. By being slender and adopting the code of males in the business world, the woman reduces any real threat as she normalises herself to fit that code. “The cultural association of slenderness with reduced power and contracted social space is striking” (Bordo, 1990, p105). The female body is juxtapositioned against the solid and powerful male body ideal and, while some women may see the androgyny in this form as liberating from the confines of reproduction and femininity, it still reflects the male domination control of politics, sexuality and power.

In 1953 the cosmetic debate intensified and the ‘Bustello’ controversy, as it has now been termed, became so heated that it caused a split in the Socialist Workers Party (Waters, 1986). This came about as leading feminists debated the use of cosmetics as, either the adoption of capitalistic bourgeois propaganda, or a woman’s right to beautify and break free of the drudgery of house work. This allowed women a means of expressing themselves and creating a new identity beyond the home.

‘Bustello’, (a pen name used by several contemporary authors) through their writings drew attention to the sagging profit margins of the large cosmetic companies in post war America, as unemployed women purchased fewer cosmetics (Waters, 1986). From the feminist perspective cosmetics became symbolic of wealthy companies forcing patriarchal values on the working class in a perpetuation of political and economic oppression. Bustello argued that “owners of the big cosmetic companies were trying to manipulate women’s insecurities and fears to sell commodities and rake in massive profits” (Waters, 1986, p 3). As such, according to Bustello (1954), the ruling class dictated the standards of beauty.

Bustello further argued that the origins of communism were matriarchal in kinship structure and came first in historical sequence. Originally, adornment was used

by both sexes out of necessity to survive. It marked clans and specific labour groups and symbolised a transition through age and role within the community. Overall within primitive society, these adornments were considered marks of equality. However, with the introduction of a class society, these markings of the primitive socialist community were transformed to represent social inequality.

*They became fashions and decorations that signified social inequality: the division of society into rich and poor, into rulers and subjugated. Cosmetics and fashions became the marks of social distinction between the classes and the apex of the social distinction is found in the French Court before the French Revolution (Hansen & Reed, 1986, p59).*

In this manner cosmetics have been the vehicle for debate within the feminist and political arena for much of the twentieth century. Cosmetics' power to transform the face, and the normalisation process that extended from the mass media depiction of the female form, has a powerful resonance on the use of make-up by women. Unlike any previous consumer product, make-up was able to divide and unite a nation, and therefore cemented its place in contemporary social policy. The way women consume appearance would therefore continue to be a significant barometer to the social order of the time.

## 2.3 CONSUMPTION OF APPEARANCE

Appearance and our consumption of it occurs on an everyday basis and is often taken for granted. Its importance in reflecting the social fabric of society should not, however, be minimised. Consumption of appearance is guided and manipulated by a plethora of variables. This section will discuss some of the more relevant literature and the issues it identifies as being influential in consumption of everyday appearance. It



includes concepts from an evolutionary perspective, ideals of beauty and the theoretical models useful in analysing consumption.

### 2.3.1 Self-decoration

Self-decoration to entice the opposite sex has been practiced by humans for centuries (Allen 1981; Corson 1972; Entwistle, 2000; Etcoff 1999; Gunn 1973). Anthropologists suggest that women use cosmetics to simulate the body in a state of orgasm. Diane Ackerman (cited in Pallington 1999, p31) claims,

*...the lips remind us of the labia, because they flush red and swell when aroused, which is the conscious and unconscious reason why women have always made them look even redder with lipstick.*

Animal behaviourist Desmond Morris supports these claims and views cosmetics as a method employed by early man to detract attention from the rear of the body to the face. He concurs that the red pouting lips represent the blood engorged labia, the rouged cheeks the skin's state of flush and the darkened eyes the dilated pupils of excitement (Etcoff, 1999; Pallington, 1999). Evolutionary psychologists also claim that, through natural selection processes, behaviour such as self-decoration has been inherited from our Pleistocene ancestors and become part of our genetic coding (Cary, 2000; Gad & Tripat 2000; Goode, 2000; Rose & Rose, 2000), however this proposition is contentious and remains the focus of lively debate.

Nevertheless, Etcoff (1999, p24) argues that:

*beauty is a universal part of human experience, and that it provokes pleasure, rivets attention, and impels actions that help ensure the survival of our genes. ... We love to look at smooth skin, thick shiny hair, curved waists, and symmetrical bodies because in the course of evolution the people*

*who noticed these signals and desired their possessors had more reproductive success.*

To this effect she also claims that now these signals are manipulated by the use of cosmetics, fashion, and plastic surgery and through misleading advertising messages which influence and reinforce a desired female image and label it as beauty.

### 2.3.2 Ideals of Beauty

*'Beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of introduction'*

- Aristotle

One of the main reasons women have worn make-up throughout the centuries is for beautification purposes. Early concepts of beauty were measured by the amount of symmetry within the face. Faces that were more symmetrical were considered more beautiful (Corson, 1973; Etcoff, 1999; Gunn, 1973). However, what one considers beautiful is very much in the 'eye of the beholder' and consumer research confirms that individuals do perceive beauty differently (Ashmore, Solomon & Longo, 1996). The debate of what constitutes beauty has previously highlighted the huge influence that culture has on determining beauty ideals for that society (Cassidy, 1991). Coupled with this are the historical changes that have seen radical shifts in beauty ideals from heavily painted to puritanical faces. Other authors suggest that beauty has little to do with the physical attributes or a genetically innate understanding of the notion of beauty, but is all about culture and power (Cohen et al., 1996; Lakoff & Scherr, 1984; Nichter & Nichter, 1991). This view originates from the times when beauty was used as a bartering tool, with the most beautiful women gaining the highest price and ownership of these women representing a position of status and power.

Ashmore et al. (1996) suggest that a multi-dimensional approach to understanding beauty is more appropriate, rather than the single dimensional approach of attractive - unattractive used by psychologists to evaluate peoples' perception of beauty. They suggest that a variety of types of beauty are a better way to classify this concept and that great difference will exist between the perception and classification of beauty between individuals and genders. Despite this, beauty is defined, represented and reinforced daily in the magazines, films and other media that pervade our society. Indeed, people that are considered more beautiful tend to have better careers, earn more money, and have a higher social status than those viewed as less attractive (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Richins, 1991).

Richins (1991) discusses how advertising's use of attractive people in its dialogue with consumers has had a strong impact on consumers' perception of their own facial beauty. Richins (1991) found females' perceptions of self, along with their confidence and satisfaction with their own looks decreased markedly when exposed to cosmetic and other advertising that used youthful beautiful images to market their product. In addition, females were found to have a natural tendency to compare and rate themselves on the continuum of how alike they are to the image presented.

The use of female beauty in the mass media of popular culture to market products to males and females is extensive, and is mainly due to the assumed linkages of a woman's appearance and her measure of self worth (Engliss, Solomon & Ashmore, 1994). In particular, the use of cosmetics to achieve a desired effect and, hence, increase self-worth has been extensively depicted within society and the mass media (Engliss, Solomon & Olofsson, 1993).

*“Women can selectively choose ‘options’ to express their own unique sense of self by transforming commodities from their mass-produced forms into*

*expressions of individuality and originality” (Lury, 1996, p. 142).*

Lury further argues that, “by representing beauty as an achievable goal through the use of commodities, women are constructed as consumers of themselves as possessions or commodities” (p. 142).

Hielman (1998) also addresses society’s commodification of young girls as they strive to achieve an impossible likeness to the slim beautiful model image depicted so frequently within the mass media. Other authors have also examined the transformation of the body into a perceived perfect form (Joy & Venkatesh, 1994). For example, Thompson and Hirshman (1995) suggest “the promotional motifs of constructing one’s desired look or to become free from unwanted characteristics have a powerful resonance throughout contemporary consumer culture” (p. 139). Thompson and Hirshman further argue that it is through the consumer ritual of self-care (Rook, 1985) and the consumer pursuit of beauty ideals that consumer culture has emerged. The result, they claim, is the daily drive that consumers conduct in order to ‘normalise’ their bodies to acquire an image that is valued as the cultural norm.

In general, women use make-up and other external facial adornment to influence the non-verbal communications they wish to make (Fabricant & Gould, 1993). Facial make-up has been used extensively to enhance the wearer’s value and beauty within society. The face itself is considered an important component in measuring attractiveness, and provides a window from which people derive all sorts of information about a person and their role and status within society (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; McNeil, 1998). Furthermore, the reason for using make-up by women is diverse, and covers the enigma of young women wearing it to look older and older women wearing it to look younger (Fabricant & Gould, 1993). This all occurs in the drive to attain the appearance that the

culture classifies as beautiful (Engliss et al., 1994; Heilman, 1998; Richins, 1991; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995).

### 2.3.3 Models for consuming appearance.

Personal adornment is also used throughout society to provide external cues about the code of that society (Belk, 1977; McCracken, 1986). In particular, the practice of adornment has been considered symbolic of an individual's class or status and this is more pronounced in societies with sharp social divisions or castes (Roach & Eicher, 1979).

All societies tend to have dominant sign systems that participants create and, as these signs are used and incorporated into the fabric of everyday life, they in turn become social structures of the community. Murray (2002) claims that new social movements, instead of arising from structural inequalities as they did in the past, are now centred around fashion, style, identity and what Maffesoli(1996, p 9) labels 'neotribalism'. The drive to adopt these images of everyday society are persistent and, without critical reflection, individuals are more likely to adopt them and the hegemonic social structures they represent than resist them (Adamson, 1980). As Murray (2002, p 9) purports:

*Consumers find meaning by selecting fashion statements that align them with specific cultural values and subject positions. At the same time, this process of alignment is forged as much by what individuals are resisting as by what they believe in and express.*

Smith and Murphy (1999) also identify the importance that in-groups and out-groups can have on an individual's identity and behaviour. Therefore, it appears apparent that by indulging in these practices of group belonging, alignment and neotribalism, it

assists the individual to overcome tensions created by the cultural complexity of their society and allows them to construct their identity within that social system.

In terms of consumption of everyday appearance, Holt (1995, p 2) defines consuming as consisting of “both actions in which consumers directly engage consumption objects (objects actions) and interactions with other people in which consumption objects serve as focal resources (interpersonal actions)”.

Holt (1995) proposed a typology of consumption practices that included four metaphors or dimensions which are ‘consuming as experience’; ‘consuming as integration’; ‘consuming for classification’; and ‘consuming for play’.

‘Consuming for experience’ examines the subjective, emotional reaction to consumption objects with a focus on the emotional states occurring during consumption. ‘Consuming as integration’ defines how consumers obtain meaning through a variety of practices, such as grooming rituals (Rook 1985) or self-extension (Belk 1988) where the consumer is able to tap into the symbolic properties of the object through undertaking these activities. ‘Consuming as classification’ occurs when objects are used as cultural labels to group consumers and inscribe meaning through their use. Work by Levy (1959), and Douglas and Isherwood (1979) use semiotic and anthropological traditions respectively to classify consumers through their use and the meaning they derive from specific objects.

‘Consuming as play’ is the fourth dimension defined by Holt (1995). This includes consumers using objects to interact with other consumers, an aspect of consumption that has great relevance in the use of visible make-up and in everyday appearance. Holt proposes that it is the simultaneous interaction of these four dimensions that provides understanding of consumption practices. Within the context of understanding consumption of make-up, all four dimensions have relevance: the

experiential; the ritual and integration; the classification and semiotic meaning of make-up; as well as the autotelic aspects of play women encounter as they create and interact with others through their appearance. Therefore this typology is useful when exploring and understanding the consumption of everyday appearance and, more specifically, the consumption of make-up within that appearance. It therefore provides a useful framework against which to compare findings from this study.

**Figure 2.1: Metaphors for Consuming (Holt, 1995, p. 3) removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Another concept that has relevance in understanding everyday appearance is proposed by McCracken (1986), who presents a framework for the transfer of meaning from consumer goods to the consumer. He suggests that meaning is held in three places: “the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer” (p. 81), and that meaning is extracted and transferred by the modes of advertising, the fashion system and consumer rituals. “Advertising and the fashion system move meaning from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods, while consumer rituals move meaning from the consumer good to the consumer” (p 81)

More specifically McCracken (1986) maintains that grooming rituals are one way that symbolic properties are transferred, and that these rituals are useful in facilitating the movement of meaning from the product to the consumer. In this manner, these everyday rituals help to extract cultural significance from the consumer good and reallocate it to the consumer. The notion of symbolic consumption through grooming rituals is particularly pertinent to this research and, consequently, it is important to consider its ramifications within the context of this study.

**Figure 2.2: Movement of Meaning (McCracken, 1986, p. 72) removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Culture may also be inscribed on the human body (Featherstone et al., 1991; Feher et al., 1989; Fisher & Davis, 1993; Grosz 1992; Mascia-Lees & Sharpe, 1992). ‘Visible’ make-up clearly marks the passage to ‘womanhood’ for most women and is considered symbolic of ‘femininity’ within a Western culture (Peiss, 1990). According to Beausoleil (1994), “women’s everyday make-up and appearance practices are indeed part of the social organisation of gender, race, class, femininity, sexuality, and the social construction of self” (p 33). To this end Beausoleil (1994) proposes that, in understanding



women's use of visible face make-up, it is more than adopting the normalised images depicted by mass media and increasingly about how women experience beauty and appearance within their everyday life that provides interesting dimensions in consumer behaviour. Recent studies (Beausoleil, 1994; Scott, 2005; Smith, 1990) have taken a different approach in maintaining that women are not all victims of the normalisation process but often may well be willing agents who engage actively in defining social order. Indeed, these authors claim that women are double subjects, in that they can be without agency or alternatively, active and skilled participants: - a phenomenon applicable to women and their use of make-up in society.

Interestingly, women will adapt their visible make-up according to the specific situation or occasion and in line with the audience they expect to receive (Beausoleil 1994). This is parallel to Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach where individuals prepare their appearance for either 'frontstage' or 'on-stage' audiences or 'backstage' roles, just as in a theatre. Perception management theories would suggest that such appearance changes are an integral part of the way women manage their image and the face they offer their surroundings. (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Grayson, 1998 & 2000).

Beausoleil (1994), however, claims that women's experience with make-up and appearance in their everyday lives highlight dimensions not fully recognised by Goffman. Women, it seems, are orientated to one another and are in fact competent active players creating their own enjoyment through the make-up experience. Furthermore, women define who they are through this appearance and use it to elaborate the self (Beausoleil 1994). For some women, and in particular those that wear make-up regularly, identifying 'who they are' was only possible when wearing their make-up.

## 2.4 TRANSFORMATION OF SELF

Appearance plays a significant role in shaping and ascribing self-identity. Transformation of form and appearance is often synonymous with a transformation of the self. This next section explores transformation of self through change of appearance and discusses the relevant theories and processes involved in this metamorphosis.

One of the key factors in understanding women's more intimate and private motivations for wearing make-up is that of identity and self. Theories on self (Ben, 1972; Sirgy, 1982; Solomon, 1992), possessions and self (Belk, 1988), and the empty-self (Cushman, 1990) have been explored by a variety of consumer behaviourists.

The 'self' concept is the cognitive and affective interpretation of the individual's identity and describes who we are (Bem, 1972; Schouten, 1991). It includes all aspects that make us what we are such as role identity, possessions, fantasies, relationships and personal attributes (Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Nurius, 1986; Schouten, 1991; Turner, 1987).

Within this theory is the need for the individual to often mark their identity through difference (Bem, 1972). It may be through the use of possessions and the extended self (Belk, 1988) or by adopting a unique fashion code representing their culture or group (Cerny, 1993). For instance, vast differences can be seen between the make-up used by a 'punk' and that of the corporate executive as the message conveyed by each has a different purpose.

To gain understanding of these behaviours, anthropologists such as Mary Douglas argue that one should examine the concepts involved as part of a sequence. To do this, one should classify concepts as similar or different, and through this classification one can gain meaning (Woodward, 1997). Within our minds, classifying who we are and where we fit in society often takes place on a bipolar plane, where measures are made

and contrasted against points on a continuum. In order to understand what something is, and where it fits on the continuum, it is often easier to determine what it is not. By identifying this difference the meaning is understood (Valentine, 2000; Woodward, 1997). This belief supports the structuralist approach of Levi-Strauss in interpreting the symbolic language of the culture, be it the cuisine, consumer-based rituals such as make-up use, or understanding individuals' concept of self.

Symbolic consumption of consumer products has been investigated within the literature from a variety of viewpoints (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; Noble & Walker 1997). As Levy (1959, p. 119) argues:

*The things people buy are seen to have personal and social meanings in addition to their functions. A symbol is appropriate (and the product will be used and enjoyed ) when it joins with, meshes with, adds to, or reinforces the way the consumer thinks about himself. ...each person aims to enhance his sense of self, and behaves in ways that are consistent with his image of the person he is or wants to be.*

As such, many consumer products have become symbols of specific lifestyles, of group belonging, or even of the consumption practices of the culture itself. Consumers are quick to interpret the language that these products represent and gain meaning from their use (Belk, 1988; Belk & Costa, 1998; Levy, 1959). Today consumer products are used to differentiate individuals. Just as the early markings of man were used to claim clan identity and status, now possessions herald a message about the individual's position in society, their idiosyncrasies and image of self within the community. One of the more common symbols used in this differentiation process is that of gender. Consequently, cosmetics play an important role in this silent symbolic language.

Levy (1959) claims that every so often new symbols appear which may indeed be historical, yet, because they capture the environment of the present so aptly, they are catapulted into the limelight to become the latest trend. This phenomenon is evident with cosmetics from the historical review presented earlier, where trends come and fade with time.

Symbolic consumption by individuals throughout their life and during the transitions they undergo has also been studied (Belk, 1988, Noble & Walker 1997). Belk (1988) claims that consumers use possessions as props to help them cope as they pass through the liminal stages in their life. This liminal transition can be defined as: “A change in a significant life role marked by a transitional or liminal period during which (a) personal identities are suspended, producing significant psychological consequences, and (b) symbolic consumption may be used to facilitate the transition to the new role” (Noble & Walker, 1997, p. 32).

The notion of possessions and the extended self also includes the individual’s symbolic consumption of possessions and extends to group belongings, places and even body parts and their alterations (Belk, 1988). Noble and Walker (1997) expand on this theory and claim that consumers in transitional roles rely heavily on past possessions which they use as safety lines to the ‘old’ self whilst at the same time gain confidence to complete the transition by consuming the possessions associated with the new identity. “By acquiring possessions symbolic of their new role, individuals facilitate the psychological transformation to the new state” (Noble & Walker, 1997, p. 35).

Other authors also argue that the consumption of symbols representative of group membership can accelerate the transitional process (Boorstin, 1973; Solomon, 1986; Van Genneep, 1960). Examples include business dress or make-up worn for group membership such as ‘Gothics’. By wearing a suit and tie the individual transforms into the business

role. Similarly, the application of pale, translucent face powder; heavy black eye make-up and black or very dark lipstick, transforms the wearer to gain group membership and be labelled as 'Gothic'.

It has been suggested that body alterations are also closely linked to individuals' liminal transitions (Belk, 1988; McClelland, 1951; Prelinger, 1959; Schouten 1991). Schouten (1991) claims that physical alteration through plastic surgery may assist individuals in transforming into a new self and provide an element of control and self-confidence in adopting the desired new role. Other appearance changes such as hairstyles (McAlexander & Schouten, 1989; Mcraken, 1995), tattooing (Sanders, 1989), and dieting (Schouten, 1991; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995) have been considered to be symbolic in their consumption and also used for this purpose. These changes in appearance have been found to be important in assisting the individual to manage during the transitional period (McAlexander & Schouten 1989). The more insecure and lacking in confidence that the individual may be in their new role, the more likely they are to use stereotypical symbols to signify their competence within it (Solomon, 1983).

Some researchers perceive that altering one's body and appearance delivers elements of control over the interaction individuals receive from other people (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981); and that just as possessions can be used to express power relationships, so too can body alterations be used to communicate ownership and control over one's self (Schouten, 1991).

A variety of authors have discussed how these identity reconstructions are closely related to 'rites of passage' and can be classified under the process identified by Van Gennep (1960). In this model the individual undergoes a three-phase process beginning with separation where the person removes themselves from their present role. This is followed by a second phase of transition where the person metamorphoses into the new

role and the final stage of incorporation where the individual re-enters society in the new and changed state. It is the middle phase that Turner (1969) argues is the most ambivalent, as the individual is caught in a state of limbo between the past and the future. According to Schouten (1991), “when a person loses or rejects an important aspect of self, separation occurs and liminality sets in. Liminal people face the task of reconstructing congruous, integrated self-concepts...”(p. 421) It is during this phase of the transformation that body alterations appear to be most marked (Noble & Walker, 1997).

## 2.5 RITUAL AND MAGIC

Masks are one of the most enduring forms of plastic art that reflect a society’s culture (Harvilla, 2000), and, have been used for centuries for a plethora of reasons such as religious, curative, festive and protective purposes. For example, the Egyptian death mask, the Bolivian devil mask or those used in festivities such as mardi-gras; all have significant meanings attached to them and are often linked with ritual, folklore, magic and identity (Pollock, 1995). The mask is interesting as it is simultaneously an ‘icon’ (or resemblance) of identity, as well as, an ‘index’ that draws on extensions of the signal to create meaning (Pollock, 1995). It represents the transformation taking place and does this through a conventional process as masks are understood and embedded within the ritual dimension of the culture.

The mask of make-up has striking transformational abilities. It is often ritualistic and is linked with traditional scripts. In this section, issues of magic, ritual and myth are discussed, with their relevance to make-up elaborated and developed as important variables that have considerable impact on women’s consumption of make-up.

Many authors have discussed myth in a consumer research context and explored its impact on consumer consumption behaviours (Belk & Costa, 1998, Levy 1981 & 1994, Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). In these studies myth is identified as an important symbolic driver of consumer behaviour, be it the behaviours of Mountain Men (Belk & Costa, 1998), the small stories handed down from mother to daughter (Levy, 1981), or Thanksgiving day rituals (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991).

Frye (cited in Stern, 1995) also proposes that myths have great relevance in the way we consume products and that advertising structures utilise this. He claims all advertising can be reduced to four fundamental themes of: comedy, tragedy, romance and irony, the fundamental components of myth. Consequently, myth still holds an extremely symbolic place within the fabric of most cultures. Even today, consumers are often motivated to action because of some underlying myth without giving any real thought to the rationale for that behaviour (Belk & Costa, 1998). For example, consumers' use of fireworks on New Year's Eve, or their desire to stock the pantry with food just in case of Y2 K problems (Ogilvie, Ryan & Pettigrew, 2000). In any ritualistic behaviour, such as the use of make-up, it would seem that underlying myths play an important part in driving behaviours that are not necessarily based on logic but have their source in the myths, rituals and traditions of the culture.

Rook (1985) explores the dynamic of ritual further and in particular those rituals involved in everyday grooming. He believes that ritual is defined by an experience that is composed of a string of events that are conducted in the exact same sequence each time the activity is performed. His study examined everyday grooming rituals associated with hair care but the same concepts can be extended to women's daily use of cosmetics.

Rook (1985, p 253) claims that ritual is characterised by four fundamental and consistent elements. These are the use of ritual artefacts, a ritual script, ritual

performances or roles, and a ritual audience. According to Rook, in following the exact same script and order of events, consumers gain feeling and meaning each time the ritual is acted out. He believes that rituals can be differentiated from behavioural habits in that they are usually group experiences, have dramatic scripts, and/or have more meaning for the individual performing them. They also usually consist of a beginning, middle and an end (Rook, 1985, p 252).

Rituals are like a social language and communicate large amounts of information about the society and the current codes and practices within it (Arnould, Price & Otnes, 1999; Rook, 1985). As Rook (1985) notes, ritual provides a structure for the correct way to do things and the feelings that are normally experienced when following the set script. Rituals make symbolic statements about the social order by dramatising cultural myths and linking the present with the past. In particular Rook (1985) identifies that,

*...human grooming activity is not only hygienic, it also functions parasomatically to modify the body's colour, smell, apparent size and shape. Literally, grooming behaviour is a form of body language, communicating specific messages about an individual's social status, maturity, aspirations, conformity, even morality (p 258).*

Others have also analysed the elements of ritual and its impact on the individual. Jung (1959) and Freud (1959) believed that rituals aided as a defence against impulsiveness by keeping the subconscious at bay. In so doing, they also helped foster the ego and develop individual identity. Rook similarly concurs that rituals are “enactments of social and individual myths” (p 262) and often reflect the individual's status, sexuality or stage of life. The literature (Rook, 1985; Erikson, 1959) suggests that ritual stems from superstition and a belief in magic and may be linked to feelings of inferiority and isolation. Therefore, it is the ritual that gives meaning and structure to the



everyday grooming behaviours of consumers. Any break or change to this ritual is met with great uncertainty and discomfort, so changes in the ritual process occur slowly and are often met with great resistance (Rook, 1985).

Arnould et al. (1999) propose that magic is reasserting itself in contemporary consumer culture and is deeply embedded in everyday practices and the transformational experiences stemming from them. The use of cosmetics can be included as such a transformation and the daily routine of 'making-up' is encased in a magical formula as it is performed. The formula consists of three criteria: the individual must be prepared to undergo a state of transcendence, there is the matching of the ritualised procedure to the context; and then the rite. As Arnould et al. purport, the central theme of magic is that it transforms the individual in some way and then returns them to their original state. In doing so, it is believed that "magic ritualises people's optimism, and enhances their faith in the victory of hope over fear" (Arnould et al. 1999, p. 3). To do this, magic uses deep cultural scripts that harness cognitive and effective metaphors and work through the body. As such, magic is very much about power.

On the topic of magic, Gluckman, cited in Kapferer (1997), also claims that sorcery was more a means of power to keep the status quo. Magic was used to explain the conflicts and contradictions of society and played an integral part as a mechanism to overcome or support repressive processes within that society. This theme is not lost on the attitudes towards cosmetics held by the church at various times throughout history.

Kapferer (1997) purports that sorcery, and understanding its consumption by humans, is a good way to understand consumer behaviour and, like other social sciences created to study this dynamic, it may be a more appropriate dimension to use because of its inexpressible link to the everyday struggle of human lives. Magic and science commonly overlap (Driver, 1991), however the distinguishing feature in magical

practices is ritual (Driver, 1991, Arnould & Price, 1993). Rituals are “agents of transformation” and, whilst repetitive and exact, “are themselves transformed by the histories to which they belong.” (Driver, 1991, p. 184). Driver uses the example of weddings, a rite of passage that creates great transformation, to demonstrate how the ritual itself is subject to change through history. A similar analogy exists with cosmetics, where the daily ritual creates for many a magical transformation while the rites of the ritual change with the practices of the day. The historical overview presented earlier in this chapter is testament to how these rituals change over time yet still maintain their ritualistic behavioural properties and hence can be considered as magical transformations.

## 2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented an overview of the literature related to visible face make-up. It has begun with an overview of make-up from an historical context and explored how societal use and reaction to face cosmetics and adornment has changed over the centuries. It has focused on Western cultures and explored the issues that have had considerable impact on cosmetic consumption over time. These include elements such as religion, war, and the woman’s changing role in society.

It looks at the role cosmetics played in the feminist debate and how they served as a vehicle to give voice to political activists of the time. It also describes how cosmetics were the medium to cause great social debate amongst feminists, their important role in advertising, and how beauty pageants and mass media depictions normalised the female form.

The chapter elaborates on how appearance is consumed in everyday life and explores key driving motivators for this from an evolutionary, social and theoretical

perspective. A discussion of how cosmetics serve as a means by which women can transform the 'self' is presented, and the mechanisms and processes behind this metamorphosis elaborated upon.

It concludes with a discussion of myth, ritual and magic and links these constructs to visible face make-up, proposing that the transformations they create are often magical; the processes are stepped in ritual and the beauty they provide often linked to myth.

# CHAPTER 3: SEMIOTICS - A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING SIGNS

*“Decoration is actually created for the face, since it is only by means of decoration that the face receives its social dignity and mystical significance.*

*Decoration is conceived for the face, but the face itself only exists through decoration.” (Levi-Strauss 1969:261)*

This chapter has a dual purpose. Firstly, it serves to introduce the concept of semiotics – the science of signs. The origins, extensions and factors differentiating varying semiotic philosophies are discussed. It also presents the theoretical framework to be used in the study and reviews the literature of the two main theories to be utilised in the analysis of the sign of make-up.

## 3.1 SCIENCE OF SIGNS

In recent years semiotics has been used to conduct consumer research on a range of issues including fashion, advertising, everyday possessions and entertainment (Cerny, 1997 ; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Holbrook & Grayson, 1986; Morgado 1993; Mick et al., 1999 & 2004; Mick, 1986). It is re-emerging as a useful framework to examine issues of symbolism and meaning within this context (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1993). As semiotics is the analysis of systems of signification, it consequently is a useful method for consumer researchers to explore the underlying meanings of every-day communication vehicles such as fashion, food and advertising (Brown, 1995)

Furthermore, large organisations such as Glaxo Wellcome and British Telecom are now utilising semiotics within their marketing plans when launching new products, as well as for re-positioning established ones (Evans, 1999). These organisations, like others, believe that the information obtained from this technique offers valuable insights into the culture's codes, beliefs and values which give the company an added advantage in an over cluttered competitive marketplace.

'Semiotics' can be defined as the science of signs and their meaning (Bouissac, 1998; Guiraud, 1975; Manning, 1987; Mick, 1986; Noth, 1990). In this instance, a sign can be anything that can be taken to represent something else (Eco, 1976). Manning explains the purpose of semiotics as "to uncover rules that govern the conventions of signification" (1987, p. 26). An alternative term for 'semiotics' is 'semiology'. The two terms today are synonymous, however they are usually used as a method to identify the different traditions within the field. 'Semiology' is used to define the linguistic tradition of Sausurre, Hjelmslev and Barthes, whilst the term 'semiotics' defines the theory of signs proposed by Peirce and Morris.

The study of signs has been in existence for many years with philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle including it among their writings as far back as 2 B.C. (Noth, 1990). It is believed that semiotics may also have had origins in ancient medical science. Noth (1990, p 13) purports that physicians such as 'Galen of Pergamum' refer to diagnosis as a process of 'semeiosis'. By the eighteenth century, Europe had adopted a variety of derivatives of this word to describe the doctrine of symptoms. Words such as semiotica, semiotique, and semiotik were all used commonly to correspond to symptomology.

Semiotics was studied by the Stoics, the Epicureans and through to the late antiquity / middle ages by St Augustine (354-430 AD). Under the disciplines of theology and philosophy, medieval semiotics expanded to create scholasticism. Topics taught

during this time included the Christian pansemiotic view of the universe, the realism-nominalism debate, the doctrines of suppositions and the modes of signifying (Noth 1990, p 17). Continuing in this tradition, many other philosophers, often with a theological leaning (Noth 1990), explored the science of signs and their interpretation.

The founding of modern day semiotics is usually attributed to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 –1913) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914) (Gottdeiner, 1995; Noth, 1990) who concurrently, but separately and individually, developed the philosophies of the sign and its interpretation from two different perspectives. These two schools of thought have since been expanded by a variety of notable semioticians who, over the years, examined varying aspects of the sign in greater depth, creating a plethora of semiotic theories and proposed methods to explore the codes and language of signs in today's society (Bouissac, 1998, Gottdeiner, 1995; Hawkes, 1977; Innis, 1985; Noth 1990). The scope of this study prohibits discussion of all of them so only those that impact upon this study are discussed.

### 3.2 The Dyadic Perspective

One of the main differentiating factors between the many semiotic approaches is their concept of the sign (Grayson, 2000; Mick et al. 1999; Noth, 1990). Saussurean-based semiotics takes a dyadic<sup>3</sup> approach and, in the analysis of the sign, there is no mention of a referent<sup>4</sup>. In Saussurean semiotics, as with many of his followers, the sign is broken into two elements: that of signifier, the actual word; and signified, the meaning or concept triggered by the word. For example, dog is the word while the meaning is the

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<sup>3</sup> Divided and consisting of two parts eg. signifier and signified.

<sup>4</sup> A vehicle that conveys the idea to the mind.

resulting mental representation of the animal (Bouissac, 1998; Guiraud, 1975; Noth 1990).

Sausurre proposed that the production of meaning depended upon language, and that language was indeed characterised by a system of signs. Signs did not occur in isolation but occurred in groups called paradigms. In linking the signs to create a coherent message, there were certain laws that applied called syntagms (Mick et al., 1999). As such, signs should not be interpreted on their own but as part of a whole system. As a result, “the rules that connect signifiers to their signified and the rules that pertain to stringing signs together are called codes” (Mick et al. 1999, p. 6). Another fundamental element to Saussurean semiotics is that signs communicate through difference (Hall, 1997) as outlined below.

The Sausurrean school of thought and its structuralistic approach focus on the sign as a form of language. Integral to this philosophy is that culture enables communication through signs, and signs are a language that can be identified and interpreted through the analysis of codes within the culture. It is this approach that the initial phase of the study will adopt and a deeper discussion of the identification of codes through the discourse of the culture shall be outlined in the methodology section of this thesis.

### 3.2.1 Communicating Through Difference

Dyadic models are sometimes developed into tetradic models<sup>5</sup> by overlaying another dyadic model to create four components (or planes) of the sign. For example, Hjelmslev’s sign model of expression and content into form and substance is an example

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<sup>5</sup> Tetradic models are an extension of the bipolar plane to include four defining points on a vertical and horizontal axis. They provide more detail and depth in understanding the sign eg. The Gremlatian Square.

of such an extension of the dyad to a tetrad (Noth, 1990, p. 83). Similarly, Levi-Strauss and Greimas developed their theories under this concept using bipolar planes of difference as their anchors.

One of the commonest ways to mark difference is the use of binary oppositions, for example, light/dark, life/death, black/white (Hall, 1997; Mick et al., 1999) where meaning is interpreted by a selection of signs along a bipolar axis. In addition to Levi-Strauss and Greimas, Jakobson also used this concept of binary oppositions to interpret meaning through difference and used it to underpin his semiotic theories. Jakobson's theories were pivotal in influencing Levi-Strauss and, in turn, Greimas, in the development of their semiotic perspectives (Mick, 1999; Noth, 1990).

Jakobson's (1896 – 1982) main interest was in poetics and linguistics and later his realm of study extended to include the semiotic fields of culture and aesthetics. Jakobson's semiotic principles became highly influential to the development of structuralism particularly through his influence on Levi-Strauss (Noth, 1990). Of particular importance were his studies into aphasiology<sup>6</sup>. It was from these studies that Jakobson developed his theories of metaphor and metonymy and their impact on language.

### 3.2.2 Metaphor and Metonymy

In these studies, Jakobson noted how the two major types of disorders in aphasia, 'similarity disorder' and 'contiguity disorder' appeared to be strikingly related to the two basic rhetorical figures metaphor<sup>7</sup> and metonymy<sup>8</sup> (Hawkes, 1977, p 77). Patients with 'similarity disorder' only had the combinative or syntagmatic aspect of language

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<sup>6</sup> The study of inability to speak.

<sup>7</sup> Description of something based on likeness.

<sup>8</sup> Description based on similarity or adjacent to.



preserved. These patients had difficulty in naming objects but used metonymy extensively. Conversely, patients with 'contiguity disorder' experienced the reverse. These patients tended to use lots of similes or metaphors but the syntagmatic rules organising the words into higher units of meaning were lost (Hawkes, 1977).

In communication, metaphor and metonymy are used as equivalents to the entity being communicated about. In the metaphor 'the river snaked along', the movement and image of a snake is proposed as 'equivalent' to that of the rivers; and in the metonymic phrase 'Canberra's policy', a specific city is proposed as 'equivalent' to the Prime minister of Australia and his cabinet. The key difference between metaphor and metonymy is that metaphor is based on a likeness. In this example, the river's movement and image is likened to the movement and shape of a snake; as such the river took on the attributes of the snake's form. Whereas, metonymy is based on a proposed contiguous (or 'sequential') association between the literal subject (the government) and its 'adjacent' replacement (where the government is located). Therefore, according to Jakobson, metaphor is generally associative and exploits language's 'vertical' axis, whereas metonymy is generally syntagmatic in character and exploits language's 'horizontal' dimension (Hawkes, 1977).

**Figure 3.1: Diagrammatic Representation of Metaphor and Metonymy  
(Hawkes, 1977, p. 78) removed for copyright reasons.  
Please refer to printed version**

Jackobson proposed that these two dimensions of opposed polarities underpin the way signs are interpreted. The meaning of the sign or message is often determined by the selection of words used and the manner in which those words are strung together in combination. The process of selecting and combining these words in itself lends meaning to the sign (Mick et al., 1999; Noth, 1990). This links back to Saussure's approach that messages and signs were constructed by a combination of horizontal movement, from combining words together, and a vertical movement which selects the particular words from the available inventory or database of the language.

The combinative (or syntagmatic) process manifests itself in contiguity (one word being placed next to another) and its mode is metonymic. The selective (or associative) process manifests itself in similarity (one word or concept being 'like another) and its mode is metaphoric. The 'opposition' of metaphor and metonymy therefore may be said to represent, in effect, the essence of the total opposition between the synchronic mode of

language (its immediate, coexistent, ‘vertical’ relationships) and its diachronic mode, (its sequential, successive, linearly progressive relationships) (Hawkes, 1977, p.77-78).

Metaphors form the basis of emotional linguistics. They are used extensively in marketing communications today to draw emotional responses and are decoded using the imagination of the receiver. Chocolate boxes, perfume and, particularly make-up use metaphor in their dialogue with the consumer employing techniques like music, shape, colour or scent to influence the consumers’ mood, or often they harness a combination of them to create an emotional response and slip between the senses to create *senisethea*<sup>9</sup> (Valentine, 2000).

Following on from Jakobson, and heavily influenced by his work, was the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (Noth, 1990). Levi-Strauss studied the customs of the Amazonian tribes in Brazil investigating their rituals, artefacts, myths and folk-tales. He examined them not so much for what they were, but more for the meaning that was attributed to them, and what messages about the tribes’ culture could be derived from them. He did this by analysing the codes through which such practices and items produced meaning (Hall, 1997, p. 37)

In his work *Structural Anthropology Part II* (1963, in Penner, 1998), Levi-Strauss designed a simple and fast way to deconstruct and read the codes within a culture, thereby interpreting their meaning. This method is still practiced extensively today by market researchers as a means of providing organisations with a semiotic analysis of their product and the market place (MacFarquar, 1994; Valentine, 2000). As previously mentioned, large organisations such as Glaxo Wellcome and British Telecom have successfully used this technique for brand positioning and launching new products (Evans, 1999).

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<sup>9</sup> A liminal state between the senses that the mind senses and understands.

Greimas extended this notion of bipolar oppositions further. Using a similar tetradic model to Levi-Strauss, he developed what has come to be known as the Greimassian Square. In this model he proposes that there are two types of bipolar difference: contrariety or good/evil, life/death, as well as contradictions (life versus non-life and death versus non-death). It is through these contrasting axes that one finds meaning in a semantic category (Mick et al., 1999, Noth, 1990). In this context, the Greimassian Square is considered useful for interpreting meaning through the set up of opposing elements, and has been used successfully by previous researchers within the marketing field in areas such as gift giving (Mick, 1991).

Derida questioned the power behind the use of bipolar axes to interpret difference and suggests that one side may be weighted much more favourably than the other, for example, good versus bad and life versus death (Woodward, 1997). Whilst there is credence to this point of view, the purpose of this study is to investigate women's make-up behaviours and identify differences between them. It is not the purpose of the study to pass judgment on these behaviours but more to explore and understand the differences between them. As such, the method of determining difference through employing opposing elements is useful.

### 3.2.3 Myth

The semiotics of fashion has been extensively researched (Bouissac, 1998, Cerny, 1997, Mick et al., 1999; Gottdeiner, 1973), and in this regard it is worthy to note the contribution by Roland Barthes and his analogy of the fashion system (1967). Barthes extended Saussurean concepts further by adding a third dimension of myth. To his mind there was a signifier and a signified. Each signified could then become a signifier for another or a second order of meaning. This sideways or lateral shift he termed myth and,

in this model, each sign is built on the other to be part of a larger system (Gottdeiner, 1975). This is demonstrated in the illustration below.

1 Signifier	2 Signified
3 Sign	
1 SIGNIFIER	II SIGNIFIED
III SIGN	

**Figure 3.2: Myth Today (Barthes, 1972 p.114-5 in Hall, 1997 p 68).**

Barthes termed the original sign or language transformed by this process the language-object and the second order created by the myth metalanguage. Barthes believed that regardless of the original medium of the sign, be it language, photo or a ritualistic behaviour, all these signs underwent the same transformation by myth to create this metalanguage (Gottdeiner, 1995, Hall, 1997; Mick et al., 1999).

Levi-Strauss also provides a structural analysis of myth. He purports that myth is like language and similar to the phonemes in language. Myth, with all its variations, is made up of bundles which he termed mythemes. These mythemes are arranged on a bidimensional axis with the horizontal axis representing the syntagmatic aspect of the narrative sequence of the myth and the vertical axis representing the paradigmatic or semantic equivalences of the textual units (Noth, 1990). The overtones of Jakobson's earlier work and his influence on Levi-Strauss's are evident from this model.

“According to Levi-Strauss, every myth contains a kernel of four mythemes related by opposition and equivalence” (Noth, 1990, p. 375) In this way, the myth is reduced to a formulae of A:B :: C:D (Penner, 1998, Valentine, 2000) and, through this

process, Levi-Strauss arrives at a deeper hidden logic of the myth, which is capable of overcoming and accounting for contradictions (Noth, 1990).

This analysis of myth extends from the work of Vladimir Propp and his morphology of a folktale (Henaff, 1998; Nathhorst, 1969; Noth, 1990). Where Propp's model was mainly syntagmatic, Levi-Strauss added the paradigmatic dimension so that his model provides a method to map the codes identified in the discourse of the culture, and identify the norms and contradictions within the society. Today this form of semiotics is considered as a recognised data capture method by marketing research societies in Britain and Australia (MacFarquar, 1994; Valentine, 2000) and has been used by a variety of different organisations in their marketing intelligence.

Levi-Strauss's tetradic model is demonstrated below in Figure 3 as applied to fairytales. This framework can be applied to a semiotic analysis of many fields including myths, brands, and ritualistic consumption behaviours such as make-up use (Valentine, 2000).

**Figure 3.3:** *Mapping the Myth* (Adapted from Claude Levi Strauss, *A Structural Anthropology Part II* by Valentine, 2000) removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.

### 3.3 THE TRIADIC PERSPECTIVE

In contrast to the dyadic approach of Saussurean semiotics, Peirce and Morris founded a triadic approach which distinguishes between sign, sense and reference as three relata of the sign (Noth, 1990). Peirce's model is considered more a philosophy than a model, and is thought by many to be more complex than Saussure's perspective (Gottdeiner, 1995; Grayson, 2000; Noth, 1990). It is Peirce's semiotic approach which has been used more extensively in consumer behaviour research exploring issues such as

indexicality and iconicity (Grayson, 2000; Mick et al., 1999; Morgado, 1993; Valentine, 2000).

Peirce's triadic philosophy of the sign involves three elements: the representamen or a vehicle that conveys an idea to the mind; an interpretant; and another idea that interprets the sign and object for which the sign stands (Gottdeiner, 1995; Hawkes, 1975). These three elements are in perpetual motion and change at all times. At any time, one can become the other in a process of continual semiosis. For example, a representamen can become an object, and an object an interpretant, and an interpretant a representamen, at any time ad infinitum. In this way the representamen, object and interpretant constantly rotate / gyrate around a central point. The sign is always changing; signs become new signs or parts of signs, which in turn become more signs or components of signs. Merrell (2000) represents this continual state of change and motion in his depiction of the Borromean knot illustrated below.

**Figure 3.4 : Signs in Motion (Merrell, 2000, p 121) removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**



In Peirce's philosophy these three elements (representatmen, object and interpretant), are overlayed against three categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness. 'Firstness' being, 'it is what it is' without relation to anything else. 'Secondness' is relating the first to the second in terms of comparison, action, time or space. 'Thirdness' relates the second to the third and includes memory, habit, synthesis and semiosis, usually in the form of communication (Merrell, 2000; Mick et al., 1999; Noth, 1990).

From the combination of these two trichotomies (illustrated in Table 3.1 and 3.2 below) Peirce created ten primary classes of sign. These ten classes of sign take the sign from its inception, a vague feeling of something, through to more complex interpretation such as argument or realisation of the sign, which usually involves some form of arbitrary process that has rules and conventions like language. Merrell describes these classes and the process of the sign within them in everyday terms. He describes them as 'feeling, imaging, sensing, awaring, scheming, impressing-saying, looking-saying, seeing-saying, perceiving-saying and finally realizing' (Merrell 2000, p. 37-41). Using this framework, he details the sign process within each and demonstrates how the elements of firstness, secondness and thirdness are combined against the trichotomies of representamen, object and interpretant to create the 10 different classes of sign. (See table 3.1 and 3.2 below).

**Table 3.1: Three Trichotomies and Ten Principal Classes of Signs**

Trichotomy Category	I Of the representamen	II Of the relationship to object	III Of the relation to interpretant
Firstness	qualisign	<b>Icon</b>	rheme
Secondness	sinsign	<b>Index</b>	dicent
Thirdness	legisign	<b>Symbol</b>	argument

(From C.S. Peirce in Mick et al. 1999:Appendix)

**Table 3.2: Ten Signs from Nine**

1	R1O1I1	Feeling	Qualisign
2	R2O1I1	Imaging	Iconic sinsign
3	R2O2I1	Sensing	Rhematic indexical sinsign
4	R2O2I2	Awaring	Dicent sinsign
5	R3O1I1	Scheming	Iconic legisign
6	R3O2I1	Impressing-saying	Rhematic indexical legisign
7	R3O2I2	Looking-saying	Dicent indexical legisign
8	R3O3I1	Seeing-saying	Rhematic symbol
9	R3O3I2	Perceiving-saying	Dicent symbol
10	R3O3I3	Realizing	Argument

*The numbers and letters in column two represent the degree of firstness (1), secondness (2), or thirdness (3); of the representamen (R), object (O) and interpretant (I).*

Adapted reproduction from (Merrell, 2000, p 122)

To add to the complexity, Peirce postulated that, by combining different aspects of these 10 signs, there were 66 classes of signs with the possibility of perhaps extending this to 3 to the power of 10 to create as many as 59,049 (Sanders in Noth, 1990, p. 44). Despite this plethora of analysis possibilities, many authors including Peirce himself, claim that the most important of the three trichotomies is the middle column, or the relationship to the object (Gottdeiner, 1995; Grayson, 2000; Hall, 1997; Hawkes, 1977; Mick et al., 1999; Morgado, 1993; Noth, 1990). Consequently, it is this trichotomy that this study will adopt in its analysis of the second phase of the study. A full description of these three important categories (icon, index and symbol) will therefore be outlined in the Theoretical Framework Phase 2 section of the thesis.

### 3.3.1 False Signs

Peirce also discusses the possibility of false signs, a concept that may be very relevant to this phase of the study. False signs occur when the inter-relationship between language and extra linguistic signs deceive others and oneself. Merrell purports that these include “language and extralinguistic signs collaborated interdependently and interrelatedly to bring about the act of deception” (Merrell, 2000, p. 112). ‘Deception’ may include where people mistake appearance for reality. Such a situation may occur when women wear make-up and believe that their ‘made-up’ face is actually their true identity. In contrast to the self-deception brought about in this non verbal or extra linguistic manner is ‘self-deceit’. This is usually linguistically based, for example, telling yourself a lie and actually believing it. Merrell (2000) argues that the nonverbal signs that are able to create deception stem from sign 311 (See table 3.2). This is the first sign to reach some form of thirdness, which in this case is the representamen. Merrell claims this “...is the pivotal sign mediating between signs of chiefly iconic and indexical nature

and signs that are clearly entering or are exclusively within the range of symbolicity” (2000, p 114). When a more thorough examination of this sign is made to identify the errors, it traces back to sign 211 from where the alternative image can be picked up and lead back to language. As Merrell purports, “deception and self deception emerge from the most basic of signs, signs of feeling, imaging, sensing and awaring, that eventually create the idea and the expression of something that is not as if it were” (Merrell, 2000, p 115). Understanding the possibilities of encountering these false signs is important as it has far-reaching ramifications to the analysis of this study.

### 3.4 ADOPTING THE SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

This study will use two different semiotic theories to study the phenomenon of visible face make-up. It will initially adopt a communication model based on Saussurean semiotics to assist in understanding the discourse of female visible face make-up in Australia today. Subsequently, the triadic semiotic philosophy proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce will be used to gain a more holistic understanding of the signification of this medium from the individual’s perspective. The models for each phase of the study are outlined in the following sections.

#### 3.4.1 Theoretical Framework Phase One

In phase one of the study, the semiotic framework of metaphor and metonymy will be used to examine the cultural context of face make-up within Western Australian society. Utilising Levi-Strauss’s theories on myth and bipolar axes to interpret communication, observation techniques will be used to identify the codes (or patterns) of facial make-up from the discourse within the culture.

There are three code categories that will be identified. Residual codes are the remnants of earlier cultural values. Whilst they are still evident within society, residual codes are gradually weakening as they become increasingly outdated, and either vanish or are replaced by newer codes. Dominant codes are the codes of the present and are visible everywhere, whilst emergent codes are the new and developing codes that are not quite fully formed. Emergent codes are ‘signposts’ to the future and consequently include much more diversity than the dominant and residual codes. The codes are “experimental, often tentative, and sometimes seen as outrageous when seen through dominant eyes” (Alexander, 2000, p. 5). Despite this, at least one from this diverse category will become the dominant code of tomorrow and, hence, from a strategic marketing point- of-view, they are extremely important.

By observing the discourse of make-up and utilising the information obtained from identifying these codes, the trends of make-up in society have been mapped adopting Levi-Strauss’s structuralist application of myth (See Figure 3.3, p62)(Alexander, 2000; Penner, 1998). The maps will provide useful information and assist in identifying a sample for a more narrow focus in phase two of the study. The resultant maps will give details on the ‘expected’ and ‘unexpected’ make-up habits of associated reference groups and thus can assist in identifying future directions and specific sample segments that interact within this discourse (MacFarquar, 1994).

### 3.4.2 Theoretical Framework Phase Two

The second phase of the study employed a Peircean semiotic framework in the analysis of the signification of visible face make-up to the individual. Besides identifying the trichotomies of visible make-up, this research is also targeted towards understanding what make-up represents and symbolises to the individual. It was therefore important to

utilise a model that allowed analysis of the respondents' thoughts, feelings and experiences rather than the more structuralist communication approach initially used for code identification (Hawkes, 1977). Indeed, many authors agree that models based on Saussure do not provide the depth of analysis offered by Peirce (Gottdeiner, 1975; Mick, 1986; Noth, 1990). The literature suggests that Peirce's more encompassing model lends itself to greater in-depth analysis of the phenomenon including the individual's experiences and perceptions and, hence, is more suited for the goals of the second phase of the research (Grayson, 2000).

The second phase of the study focused on the second trichotomy, or that which relates to the object (icon, index and symbol) (Table 3.1) of Peirce's theory for the semiotic analysis. As previously discussed, this section of the matrix has been identified as being particularly significant and of the most importance even by Peirce himself (Hawke, 1973; Peirce in Mick et al., 1999; Noth, 1990). These three dimensions are explained in more detail below and shall form the basis of the Peircean analysis in phase two of the study.

#### 3.4.2.1 Icon, Index, Symbol

The icon is a sign that conveys meaning because of its close resemblance to the object. For example, a painting or picture depicts an actual likeness to the object (Hawkes, 1973; Gottdeiner, 1995). In his writings, Peirce (1955, p105) elaborates on the different types of icons and describes how they can be broken down into hypoicons. Hypoicons can be divided into images, diagrams or metaphors depending on their characteristics. Images are 'first firstnesses' (Peirce, 1955, p105) and have simple qualities. Diagrams have a dyadic relationship by joining two parts together and finally those that represent the character of the representamen "by representing a parallelism in

something else, are metaphors” (Peirce, 1955, p 105). Hypoicons include any material image such as a painting or photograph as it stands, with no reference or legend to describe it. Within this study, the photos that participants take of their faces may represent the icons or hypoicons. According to Gottdeiner (1995), icons’ meanings are only weakly set by social customs and codes. Icons are important because to communicate any idea either directly or indirectly, necessitates the presence of an icon for the process to take place (Peirce, 1955).

Unlike the icon, the index does not arise from the cultural customs but from some existential and causal connection between two entities; for example, a flash of lightning is an index for the thunder that follows (Gottdeiner, 1995; Mick et al., 1999). An index works on the prior knowledge of the interpretant and the linkage of the two signs to create meaning. “Through the concept of the index Peirce showed how daily practice or a pragmatic understanding of the material world created meaning through experience rather than through cultural codes” (Gottdeiner, 1995, p. 12). For this reason, it is under Peirce’s philosophy that the study will interpret consumers’ experiences rather than maintaining the structuralist dyadic approach of Levi-Strauss which is limited in exploring this dynamic.

Symbols are the arbitrary rules that govern meaning. For example, the laws of language that guide sentence construction and understanding are symbolic. A symbol would no longer exist if there were no interpretant to make the signifying connection. It is “a vehicle that stands for something else which is understood as an idea in the mind of the interpretant” (Gottdeiner, 1995, p. 12) In relation to make-up, this will include the laws of product application. For example, lipstick is applied to the lips and mascara to the eyelashes as this is where custom expects them to go. According to Peirce (1955, p115), the symbol part of the sign is the concept, and to create new signs requires thoughts

involving concepts. In this way symbols can grow and lead to the development of new signs, which, once created, spread within the culture and expand in meaning with use and experience.

Using the trichotomy of icon, index and symbol in itself is an oversimplification of Peirce's philosophy on signs and in reality signs could be analysed using a combination of the 10 classes of sign. The analysis using this more complex approach of mixing the trichotomies is vast but worthy of further research. However, this project limits itself to a more narrow and manageable focus and, consequently, will only examine the icon, index and symbol.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter introduces semiotics and defines it as the science of signs. It discusses the origins of this field and how semiotics has been extended and developed by a range of philosophers and researchers to become an effective modern-day marketing research tool. It details the difference between Saussurean-based semiotics, which takes a dyadic perspective, as compared to Peircean semiotics, which takes a triadic approach. These two different approaches are explained and discussed.

In this chapter the focus is on the two semiotic perspectives that have been used in this study. They are explored with explanations of their components and how they work to interpret the sign. Firstly, the concepts of Levi-Strauss and his analogy of metaphor and metonymy are presented. This framework has a Saussurean-base and, hence, is dyadic in its understanding of the sign. It consists of a signifier and a signified and interprets the sign from a communication perspective. It does this by exploring the codes within a culture and gains meaning through the analysis of these societal codes.



The second semiotic framework used in this study is Peirce. This triadic approach is discussed with the complexities of Peirce's philosophical theory presented. Within this study the classification of icon, index and symbol have been utilised as the points of analysis. Consequently, this framework highlights the experiential perspective of the sign. The concepts of icon, index and symbol are defined and discussed along with the influence of false signs and their impact on interpretation.

# CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with a discussion of the selection of the method of inquiry for the study, and presents a rationale for the choice of the interpretive approach. It proceeds to discuss aspects of phenomenological inquiry and justifies the use of this method as an appropriate tool for the research. A graphic representation of the flow of the research is presented, followed by details of the design and procedure for the two phases of the study. The chapter also outlines the techniques used to analyse the data and discusses issues of triangulation that increase the validity of its results. Finally, the limitations of this project are outlined along with the ethical procedures adopted during the research.

## 4.1 SELECTING THE METHOD OF INQUIRY

To interpret the meaning of make-up and explore the signification of this medium to the individual, a constructivist paradigm was chosen. Constructivists believe that reality can only be obtained through the revelation of individuals' intangible mental constructs (Schwandt, 1994). According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), the constructivist paradigm “...assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject create understanding) and a naturalistic (in natural world) set of methodological procedures” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p 27). Consequently, to explore the significance of the sign of make-up in today's

environment, this methodology was considered the most appropriate as it allows the researcher the ability to explore in depth the individual consumer behaviours associated with the medium. Therefore, to gain insights into this personal behaviour, the study adopts an interpretivist epistemology and uses a qualitative methodology in the form of phenomenology to explore the social phenomenon of make-up.

Goulding (1999) discusses the increase in the use of qualitative methodologies in the study of consumer behaviour and outlines the usefulness of techniques such as phenomenology in understanding every-day humanistic experiences. The post-positive movement (Venkatesh, 1992) has incorporated many of these qualitative techniques and recognises their importance in understanding the complex issues of humanistic enquiry. As Goulding (1999) purports, these methods take into account “the social, complex, often irrational and sometimes unpredictable nature of consumer behaviour”; and they “... give(s) equal significance to the experiential and meaningful aspects which underpin consumption” (Goulding, 1999, p 860).

Whilst there remains some debate over whether these methodologies should be used alone (Baker, Wuest & Stern, 1992, Goulding 1999), or mixed as in other consumer research (Belk, Walendorf & Sherry, 1989), the usefulness of these qualitative methodologies can not be underestimated in providing valuable understanding into subjects and how they perceive the world around them.

In particular, phenomenological principles explore the essence of a specific phenomenon of interest and its experience on the senses. Central to the phenomenological approach is that there is a core meaning that is mutually understood through the experience of the phenomenon (Patton, 1990). Consequently, consumer research studies have used this approach to successfully research issues such as special

possessions (Myers 1980) and consumer experiences (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1990, McQuarrie & McIntyre 1990).

Thompson et al. (1990) argue that existential phenomenological study comprises three important categories. These include “intentionality”, “emergent dialogue”, and the “hermeneutic circle” (p 347), and these three elements provide the base for this form of methodology. Intentionality contends that “lived experience may not always honour standard conceptual boundaries and, therefore, must be understood relative to the specific life-world from which it emerges” (p 347). Existential phenomenology also uses rich, descriptively focused interviews where questions are guided by the participants’ responses. Dialogue should be non-judgmental in nature (Colaizzi, 1978; Kvale, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1989) through the process of emergent dialogue understanding is gained (Thompson et al., 1990).

The final category is hermeneutic endeavour where constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the data is conducted. Each part of the narrative is examined alone and then, as a whole, with interpretations being continuously revised as more information becomes available. It is a back and forth process (Bleicher, 1980; Ricoeur, 1976,) from which commonalties appear. These commonalties are then grouped or bracketed to become themes.

Thompson (1989 & 1990) attests that essential elements of bracketing include interpretations being described in emic terms, in addition to interpretation by an alternative group. This is important as the narrative is the core component of analysis and hence is open to multiple interpretations. It therefore falls upon the researcher to demonstrate this interpretation through the participants’ description so that others can understand their interpretation of the phenomenon under study (Giorgi, 1983 & 1989; Thompson et al. 1989). Similarly, by using this approach and focussing on the

experiences of participants and exploring how individuals interpret the experience of face make-up, the research can gain insights into the phenomena not offered by a more quantitative approach.

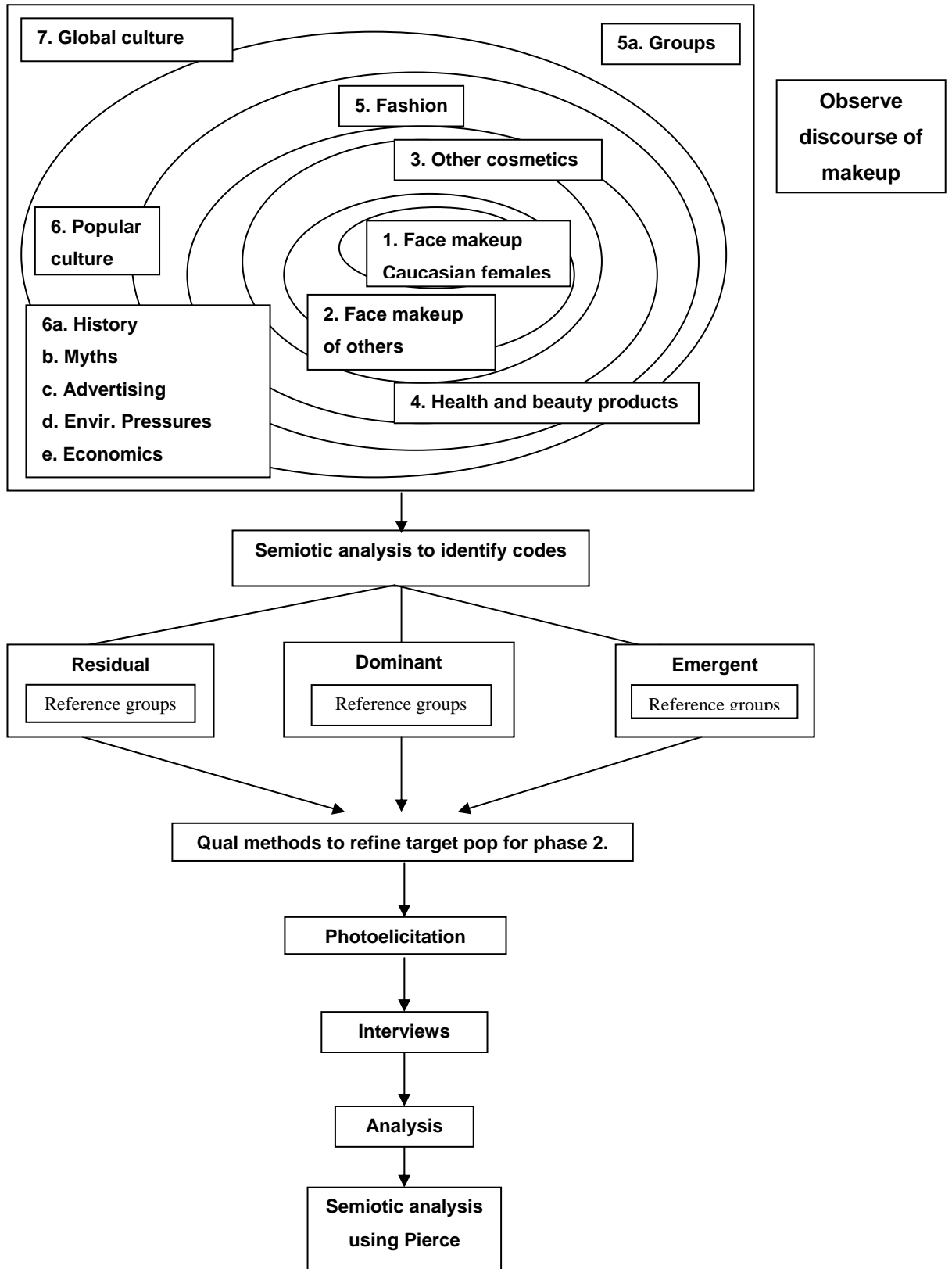
Phenomenology adds another important dimension to consumer research in that it prevents the everyday event such as face make-up from becoming trivialised and losing its existential significance. “By infusing everyday consumer experiences with a description of lived meaning, this significance can be better understood ...” (Thompson et al., 1990, p 371).

Adopting this methodology, the study uses a combination of qualitative techniques including observation, in-depth interviews and the use of photoelicitation as an auto-driver. The use of observation and interview techniques were chosen in line with existential phenomenological principles to explore the symbolic nature of the medium and the emotional dimension that visible face make-up represents to women. The study was divided into two phases, each using a different semiotic perspective. The design, sample and procedure for each of these phases are described forthwith.

As Perth is a multicultural society, a cultural filter was used so that only white Caucasian women were included in the study. The rationale behind this selection was to remove any discrepancies that may be caused by different skin tone and colouring. For example, Asian women may wear make-up to look pale and, conversely, white women may wear make-up to look more tanned (Corson, 1972). Additionally, only women that wore make-up were researched in this study. The feelings, experiences and behaviours of women who never wear make-up are not reflected in this project.

## 4.1 FLOW OF THE RESEARCH

Figure 4.1: The model below outlines the flow of the research for this study.



## 4.3 PHASE ONE OF THE STUDY

### 4.3.1 Design

Using a semiotic analysis based on the work of Claude Levi-Strauss (outlined in the previous 'theoretical framework' section of the thesis), the first step was to identify the codes of make-up that existed within Perth, Western Australia at the time. To identify and describe these codes, the discourse of visible face make-up was observed over a ten-year period between 1990 and 2000. Observation of selected mediums over this time-frame were used in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the cultural context of make-up, and to allow for a more grounded approach to sample selection in the second phase of the study (Patton, 1990). Print media, films, products and packaging along with individual conversations that represented everyday life were used in these observations, and are outlined in the 'procedure' below. The use of this technique made it possible to identify the codes of make-up on a time dimension and to classify them into three categories - residual, dominant or emergent make-up trends.

### 4.3.2 Procedure

Print media over the ten-year period was scanned for representations of make-up in pictorial form. The pictures of both idealised models and everyday people were examined. Wedding columns, social pages and lifestyle articles were used to provide an insight into what make-up the ordinary person was wearing in comparison to the more glamorised depiction of cosmetics in brand advertising. Similarly, film, television and music video clips were viewed to identify patterns of face make-up over the ten-year time-frame.

Past publications of women's magazines, newspapers, old film, MTV clips and television programs were used to observe face make-up over the ten-year period of 1990-2000. Material was sourced from throughout the community and libraries. In all, 56 magazines and 20 hours of film and video clips were observed to help gain an understanding of the discourse of make-up. Patterns were documented and analysed to uncover the three cultural codes that represent the historical paradigm shift.

In addition, more recent products and packs were examined for patterns and trends in face cosmetics, (as were conversations, behaviours and visual observations of women in the natural setting.) Products, packs and promotional material were observed in six separate geographical locations and across a range of cosmetic retailers (See appendix 1). The retail outlets included department stores, local chemists, natural cosmetic outlets (eg Body Shop, Red Earth), supermarkets and budget generic outlets (eg Priceline) from each of the six locations (Perth City, Midland, Carousel, Fremantle, Claremont and Joondalup). These locations and retail outlets were chosen to provide a cross section of demographic profiles throughout the study area (ABS, 2001).

In addition, consumers' conversations and behaviour at the above localities were observed and documented whilst collecting information on products and packs. Further observation of women's face make-up in locations such as nightclubs, restaurants, public transport, the street and other natural settings from the community at large were also employed. This resulted in thirty A4 pages of field notes.

The observation data were sorted and analysed for patterns and emerging themes. By using a variety of media and a ten-year time frame for the print and film media, the researcher was able to observe the phenomena from an historical perspective and gain an understanding of the code movement and paradigm shifts that were taking place within the culture (Alexander, 2000).



From this process the three code categories (residual, dominant and emergent) were identified and used to map the 'brand myth' (Valentine, 2000) on two bipolar axes. The resulting quadrants help to understand the discourse of make-up in Perth society today and provide insight into future trends, directions and reference groups that utilise this medium. Pictorial representations from the graphic mediums were then utilised to create collages representing these trends.

Initially it was planned to use the reference groups identified within the three codes as a basis for sample selection in the second phase of the study. However, the codes that emerged could not be readily transposed to a clear-cut sample because women would tend to wear different make-up looks depending upon the situation. For example, women may wear the more modern translucent ethereal look for a special occasion but wear no make-up for work. Therefore, to help define the sample for the second phase of the study, further qualitative research was required. Whilst the codes helped understand the discourse of make-up in today's society they could not be used in isolation because of this phenomenon.

To help confirm the first semiotic analysis and the themes that emerged from it, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the cosmetic industry were undertaken. In all, seven interviews and numerous conversations with cosmetic retail shop assistants were conducted. These included two multinational cosmetic organisation executives, a beautician, two cosmetic retailers, a new-age therapist, and a network marketer.

These interviews confirmed the major themes that emerged from the observation phase of the study and subsequently a more narrow focus into the make-up behaviours of older women and how they experience appearance in their daily lives was pursued in phase two of the study.

## 4.4 PHASE TWO OF THE STUDY

### 4.4.1 Design

Photoelicitation was used for the second phase of the research. This technique was used as the photographs motivate respondents to respond to a visual prompt with more descriptive and insightful comments than they would without such visual aids (Heisley & Levy, 1991). The use of photographs as visual projective techniques has been employed within a variety of disciplines. Collier and Collier (1986, in Heisley & Levy, 1991) graded the level of response given to stimulus used in an interview setting. They suggested that “(Photo) representation of critical area(s) of the informant’s life can trigger emotional revelations otherwise withheld, and can release psychological explosion and powerful statements of values” (p 260). In addition, in accordance with existential phenomenological principles described by Thompson et al. (1990) this method also allows for emergent dialogue from respondents to discuss the issues about make-up that they feel are relevant and important.

During the study four different situations (outlined in the procedure section below) were selected for photography by respondents so as to separate out any differences between the public and private face that respondents show to the world (Fabricant & Gould, 1993). In addition, participants were requested to take a photograph or find a magazine or newspaper clipping of someone they perceived to be different to themselves, and someone whom they felt was similar or the same as themselves. The purpose of this was so that attributes of self-identity could be further explored through understanding these differences and similarities (Woodward, 1997).

Photographs were developed and used as visual elicitation with respondents during an in-depth interview. “Autodriving” is the term used when an interview is ‘driven’ by the respondent on seeing and hearing their own behaviour (Heisley & Levy,

1991). Autodriving has been described by McCracken (1988) as assisting respondents to ‘manufacture distance’ from their own personal feelings. Through this technique respondents can “see familiar data in unfamiliar ways”(McCracken ,1988, p.24). Similar to this technique the visual elicitation allows the respondent to drive the interview as they seek to interpret their photographs and explain them. “As the interviewer interprets the image, a dialogue is created in which the typical research roles are reversed. The researcher becomes a listener and one who encourages the dialogue to continue” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 145).

During the in-depth interview, respondents’ feelings, attitudes, perceptions and experiences about make-up were explored using the ‘focussed’ interview format (Sampson, 1996). This format uses a general question outline to guide the interview but still allows for the flexibility to adapt and probe with each interview situation. Due to the nature of understanding, the signification of make-up, and in line with existential phenomenological principles, a face-to-face interview technique was selected as opposed to other methods of qualitative data collection. The need to understand the symbolism of the sign of make-up from the perspective of the individual provided data rich in emotion that was best captured by a personal interview setting.

To draw out these feelings from participants, a combination of projective techniques and laddering in the form of the Kelly Repertory Grid technique (identifying how any two of three stimuli are similar but different from the third stimulus) was used (Kelly, 1963, Zaltman & Coulter, 1995). Respondents were asked to identify from their set of photos the image they perceived as being different to the others, and the shots they would group as the same. They were also asked which of the photos they liked the most, and which the least, as well as discussing the rationale for their choices.

In addition, a description of each participant's make-up history was documented with reasons for change explored. Feelings and emotions about wearing facial make-up and facial adornment were also discussed and the signification of the medium extrapolated from the data gathered.

Respondents discussed the photos or media clippings of the people whom they perceived to be different / similar to themselves, with their reasons and justification of why they believed this recorded. Respondents were also shown a series of eight photos of different forms of facial make-up with their responses to these plates documented (Appendix 2, plates 1-8). Included in these photos were extremes of beauty and cultural difference. This was undertaken to determine women's values and attitudes towards different looks and their intentions to consume or reject these specific facial appearances.

#### 4.4.2 Procedure

White Caucasian women aged 30 years plus were purposively selected to reflect a broad cross section of the population. Thirty-one (31) women aged 30 and over were selected from across the metropolitan area (thirty-three women in total were interviewed, however two fell outside the selected age parameters). Age and occupation were used to guide the selection of the judgment sample to ensure participants reflected the diverse roles that women, in this age group, occupy within the community.

Women over thirty were selected because, in the initial semiotic analysis, this group was identified within the 'unexpected' quadrant of the bipolar maps and from where new emergent codes were more likely to develop. This age group also provides a significant financial market due to the large number of baby boomers that fall within this

age category and their potentially larger disposable incomes in comparison to their younger counterparts (ABS, 2001).

An added advantage of using this group of women is that they already have set-behaviours with regard to make-up use and their ritual is often well-established (Beausoleil, 1994). Furthermore, their experience with make-up is often more diverse because they have been using make-up for longer and can provide a rich history of how their make-up behaviours have changed over time.

Once the age category had been decided, it was considered important to reflect varying professions to account for differing codes of dress and differing lifestyles. For example, office workers may wear the same make-up despite individual demographics because of an established business dress code. Therefore a broad selection of professions and ages were used to provide a more accurate reflection of women and their make-up behaviours within the community. A breakdown of respondents by age and occupation is provided in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Phase 2 respondents by age and occupation**

PROFESSION	AGE	PROFESSION	AGE	PROFESSION	AGE
Home duties	45	Shop assistant: cosmetics	42	Academic	43
Sales Manager	43	Equestrian judge	38	Geologist	46
Student / Nurse assistant	32	Receptionist	52	Teacher	34
Beautician	38	Retired	63	Customs officer	48
Chicken farmer	43	Emu farmer	37	Immigration official	35
Nurse	37	Restaurant owner	46	Marketing manager	48
Flight Attendant	41	Manager	40	Academic	52
Secretary	37	Small business prop.	55	Hairdresser	55
Clerk	38	Marketing manager	58	Nursery hand	65
Home duties	34	Accountant	37	Plant propagator	54

Home duties	43				
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Once respondents had agreed to participate in the study, they were advised of the purpose of the study and requested to sign a consent form. They were then provided with a disposable camera and asked to take 4 (four) photographs of themselves with an emphasis on face and shoulder shots during the following different consumer behaviour activities:

1. A night out or special occasion.
2. Work or normal daily activity throughout the week.
3. Relaxing at home on day off.
4. Shopping (Groceries).

In addition, they were all asked to take 4 (four) photos, or find a newspaper/magazine clipping of someone, who they perceived to be 'different' from themselves and someone they considered to be similar or the same as themselves.

The camera was then returned to the researcher who developed the photos and set up a time with the respondent for an in-depth interview to discuss them. Interviews were conducted with participants in a setting that was convenient and conducive for candid and open exchange. The interviews were forty-five minutes to three hours in duration with an average time of one and a half hours per interview.

The photographs were used as a prompt to guide the interview as well as to draw out key information from the respondent as they endeavoured to interpret the image (Harper, 1998; Heisley & Levy, 1991; Ryan & Ogilvie, 1999). Using this technique the following key issues were addressed during the interview:

- A definition of the photographed events.
- The difference in make-up routines for each event and the reasons for those differences.
- The respondent's feelings, attitudes and perceptions for each of the occasions and reasons why they felt like that.

- The emotions respondents remembered feeling at the time of each picture.
- Documentation of individuals' make-up histories and how they had changed over time
- The motivations behind the make-up for each occasion. Were there any underlying reasons for their choice of facial adornment? What guided their decisions?
- To identify which look they liked the best/least and reasons why?
- To explore the rationale for respondents choice in people perceived as different to and the same as themselves.
- To establish what make-up signified to the individual.

The eight photos (Appendix 2) were then used as a projective technique to elicit respondents' reactions to different make-up outcomes. Respondents were shown pictures of these faces and their reactions and impressions were recorded. The main purpose of this extra stimulus was to confirm if the participants' impressions of themselves were congruent with how they perceive others (Richins, 1991; Woodward, 1997) and to understand their intentions to consume or reject these specific facial appearances.

#### 4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The semiotic analysis of phase one of the study firstly analyses the discourse of the culture by looking for patterns in the communication codes that structure it. Secondly, the context of that discourse is examined and the code movement within it identified and, finally, the shifting paradigm taking place within the discourse is mapped and interpreted (Alexander, 2000).

To achieve this, observation data was pooled, sorted and analysed for patterns to identify the residual, dominant and emergent codes. This process included consideration

of the cultural, economic, social, and demographic changes that may have impacted on the discourse over the ten-year time span (Alexander, 2000).

Field notes, film and print media observations were sorted into categories and analysed for underlying themes and constructs to aid in code identification. Once identified, the codes were used to map the 'brand myth' (Valentine, 2000; Alexander, 2000) of make-up, and the print media clippings assembled into collages to create a visual representation of the trends and directions that emerged from this process.

In the second phase of the study, participants' photographs were labelled and sorted. In-depth interviews were transcribed into Word and interview transcripts entered into Zyindex for further analysis. The data was extremely rich with many commonalities emerging from the data. The major commonalities were bracketed and analysed in more depth using a Peircean semiotic framework.

Whilst aspects of indexicality have been explored in other semiotic studies, this project aimed to include an analysis of all three trichotomies that fall within the middle column or 'of the relationship to object' of Peirce's framework, in an endeavour to understand the polysemic nature of the sign of make-up (Grayson 2000, Mick et al., 1999, Morgado, 1993). Once again, during this process the analysis refers back to the literature for supporting theories for each classification.

A discussion of the interesting findings and key differences and /or similarities within the sample group is used to identify the role that visible face make-up plays in women's perception and image of 'self'. Similar dialogues have been used successfully by other consumer research studies to provided understanding of the subject under review: (Belk & Costa, 1998; Heilman, 1998; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995; Richins, 1999; Ritson & Elliot, 1999; Wallendorf & Arnould 1991).



## 4.6 TRIANGULATION

One of the main ways to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research is through the use of triangulation. In this study triangulation was employed in a number of ways. Different data-capture methods were used (observation, photos and interviews) to view the construct from a range of different perspectives and to remove the possible bias from using only a single data source.

The data source itself was also confirmed by ensuring the photos were actually of the participant. In addition, the four different occasions photographed were verified for their truthfulness and accuracy during the in-depth interviews.

Different settings were kept to a minimum with all but one interview being conducted in the researcher's office, home or the respondent's home. At all times an interview place was selected that was both convenient for the respondent and where they felt comfortable to talk candidly. On only one occasion was this a public place. As such, any differences introduced by different settings were reduced.

Results from the interviews of some respondents were also shown and discussed with respondents to check for accuracy in interpretation. In this way member checks were utilised to assess the interviews' interpretations credibility (Belk et al. 1989; Hirschman 1986; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989; Zaltman & Coulter, 1995).

There are varying views on validity for qualitative research, from abandoning it entirely, to addressing it in a totally different context from that used to assess quantitative research. Two types of validity are relevant to this project. The first is validity-as- culture (VAC), a claim that the researcher reflects, writes, and interprets their own cultural perspective on behalf of "others" (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). To achieve this end requires more points of view, including the aspects of how the researcher approaches the research topic. Consequently, this research has gained 31

respondents' points of view in order to identify and understand the significant issues involved in make-up use by women. In addition, the study includes 'analyst triangulation' by consulting with the projects two supervisors to confirm the interpretation of findings, and 'theory triangulation' by analysing the study from two different semiotic philosophies.

The second form of validity is validity-as-standards (VAS) which asserts that there are multiple truths that cannot be captured and interpreted by one method of research alone. This perspective also subscribes to the view that what is preferred is the understanding of knowledge rather than the "codified, theoretically integrated information" (Altheide & Johnson 1998, p 290) that is often substituted as knowledge. Therefore, this study will focus on understanding each individual's make-up behaviour in an endeavour to explicate the emotions, perceptions, attitudes and experiences that make this behaviour so ritualistic and symbolic. In using these methods of triangulation, the research can gain trustworthiness and credibility. As Denzin (cited in Patton 1990, p 464) describes, "by combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources," researchers can hope to "overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observer, and single-theory studies".

#### 4.7 LIMITATIONS

This study only examines Caucasian women and limits its sample selection to those women over thirty and living in Perth, Western Australia. How different they are as a population to other women requires further research. Furthermore, as a qualitative study, it only reflects the insights, feelings and behaviours of this group of women who

may not necessarily be a true reflection of the population despite the efforts of the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected.

The research in this project focuses only on visible face make-up. How much influence hairstyle, clothes and other fashion accessories have is not included within this study.

The data was time-consuming to collect for, whilst most respondents selected joined the study readily, others were reluctant due to the invasive nature of the facial photographs. Respondents were often self-conscious about taking, discussing and having close up photographs of their face and all its intricacies scrutinised.

In addition, respondents did not always have a special event to attend and would hold onto the camera for prolonged periods until such an occasion arose. In some cases six months elapsed before cameras were returned and interviews completed. Consequently, there is potential for this time lapse to influence fashion trends and hence the data collected from respondents who moved with these trends. As most respondents interviewed within this study had set make-up routines, the researcher believes that the number this would affect within the sample was extremely limited.

Classification of the residual, dominant and emergent codes did not represent the full extent of make-up use by all reference groups, consequently small sub groups may have been omitted in the categories defined.

Furthermore, defining the codes alone was not appropriate for sample selection, because of the nature of make-up and its use. Sometimes women did not fit neatly into set codes and would fluctuate between them depending on the situation and occasion they were attending. For this reason, it was necessary to conduct further qualitative research to define a narrower sample and confirm trends that emerged from the mapping of the make-up discourse.

The project was initially disguised with respondents being advised that it was a study into grooming behaviour. However, with the first respondents returning missed or distance photos of the face, the researcher found it necessary to supply more specific instructions that revealed the purpose of the study to ensure that shots of the individuals' make-up were actually obtained.

Finally, as make-up is a fashion item, it is responsive to rapid change. Codes identified as emergent during the study are now dominant or residual. Consequently the initial phase of this study is susceptible to influences of time. Despite this disadvantage many women are slow to change their look and the consumer behaviour identified within this thesis provides useful information on both habits and the ritualistic use of make-up. The study also demonstrates the usefulness of analysing a consumer research topic using dual semiotic philosophies despite the influence of time on the initial phase of the study.

#### 4.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Before commencing this research, approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the university was gained. With permission granted, all participants who took part in the study were advised that they did so on a voluntary basis and had the right to withdraw at anytime. During the course of the study, participants remained anonymous with no names recorded on the interview transcripts. In addition, all information obtained from respondents, such as photos and audio tapes, were treated with the strictest confidence and stored in a secure environment within the university by the researcher.

Because of the sensitive nature of taking facial photographs, all respondents were asked to sign a consent form acknowledging that, whilst no names would be used, they may be recognised by their photograph in future publications.

## 4.9 SUMMARY

This chapter argues for the methodological approach of the study. The study adopts an interpretivist epistemology and uses a qualitative method in the form of phenomenology to explore the social phenomenon of make-up. The principles of phenomenology are discussed, with justification of the selection of this method provided.

The chapter also details the design and procedure of the study. This is a two-phase process. Phase one consists of examining the cultural discourse of cosmetics within Australian society. Observational data was gathered from a variety of print, media, promotional and packaging material, and examined over a ten year time-frame. This time context was used to identify the code movement and paradigm shifts that were taking place within the culture. Additional interviews with seven key stakeholders were also conducted to confirm findings from the observational data collected.

Phase two of the study takes a more narrow focus. Through the use of photoelicitation and in-depth interviews the experiential dimension of face make-up is explored further. A judgment sample was used. Thirty-one women aged thirty and over were given disposable cameras and requested to take four photographs of their face in four different settings. This procedure was selected as the photos served as an 'autodriver' for the phenomenological interviews and enabled the researcher to capture the women's histories, motivations, beliefs, behaviours and experiences about wearing

make-up. In addition, eight projective stimuli of different make-up outcomes were used to explore these issues further. This second phase of the study explores how women consume appearance in everyday life.

A discussion of the triangulation used to increase the credibility of the research process is presented, along with the limitations and ethical procedures used within the context of the study.

## CHAPTER 5: COMMUNICATING THE SIGN - FINDINGS PHASE 1

*...it's a lovely together look.... She looks in control, she's organised,  
perhaps successful, she's in control of her life, she's experienced, she has a  
wealth of knowledge.... She is competent in herself as herself.*

*(Retail beautician)*

This chapter presents the findings from the initial phase of the study. It begins by reporting on the discourse of cosmetics within Western Australian society and information gained through the observational data. The observational data is analysed and major emergent themes from this are bracketed for commonalities. These key themes are discussed and emergent trends presented in a pictorial collage. A semiotic analysis using the technique adapted from Levi-Strauss is then used to identify the codes of cosmetic appearance within Australian society. These are then mapped to reveal potential reference groups for the second phase of the study. Additional qualitative data from in-depth interviews with key industry stakeholders is reviewed to confirm information derived from the semiotic analysis.

## 5.1 DISCOURSE OF COSMETICS

By observing the discourse of make-up through the selected mediums previously identified, a clearer understanding of the specific goals and uses of visible face make-up became apparent. These goals and uses were conceptualised by the varying appearances that the media use to reflect different demographic and psychographic reference groups within the community. For the purpose of this study, the observation focused on identifying the codes within the discourse, (reflected in the appearances presented by these channels of observation), as a means to provide insights into the varying reference groups that exist within the community. Therefore the findings presented shall focus on these images and the information that assists in identifying the specific groups they represent within the community.

### 5.1.1 Ancient Remedies

A key theme that emerged from the observation data was the heavy influence of ancient recipes in cosmetics today. Product ingredients based on tried and tested remedies appear to be perfusing the market place and advertising images are harnessing the intrigue associated with these ancient remedies. Concept stores such as 'Red Earth', 'Lush', 'Bloom' and the 'Body Shop' have made a living on the resurgence of interest in these products. Within these stores the old beauty recipes of African, Eastern and other cultures are marketed very successfully to new environmentally-aware consumers. Ancient pots and potions from third world countries are used to transform women/men into the image of beauty valued by western society (Thompson & Hirshman, 1995; Engliss et al., 1994, Richins 1994). In this way, the folklore of old beauty therapies which have been passed down from mother to daughter throughout the generations, and



attributed with possessing powerful transformative properties, are perpetuated and the myth of beauty maintained.

Women perceive these ancient remedies as being tried and tested in their transformative powers and believe any deleterious side effects from use would have been documented over the centuries (Corson, 1973). Consequently, their reintroduction into the market place, linked with a powerful marketing message that taps into the myth associated with these products, has meant that consumers have been keen to try them. There is also a certain amount of mystery and magic associated with using these ancient recipes as they come from cultures with long histories of their fabled results and, as such, they have been woven into the traditions of the community. For example, the 'Ayurveda' range tap into a more spiritual domain and utilise concepts of aromatherapy and Feng Shui. The product range is based on an Indian ritual that is over 2,000 years old. It is sold as a 'ritual' to promote purchase of a range of products and focuses on 'balance' as being the key ingredient to create beauty inside and out.

Continuing along this Indian theme is the increasing use of Mhendi around the eyes and on the face by fashion models and popular figures to create a more spiritual, eastern princess-look. Sprinkles of eastern influence are evident everywhere within cosmetic products. Advertising images promote it, along with the packaging itself; for example, adopting Japanese porcelain pots for lip-glosses.

The bath and body category of cosmetics have experienced the influence of old recipes and increased spirituality the most, and a marketing link between the busy, time-poor lifestyles of many women today and the need for healing, pampering and 'time-out' for self has been created by many cosmetic companies. Cosmetic companies have also experienced a new resurgence and interest in 'botanicals', and have begun including them in a range of their products.

Mysticism offers marketing potential because of its connotation with intrigue, the exotic and the spiritual holistic healing of old recipes. Using this in conjunction with social conscience marketing, no animal testing, and products supporting community aid abroad makes a powerful marketing package to which many new age consumers have subscribed (Body shop, personal communication, November 2000). For example, lip balm made with Zambesi bee wax is so much more exotic than ordinary bees wax and, when linked with part of the proceeds going to an African community to aid education, it gains even more appeal.

Make-up itself is a very ritualistic behaviour and hence to link it with magic where ritual forms the tool for magic to occur, seems a natural progression (Rook, 1984). Kapferra (1997) describes magic as transforming one thing into something else, and then returning the object to its original state, a description that aptly describes the transformation process sought by the wearing of visible face make-up. Cosmetic products today are marketed to take advantage of the ritual and old recipes become dressed up in new millennium language that matches the current lifestyle (Ogilvie, Ryan & Pettigrew, 2000). Products termed 'Uplifting', 'Stress buster', or 'Mood rescue' have identified a niche in the market by looking at lifestyle and linking in the ritual to combat the de-beautifying effects of modern living.

Beauty is often associated with the exotic and mysterious and hence the link between it and ancient cultural rituals. Observation would indicate that mass media depicts two looks. One is for older women based on the elements of mystery and intrigue where women display elements of worldliness. Colours are rich, deep with a heavy oriental flavour, such as deep plum or burgundy (see figure 5.3). Alternatively, the other popular look targeted at younger women is that of the ethereal muse. This look

includes elements of illuminosity, which is the fastest emerging trend within the make-up industry.

### 5.1.2 Illuminosity

Illuminosity of the skin is a sheer, clear, almost transparent look that creates the impression of a perfect healthy young skin. Rather than the matt natural of the '90s with the browns, ochres and other earth colours, there is a trend for a 'new natural' which includes products based on shimmers with built-in light reflectors to create the impression of a flawless complexion. This produces a certain shine to the facial skin that appears symbolic of the shine of youth and/or health. The look is one of 'roses' in the cheeks, or the clear, almost transparent skin, of a young nymphish girl. Cosmetic companies have introduced a range of products such as shimmer powders, blushes and facial glow creams that produce a subtle glistening glow to the skin that help create this angel-like look (see figure 5.2).

The 'new natural' phenomenon also extends to older consumers with the introduction of products with all natural ingredients for a more healthy and environmentally aware society. In addition, products that have anti-aging benefits such as firming, up-lifting or containing a sunscreen have become popular and important issues in cosmetic consumption by mature women.

Lip colour has tended away from the brown naturals to a rose pink or natural shine. Lipgloss is popular, and the fashion trend indicates a desire to create a full-moisturised lip. This is symbolic of the full-moisturised lip of a young girl, and other literature would even suggest that this could also be representative of the engorged labia (Etcoff, 1999). Observations indicate that the lipstick trend is for sheerness with more shine than colour, and it is watery and glittery in appearance.

In contrast to this trend, evening wear lipstick is deep and dark in colour; a deep plum/purple hue has emerged that is reminiscent of the dark gothic lipsticks that perfused the make-up landscape earlier in the decade. Rather than being black, this lipstick colour is dark but with a berry overtone which tends to remove the sinister satanic connotations associated with dark make-up and it creates its own hint of mystique.

### 5.1.3 Sparkle and Colour

Linking in with illuminosity and the shine it creates, is the new resurgence in sparkle, bright dominant colour and definition for eyes. Trends observed demonstrate lots of colour on the eyes, particularly in the evening when younger consumers use bold colours such as blue and purple. Eyes are dramatic with more use of eyeliners and pencils. In addition to the bold colours, is a full range of creamy frosted eyeshadows for daytime use. Everything seems to be linking in to the millennium silver craze (Ogilvie et al., 2000) with lots of glittery silver and gold for the eyes. These colours come in eyeshadows, pencils and liners and add to the glittering, new millennium look.

Even the packaging of products is clear and simple with large amounts of grey and silver. Product lids are transparent or packs are clear, clean and fresh in line with the 'new natural' theme that pervades the make-up landscape (see figure 5.1). This appears to be trying to communicate 'honesty' to the consumer in the hope that this currently popular concept will induce consumption. A similar concept harnessed by cosmetic companies is that of simplicity, with product packs offering simple clean lines or classical lines that never date. (As compared to older product packs that used burnt orange and desert /nature colours.) This links with the message of creating a beauty

regime that is simple and easy, and is extremely potent when targeted to the busy lifestyles of many contemporary women.

## 5.2 CODES OF MAKE-UP

From observing the discourse of make-up within society, the codes of ‘main stream’ make-up were identified. These codes do not provide a total impression of all aspects of make-up use within Perth, however, they do represent the dominant themes that were evident during the time of observation. Consequently they are useful for providing insights to assist in sample selection for phase two of the study, as well as for mapping the dominant trends evident within the discourse of make-up.

**Table 5.1: Codes of Make-up**

<b>Residual</b>	<b>Dominant</b>	<b>Emergent</b>
Burnt colours	Silver	Colour
Earthy	Grey	Oriental
Rich, deep, earth colours	Futuristic	Spiritual
Punks	Eyeliner	Botanics
Barbie doll look	Pure	Eastern
	Clear	Natural, clean/clear
	Fresh	Angelic (ethereal)
	Natural	Illuminosity

Two dominant emergent trends were identified from the observation of the selected mediums. The first was an ‘angelic’ or ‘ethereal’ look and the second was a ‘worldly successful’ look. These could be linked to age with the younger women fitting the former profile and more mature women the latter. These were particularly emphasised by advertising, music video clips and other mass media. Three collages to

demonstrate the emergent trends in looks and product packs are presented below. The first illustrates the packaging and the trends previously highlighted. The second depicts representations of the successful mature look, and the third exemplifies the youthful, angelic, ethereal image.

Within these trends there are also codes of make-up that follow the same delineation as fashion, with place and situation having a dominant effect on the type of make-up worn. Women working in an office environment appear to follow a more conservative mode of make-up code, in line with their strict dress code, and tend to wear less heavy and dramatic make-up than in an evening situation. The environment and place have a major impact on the extent and artistry used; for example, nightclubbers have more licence to experiment than those attending a formal dinner.

**Figure 5.1: Cosmetic Pack Trends removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

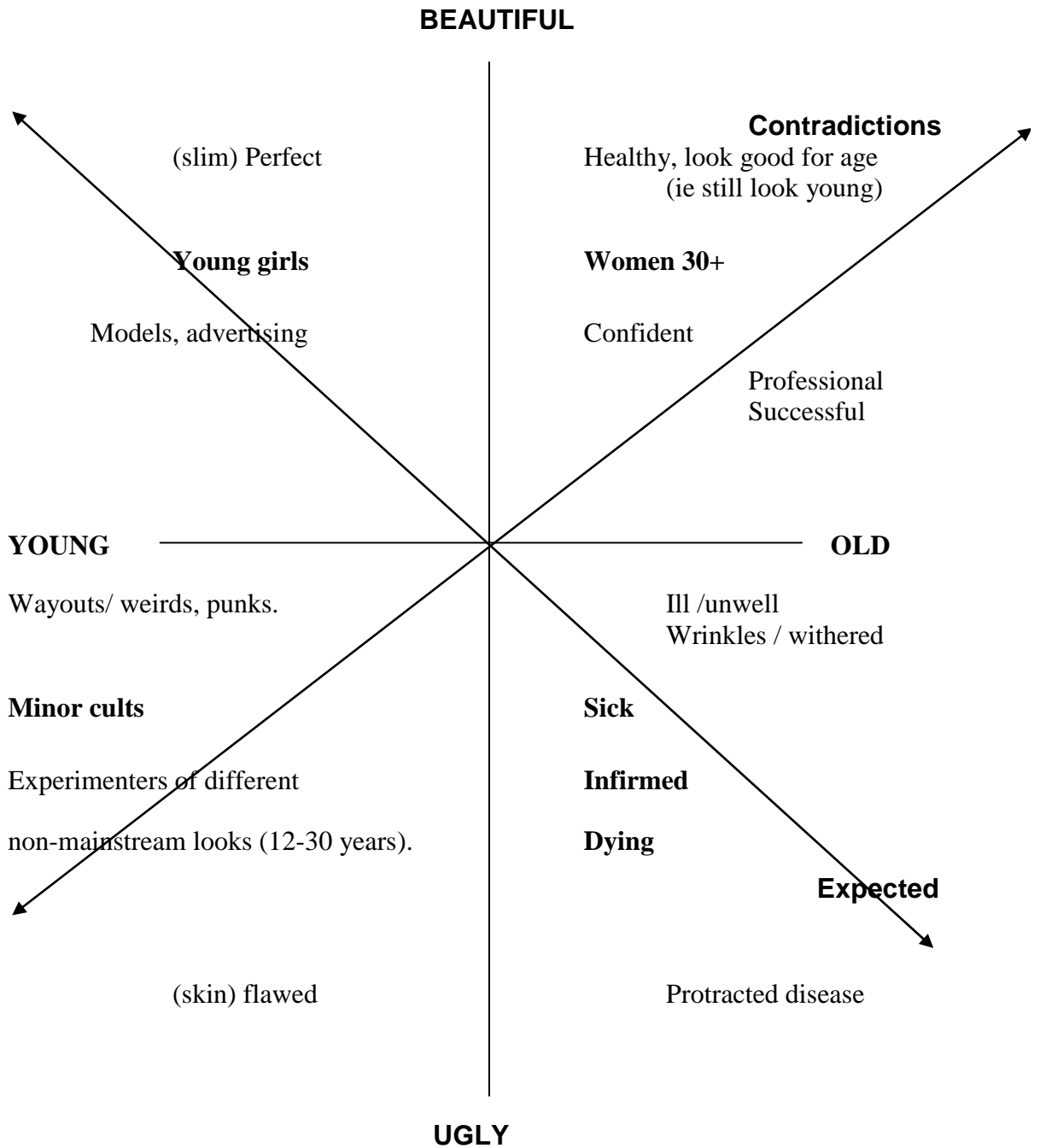
**Figure 5.2: Young Appearance Trends removed for  
copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**



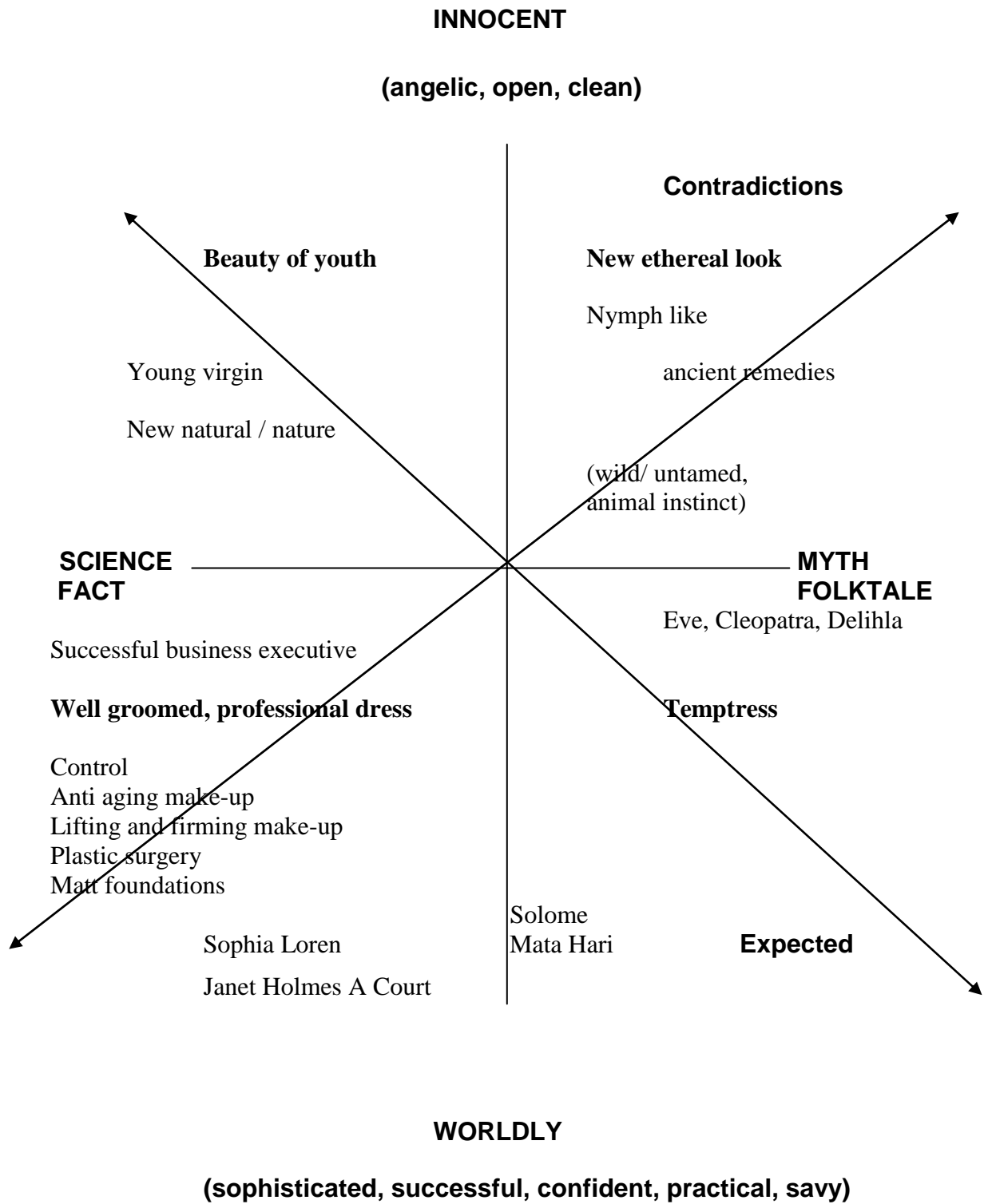
**Figure 5.3: Mature Appearance Trends removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

### 5.3 COSMETIC MAPS

In defining these trends, semiotic analyses of the discourse within society are helpful in identifying shifts in the cultural paradigm. According to Semiotic solutions (Valentine 2000), semiotic maps help to indicate from where emergent trends will develop and hence are useful for organisations in predicting future directions and for consumer researchers in gaining deeper insights into the cultural discourse of the topic. In these maps, the first diagonal indicates the discourse that is 'expected' within society and usually is indicative of the dominant trends of the time. The second diagonal contains the 'contradictions' of society and from where new trends are likely to emerge. From the maps presented (see Fig. 5.4 and 5.5) it is evident that the normal societal view of beauty is one of youth and purity whilst, in contrast to this, is the image of protracted disease, age and death. Map 5.4 would indicate that there are two areas from where emergent trends could burgeon; either the young/ugly quadrant from where many fringe cults have sprung or the beautiful/old quadrant where the concept of 'aging beauty' has huge implications for cosmetic companies. The results from this semiotic analysis help define society's view of beauty and the role that cosmetics play as a signifying agent to produce these looks.



**Figure 5.4: Societies View of Beauty**



**Figure 5.5: Beauty Images**

In the second map, the themes of ritual and illuminosity identified from the observational research were developed to explore the area of beauty images that women mimic. Firstly, in the 'expected' quadrants, the beauty derived from innocence and youth appear to be intermeshed, with naivety being a key component in this situation. On the opposite side of this diagonal, in the second 'expected' quadrant, intrigue and danger are the driving motivators behind the beauty images. Western literature is full of these images depicting the older worldlier seductress similarly to the beauties narrated in many folktales and legends.

In the 'contradictions' quadrant two models of beauty emerged as future trends where cosmetics would play a central role. The first confirms the look derived from the observational data. It is a young, ethereal, mythical girl-like image not unlike images of nymphs, angels and muses narrated in stories. The look has clear, pale, translucent skin with a waifish figure that appears to transcend normal daily life activities and be in tune with nature or some spiritual realm. The second is that of the science/ fact 'worldly' image that is often used to depict the successful businesswomen of today. This look is one of slightly tanned, healthy skin with a large amount of make-up used to create the impression of a natural look. This image has the woman as perfectly groomed with not a flaw or hair out of place. She conveys total control and readiness for any situation. Linked in here are all the issues of plastic surgery, collagen and other age-defying techniques used to maintain this beauty image. Interestingly, these beauty images are now beginning to emerge in cosmetic advertising as demonstrated by the representations assembled in the third collage (Figure 5.3).

## 5.4 FURTHER QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

Whilst the initial semiotic analysis has provided insights into the direction and trends of beauty images within Western Australian society, it is difficult to use this alone for sample selection for phase two of the study as women may adopt different looks for different situations. Therefore, from the trends identified in the semiotic analysis, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the cosmetic industry were undertaken to identify a more narrow focus for the study of a specific reference group.

These industry professionals represented a range of differing perspectives of the cosmetic market in Western Australia. Results of these qualitative interviews confirmed the findings of the observational data but also provided some clear market segments from which to select a sample for the second phase of the study.

The respondents supplied varying degrees of detail about the consumption of beauty images in Western Australian society. Those working for cosmetic manufacturers and in retail positions suggested a micro segmentation based on marketing strategies and specific target markets for their product ranges, whilst service professionals such as beauticians drew from their past experience and observation of clients. On pooling this data, two groups became consistently evident from the sources interviewed. The respondents identified two distinct reference groups, each with their own individual cosmetic trend and appearance. The first was the youth market, which referred to young girls/women 14-20 years of age. The trend here was for a 'natural look' rejecting traditional foundations in favour of tinted moisturisers, skin illuminators and other products that utilised reflective technology. The look incorporates a more natural shine to the skin rather than the matt foundations and heavy application of powder or pancake type make-ups of the past. The blusher is sheer, if used at all, and touched slightly to the cheekbone, not sculptured dramatically up the cheek as in the glamour images of the

nineties. Added to this sheerness is the influence of sparkle and colours such as silver, blue and mauve, which have all undergone resurgence to be the main-stay of eyewear. Eyes are framed with eyeliner of differing colours; it is light and utilises colours such as grey, taupe, white, silver unlike the heavy black liners of the sixties. Lipstick is glittery and wet, with shine being more important than colour.

*The direction particularly in face make-up is to a more natural look, and that is particularly so for younger consumers, a lot of younger women both here and in the US, have actually rejected traditional foundations, and they are not using them, so there are a whole new category of almost tinted moisturisers and skin illuminators that are coming through....(Senior executive, multinational cosmetic company)*

Trends in this age category move faster than any other age division because of the nature of the reference group and the high incidence of experimentation within it. In speaking about the dynamics of this group, one respondent claims

*....they move so fast because its very uncool to be main stream at that age, so the minute something becomes main stream they want something cultish, something that nobody has got, so it's a very, very difficult age group to market to for that reason. (Cosmetic company representative)*

The second reference group is the over 30 market which utilises anti-aging ingredients in traditional make-up preparations, particularly foundation. The trend is for products that contain more lifting and firming attributes to achieve this age defying effect. The look for this image is one of health and control. Skin care is extremely important and make-up that limits the signs of age is popular. The look is also natural but usually more creamy foundations are applied to cover skin defects like wrinkles, sunspots and other signs of age. Despite this, make-up is not heavy; it just provides good

coverage and is thicker and creamier than products used by the younger market. There is also not so much use of glitter and sparkle, rather colours such as silver, blue and grey are popular for eyes. Eyeliners, similar to the young market are also worn, and another large contrast is that lipstick is more popular among this age category. Lipsticks are still shiny and wet but deeper in colour and 'real' lipsticks as opposed to tinted glosses.

Respondents discuss the attributes of this reference group in the following quotes, which highlight the need for age-defying cosmetics; the size and significance of this market; and the appearance outcome women are seeking.

*As you are getting older you become more opaque you know your skin is not as clear on you as before, it's a fact of life, can't do much about it, and so you need more coverage definitely, doesn't have to be you know heavy, heavy, but you need more appropriate products for the different ages..... the main focus for women say 35 onwards is good skin care, top of the range skin care, and moderate make-up,.... (Network marketing consultant)*

*So even the older consumers, for them in particular they are looking for high tech ways of looking younger. I mean the whole baby boomer phenomenon is one big group of people who are not going to sit back and get old gracefully. ....I am sure that's the basis of the whole anti-aging thing, you know its all these women who are hitting their late forties and early fifties and say to themselves we are not going to sit back and look old. (Marketing executive cosmetic company)*



*...it's a lovely together look.... She looks in control, she's organised, perhaps successful, she's in control of her life, she's experienced, she has a wealth of knowledge....She is competent in herself as herself. (Retail beautician)*

Because of the significant size of the over 30 market, and that the majority of these women have established make-up routines which are less likely to change as rapidly and as dynamically as their younger counterparts, it makes it an attractive category to examine in further detail. Additionally, these women can provide longer and more detailed make-up histories that will better assist in examining the semiotic aspects of this phenomenon. For these reasons, the second phase of the study will focus on this reference group to provide further insights and understanding about the role visible face make-up plays in the daily lives of women and their consumption of appearance.

Finally, respondents commented on the increasingly competitive nature of the cosmetic marketplace, with fickle consumers that are less loyal than ever and brand switching a part of everyday life.

*I mean everybody is looking for that hope in a bottle really and so if you see a story that's compelling I don't think it would take too much to get brand switching happening. (Senior executive, multinational cosmetic company)*

Consequently, the correct communication dialogue with consumers is vital if cosmetic companies hope to capture their share of this significant market. The information obtained in phase two of this study will provide a clearer understanding of older women's consumption behaviours of visible face make-up and, hence, aid cosmetic companies to have more meaningful dialogue with these consumers.

## 5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presents the findings from the observational phase of the study and examines the discourse of cosmetics within contemporary Australian society. It identifies the resurgence of old remedies, along with the popularity of cosmetic rituals that are heavily overlaid with Eastern and Asian influences, to create mystique and allure. It discusses trends in make-up, cosmetic packaging and the marketing implications that are derived from the connotations that are drawn from these images and products.

The codes of visible face make-up are identified and the residual, dominant, and emergent trends tabled. Once identified, these codes then form the foundation of creating two cosmetic maps to encapsulate the concepts of ‘society’s view of beauty’ and ‘beauty images’. Two looks emerged – the young ethereal, mythical girl-like image not unlike images of nymphs, angels and muses narrated in stories. The second is a mature, successful, worldly business woman, who is tanned, with healthy skin and large amounts of make-up to present a natural look. She is perfectly groomed and in total control.

Finally this chapter presents the findings from the qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in the cosmetic industry. Their insights guide the sample selection for the second phase of the study and the rationale for selecting women thirty and over is discussed and justified.

# CHAPTER SIX: EXPERIENCING THE SIGN – FINDINGS PHASE TWO

*“Any old barn looks better with a coat of paint”. (Female, 48)*

## 6.1 ADOPTING THE CODE – REFLECTIONS OF SELF IN SOCIETY

This chapter discusses the findings from the second phase of the study and focuses on the experiential aspects of interpreting the sign of make-up. The experiences, histories, beliefs and behaviours of women interviewed and their daily interaction with cosmetics is documented. Once again, under the concepts of phenomenology, the interviews are analysed for emergent themes and bracketed for commonalities. These commonalities are explored under the constructs relevant to this study and outlined earlier in the literature review of this thesis.

Make-up is often considered a fashion item, with colours varying from season to season according to the latest ‘look’ that consumers are striving to replicate. Colour stories designed by fashion designers and make-up artists are readily changed each season and marketed to create new trends and demands in the market place. (D.Baird, personal communication, 18 September, 2001). Fashion itself is a code adopted by a group at a specific time and followed by members of that group in order to fit in with that community and its values (Belk, 1977; McCracken, 1986; Peis, 1998).

Similarly, evidence from this phase of the study indicated a strong theme of the need to conform to societal codes of fashion and customary appearance in order to gain

acceptance, status, recognition and to feel valued by society. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that they would wear make-up for themselves and for reasons of self – esteem. Underlying this universal response, the rationale for this behaviour was always linked to their need to conform to society’s code of appearance and the benefits they derived from doing so. As such, power, sexual allurement and self-esteem were all derivatives of conforming to this appearance code and each of these areas are addressed in this chapter.

The chapter also explores the ritualistic aspects of make-up. A thorough discussion of the ritualistic dimension of make-up is provided utilising the framework of Rook (1985). The ritual artefact, script, role and audience are all examined, as are the special transformational properties of make-up and the impact it has on the self, role identity and rites of passage. In experiencing the sign of make-up, how women consume appearance in everyday life is also considered.

The chapter concludes with a discussion on the signification of make-up and an analysis of the data using Peirce’s semiotic perspective. The icon, index and symbol are examined under this framework and explored with reference to the sign of make-up.

### 6.1.1 Adopting the code of society

In this study the reasons women gave for wearing make-up produced an extremely rich and diverse range of responses. Interestingly, all of these responses could be linked back to the desire of the individual to belong and be accepted within society.

The code itself is defined by the community’s customs and practices of how appearance should look in a certain role or setting. This code is heavily influenced by society’s concepts of beauty and what it values and considers beautiful. Within western society, the concept of beauty is heavily influenced by images portrayed in mass

communication mediums. The images of the perfectly slim, coiffured and made-up women bombard women daily in a conditioning process that makes this the normalised image for women within this culture (Thompson & Hirshman, 1995).

When discussing make-up and desired outcomes, respondents defined what they thought was beautiful. Responses varied, yet a common thread between these ideals were the even flawless skin, a face with high cheekbones, a classic Roman nose, a perfect full lip and clear and well-defined eyes. This links in with earlier work on beauty which found that symmetry of the face played an important part in defining beauty (Corson, 1972).

Women in this study indicated that they derived confidence from conforming to this beauty code of unblemished skin or perfected lips, and that their status and level within society was linked to this appearance. They perceived that others judged them as being of a lower social standing if they did not adhere to this code and, consequently, they would wear make-up and conform in order to gain power, credibility and status within society.

*Because that is how I always look if I am going, you know, somewhere, so that's how I make myself look, so if I put that on then I look normal.*  
(Female 41)

Other respondents discussed how they would critique their own appearance in comparison with societal norms, whilst others indicated that they would wear make-up in order to blend in and camouflage themselves amongst the populace so as not to draw any attention to themselves.

## Father influence

Many respondents discussed how they learnt what this appearance code was, as they experimented with different make-up outcomes, when they were growing up. Interestingly, in many cases, fathers had a strong influence on what they felt a 'nice girl' should look like in regard to wearing make-up. As one respondent reflects:

*My father wouldn't let us wear make-up until we started work. (Female, 58)*

In this case the paternal influence was strong and guided the individual's identity construction by advising on what a 'nice girl' should look like and what make-up should be worn for particular settings or roles. It was the father who influenced how she looked in these roles.

Similarly parental influence was apparent when respondents reflected on their experimental years as they passed through different phases of their lives. Consistently the code of what society revered as normal was progressively programmed into youthful minds. A lesson to be learnt, like so many others in youth.

*When I was young I suppose I went through that mod gothic stage, really heavy in black lipstick or really dark purple lips, and Mum and Dad used to go insane, "you are not going out like that", they would yell,... (Female 32)*

One respondent when reflecting on her use of make-up remembers following an accepted trend in eye-shadow colour and her father questioning her use of it.

*I had green eyes and wore green shadow,... and if you had been taught or told anything they possibly would have said that if you have got blue eyes you wear blue shadow, and if you have got green eyes you wear green, and if you have got brown eyes you wear brown shadow.... I don't know but I think that was the way it worked in those days its going back a while, so I*

*had green shadow, because my father would say, “why are your eyes going mouldy dear?” (Female 55)*

Respondents often reflected on how their fathers would dislike the use of strong or heavy make-up because of the connotations they linked with large amounts of make-up and women with loose morals. Respondents discussed how, as young girls, they experimented with different make-up outcomes, which were either accepted or rejected by their father and others with whom they interacted. In this way, the code of what make-up was appropriate for their age and setting was learnt. Interestingly, the strictness and approach to make-up appears to be influenced by the amount of make-up that their mother used, with fathers whose wife wore more make-up being more lenient and flexible with the amount of make-up that their daughters were allowed to wear.

*...mother was always a bright lipstick person, but she obviously knew the value of make-up because being a singer she had her stage make-up, I loved playing with her grease paint box and everything when I was young that was good fun.... (Female 55)*

### Looking like mothers

Despite rebelling and not wanting to look like their mother, daughters often invariably end up similar to them, for example in the above case where the mother was on the stage and used a lot of make-up. Now the daughter also wears a large amount of make-up despite a long period of rebellion and nonconformity. Indeed, in this instance the respondent felt she needed to create her own identity rather than be compared with her beautiful sisters and did this by rejecting and rebelling against the recommended ‘good taste’ of her mother and society to create her own look.

*I knew I was rebelling against mother, if mother said do something I did*

*the opposite as a matter of principle and even because I didn't like what she chose for me, she chose you know stodgy good taste,...(Female 55)*

Similarly, other cases reported where the mother would always wear her lipstick when she went out of the house and now the daughter follows this practice. This may be because of inherited similar facial features or because of the passing down of ritualised ways, however, it is a very consistent thread across many respondents.

In line with the emphasis on lipstick, eyes rated of equal importance for some, confirming previous data that women tended to be eye-or lip-focussed (qualitative data phase one). For example, in one instance the mother would always wear mascara and not leave the house without it. Today, the daughter is insistent on always wearing eyeliner. In this case the importance of highlighting a special facial feature (eyes) had been seemingly passed down from mother to daughter.

## Sisters

Respondents also reported their initial encounters with make-up and the response it generated from their family members. In one situation, the older daughter moulded parents' thinking about make-up. The parents became more accepting of make-up in society through their first daughter as they realised that the girls were wearing make-up younger and younger. The acceptance also came because they had experienced first hand that the wearing of make-up did not lead to their daughter being labelled as a fast woman or considered unacceptable by society. Consequently, the parents were more relaxed in their attitudes about wearing make-up with their second and subsequent offspring. In this manner they created a new index and formulated new learned experiences about the sign of make-up.



*... my sister was in the car absolutely going bananas because I was wearing make-up, I had lipstick and she was sitting next to me in the car having a huge fight with mum and dad, "how come she is allowed to wear make-up at 13 and I wasn't allowed to wear it until I was 16, its just not fair." (Female, 47)*

## Role models

Respondents also discussed the desire to adapt to society's trends in order to fit in and be part of it. In conforming to these trends, women consumed different make-up products according to what they felt they needed to help them achieve the appearance that was valued by society; eyes with lashes that would give facial definition; eye brows for very fair women; lip liners to even lips; and foundation to provide a clear even complexion. Respondents often adopted a look of a role model such as Audrey Hepburn, or other images depicted in mass communication that were revered as fitting society's concept of beauty. (Meyer, 1977; Peiss, 1998,) Alternatively, other people could serve as role models to influence and teach the make-up code to younger girls. According to respondents, women such as big sisters, work colleagues and peers all served to influence make-up outcomes of young women learning the code.

*I probably became a lot more aware of how I dressed and because you have role models in the office, people that you know wear make-up that look good, that dress well, that are confident and successful you tend to try and mimic them... (Female 40)*

In this way the people in the respondent's immediate sphere of influence shaped their make-up outcomes and guided them to what the make-up code was for particular settings, roles and levels in society.

## Different settings

There is an unwritten code of appearance for specific settings and situations. Those that don't conform are judged negatively and considered as either rebelling or of a lower status because they are unaware of the code. As such, respondents perceived they were judged by others when they did not follow the code. This applies to when a woman wears no make-up in a formal setting and also when she wears too much in an informal setting.

*I think because if I wear make-up to school I sort of feel that everybody is looking at me going, "oh she thinks she is just it!", you know, "she's got make-up on". And it's actually a bit of a relief to not have to go through that routine in the morning,.... (Female, 33)*

## Extra ritual for special occasion

All respondents indicated the need to adjust their make-up according to the setting. The setting shall be discussed in further detail within the ritual section of this chapter, however of particular interest was the need to indulge in extra ritual for special occasions to gain acceptance by the group attending that occasion. Respondents discussed the make-up they would wear to special occasions and were asked how they would feel if they were attending the event without this make-up. Respondents indicated that they would feel vulnerable, lose confidence and find it difficult to cope. It appears that the code of conduct at these special events necessitates the extension of ritual on these occasions and those not conforming are judged harshly by the others.

*I would feel really awkward I think. Yes, terrible! Because I would feel I have made no effort to look nice for such a special occasion, 'cause everybody, well I think most people when they go to weddings go out of*

*their way to look their best, because it's such a special day. Yes I would feel terrible. (Female, 32)*

*It's part of the occasion, you know, you put your nice clothes on , you put your make-up or your nice lipstick or something like that and you look at yourself and think, yep, that looks alright I can go, you know I am happy with that thing, I don't think I am too vain or anything like that , but I just make a bit of an effort so I feel comfortable the way I look when I go out, I would feel uncomfortable if I had to go out without anything. (Female, 34)*

A common response from women interviewed when asked how they would feel about attending a special event without their make-up on was similar to the one that follows:

*People would think I was a commoner, like, "what are you doing here like that", you know, that the event wasn't important to me in order to get dressed. If I went with my husband it wouldn't be good enough for him either because you know he would expect a certain standard of grooming as well, it would be like going out without a shower. (Female 48)*

As such, women gain confidence from wearing an appearance that conforms to societal code. Some respondents indicated that although the make-up code on these special events was only useful for entrance purposes and for creating a good first impression it was still considered important to gain confidence and to fit in with the setting. For example, in one situation one respondent highlighted the need to use humour and personality to compensate for her lack of code adherence as she tried to convert the audience from total strangers to more intimate acquaintances in order to feel more at ease.

Another felt she would be considered not normal if she did not wear any make-up to a formal event. Women indicated that they would wear make-up because it was expected of them. Just like a code of conduct, there were unwritten rules about its use.

*...I think probably the reason that we wear make-up is because everybody else does, its just society and its just like getting married, you do it because it is sort of expected or its part of life; plus it makes you feel better I think, you feel good. I can't really remember when I stopped not wearing and started wearing it (make-up) but it was graduated I suppose from being sneaky and wearing the eye liner and mascara to school to then being allowed to do it because I worked. (Female, 32)*

## Stereotyping

Society judges those not conforming to the appearance code and associates negative attributes to the individual for not adopting the code appropriate to the setting. For example, a sloppy look of no make-up and unkempt hair in an interview setting was perceived to indicate that the individual may do a sloppy job.

*She hasn't gone to the effort of preparing herself completely for this, she is not taking it seriously. Yes, so she hasn't put the effort in here, would she put the effort in for the job? (Female, 57)*

In adopting the code it was considered by many that the 'total package' was important in order to be viewed favourably within society. Others commented on how appearance was 'the total package of hair make-up and clothes' and if one bit was misplaced, they would feel all wrong. Make-up was considered a key ingredient in creating the self that was presented to the world.

*...because it really is a package thing, make-up, hair, accessories and what*

*you're wearing, and its all part of the package, I mean , I feel you might have one bit right but to add that to all the rest that you might not be happy with and you feel all wrong. (Female 32)*

## Societal roles

Often women would conform to the code set by the practicalities of the profession. For example, one respondent who was a chicken farmer discussed how the duties of the job required them all to shower on and shower off for quarantine reasons. Consequently, the use of make-up in this role was considered pointless.

A travel agent suggested that everyone in her industry had subtle make-up and it was considered the make-up code for the role. Similarly, flight attendants were expected to wear make-up around the clock and look impeccable whether on or off duty. Consistently, women reported that they felt front line roles demanded presentation that adhered to well-groomed and professional appearance codes. Indeed, a code for make-up based on profession was very apparent and noted by all respondents:

*... with the Australian sun a lot of people tend to have a healthy glow so I don't think that would have been a major issue its just if you had looked like you need a little bit of help then work expected you to have some. (Female, 34)*

## Country verses city

There are also different codes depending on geographical location. For example, different codes exist for the city and the country, with the latter being much less formal and more relaxed in its approach.

*When I lived in Geraldton I never used to bother that much about make-up, for some reason it didn't seem as necessary to put a whole lot on,... it*

*wasn't expected, - no matter where you went. (Female, 40)*

Many respondents who had lived in regional Australia commented on how they would wear little, to no, make-up in these rural locations. They also felt the need to apply more make-up when visiting or moving to metropolitan Perth as they perceived the dress code for the city to be much more formal.

### Subcultures and experimentation in youth

Respondents also discussed and recognised that those wearing outlandish or nonconformist looks as depicted in the projective technique picture prompts (Appendix 2, Plate 2 and 8) were in fact demonstrating a need to belong to a certain group that had its own code. Despite being a minority group, these appearance codes, and the need to follow them, was often even stronger within the subcultures in order to gain the belonging and identity that was associated with them. One respondent describes how adopting the make-up code of a specific minority group was a sign for what the group stood for and its lifestyle. She felt beautiful when she had her Gothic make-up on and defined her identity by painting her face in this way.

*Oh that was more to do with the people I was hanging around with and what we used to do on the weekends. We were like heavily into music and just going out to nightclubs I suppose, anything but studying... Yeah, not just a statement but maybe to describe what I was into, what sort of music I was into, my favourite singer was Suzie Sue from Suzie and the Band, like she's a Goth, Goth girl and she did the eye make-up so I sort of looked up to her, I thought she was beautiful... (Female 32)*

Conversely, when shown the projective pictures that the Gothic look presented, some respondents felt that the individual depicted did this so they could stand out in a

crowd and they had adopted an image not readily accepted within society's norms because they were not confident with themselves.

Either way, Society judges by appearance and adherence to what is considered normal, as indicated by two women who worked in Customs. They stated that they were more likely to question and delay those not conforming. When asked how they would approach individuals depicted within the photo plates such as the Gothic and Venetian lady (Appendix 2, plate 2 and 8), their comments indicated that they were more likely to stop those not fitting into the customary appearance of society.

*Coming through customs hall. Yeah, you would look twice at it, yeah think we should frisk him. (Female 34)*

People not conforming to the make-up code are therefore more likely to be judged negatively and scrutinised by the rest of society.

Whilst it was considered acceptable for the young to experiment and try different looks, which often may be outlandish and not in line with main stream appearance norms, this did not extend to older individuals. If an older woman tried to mimic this experimentation they were quickly scorned, as this was considered unacceptable within the framework of society.

*... you wouldn't be doing that once you got over 50 or something would you? You would be looking pretty, you know. (Female 34)*

### Mature women

Most respondents believed that there was an accepted code for mature and older women wearing make-up. They considered that it could be an effective mask when applied with mastery, however, if the woman had strong flaws such as poor skin or

wrinkles, these could be made to stand out or look even worse when trying to hide them with lots of make-up.

*Because I think your skin goes dry and you get wrinkles and your eyes change as we.., I just think the more make-up you put on when you are older the older you look. (Female 32)*

Too much make-up in the elderly was viewed by some respondents as a mask indicating the individual was not confident with themselves. It was felt that make-up should be age-defying but stay within the code of being subtle, understated and non-alluring in the elderly. There was a fine line between looking younger naturally and looking young artificially.

The enigma of age and too much make-up is that old women look older and young girls look younger when it is applied too heavily or not with the correct technique.

*... I think as a young person you look younger because it looks like you are totally inexperienced and it looks really awful, and I think as an older person sometimes it indicates that you can't actually see so your eye sight is going, so you can't see. (Female, 50)*

In this example, it was considered that too much make-up in the young resulted from too little experience and mastery. Such code violations could be tolerated and, no doubt, would change with time. Too much make-up in the elderly, however, was met with greater disapproval because it was felt that, at this stage in their life, they should know the code and, by not following it, were demonstrating either, great rebellion and lack of care for society's values, or degenerative abilities which limited their capacity to perform the task properly.



Respondents also discussed how, when they were younger, they may have tried new trends such as the Mendhi depicted in the projective technique photos but, now that they were older, they would not dream of attempting this. This is because they felt that, unlike their youthful counterparts, it was considered unacceptable for older women to experiment with such things. To do so would incur the risk of negative societal labels such as ‘mutton dressed up as lamb’. It appears that society has extremely strict conservative codes of make-up for older women. The following table summarises society’s different approach to excessive make-up in relation to age.

**Table 6.1: Society’s Approach to Make-up Use**

	<b>Young</b>	<b>Old</b>
<b>Lots of make-up</b>	Look tarty	Look even older
<b>Experimentation</b>	OK to experiment	Need to age gracefully, look is conservative. It is not OK to experiment.

### Different cultures

It was considered to be acceptable for people belonging to a different culture not to wear make-up. For example, African women were considered beautiful within their own right without the need to wear make-up. It was perceived that their facial features were well defined and did not need make-up to enhance them. To this end some respondents felt that commercial make-up was more a Caucasian product than one for other cultures. This may be because these women are not being compared to the idealised beauty images perpetuated in the mass media daily (Ashmore et al., 1996). These women were considered beautiful, and their beauty measured in a different manner to that of the Caucasian women living in a Western society.

In line with this, different facial adornment is considered appropriate for each culture. Respondents indicated that Mendhi was considered acceptable for Indian women but not for Western Caucasian women as it was not considered coherent to our code of appearance. Comments about the projective pictures of women wearing Mendhi included the following:

*I don't like those either, I think they are certainly a fashion statement. If she was an Indian I would find that quite accepting because that's what they wear, but I don't see that as being beautiful personally, it's artistic but its not beautiful. (Female 40)*

#### Other facial adornments

As fashion changes within the community, different statements are accepted or rejected. Just as Gothic looks were once considered outrageous, these have been replaced with a series of body piercing and adornments. One respondent reflects:

*Everyone goes through that rebellion stage, you have groups of people that look different, whereas today it's more to do with piercings and things like that to differentiate groups, so its more extreme I guess today than it was then. (Female 32)*

Most women can also make the link between tribal and subcultural trends as depicted within the projective photo plates (Appendix 2).

*It's a way of expressing their personality again I think and to try and be a little confronting, you know shock someone, shock the oldies something like that, where as its just make-up and its no more drastic than say the tribal one really and we found that quite accepting straight away because it was obvious what it was. (Female 34)*

Socioenvironmental influences can impact on make-up use. For example, one respondent reported how she lived above a tattoo shop and after observing the practice agreed to have her ears tattooed. She liked the environment so adapted her appearance to feel part of that community. Interestingly, despite not conforming herself to a mainstream code, this respondent rejected alternative unconforming codes such as depicted in the projective stimuli.

*Because it looks silly like you are going to a fancy dress or something.*

*(Female, 41)*

### Sun damage

Recently there has been a change in cultural perceptions of facial skin colour through education. Women discussed how brown used to be considered healthy-looking and now white skin was accepted as a more sensible image. Through more awareness of damage from the sun and the need for skin care, the normalised image of beauty and what was considered a healthy look was changing. With this change a whole new range of cosmetics packed with sun filters and UV protection agents were developed.

*I think I have got good skin considering the abuse I put it through when I was younger, I was always toasting, I used to get so burnt that I used to have to come home and slather tomatoes over my face and everywhere to take the sting out of the sun burn. ...Now I don't find being brown all that attractive and for me myself I actually like being quite pale, a bit different maybe I don't mind it yeah, fair. (Female 47)*

**Figure 6.1: Respondent preferring pale complexion removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Financial reasons

The desire to conform to the appearance code was so intense in some cases that it moulded consumption patterns from a young age.

*...Mum and Dad weren't wealthy in any way shape or form, so it wasn't just a luxury of having a draw full, but I did work when I was 13 at the Squash Centre so I did have a little bit of money of my own so I probably spent it on this and that to wear make-up, things like that, even though you weren't really supposed to wear it to school. (Female 34)*

It could be argued that make-up is so entrenched within our culture that young girls, despite disposable income limitations and demographics, will spend their first earned dollars on acquiring cosmetics.

Compliments

It would seem that many women believed that the perception of appearance in society needed to reflect the self and be congruent with the individual's goals in self identification. The key initial motivator for women in adjusting their image is to be valued in society.

One of the ways that women measure their acceptance or rejection of their fit within society is through compliments from others. Positive compliments would tend to raise the individual's self esteem and reinforce the behaviour adopted. Respondents reported that they would wear make-up to gain compliments from others. In so doing they confirmed that their appearance abided by society's values of beauty and was accepted by the community.

In one case it was very evident how much younger a smile made a respondent look. She discussed how her husband never gave her compliments, so she would often put make-up on her face and go out and get those compliments from others, thereby gaining the reassurance to build her self-esteem. Because her husband would never tell her she looked nice or even comment, she felt compelled to look for them from other people in order to gain acceptance within society.

### Emergent themes

Past studies have indicated that there is a set appearance, particularly for women, that is valued and considered to be beautiful by Western society (Etcoff, 1999; Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Heilman, 1998; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995). Studies have also demonstrated (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; McNeil, 1998; Richins, 1998) that people considered beautiful are more successful and enjoy higher status within the community than those not perceived to be so. Consequently it stands to reason that to adopt the appearance that society values or, at least to strive to, will result in benefits to the individual within that society. Evidence of this was extremely apparent within this study. Despite respondents talking about make-up as a sexual allurements, providing self-esteem, or a product from which they derived power and confidence, on further analysis and questioning these issues could all be linked to the need to conform to society's code.

The following sections of this chapter will discuss these side issues in more detail and provide information that will help the reader understand this link and analogy.

### 6.1.2 Power

Make-up is often described as ‘war paint’ and indeed some respondents in this study believe that, within Western society, it may still serve the same purpose. Whilst the battle ground is not as bloody, the stakes are still high and the most frequent place that this appears to be evident is within the corporate arena. The Executives interviewed could not imagine meeting with clients, or attending an important boardroom meeting, without wearing their make-up. They felt that it provided them with credibility, confidence, and power. Most importantly, it provided a picture that they were in control of the situation.

*I would do my hair and re-apply my lipstick to make myself look more professional and sharper.... Well the reason why I say sharper is because in my area it is very male dominated and at the level that I operate you would have to, I think you need to be well groomed, but still feminine and that is one way I think I demonstrate that....It's like your shield of confidence. (Female, 48)*

Women interviewees claimed that they would use full-face make-up for a business audience or an important meeting. They would readjust their look just prior to important meetings as they felt they needed to look ‘professional and sharper’. The above quote demonstrates the importance one respondent placed in reflecting an appearance of control and capability. She felt that full make-up was an essential component in creating this image. Working in this executive role the respondent felt she

was conforming to the expectations that the role demanded and, in doing so, gained power, control, and status in her daily encounters.

Interviewer: *Is it expected of you to wear make-up in the office environment?*

Respondent: *It isn't relayed verbally or in your contract or anything, it is just an expectation of the position that you hold that you wear, you have to be well groomed, it is part of your whole power position. Yeah, I mean it is an expectation that you will automatically be well groomed. (Female 48)*

Similarly, another respondent, when reflecting back to being a school principal discussed how she would use her appearance and particularly full-face make-up to support her authority and position.

Interviewer: *Did you ever feel that you were power dressing or had power make-up on?*

Respondent: *Oh yes. I was dressing for an occasion that this was my position and I needed to hold that position and I gained authority by the way I looked and presented myself. (Female 52)*

Several respondents discussed power dressing and the need to wear red or dark lipstick colours to key meetings despite the recent trend to more sheer and natural glosses. The significance of the colour and resemblance to markings used by tribal warriors as they went into battle is not lost.

Women often referred to make-up as a vehicle through which they could gain status within the community. It was a simple way that some women used to differentiate themselves from the masses and increase their status within society. They did this by

presenting an image of care and control to the community and thus gained a higher level of status within that community.

*Sort of makes you feel better I think doesn't it, wearing make-up makes you feel more confident, gives you a bit more confidence, so you don't look like the slobs down the road. You know I must admit, I always had a fear that I didn't want to turn into the thongs and shift brigade when I had kids, like some of the others did and I was always determined I was never going to do that. So I probably always made a bit more of an effort. ... .. Yeah, 'tracky' daks or the shift and the thongs, and they have a perm and they have two inches of straight hair and then frizz on the ends or they have dyed hair with two inches of roots showing. (Female 47)*

A strong theme emerging throughout the interviews was that 'to not wear make-up and present a well-groomed image' would lead others to have perceptions that they had 'let themselves go'. The link between 'no care for appearance' and 'lack of any care for other things' was common. Respondents felt that such an image was judged as being 'less intelligent and less intellectually capable', because they could not make the connection between not conforming to society's appearance code and their unkempt appearance being judged as a lack of care or control.

Make-up also was used as a prop by women when they were feeling tired and/or stressed to act as a mask of normality. It was used to signify that the individual was coping, as their appearance remained constant, even if they were not coping.

*... I was still doing a few extra bits that I shouldn't have taken on, so I felt very tired and probably needed to put the make-up on to look half way reasonable, ... (Female 34)*



Such a masking technique is illustrated when women discussed the importance of applying make-up when at home with the children. They did this to help them feel and present an image of togetherness, organised and ready for action, in control of their lives and its activities. A strong theme of make-up being linked to control emerged from many of the transcripts. This was because women felt it helped present a facade of control when this may not be the case for a plethora of reasons such as: no sleep, feeling depressed or vulnerable, crying, personal problems or stress.

### 6.1.3 Sexual allurement and the self

The number of respondents that indicated that they would wear make-up for sexual allurement was extremely limited. However, the benefit of receiving compliments from others and, in particular, the opposite sex did tend to drive the appearance outcome for some women. These women felt that maybe they still did subconsciously wear make-up to attract the opposite sex but it was not something they thought about or did intentionally.

*Your make-up and what you wear is a part of that self that you think that you are, and I don't know whether it's the self that other people think that I am, but you know, its more like I put make-up on for myself. I don't actually believe that I put it on for anybody else or for a man, or to look sexually attractive. No, no, I mean yeah, maybe as a result of that you might feel that you look more attractive or whatever but I always put it, I think I put it on for me. (Female34)*

In this case, as the respondent highlights, sexual attraction may result from conforming to society's code of make-up and the normalised image of beauty. However, the initial motivator is to be valued by society.

Lips and sexual allurement were often linked together. From comments that women made over feeling they needed to make their lips large and pouting, redder or shinier, it became evident that lipstick was a powerful artefact and attaches its rationale and reasons for use. It has been embraced and scorned throughout the centuries and is often linked with great sensuality because of its connotations with the labia. This stems from the fact that anthropologists suggest that women use cosmetics to simulate the body in a state of orgasm (Etkoff 1999; Pallingston 1999).

Whilst women interviewed would be unaware of this association claimed by animal behaviourists, and would vehemently deny that this was the reason they wore lipstick or lip gloss, the need to moisturise the lips and the image of moisture on the lips could well be considered to be representative of a more sensual and sexual connotation of the moist labia.

*I don't always wear lipstick you know but I have, I need moisture on my lips so I would usually have on a bit of vaseline, I would have that on yeah.*  
(Female 57)

Women reported that paternal influence played a significant role in make-up use and perceptions of it in their youth. Fathers, it seems, often had the idea that large amounts of make-up were associated with being a slut or of loose moral fibre. The women interviewed claimed that their fathers believed that make-up was a sign of different roles within the community; it was considered acceptable for women to use it if they were working because they were considered to be independent and older. Consequently, they were allowed to be more provocative and indulge in the sexual connotations that the fathers perceived it conveyed. Girls of School age (17) or younger, however, were denied this behaviour because their role was still considered virginal and, hence, fathers denied the sexual implications that make-up may have had.

*If I put make-up on at home I probably would have got a hiding, yeah he would have gone off his head what are you wearing that for, you must be a slut. ...No, no I just knew my Dad, you know I had grown up with him and I knew what he was like and I wouldn't have been allowed to. My mum very rarely wore make-up, my sister did but she was a bit older and was working and that was a bit different, but because I was still at school that certainly wasn't allowed. (Female 34)*

The need to present well was often inherited from their mothers and some older respondents discussed how they would ready their appearance before their spouse arrived home each day. They felt that their partners valued this appearance and felt that they would gain disapproval if they did not conform to this image.

*He liked me to look nice and knew it was for him yeah. (Female 57)*

*I remember Mum always brushing her hair and putting her lipstick on just before Dad would come home, well always just before dinner (Female, 43)*

Women also discussed how at times in their lives make-up had formed an integral part in creating an appearance that was desired by their partners. This would necessitate them moulding themselves into a certain image that that person perceived as how a woman should look, be it demur, provocative or sexy.

Many of these women now wear make-up for themselves as opposed to adapting their appearance for other people. In one instance a woman did this and the man still went off to flirt with other women. He desired her to look a certain way, in this case fashionable and sexy as an extension of himself, just as in Belk's (1988) notion of possessions and the extended self. She was a commodity that signified what he was about.

*... oh yeah, I mean he didn't have any taste it was I suppose a sexual thing,*

*an alcoholic sex maniac I suppose really would sum him up. (Female 57)*

Some women discussed how their confidence decreased as they sexually matured. They felt awkward and clumsy and would use make-up to hide poor complexions or features they felt made them unappealing to the opposite sex.

Respondents claim that the reasons for using make-up would change throughout their lives.

*Well I must admit I always used to wear make-up years ago, I used to think I would wear make-up because it makes you look more attractive and its easier to get blokes you know and this but I have had one, I have got the bloke and I had him 20 years and I am certainly not looking for anyone else, so I sort of realise wearing make-up really is all about me feeling better about myself, my own self and nothing at all to do with him or anything, its how I perceive myself I suppose. (Female 47)*

#### 6.1.4 Self-esteem

Increased self-esteem was the overwhelming reason that women gave for wearing make-up. Issues of self-esteem and the confidence derived from altering their appearance to fit a self they perceived as reflecting who they wanted to be were common. This would reinforce findings from earlier studies (Ogilvie & Ryan, 2002), which indicate that women do not wear make-up (lipstick) as a sexual allurements, but more for their own self-esteem. Similar feelings were reflected by respondents in this study.

*It's just my own personal feeling that I feel I am more attractive with my make-up on but I feel stronger in my self if I know my face looks good... (Female 58)*

One respondent believed it was from undertaking the ritual itself that the feelings of positive self-esteem flow.

*... when I come back after I have had make-up on all day and I think, well you don't look any different than when you had just lipstick and eye brow pencil on so for some reason the actual ritual of putting it on and looking and thinking, oh yes you look nice, makes me feel better.... (Female 58)*

In most cases it was felt that make-up completed the picture in creating the individual's identity. Furthermore, they believed that there needed to be congruence between the perceived self and the portrayed self of an individual and that confidence came from aligning the two. Consequently, despite the paradox of people judging others on their appearance, most women claim that they wear make-up for themselves as opposed to what others think.

Confidence was an attribute that many women sought to gain by the wearing of visible face make-up. Indeed, many respondents felt that this was an important criterion in regard to the amount of face make-up they would use each day. This is because when they feel confident they are less likely to worry about their appearance and are inclined to use less make-up.

*... doesn't really matter how awful you look if you are happy with yourself, if you are happy with yourself it doesn't matter what any body else thinks because you just radiate your confidence, but if you think I look a bugger you can't go into yourself. (Female, 58)*

Make-up is also used as a shield to cover individuals' inferiority complexes and perceived inadequacies. Society's value of beauty dictates that the more beautiful enjoy higher status and are more valued by society (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Ectoff, 1999).

As such, most women are therefore driven to conform to a set appearance code to gain acceptance by the community.

*Because I was brought up with an inferiority complex for reasons various, and I was repeatedly told that I was unattractive and plain and had a knack of making myself look an absolute humbug, and you know, there were two beautiful daughters apart from me and so I thought, okay, so I am the ugly one, and I have never actually got over that one. I feel most of the time, I feel seriously plain and on bad days I feel ugly....I think okay, if you paint something on you can look passable, or you can feel as though you look passable, yeah. I am more likely to feel comfortable having put on half a face at least, it makes a big difference to me, if it's a total mess I feel seriously, you know, rotable... . (Female 57)*

Make-up serves as camouflage for others who wish not to stand out in the crowd and perhaps have a low opinion of themselves. By applying their make-up daily and conforming to the set appearances of Western society they gain confidence by blending into the background and not drawing attention to themselves.

Furthermore, women discussed how they would use face make-up to improve their perception of self. In this process, mood was considered an integral factor of attaining self-confidence and this would impact on the daily ritual of make-up. This is demonstrated in the following quote where one respondent discusses the need for extra make-up on days when they have low self-esteem.

*...on some days regardless of whether you are going out, you make more of an effort because you feel ugly and tackier, but on days when you feel terrific much less it's not required. (Female 58)*

Similar comments from other women interviewed highlight that the reason for wearing visible face make-up was for the positive feedback and improved mood that they would receive from undertaking this behaviour.

*Having my make-up on makes me feel good about myself and if you feel good about yourself then that's what you give off to other people and you get a positive response, but if you feel bad about yourself that's what you give off to other people and you get a negative response. (Female 40)*

Make-up plays an important role in identity construction too. For example, one respondent remembered when she had experimented with many different colours of eye shadow to make a statement about who she was, and what she wanted to be, in an effort to establish her identity. From this process she derived increased self-esteem as she gave voice to her own interpretation of beauty.

*During the eighties I had a lot more eye shadows on at once and I had a purple and a green and a flowery shirt that was purple, green and pink so my eye shadow reflected my shirt and they were bright. All different colours together like the green and the purple and the pink like a peacock. ... I laugh now, but I loved it then and I just thought that I was just gorgeous... (Female 34)*

Similarly, women would discuss the need to regain their identity after childbirth by reapplying their make-up. Through this process they were able to achieve a sense of control and confidence by returning to an identity with which they were comfortable. Achieving this familiar appearance was like some self-fulfilling prophecy, where individuals believed that, if they looked confident and in control, then the attributes of this state would actualise.

Respondent: ... *how I looked didn't worry me in hospital but when I got home with my son I started putting it on, because it made me feel better.*

Interviewer: *And how did it do that?*

Respondent: *Just made me feel like me, like I looked attractive so I felt more confident with life you know. (Female 33)*

Many women who talked of using make-up in their younger years to gain confidence now felt comfortable being put in a strange social situation with no make-up at all in the belief that they had the skills to ride it out on personality alone. This contrasts to when they were younger and they would never have been able to accomplish this task. These women now believed that their personality would eventually outweigh appearance, but that initially it would be a very uncomfortable situation. Given the choice, they all agreed that they would prefer to wear some make-up and avoid this potential scenario. In this circumstance, it seems the rationale for their belief and confidence stems from a need to justify their self-identity and provides an example of how the mind may compensate in strange situations to try and make the individual feel more confident in an environment where they would normally be marginalised.

When one respondent was discussing the extra grooming preparation required for a special occasion, she indicated that she felt this demonstrated a pride in self and showed that you liked your self-image. Consequently, she believed that she would use cosmetics and makeup her face for herself rather than for how others judged her appearance.

*I think it's because it shows that you like yourself. (Female 34)*

Associated with this, is that the effort taken to conform in any situation enhances the individual's self-esteem. Indeed, respondents indicated that they perceived that they



had a better time when they felt they looked good. Interviews suggested that this could be derived from the fact that women feel increased confidence because they more closely resemble the normalised image that society values.

*Cause I feel I am more attractive, I feel better about myself you know, its just a confidence thing, you feel better about yourself and have a better time, its like getting fat and being thin you know you always feel better when you are thin. (Female 47)*

Pampering rituals to increase self-esteem were also mentioned as a means to increase self-esteem. To spend a large amount of time on grooming your face was considered a pure luxury and women indicated that they would consume this behaviour at times just to feel good and indulge themselves.

In addition, most women reported carrying with them a 'make-up survival kit' just in case they were caught out and needed to adjust their image. This would include key products that they felt were essential to rectify any inconsistencies with their appearance, such as lipstick, eyeliner or powder compact. In this fashion, make-up provided a shield for many women, from which they derived self-confidence because they were always ready to alter their image in line with the set appearance code.

For others, self-confidence also comes from other benefits; for some in that they feel they look much older without make-up; that the flaws in their facial appearance are apparent and hence they feel self-conscious without it.

*...you know if I have slept in bed and get up and we have got a visitor and I have not gone through that make-up ritual I feel extremely vulnerable, I almost feel like they can see through me. (Female 37)*

Hence the need to make their appearance congruent with their self-impression was crucial and the individual would gain confidence and feel good when this was

achieved. In this manner, consumers are repetitive, habitual and often described as ritualistic in the routine required to align these two perceptions of appearance. The ritualistic aspects of consumers' consumption behaviours of make-up are described forthwith

## 6.2 RITUAL

Behaviour associated with the everyday grooming practices of human beings has been found to be ritualistic in nature (Beausoleil, 1994; McCracken, 1986; Rook, 1985). The use of face cosmetics in these grooming practices can also be defined as a ritualistic process using the framework identified by Rook (1985) of four tangible characteristics of a ritual process. Ogilvie and Ryan (2002) successfully used this framework to examine the ritual aspects of lipstick and demonstrated the highly symbolic and ceremonial context in which this product is used. Similarly, this framework is a useful tool to examine the ritualistic processes involved in the grooming behaviours of visible face make-up and these are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

### Ritual

Rituals differ from habits in that they are more dramatically scripted and acted out. They are likely to be larger more plural experiences whilst habits tended to be more individualistic behaviours (Rook, 1985). Whilst both habits and rituals are repeated in a similar sequence, rituals tend to generate the same emotions and feelings each time they are enacted unlike habits which may be devoid of any emotion. Rook (1985, p252) defines ritual as:

*...a type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviours that occur in a fixed, episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over*

*time. Ritual behaviour is dramatically scripted and acted out and is performed with formality, seriousness, and inner intensity.*

The use of visible make-up by women in this study was found to be extremely ritualistic in nature and these behaviours are outlined under the four key criteria described by Rook below.

### 6.2.1 The Ritual Artefact

Ritual artefacts are items that convey symbolic messages when used in the context of the ritual (Rook 1985). In this case, the cosmetic products themselves are the ritual artefacts, for their use is perceived to create significance and they are often associated with interpersonal communications. Artefacts are also often exchanged as gifts (Belk, 1979; Sherry, 1983) and cosmetics are a popular gift line for most women during festive occasions such as Christmas and birthdays. One respondent reported the use of cosmetics as a currency that was central to a bartering process where cosmetics were exchanged for piano lessons. For these reasons, make-up can be considered as a ritual artefact and the consumption behaviours and self-reports from the women interviewed would also confirm this.

Findings in this study indicate that each woman appears to have what they term an 'essential cosmetic'. It is the product that they believe to be central to their grooming ritual and it may be either eyebrow pencil, lipstick, eyeliner or face powder. This product is considered an extension of their self and is an essential component in the appearance they present to the world. Indeed, the selection of a key artefact by women often identified the aspect of the face that the individual considered important. It was usually selected to correct a perceived flaw in their facial features. For example, one respondent claimed she had 'piggy eyes' so would always wear mascara. Another would

always scrutinise another's eyebrows because she felt that she had none, and yet another complained of a fat face so she would always wear blusher to give her face definition.

*I always wear blusher because I have such a fat face, so it just gives me some cheeks. (Female 34)*

In each of these instances, the mascara, the eyebrow pencil and the blusher became central to the respondent's make-up routine and a key artefact in their daily grooming ritual. The product conveyed great meaning to participants because it allowed them to present an appearance that they perceived was congruent with who they were and, in this way, communicate with others in society.

Women had various artefacts that they felt were essential to complete their daily ritual before encountering certain audiences.

*I really don't feel I could go to the shop without lipstick and eyebrows, it just feels as though it doesn't look right. (Female 57)*

In this case the respondent perceived that these items of make-up were a necessary part of her 'self' and essential for certain audiences. She experienced great discomfort when she was unable to perform the ritual using these artefacts to create her perceived self. The artefacts of the lipstick and the eyebrow pencil were considered as extensions of the self (Belk, 1988).

The connotations linked with some products used in a certain way could also communicate messages. For example, some respondents believed that over use of blusher could be considered tarty and that very bright red lipstick was indicative of a 'painted lady' or someone with loose morals.

In contrast to this, women also believed that, with correct use of these artefacts, they could achieve higher status and transform themselves into something perceived to

be better. Hence, to increase their status and to gain acceptance, they would undertake that ritual because it offered this visual difference.

## Brands

Status was also reflected by the brand of cosmetic women wore. Brands with high brand equity were perceived to do a better job than less expensive unbranded products. Women discussed their make-up histories and how the brand of make-up they purchased would change depending on their life situation and their disposable income at the time. Women who purchased products by brand tended to move from the less expensive brands consumed in their youth, to brands with higher brand equity as they became more affluent, and conversely back to less expensive products once retiring from the workforce.

Consumption of the brand appeared to change with life transitions. For example, one respondent discussed changing to a cheaper brand once she retired for financial reasons. This would confirm earlier qualitative data that there were different products for different market segments, one being the new mum with little disposable income and another being the more elderly with less money available. Despite the need to change to a cheaper brand, this respondent still perceived that expensive brands were somehow better. This could be due to her feelings of extravagance when purchasing the products because she believed richer ritual was associated with these artefacts and their consumption.

*They are so nice, they feel light and feminine, very light, very feminine and yes the experience of putting it on, the presentation first and the experience of putting those lovely soft, cool creams on your face makes you feel beautiful it does....It's just that I can't afford it now. Yes, just saying that I have just realised what I am using now, I mean I use it, its fine, but it*

*doesn't make me feel like Lancome does when I put it on. Just because it's the cost probably it's the perception, the value of thinking this is like gold and rubbing it onto your face. (Female 58)*

From a ritualistic perspective such brands were considered better artefacts with more magic properties and were used for indulgence to make the individual feel good.

Whilst financial reasons impacted on consumption practices for many, others indicated that their key rationale for purchasing a product was the quality it offered and how well it did the job in helping to create the desired appearance.

*...in the past the difference was that I might have used a cheaper brand of foundation and from time to time I have actually thought, 'oh this can't be much different', and I have bought one in Coles and I have found a difference, because I like Estee Lauder and the cheaper ones don't seem to do the same job ... (Female 34)*

Many women interviewed appeared to be brand loyal with loyalty based on artefacts that were known and trusted. It would also seem that women became more resistant to changing the artefacts used in their daily make-up ritual as they became older. They did however, adapt their usage of these products and selected new techniques to suit the facial changes they were experiencing.

*... as you get older you don't have the same definition in your eyes so you do it with make-up, but then you would start getting limited because you have got creases, foundation tends to crease a bit more in the lines and eye shadow goes into creases and things like that so it does change, the way you put make-up does change as you grow. (Female 40)*

Fashion plays an important role in influencing ritual and establishing the appearance selected by individuals in their everyday encounters. This is influenced by

the mass media in communicating images and shaping the appearance chosen, therefore perpetuating the appropriate appearance code for each age group. An example is the subtle and softer make-up suggested for more mature women.

### Time poor

In today's busy, time-poor lifestyle many women discussed the need to adjust their ritual to compensate for their lifestyle. In doing so they were still able to include a grooming ritual within their tight time frame and the practicalities of working life. By adopting an image and ritual to meet these demands rather than going without, women still derive the benefits of the ceremony and the significant communication outcomes related to its performance.

*I start work at 5.00 in the morning and I don't get out of bed till about 4.15, so it's out of bed and straight in to the bathroom. I put my make-up and everything on and I am out the door and I am at work by 5.00, so I take about 20 minutes to do everything, so a very quick make-up routine.*  
(Female 47)

Ritual has also been shown to take precedence over sustenance. One respondent claimed that she would rather put make-up on and indulge in this ritual to gain the attributes it offers than have breakfast. This confirms the importance of appearance in daily lives and how we perceive ourselves and are perceived by others.

*On a Tuesday or Thursday morning I am in an extreme rush dropping kids off, and the other morning when I had to drop off because my husband was away it was a case of do I have time to put make-up on or do I have time to sit down and eat breakfast? So, I actually put some make-up on, ... (Female 35)*

## Lipstick

Lipstick was considered an important artefact by many in the ceremony of preparing the face. Ogilvie and Ryan (2002) discuss the historic perspective of this artefact and its massive influence on society over the years. Included amongst their findings were the powerful transformational properties of lipstick as a vehicle through which women could create and change their identity.

Respondents often talked of lipstick in a separate category to make-up with make-up meaning foundation, eye shadow and other products. It was considered an important addition to the face and an essential component of many make-up routines.

*I have got a friend who stopped wearing make-up Jackie she just wears lipstick,... (Female 58)*

Interestingly, all respondents discussed adapting the artefacts in the grooming ritual depending on the setting and the audience. For example, the use of a different lipstick for different places with darker and brighter colours reserved for going out.

*... and if I was going out I would try and use the brighter one, if I am at home I sort of use the pale one because I don't really like much make-up. (Female 52)*

One respondent even believed that lipstick was a barometer for the occasion with the brightness of the artefact identifying the occasion.

Without, what one described as her 'mask' of make-up, she felt uncertainty and discomfort, especially without her key artefact of lipstick. She describes the importance of this artefact and justifies reasons for wanting to wear it as she claims that the lips are a key part in the communication process. Consequently, the image she presents to the world needs to be consistent with wearing lipstick as people have learned that this is what she looks like and, hence, they anticipate an appearance that includes this artefact.



*I do like to wear lipstick, I see myself as quite plain even though I have got dark hair, I feel quite plain and I think the lipstick sort of highlights, you know, the first thing you see when you meet somebody. Yeah, you look at their lips or their eyes, so I wouldn't feel happy, no, I prefer to, if I could chose one, if I could have something it would be the lipstick I think.*  
(Female 34)

Even immediately after childbirth this respondent claimed she still needed that key artefact of lipstick and felt incomplete without it. Indeed, many women also assert that lipstick was the one product that they could not do without.

Often a cosmetic artefact that had particular significance for an individual could be linked to a past experience and be related to a specific occurrence. For example, a mother and her red lipstick. In this case the respondent vividly remembers her mother and the red lipstick that she would always wear. Consequently the red lipstick became symbolic to the daughter in representing her mother.

*I remember when I was about 4, I pinched my mum's lipstick and I hid it from her for weeks, because I wanted to wear it, and I must have realised I couldn't because she would know. After a few weeks she said to give it back to her, so I remember having an infatuation and that was red lipstick. That lipstick always used to remind me of Mum.* (Female 48)

Lipstick was often the first and last artefact to be used by women in their daily grooming rituals. Initially, because of its simplicity in application and the sensual implications associated with it, and lastly because women tended to use less make-up in the aging process and lipstick was the last of these to go.

Furthermore, women who were avid lipstick users talked of the many different colours that they possessed and how they would keep these for prolonged periods just in

case they needed that specific colour again. Once a product was considered an artefact and a necessary part of the ritual, varieties of this artefact were kept for great lengths of time in case they were needed again for some future ceremony.

### Mascara / Eyes

Similar to the use of lipstick, but not as common, was the perception by women that eyes were the key feature of their face and consequently products such as mascara and eye-liner were staple cosmetics that they could not do without. Indeed, one respondent discussed how eyeliner was the one constant in her life through many transitions and phases, whilst another believed the eyes were the ‘window to the soul’ and hence she would not go out without her eyes darkened with make-up.

*... like I said I would go out in my pyjamas if I had to just go to the shops, I just don't care, as long as I have got mascara on I can go anywhere.*

*(Female 34)*

Eye shadow appeared to be a useful artefact by which many women could differentiate the setting, the ritual script and the role that they were required to enact. More commonly women would only wear this product at night time or for more formal occasions.

*I wear eye shadow if I am going out to dinner or somewhere really special.*

*(Female 33)*

### Skin

A few considered face powder the key artefact in their grooming practices as clear skin and evenness of complexion was so often considered a necessary ingredient of beauty.

*I would probably have a bit of powder, you know, the compact powder just*

*to even out my complexion, or to hide any blemishes. (Female 32)*

### Combining artefacts

Finally, several women believed that there was a need for all the artefacts together to create their desired appearance; one on its own was considered out of place. For example, one participant even felt that lipstick on its own made her complexion look uneven, whilst another who wore lots of make-up everyday declared that her cosmetics represented a consistent daily mask that she could not, and would not, do without.

### Extension of ritual

Women discussed the use of cosmetic artefacts in the extension of the ritual process for special occasions. On these occasions they may use artefacts that are not normally used and paint/shape or distort parts of the face normally left unattended. For example, women spoke of only ever highlighting their eyebrows when they went out at night, while some would use lip liner to change the shape of their lips.

The elaborate extended ritual of self-care adopted on special occasions was considered by women to be a mark of femininity. Similarly, the wearing of make-up itself was described by one participant as a feminine ritual and a behaviour that was expected of women.

*Just all the effort that's gone into it, that would take hours, which is a feminine thing, its hard to explain, I expect it is more likely to be done by women than say by men. Anyway I think make-up is a feminine thing, I guess I wear it to feel more attractive and feminine, after all you look more like a girl when you wear make-up. Let's face it girls wear make-up and it's*

*something that girls do. (Female 32)*

The extra care, time and effort put into a woman's make-up before a special event appear to be part of a process of extending the occasion. This is not something that women can do everyday as it is too complex and time consuming, but on special occasions it enables the respondent to extend the length of the event and the anticipation and enjoyment associated with the occasion.

*...it is part of dressing up, its part of acknowledging that it's a special occasion you put your nice clothes on so you put your nice face on. (Female 37)*

Most women admitted that they had a habit of carrying a 'survival' make-up kit to adjust their image, even though they never or infrequently would use it. This behaviour itself also appears to be an extension of the ritual process, despite the fact that the extra ritual is not performed.

### Old recipes

Women were asked if they could remember any old beauty recipes that their mothers or others had taught them, or which had been handed down through the generations. Many talked of ways to highlight the hair with lemon juice or mayonnaise, or of creating a better facial complexion using egg yolk.

*Egg yolk on your face, 'cause that was for dry skin and it would make your skin go really hard, while you couldn't move, I remember that yeah. (Female 34)*

Another remembers using egg white and oatmeal and a range of other natural products in her beauty regime.

*...I don't think they came from my mother as such because she wasn't*

*really into make-up, however grandmother was certainly a lot better groomed and did a lot with / her face.... ... I remember having oatmeal and egg white plastered all over my face and my little brother coming into the room and going out screaming when he saw me, and then there was cucumbers on your eyes and lemons on your elbows, beer in your hair, and yeah, lemon in your hair too. (Female 51)*

One woman professed that she put vitamin E oil into Nivea crème as her mother before her had done for years. Others spoke of colouring the lips with cochineal and vegetable dyes, of applying cucumber to the eyes to decrease the puffiness, and of applying charcoal to their eyebrows. Whilst the cosmetic artefacts have changed, women have been compelled to paint their face in any way possible, often using everyday items as their artefacts for this ritual.

Interestingly, many women often subconsciously mimicked habits of their mothers. Evidence from this study suggests that women tended to adopt the very ones that the individual may have rebelled against or rejected earlier in life and, then later, these very same idiosyncrasies are incorporated into the daily grooming ritual of these women. The means of learning the ritual, and the techniques associated with its accomplished application, are part of the ritual script and are outlined and discussed in the next section.

## 6.2.2 The Ritual Script

The script identifies the process and the behaviour sequence of the artefact. As Rook (1985, p 253) purports, “a ritual script prescribes a consumption paradigm, which may include either extensive or relatively limited product usage.” The application of make-up has its own script, as evidenced in the overall sequence of its application.

Women report using the same daily routine in their grooming practices, and more specifically in their use of make-up. They will apply their face make-up in exactly the same order each day, using the same hand and method to apply the artefact. For example, left-handed women tended to prepare the left side of their face first, followed by the right, whilst the opposite was true for right-handed women.

Respondents usually began with the face as a canvas and concentrated on applying moisturisers followed by foundation and powder if they were worn. Preparing the eyes followed, next came the eye brows, blusher, and finally lipstick.

*I would have foundation, powder, mascara and blush. I put those on everyday, that is my standard ritual, those four items.... I have a shower, blow dry my hair and then the foundation goes on, the powder, the blush, the mascara, finished.... Every morning I do it before I leave the house, before I do my housework, before I come out of my room, I do those things.*  
(Female 37)

*Block out yeah, tinted block out, and then I will put my eye liner on, eye shadow, mascara, blush, comb my eyebrows and finally lipstick just before I walk out the door.* (Female 57)

Or, as one respondent discusses, the ritual is subconscious and often not related to any real thought or rationale for the action.

Respondent: *I have a shower, then put on my moisturiser, when that is dry I put the foundation on, sometimes I put one of those little concealer sticks, like if I am a bit tired or if I had a pimple I would... then I put the powder and a blusher and then I put the eye liner and mascara.*

Interviewer: *Which eye do you do first?*

Respondent: *The right one.*

Interviewer: *Do you always do it that way?*

Respondent: *Yep, when I think about it, I have never thought about it but yeah I do, but I don't put the lipstick on until I am just about out the door because the last thing I do is clean my teeth. (Female 34)*

Respondents claimed that, once they had established a certain way of doing their make-up, their ritual was set. They followed the same pattern of behaviour everyday, using the same products, in the same sequence, and often within a set time frame. Most reported that they had not changed this behaviour for a very long time.

The motivation to change only came when women saw, or actually tried, a new product in a trial process. Hence the success of make-up networking parties and cosmetic 'make-overs' in large department stores. Both these methods of inducement require the respondent to participate in the experiment. As most of these women had neither the time nor the inclination to change, they did not make themselves available to these avenues and consequently there was very little deviation in their routines from when they were first established.

Some respondents questioned the effectiveness of the artefacts and the script, however, they still took part in the same ritual despite wondering whether it made any difference or not, for to withdraw the ritual would leave the respondent with great uncertainty and discomfort.

*The first thing I do is put concealer under my dark lines, but that wears off and doesn't really work, and then the next thing I do is put mascara on, and then a tiny bit of blush on because I don't need a lot, and then I put a bit of lipstick on and that's it. (Female, 34)*

In addition, respondents also indicated that they would indulge in more intense ritual with greater use of artefacts when going out. However, a few perceived that the

outcome was the same. Whilst respondents indicated that they were aware that there was very little difference in the appearance outcome of different make-up routines, they still felt that, as an individual, they derived confidence from following these rituals for particular occasions.

*Yeah, although I don't see much difference when I do try and when I don't try so there you go, I do it for morale but the finish is not much different (Female, 52)*

### Learning the ritual script

The learning of the ritual script is often subconscious and the individual is not even aware that it is taking place.

*I don't know I must of put make-up on with a girlfriend, I don't think that I actually learnt it, I can't remember learning it from anywhere, maybe just through experimentation. (Female 35)*

A few respondents claimed that they learnt to apply their make-up through party plans. Avon, Nutrimetics and other cosmetic networking parties appear to be influential in teaching women how to apply make-up or adapt the products they were using.

The ritual script is learnt in many ways, including magazines, books and experimenting with peers. Additionally, respondents claimed that their older sisters, aunts and other relatives were instrumental in teaching them the ritual script in their teenage years.

*I think I was about fifteen or sixteen and my Aunty showed me how to put mascara on, yes she was staying with us for the weekend, and that's all I wore for years. (Female 58)*

*I wouldn't say they were strict guidelines, I would think there are some*



*protocol perhaps that has been instilled in us since we were young enough to put make-up on probably, that foundation goes on first, then your powder goes on, and then you do your mascara last, you know, those sorts of things are things that are taught to us by Nutrimetics ladies or the older sister or who ever, and I think personally once you get into that then that becomes your ritual. (Female 37)*

Mothers also were influential in teaching the ritual script to their daughters, as one respondent reflects.

*No, I used to just watch mum, yeah, always sit on the bath and watch her put hers (make-up) on. (Female 58)*

However, the role of the mother in teaching daughters about the ritual script is quickly diminishing and rapidly being replaced by mass media images and messages. From these mediums young girls today learn how to use the artefacts of the ritual and the appropriate order and methods of application. Through their interaction within society, they learn what to wear to be accepted and when to wear it. For example, one respondent claimed that the script for her facial make-up was exactly the same. However, what defined a different occasion and setting was the use of an assortment of diverse lipsticks. In this situation, her ritual script defined the use of lipstick as an important component in creating this transition between roles.

#### Artistry/skill

Performance of the script in itself requires mastery and skill of the artefacts and the techniques used in their application. One respondent claimed that she did not consider herself an expert in the ritual of applying make-up; she perceived that she did not get the desired effect that a professional make-up artist could achieve. Consequently,

she alleged that she could not transform herself fully into the desired image valued by society.

Similarly, another also claimed that she had still not mastered the ritual to her desired effect. Therefore, she did not like the image in the mirror and experienced feelings of discomfort upon looking at herself. In this case she felt she had performed enough ritual to pass under society's expected code, however she did not derive full confidence because she had not mastered the script to her desired level or expectation.

*I still say that I haven't really quite mastered it, when I look at myself compared to what other people do and their routines and things like that I am very basic, its just enough on to satisfy myself. I don't really like looking at myself, so I don't really like looking at myself in the mirror and it can be a hard thing, so I don't do much, I just do as much to satisfy myself and think yep, yep, you look presentable and that's all as much as I can hope for really (Female 34)*

### 6.2.3 Performance Role

Rook (1985) describes the ritual script as being played out by individuals adopting various ritual roles. In the case of make-up, the roles that women play whilst wearing make-up are many and varied and are dependent on the setting and the audience. Women indicated that they would adjust their facial make-up according to what role they were enacting at the time, be it relaxing at home, working in a professional capacity, or undertaking an especially symbolic event such as a wedding.

*Well, I feel for me just potting around the garden I would be fine with even no eye brows on, but just to go to the shop I really don't feel I could go to the shop without lipstick and eye brows, it just feels as though it doesn't*

*look right. (Female 57)*

Respondents indicated that their appearance had to be appropriate for the role or setting and that society had a code that was expected with regard to facial appearance for each of these roles.

*I mean you can't go to an interview for example with no make-up on you know, if you are going all dressed up and no make-up it wouldn't look right. (Female 51)*

What's more, women indicated that at night they would wear different make-up that was usually associated with the setting to which they were going. Some shift-workers interviewed reported wearing the same make-up day or night regardless of the time or lighting, because it was the make-up and appearance that was considered appropriate for the work-setting and the work-audience. Interestingly, different make-up artefacts were used to define the role in each setting, with more formal roles requiring more make-up, or make-up that was different from their everyday routine. For example, one respondent spoke of the different eye shadow she would wear for different occasions.

*...if you were going to the casino or maybe a wedding I would probably wear something shiny, but if I was just going to dinner it would probably just be matt, you know just something to highlight the eyes. (Female 34)*

Others reported using a separate artefact for night and day use. One woman would colour in her eyebrow especially for night roles. She was unaware why she behaved in this manner but noted that it was something that she always did. Others implied that they linked a woman's role to her appearance and felt that this was true for others' perceptions of them.

*I would feel really out of place if I wore lots of make-up to school, say like*

*for a Friday morning assembly because I know that everyone would come up to me and go, “where are you going today, are you going somewhere special?” and I’d be like, why do I have to go somewhere special to wear all this, do you know what I mean, like people just assume that ‘cause you have got that on that you are going somewhere special. (Female 34)*

Respondents also suggested that they liked to stay in control of the situation and, depending on the setting, would prepare for the audience and role they needed to enact by applying make-up accordingly. Similarly, there are settings and roles deemed inappropriate for make-up use. These tended to be outdoor, active and casual occasions such as boating or wood chopping.

*I wouldn’t wear make-up when we go out on the boat or you know when we go wood chopping in the bush for fire wood, it just doesn’t seem necessary. (Female 34)*

#### Setting – Location, surroundings and social environment

The geographical setting and climate would also influence the amount of make-up that women would wear. Several women discussed their time living in very hot climates and how in these conditions foundation was deemed not appropriate, as it would ‘melt’ off their faces. Indeed, it was climate that influenced one woman to avoid using all make-up altogether (with the exception of lipstick) and have her eyes tattooed and lashes dyed to avoid wearing mascara or eyeliner in the hot climatic conditions of Australia.

**Figure 6.2: Respondent with tattooed eyebrows, eyeliner and lip liner removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Akin to this, respondents talked of the change in dress codes and face make-up worn between places, describing how they once had ‘dressed up’ to go to town but now this was not an expectation to go to this setting. Women who had lived in Western Australian country towns throughout their life also spoke of the difference between the make-up code in smaller country towns (particularly warm ones) and Perth.

*The heat, yeah, you couldn't wear foundation up there because it would just melt off your skin, and everyone was more natural up there, just sort of a different way of life I guess. (Female 40)*

The ritual setting where the woman prepares for her various roles has undergone a change. Where applying make-up was once a social ritual performed at a dressing table with people passing through, it has now moved to a more private setting away from the public arena, now usually performed alone behind the closed door of a bathroom. One respondent commented on how the make-up ritual was becoming more private and insular where once it had not been so. She remarked on how women used to sit at their dressing tables and apply their make-up; as people came and went they would stop and talk, often having long discussions with their intimate audience in the process. Now

women perform this same ritual in the sterility of their bathrooms with limited communication involved; the ritual becomes more secluded and isolated.

*We would always have our dressing table and we would do all our beauty stuff sitting at our dressing table, and you had your draw with all your bits and bobs and you know, you have your cleanser and you would put it on and you would tissue it, and then you would do your toner, which is cotton wool and dab, dab, dab and you would do your face and it was all on your dressing table, none of this standing in the bathroom getting back ache doing it, it was a sitting down operation. ... .. And it was quite feminine and you know you would always sit at your dressing table and we may have had a cryptic mirror cause then you can sort of see yourself all round, and if someone was coming in when you were doing it they would sit and chat it was sort of a, I suppose it was a very female thing... (Female 57)*

Besides the bathroom, the setting for applying make-up has extended from the powder room to the car. Yet, again, this is a solitary behaviour which is performed alone. Rather than have the discomfort of not conforming to the appearance for a specific role, respondents said they would take their artefacts into the car and perform the ritual on the move before greeting the anticipated audience.

#### 6.2.4 Audience

The ritual audience for make-up ranges from the self, to the various representations of the public world. In presenting this range of images to the world, respondents noted the importance of the audience and, depending on who they were, would adapt their make-up accordingly. As Goffman (1960) discusses, a definite front stage / back stage became apparent with regard to the visible make-up that the

respondents would wear. The use of more visible face make-up in the women's appearance was considered important for the front stage whilst the use of little-to-no visible face make-up was reserved for relaxing at home with a more intimate audience.

In addition, the self is an important audience in terms of confidence and self-esteem. Often the family culture was the first influence for respondents as to when and what make-up to apply. Acceptance or rejection was received from spouses, significant others, work colleagues and the general community. In this way the audience guides the code that the respondent's community adopts and accepts as a normal and valued appearance.

Some respondents discussed how they felt that make-up was a necessary part of what made them who they were. They believed it was essential for their presentation to the world. They felt great discomfort when they were unable to perform the ritual to create the self they perceived they were. In this way, for these women, the artefact of make-up had become an extension of the self (Belk, 1988).

*... it is not as if it's a mask or anything, its just me. (Female 58)*

Indeed, one respondent indicated that she would prefer to miss an event than to present a self that was not congruent with how she perceived herself.

### Backstage / Private

The private audience consisted often of close friends and relatives or just the self. It was for these audiences that respondents would wear no, or very little, make-up. In these situations women felt they could relax without their make-up on because they were not being judged and had no need to be concerned with their appearance.

One respondent indicated that she was not comfortable with her 'backstage' appearance and hence would only wear no make-up when alone.

*It is only when I am at home and nobody is coming to visit that I would have absolutely nothing on my face. It very rarely happens, but when I do I avoid any mirrors because I don't feel comfortable at all... (Female 58)*

Another respondent indicated that she felt dirty and constrained if she was forced to wear front stage make-up in a back stage setting.

*At home I wear nothing, oh I would hate that, I'd feel dirty if I had make-up on at home. (Female 34)*

For most, the make-up ritual itself was performed in private, often behind closed bathroom doors where only the 'intimate audience' was able to view. One respondent discussed how her husband enjoyed watching her apply her make-up and found it fascinating to watch the skill and mastery required in its application.

*Yeah, he likes it (make-up) and says he likes to sit there and watch me put it on. He says it's fascinating. ... I am putting my mascara on and I am going are you right there, and he goes I am just watching and artist at work, god what a dag! (Female 34)*

Several had strong memories of their mothers preparing themselves for their husband's homecoming each evening. The need to be well presented for any audience, even the intimate ones, was considered important for these women. They felt that these behaviours were useful in transferring from mother to daughter the concepts of society's appearance code.

*... I remember late every afternoon she (mother) would go and tidy herself ready for Dad coming home. (Female 58)*

Make-up was not considered to be as important when the audience knew more about the individual than their appearance, or when the audience was perceived to be non-judgmental. Evidence from this study indicates that animals and children were



considered to be in this category. One respondent, who was a chicken farmer, said she had no need of make-up at work because the 'chooks' were her audience and hence she had no need to impress them.

### Front stage/Work

Other business women talked of how they believed visible face make-up was imperative for the business audience, particularly when they had important meetings. They would gain self confidence and power from the image they presented. Most women agreed that make-up was a shield from which they gained confidence. They perceived that it was all about presentation and presenting one self to create the image desired for the role and the audience.

*It's a shield, it's like, it indicates that you have taken trouble and that you are a caring person, grooming is important. To me, grooming like make-up which is visual, as well as hair to be clean and clothes to be clean, is a hygiene thing so you relate the two. (Female 48)*

*I always try and I think you have to present a bit of an image, I think its important anyway to present a bit of a professional image (Female 34)*

Others indicated that they would take more time and care with their make-up ritual when preparing for front stage events. Depending on the audience and its considered importance, the ritual would be increased and more make-up artefacts would be used.

The audience could impact significantly on the ritual performance. Where previously a set role influenced day or night make-up use, one respondent discussed how she would have different make-up routines for these times despite performing the same role in the same setting. She explained that this was because of the different audiences

one would encounter in that role at those times and hence each required a different appearance. After midnight she detailed how she would be in contact with more colourful characters who she perceived were less judgemental and so would wear no make-up whilst working these shifts. During the day however, more professional business people would be encountered and, consequently, more protocol was demanded.

*When I worked at the needle exchange it would depend when I worked, if I worked during the day I would wear make-up, but I did after midnight shifts and because it was open 24 hours, on these shifts I wouldn't bother wearing any make-up. (Female 34)*

In contrast, another woman indicated that, because of her official capacity in the immigration department regardless of what shift she worked, she would wear the same face make-up for her work role. This was her front stage image for the work audience and from it she derived authority and respect.

Moreover, many women voiced the need to wear make up because of the role they were in and the expectations of that role to conform to a certain appearance standard, be it professional, beauty or authority based.

*I worked at the Croatian club so they were open all the time, they used to have guys who would come in and they would expect you to look nice, and I know it's chauvinistic but to keep my job it was expected of me. (Female 34)*

Women felt it was important to create a good impression of themselves and the audiences' perception of their appearance was important to them. They also believed that the status of the audience was significant, and whether the individual was endeavouring to rise above, be on an equal footing to, or treat the audience as

unimportant in the scheme of things influenced their appearance. Additionally, it also seems, that the larger the audience, the more make-up women would wear.

*...because I work in my husband's office in a very male oriented place where they are all rough necks they are not suits, I don't see the necessity for it. (Female 40)*

Another issue is the congruence between the front stage appearance and the true image and the perception of the audience being privy to both. One respondent talked of how her husband became jealous when she applied too much make-up when she was going out with friends. He feared it may be alluring to others.

### Other Issues

Respondents reported adopting different techniques of the ritual with experience and age. Colours are more muted to suit the age group and reflect how society expects one of that age to look, therefore conforming to the valued societal norm.

Other respondents discussed how they would keep particular artefacts for selected audiences. For example, foundation may be kept for a more formal audience of people who are unknown to the respondent and who she may encounter in a more formal setting. Similarly with eye shadow, respondents indicated that they would wear this at night and only to more formal occasions. Respondents also suggested that often one artefact such as lipstick was the key ingredient or prop which prepared them for the front stage.

Despite the fact that men play such a pivotal role in influencing the societal code of the ritual itself, some respondents discussed how they believed the male audience didn't understand the make-up ritual and the artefacts used.

*... my husband thinks I am going to die with all the poisons going on my*

*skin, and I have tried to explain to him that I am not blocking off my skin because I don't wear foundation, he doesn't understand that some women wear foundation every single day of their lives and you would never ever see their skin because they wear foundation. (Female 39)*

Finally, all respondents believed that emotion influenced the appearance presented and often make-up would be used as a mask if women were feeling vulnerable or teary and did not want to draw attention to themselves. Alternatively, if women were feeling happy and confident and they did not wear make-up, it was because they were more ready to tackle comments from their immediate audience indicating that they were, or were not, conforming to society's code.

*But for me it depends, like some days you feel stronger in yourself than you do others and you can say well stuff the world, you know I don't care what I look like today this is how it is, but if you are vulnerable and teary and everything you don't want anyone to say, "god look at your face", and you stay crying, so yeah, its also a lot to do with emotions I think too. (Female 37)*

### 6.3 TRANSFORMATION

Van Gennep (1960) argues that during major phases of life transition consumers undergo a period of liminality where individuals divest their old identity and prepare to metamorphose into a new one. Noble and Walker (1997) describe this liminal state as "the instability, ambiguity, and suspended identity that can occur in the transition from one significant role to another" (p90). In this context, results from this study suggests that make-up represents an inexpensive and non-permanent means by which women can try on a new image and test the response to it by society. It offers a quick retreat should

the new image not meet with approval or be congruent with the image the individual is trying to create, unlike more permanent plastic surgery procedures (Schouten, 1991).

In this regard, it appears that make-up is an important vehicle in this liminal stage of the transformation process (Van Gennep 1960; Noble & Walker 1997). The new image is either accepted or rejected for another. Once accepted, the transformation is adopted and complete. This may occur quickly or even take years.

These issues of liminality were very evident when respondents spoke of how they would closet themselves away, experimenting alone and in secret, as they tried on different selves. In this liminal stage they would use make-up to transform themselves and their faces into an image that reflected the self they wanted to present to the world as representing themselves.

There is mastery involved in the transformation process and a perceived risk of failure in undertaking the process. The result may transform the individual into an undesired appearance, hence, to minimise this risk, they would experiment with the outcome in private until the result resembled an outcome with which they were comfortable. For example, one respondent discussed using lip liner and how she would never use this in public because she had not mastered the use of this artefact or accepted the make-up outcome it created.

*I am not very good at it and I could end up with odd shaped lips. (Female 34)*

*I would have tried out in secret using my sister's make-up I think, it wouldn't have been when she was around. (Female, 34)*

This identity construction process is also a result of how others consume their appearance and, hence, women would alter their image accordingly. For instance, one respondent had a friend who was a make-up artist and, when her friend would do her

make-up in the way that she thought would suit her, the first impression by the participant of her image as her friend perceived her to look, was not at first accepted. She consequently experimented and adapted it until she gradually adopted the new self that was first presented. The respondent indicated that it took some time to accept the new appearance and that she had to convince herself that it was right. In this way, the individual must undergo a liminal phase before the transformation is complete and a new appearance of self is accepted as being representative of them.

*Janet taught me how to put on a face so I have stuck to doing it because when she first taught me I thought, well I need make-up now, I am much older and I can't get away without it. I practice regularly, and because of the choice of colours and things I have to work through them all to try them. Normally I disagree with everything Janet does, and I have to start with a compromise and then gradually realise what she did was absolutely totally right, but I didn't like all of it anyway so I didn't do it. (Female 58)*

*I remember being carted off to Manchester to get make-up lessons. God I looked like an absolute painted doll, and I thought this is horrible having this, so I didn't bother at all, and I went back to the mascara and the pale lipstick, much to my mother's horror. (Female 57)*

Women will be critical of themselves if their make-up outcome is not congruent with the appearance they perceive reflects who they are. In another example, one respondent discussed how she had photographed herself going out somewhere special and had dressed up and applied foundation to her skin. On looking at the photos, she felt that her skin did not look 'natural' and that her image was not a true reflection of herself because of all the 'white stuff' on her face.

*I am sort of not keen on it either, its too, I don't know, it makes you look white or something doesn't it, usually I don't wear any base make-up, like look at the difference you know. (Female 41)*

**Figure 6.3: Respondent did not recognise image as self with foundation on removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Another respondent discussed how she would transform herself daily and rationalised why she felt this to be important.

*Yes the puffy face, the hair that looked like I had been pulled through the sheets backwards, and I think that is when I probably began to realise that even if I was staying at home, which I did for a long time, I still needed to do that for myself so that when I did duck down the shop, when someone did pop in, I had that little confidence boost of knowing that I didn't look as haggard as I felt inside. (Female 37)*

The transformation that women believed make-up brought to their face was considered essential for many to function normally and undergo their daily activities. One respondent highlights the importance of full make-up and in particular eyeliner as follows:

*My eyes look sick without it on... I just don't think they look as bright or something. (Female 25)*

In this instance the respondent's desired facial appearance needed to conform to a set look of 'all' or 'nothing', as she felt naked without her make-up shield. Moreover, the transformation was visual and dramatic as illustrated below.

**Figure 6.4: Respondent is transformed with make-up removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

**Figure 6.5: Transformation through make-up removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Once a respondent becomes confident with the transformation that the cosmetics create they tend to stick to them until the next transformation phase. This may come quickly or not at all.

*I have always worn these colours, and because they suit me' (Female, 37)*

Similarly, just as women can achieve a transformation of self through the use of make-up, they can also reach the same result by wearing less or no make-up. Whenever



the facial appearance is in contrast to the norm for that person, either with or without make-up, a new identity can be created when their appearance is altered in this manner.

Identity is created through presentation of the face to the world, and it is a means by which women define themselves and showcase the ideal 'self' they desire. For example, one respondent defined how make-up was an important part of her presentation in defining her individuality when she discussed a picture of someone she perceived as different to her. The picture was of a group of Buddhist monks, who had no make-up at all and shaven heads.

*I thought well they don't wear any make-up, their heads shaved, they have got these saffron robes around you know, and they all look the same, there is no individuality. (Female 57)*

Some would even use make-up in a total transformation to create a new identity for the evening. Using the prop of make-up for fancy dress and novelty evenings, individuals could create new personas to represent parts of themselves.

**Figure 6.6: Respondent uses props to create different identities removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Preferred image

Respondents had a definite perception of which of the images they preferred and which they felt was the most representative of them. Many respondents indicated that

they liked the photos of themselves going out the best because they felt that they looked more glamorous. In conjunction to this, women also indicated that they favoured their workface as they felt this reflected the self they were most comfortable with. Either way, all respondents indicated that they preferred an image of themselves with a certain amount of make-up on, as opposed to pictures of them relaxing at home with no make-up. They felt the make-up assisted them to transform into the image that they perceived was more reflective of them.

One woman spoke of her inability to obtain the desired look of full lips. She felt she could not use red lipstick because this was not congruent with her perception of self. This is also seen in wedding parties where women who are required to wear make-up colours and routines different to their normal outcomes experience great discomfort and often require counselling ( Jenny Long, personal communication, September, 2002).

*I can't stand bright red lipstick and I think on myself, I personally look even uglier than normal. (Female 57)*

Most women indicated that visible face make-up represented to them a mask of confidence. Women would utilise make-up products to minimise perceived flaws they believed their face possessed. For example, they would transform lips with lip liner to make them fuller and bigger as opposed to having collagen injections. A less permanent transformation was preferred.

Interestingly, the transformation of a woman's image often impacted on the enjoyment of the occasion as one respondent describes her feelings at attending a wedding after having her make-up and hair done. She felt transformed into a 'beautiful princess':

*I felt really good and it's the first time I have ever had my make-up and hair done and I really liked what they did. So I felt really good and I was*

*getting heaps of compliments. People kept on coming up and saying “you look beautiful, you look really good, or you look gorgeous” and Brad kept saying it too and just all night they kept coming and I felt wonderful, like a princess or something. (Female 34)*

In this way women transform their appearance in a desire to conform to what society values as beautiful and receive positive reinforcement in the form of compliments to support this behaviour.

Indeed, some women have been wearing visible face make-up for so long it would not feel like their true face if they did not have it on.

*I have been wearing it since I was so young that I don't know any other way not to. (Female 34)*

Other respondents reported finding themselves through a new audience and its acceptance of their transformation.

*I got a lot of confidence back from working in a hotel down south. It was good to interact with people and just having to make a whole new set of friends and become a part of the community and things like that, so I became me as I am now. (Female 34)*

## Transitions

Respondents also suggested that transformation of the self continued to take place with age. Indeed, as they became older, one respondent indicated that it was not the appearance that she considered important but how she felt.

*I think it's just my age, I think you get to a stage where you don't really care or mind how you look it's how you feel, quite different. (Female 48)*

Another respondent discussed how her appearance had changed with age, with a perception that her skin was more sallow and needing extra colour. In this case the respondent transformed herself using make-up to compensate and achieve an appearance of self similar to when she was young. Consequently, she perceived that a lined face was indicative of being tired and, hence, the difference of a better appearance was to have less lines around the eyes.

Respondents reported wearing less make-up as they aged because they could not see as well to apply it any more. Sight and age make it difficult for some women to continue adopting the appearance code, hence the inability of these women to apply make-up as they had done before.

Age influenced various role transitions as well. One participant discussed leaving the security of a group subculture and its related appearance code to establish a new identity as she grew older and realised she had different priorities. In this case her make-up outcomes changed radically from the full Gothic make-up to a more subdued conservative appearance as she redefined who she was and what she stood for in society. When asked why she changed she responded:

*I think maybe because you're more settled within yourself, and you had to have your own style, which was less inclined to be influenced by bands and things, it's just something you grow out of I think. ... .. It's just a transition thing, even though those Gothic bands were still on-going you just decided, you got bored with it. (Female, 34)*

Within society people are expected to look a specific way. Individuals need to change their appearance when they undergo a role transition in order to fit into that role. Make-up was considered an important product which assisted in defining an individual's role in society and the transition from one role to another. For example, one respondent

discussed how, when she was fifteen and working, she would wear foundation because it was an acceptable practice for someone in that role to do.

Similarly, another respondent discussed the role of a mother and how, during this phase of her life, she had different priorities and time pressure than when she was working. Within this role she no longer had time to experiment any more.

*Well I didn't wear it often, didn't have time. (Female, 40)*

The role of the mother and the financial demographic of this group also frequently had limited audiences and outings.

*No, not a lot of time, not a lot of finance, and generally the only time you got out with the kids was when you went shopping or went visiting, then put it on, like that was your real outing in those days. (Female 48)*

Returning to the workforce after being at home for a lengthy period, raising a family was also considered a transitional phase in some women's lives. The importance of make-up is highlighted by a woman who describes how she felt when getting ready for work:

*Good, um like it's the old self coming back yeah, like being away doing something else but now sort of coming back to your home body and you are doing what you like you to do, and you are enjoying getting dressed up and preparing to get out there. (Female 48)*

Another woman talked of her need to reclaim her old identity and normality post-illness. After a long bout of post natal depression make-up was used to lift her mood and transform her persona.

*Sometimes I would be feeling really down but I would get up early and I would think right I have got to make an effort, so I would put lots of make-up on to give me a lift. I could still be down but I would do make-up to give*

*me a lift and other times I couldn't be bothered... (Female 39)*

Included in this concept of role transition is that of the transformation from mother to woman going out. Participants discussed this role change and transformation as significant because it was often so drastic, moving from an appearance that often had no make-up and was not considered sexually alluring to that of provocative female with the possibility of sexual connotations attached.

### Knowledge

Some respondents suggested that they would change their make-up routines due to knowledge. For example, one respondent talked of how she had a colour consultant advise her on her colour toning and since then her make-up changed to reflect this. She believed this lifted her face and transformed her in ways that made her skin look healthier and clearer and hence younger and more attractive.

*I went to have my colours done, and found out all the oranges and the greens that I love didn't really suit me. They said I had cool colours. It's actually amazing how it just enhances your face even with just lipstick on if you have got the right colour, I can actually see if I put an orange lipstick on that my skin goes sallow. (Female, 58)*

Several other respondents also discussed the benefits they felt that they derived from having their colours done and the positive effect this had on their skin toning and make-up usage.

*I have had my colours done, and I now see the logic of colours and why one chooses the wrong colour sometimes, because it makes you blend into the walls, if you wear the right colours, as you know, one stands out a bit, which one doesn't always feel like doing, but it does compliment your skin*

*tones, it makes you look sort of brighter rather than knackered, so I do try not to wear the brown lipsticks which I like. (Female 51)*

In this way these respondents learned information about colours and the impacts they had on their skin. As they perceived that this information helped them to transform into what society valued, it was used in the creation of their daily facial presentation.

In addition, increased awareness of the damaging effects of the sun on the face was very evident among women interviewed. Improved education has changed the products and cosmetics available today, with UV protection considered an essential attribute for many respondents to avoid the dryness, wrinkles and early aging effects of the sun. The appearance that society values as healthy and beautiful is changing with continual social marketing messages. Consequently, it is now considered more attractive to have a fair facial complexion rather than the dark bronzed images represented by the previous mass media images.

### 6.3.2 Rites of passage

Results also provided evidence that make-up serves as a rite of passage (Noble & Walker, 1997) within Western Australian society. Such transformations mark major identity reconstructions and it is noteworthy to see an everyday product such as make-up playing such a major role in these significant life changes.

#### Womanhood

The first and most evident rite of passage was the transition from adolescence to womanhood. In remembering the very first time that she wore make-up, one respondent reflects on the transformation this product made in her evolution from innocent child to young woman.

*I was twelve and I was going off to my school social, and I put green eye shadow on my upper lids, and probably a bit of mascara and a little lipstick, I felt very grown up. (Female 40)*

This woman also talked about how she learnt the ritual of applying make-up at a young age from her older siblings, and how they taught her this ritual as a rite of passage into womanhood. From this point on she felt she needed to master the ritual and would experiment with her peers to define herself within the community.

*I had an older sister,- I had a sister that was ten years older so she was well into it. She was the one that said when I was eleven that I had to shave my under arms and my legs because I was too hairy, and she sat me down and plucked my eye brows and showed me how to put make-up on, so I was very conscious of it from a young age. (Female 40)*

Some respondents also highlighted the importance of red lipstick as the colour of womanhood. This may be related to the sexual implications that earlier literature links with the lips (Etkoff, 1999; Pallington, 1999) and in particular the full red pouting lip.

Another respondent discussed how the importance of lipstick was passed from mother to daughter and how this artefact could be used as an emergency backup to transform one's image if, and when, necessary.

One respondent remembers how a role transition was probably the key for her wearing make-up and how, moving from the schoolyard to the work force despite being only fourteen, gave her a licence to indulge in this behaviour.

*I finished school early and had a job when I was only fourteen, so I would have been wearing make-up then (Female 47).*



Many other women reported that this role transition from childhood to womanhood was a precursor for their use of visible face make-up and that face cosmetics were symbolic of coming of age.

### Perception of Mother

Often women spoke of motherhood and the perception of this role in the society. It would seem that society accepts the image of a 'mother' with no or limited face make-up because this role is perceived as natural and non-sexual in nature. Interestingly, despite sexual allurements being an offshoot of conforming to a valued appearance code, one respondent did indicate how she would not make her face attractive because she was not available sexually. It would seem that this behaviour would link with her perceptions of how a woman should look as a mother.

*I got pregnant when I was nineteen and I had just turned twenty when I had Nathan and then a lot of it seemed irrelevant then the make-up things I probably didn't wear much at all (Female, 34)*

In line with these beliefs many women had a similar view that women undertaking this role did not require large amounts of cosmetics in their daily presentation to the world. In undergoing this transition to the mother persona, it was also often necessary to pass through a liminal phase before accepting the new appearance. One woman discussed how she was unclear about what a new mum should actually look like and found that make-up helped keep her identity intact. Each day in the hospital she would get up and put it on as she passed through this liminal phase into the role of mother.

Transcending into the role of the mother, respondents indicated that childbirth or the birth of a first child was often a stimulant to change or to downgrade their make-up

routine. However, respondents suggested that they still needed their key artefact. As one woman jokingly suggests,

*OK so that's the first thing never feed the baby, put the lipstick on first, the baby is screaming just got to get the lip liner on right (Female 34)*

In reality, the make-up ritual takes a secondary role to a new born child. However, women still desire to return to their ritual of make-up because of their need to consume an appearance that is valued in society. How women consume their appearance in their daily lives and its signification shall now be addressed.

### Consumption of appearance

Beauty was considered to be more than a mask by many women. The importance of facial bone structure and clear skin was considered the basis by many for what they perceived as beauty. Most women agreed that a clear skin was a real benefit and one of the central elements they felt that they needed to achieve in their quest to normalise their facial appearance.

*I don't wear any foundation at all, very rarely maybe once a year if I am lucky, I have been lucky with my skin. (Female 39)*

Another respondent, who also indicated that good, clear skin was a sign of beauty, included neatness and a sense of orderliness as well. She believed that make-up provided a sense of completeness for the desired appearance for the individual. It added the final touch for how they wish to be visualised by others.

Additionally, the significance of foundation lies in its ability to create an evenness of complexion so those women, without the inherent clear skin of others, can still gain the communication qualities that this attribute signifies. For example, respondents mentioned how they felt the complexion of their skin post childbirth may

have looked sallow and they would compensate for this by wearing more make-up and in particular foundation to hide these unwanted effects.

One middle aged woman felt that she looked older without make-up and her perception was that a little colour helped one look younger. This is consistent with findings from the initial semiotic analyses where the image of beauty is anti-aging and that a wrinkled and withered skin is not considered as beautiful, healthy or successful.

In many aspects, what many women considered beautiful also included an element of symmetry in the face. As one respondent described her impression of the projective stimuli (Appendix 2, plate 3), she identified the factors that signify beauty to her and compared her own image with them.

*Well her face is all proportionate rather perfect, she's got her make-up done perfectly, she's young, she's beautiful, she's all the things that I am not any more. (Female 40)*

Another participant indicated that she would make-up her face to draw attention to the face and away from other perceived faults in her body appearance, such as her larger size or short legs. In this way some respondents felt they could draw attention to their good features. Another used an attention grabbing statement on the face to hide other body inadequacies.

One woman described how she believed that her fair features needed definition because otherwise she felt her face looked flat and all one colour, making it impossible to distinguish her facial features. Others believed that their lips were the focal point of their face and would tend to always wear lipstick. Another respondent indicated that gloss, or even Vaseline, would be used when no colour was available just to keep the lips shiny.

Women discussed how their make-up routine may have changed over the years as their consumption of their own appearance fluctuated through various life transitions. As they aged they would tend to wear less eye make-up and more natural colours that blended with their eye colour more closely, as opposed to bright colours that would stand out.

*... they are more earthy colours to blend in with your eye colour and they just look a little bit, like you don't look like a clown, you know like bright eye shadow and stuff. (Female 34)*

Women undertook different make-up behaviours in order to gain different outcomes in the consumption of their own appearance. For example, one woman used make-up to distinguish herself from her twin sister and hence create an individual identity for herself. In contrast, another felt that she gained a certain amount of anonymity from the make-up she wore in her role as a customs official.

Almost all respondents discussed someone they knew who 'plastered' the make-up on. Interestingly, they would describe themselves as being different to these individuals despite the fact that many of the women would wear large amounts of make-up. In their comparison with these friends, it was not considered too much or over done. Once again the consumption of their own appearance was gauged in accordance with the behaviours of others in the community.

### Impact of parents on appearance

As highlighted in various sections throughout this chapter, parental influence had a significant impact on how these women consumed their appearance. Respondents often spoke of how their parents would drill them in the correct grooming procedure and how they should present to the world. For example,

*...as a child it was always drummed into me that even if you are going down to the shop you make yourself look presentable, you don't go down to the shop in your slippers and your torn pants and stuff that was just my upbringing you know. (Female 37)*

Similarly, another respondent remembered how beautiful her mother was and how she tried to mimic her make-up routine to achieve the same outcome.

*My mother is a very beautiful woman and she just wore a bit of eye liner, a little bit of mascara, and some blush when she went out. She had beautiful skin, it is very attractive and I try to look like her, don't know if it works but anyway...(Female, 39)*

Another respondent compares her routine with her mother's and comments on how her mother would rather be late than present without her front stage image. In this way she demonstrated a need to consume her appearance in a set and standardised way, a consumption pattern that has had significant impact on her daughter and her make-up routine to this day.

Respondent: *TI grew up with a mother who never went out of the house without lipstick on.*

Interviewer: *Do you think you are the same now that you won't go out of the house without your lipstick on?*

Respondent: *I mean yeah probably, well I just feel better with it on, but mum would have all her make-up on and she wouldn't go anywhere without doing a routine, and I am not like that, I will throw some lipstick on or some lip gloss and go out, but she wouldn't do that, she would have to be all done up and her hair done perfectly. Yeah, she was always making everybody late because we*

*would all be waiting around, dad would be out in the car just about tooting the horn, and she would still be inside finishing her face off. (Female 48)*

## 6.5 SIGNIFICATION

When respondents were asked what visible face make-up signified to them, all participants indicated that in some way it helped them achieve increased self-esteem and self-confidence as described in previous sections of this chapter. Many women described how they would feel naked without facial cosmetics, because their face and appearance would not represent the self they wanted to portray to the public. Indeed, some women believed that an image of themselves without make-up did not fit the role they were undertaking and, hence, they displayed great discomfort at the idea of going without. Women commented on how they would feel vulnerable without make-up. They had a need for the mask-like characteristics it provided to feel dressed and 'nice'. They also perceived that they looked tired without make-up.

*I just feel like me, I just feel that its me and I feel that if I don't have make-up on I don't really want to look at anyone, ... I feel ugly. (Female 34)*

Many women believed that a lot of make-up was a sign of an artificial look. They linked large amounts of facial cosmetics, including foundation, eye make-up, blusher and lipstick, with the perception of something false and plastic, with this connotation being extended to the individual.

To really capture the image of beauty it seems that there needs to be a link between one's appearance and health, and many identified the importance of a clear perfect in skin as an important indicator of this. This is implied below where one respondent discusses her feelings towards the projective stimuli (Appendix 2, plate 3).

Respondent: *Yes I suppose she is beautiful but she looks healthy ... ..she has got lovely teeth obviously capped and all the rest but you know she looks healthy.*

Interviewer: *What is it that makes her look healthy, any ideas?*

Respondent: *Could be her eyes, nice teeth, clear skin. (Female, 53)*

As discussed previously, the elaborate extended ritual of make-up was considered as a mark of femininity and symbolic of being a girl. Indeed, in today's society, make-up is perceived as being part of the image of beauty for women.

The projective stimuli includes a range of appearances, from the images that signified beauty to pictures of shock and subculture trends (Appendix 2, plates1-8). Most respondents felt the use of dark colours and the down-turned mouth in the make-up routine in these pictures was representative of 'horror' (Appendix 2, plate 2 & 8). They felt a sense of danger from viewing the individual in the picture, like a snarling dog warning not to approach. They felt it conveyed negative messages. Universally, all respondents felt that this unsmiling face signified an unwelcoming and unfriendly individual, and believed that the face represented the receptiveness of the individual to others as indicated by one woman's description of the projective stimuli:

*The downness of the mouth, the darkness around the eyes, and this I suppose its supposed to be like a vein,.... Oh yeah they are definitely dark, I mean I don't have any lipstick that is that colour,...yeah, no I don't like that at all, its awful. (Female 34)*

Another common response to these projective stimuli was that the face needed to reflect an identity and heavy Gothic make-up or garish antisocial facial adornments were considered a mask to hide behind. One respondent even believed it was analogous with the veils that Muslim women wear to conceal their identity. Indeed, many of the women interviewed felt that there was a rejection by mainstream society to heavily pierced

facial adornments because of the negative and fearful connotations attached to it by society.

Furthermore, the sign of a shaven head also had negative connotations for some:  
*... whether its just me over reacting to a shaven head or whether you can ever envisage seeing one of your children with a shaven head and understand what I am saying I don't know, but it's the connotation because it's either a prison thing, or it's a terminal illness cancer thing. (Female 58)*

Additionally, the Mendhi depicted on the picture in plate 5 (Appendix 2) was also considered only acceptable when attached to the Indian culture. When it was merged with a Western appearance, as in this example, it was considered out of place.

As such, all these stimuli represented a departure from the main-stream appearance code that society values and considers to be normal. The reason respondents rejected these images as representing the type of people who they would be keen to model or communicate with, is because of their digression from the accepted appearance code of Western society. By not being congruent with this code, these individuals are signifying other messages that are often received less favourably by the community.

### Facial features in communication

Many respondents described the importance of facial features in the communication process. Eyes were considered the 'window to the soul' and for some they reflected a person's character. Another suggested that eyes were an indicator of one's personality, whilst others spoke of the importance of the mouth and lips when attending a conversation.

*You know you focus on your eyes, because you look into peoples' eyes*



*when you talk to them, and when they are speaking to you, you look at their lips. (Female 47)*

A theme that emerged from the interviews was that people were drawn to the part of the face they were not comfortable with in themselves as they compared themselves with others. For example, one woman claimed she always looked at someone's nose after having an earlier rhinoplasty; another at someone's moles after having many removed herself; and finally another at someone's eyebrows because she perceived that she had none.

Often women would define beauty and identify perfection in an area that they perceived as inadequate or flawed in themselves. For example, where one might mention lips and another eyes each had a perception of beauty that incorporated that perceived dominant feature.

In considering the above, one respondent implied that she believed that make-up was more important than clothes and would feel confident going anywhere as long as she had mascara on.

*Cause I have got really light eye lashes and I have got little eyes so it makes me look like 'little piggy eyes' when I go out if I don't have anything on at all, so if I wear mascara I will go anywhere, I don't care what I am wearing or anything. (Female 34)*

On the other hand, some respondents discussed the importance of lips in the communication process and felt that it was important to have lipstick upon them.

*I do like to wear lipstick, I see myself as quite plain even though I have got dark hair. I think that lipstick sort of highlights you know, the first thing you see I think when you meet somebody, yeah to look at their lips or their eyes... (Female 34)*

In this way individuals perceived that the face was an intricate communication tool and the make-up upon it a complex sign of one's status, conformity and overall level of standing within the community. This silent language is learned through experience and hence has become a sign within the culture of Western Australia. In particular, the learned experience or indexicality attributed to this sign became apparent in various circumstances throughout the study. These and other analyses under the Peircean framework are discussed next.

## 6.6 PEIRCEAN ANALYSIS

In this section an analysis of the experiential dimension of make-up is presented. It is impossible to present every individual's experience with the sign of make-up so key themes that emerged from the data shall be discussed using Peirce's interpretation of the sign. These will be supported using quotes and experiences from participants to demonstrate the triadic nature of the sign of make-up, similar to other studies that have taken this approach (Grayson & Martinec, 2004).

### 6.6.1 Icon

As discussed in the theoretical framework (chapter 3), the icon is a sign that conveys meaning because of its close resemblance to the object. For example, one's reflection in the mirror is an icon; as it looks exactly the same as the person and is recognisable as a representation of the individual at that given time. In this study participants' photographs are the hypoicons of the sign of make-up because they represent an actual likeness to the object (Hawkes, 1973; Gottdeiner, 1995). However, the study revealed several interesting issues in regard to their true likeness.

Respondents were keen to see the photos of their different make-up encounters but were disappointed when they did not see a great deal of visual difference between the make-up outcomes for the four different settings.

*Well looking at them I don't see that there is any difference, so whether that is the fault of the camera or whatever. In actual fact this one here with nothing on to me now looks better to any of the other ones, although if I looked in the mirror and not at the photographs I would see differently.*

*(Female 53)*

This therefore begs the question of what constitutes a true icon. In this case the respondent felt that the photographs were not iconic of who she was and how she thought she looked. Others also alluded to these issues of iconicity when the photos did not represent the respondents' perception of their own faces. Participants commented on good and bad photos and these were judged on a criterion of similarity to their perceived self. The criterion for judging this, it seems, is linked to how women interpret their appearance and whether or not the photo is considered a true icon. From their point of view, if the photo was bad or showed the woman in a bad light, it was rejected as not being a true icon of the self.

One respondent also talked of being in control of the icon. She took an active interest in photography and described how, by being behind the camera, prevented her image being taken and, hence, she felt she had control over what was presented. From an artistic perspective she probably had higher expectations of her image to represent self-set ideals. Unfortunately, when the resulting images fell short of achieving this, she experienced a lack of confidence. The outcome was that she stereotyped herself as a less attractive person and believed that consequently she would be less successful.

*I studied photography at university, ... .. it was always a good excuse*

*because you are in front, you know, you have got the camera no one else is taking photos of you, cause I really hate having my photo taken. I don't have high thoughts of the way I look or anything like that you know.*

*(Female 34)*

The predominantly Christian culture of Western Australia was also influential in how people perceived some of the projective stimuli. In particular, the pictures of the Gothic and the Venus lady (Appendix 2, Plate 2 & 8) were considered to be demonic and representative of a fearful image. One woman felt this because of the symbolism of the colours, the dark eyes and the down-turned face and she linked these images with what her Christian culture perceived as evil. Several women believed that the Venus lady particularly was an icon of a more sinister and evil character.

*Yeah, the veins, the red, it's the dark, it's black and it's everything that embodies evil. (Female 40)*

Additionally, issues of iconicity were apparent when respondents underwent a transformation due to some life transition in which their make-up routine and visible facial appearance changed. During this process it takes time for the individual to recognise and accept the new image as a true reflection of self. In this instance there is confusion because the individual is still learning the sign of the new identity. During this process it is difficult for them to separate the two images and accept one over the other as a true icon of the self. Until the icon of the new make-up outcome is accepted as an authentic icon the respondent stays in a twilight zone of liminality.

Finally, most women believed that their front stage face was an hypoicon of themselves and that people interpreted their face with make-up on as the sign of who they were. For example, one respondent discussed seeing a picture of Pamela Anderson with no make-up on:

*Sometimes in magazines you see Pamela Anderson. It doesn't look like her with no make-up on, and you just think oh my god is that her? (Female 34)*

Women felt the same would be true for them if people saw them without make-up. These issues are discussed further under false signs but, to understand them, one first needs to examine the issues of indexicality and how they impact on women's make-up consumption behaviours.

## 6.6.2 Index

Unlike the icon, the index does not arise from the cultural customs but from some existential and causal connection between two entities (Gottdeiner, 1995 & Mick et al., 1999). An index works on the prior knowledge of the interpretant and the linkage of the two signs to create meaning; for instance, lightening and thunder, or, smoke and fire. The key themes that incorporate these elements of indexicality with regard to make-up are discussed below.

### Health

Findings from this study have indicated that most women believed that having a clear and perfect complexion was a sign of health and beauty. More specifically, having a 'glow' on the skin was an important index of health.

For example, one respondent had a fear of looking pale because of an earlier illness and used cosmetics to obtain this healthy glow, which she equated to being outdoors, fit and able. Because of her learned experiences, she interpreted the colour of a woman's skin as an index of health with the paleness she had once experienced being an index for infirmity.

*I wanted to make sure that I was still not like a white ghost, I had a real*

*thing about looking like a sick ghost sort of thing. I think about that or when people look white and they haven't been out in the sun a lot and they need to go out in the sun, to look healthy, so I put blush on to look healthy. I put a bit on here (she indicates to her cheeks) just to look a bit healthier, perhaps that is what it is, the colour just a healthy colour not like sun burn but healthy colour in the skin...(Female 39)*

The respondent continued to describe this skin tone as a healthy 'glow' to the skin, which she felt, was a sign of one's health. In this way, like many others, she believed from learned experiences that skin complexion and tone were indexical of health.

Other respondents also spoke of how they perceived what they termed 'colour' in their skin as signifying health.

*... it's just that she does have some colour in her skin I think, whereas mine is very pale so I think I need to enhance it. (Female 58)*

Another respondent concurred that colour is an index for health.

*I don't necessarily need eye mascara, because my eyes look fine when they are not made up but my lips are very pale and so is my skin so a bit of colour. (Female 37)*

Women felt the colour of a woman's skin needs to reflect health. To do this they believed that they should look slightly tanned (sun touched, but not brown), or if adopting the pale translucent look, they needed to have 'glow'. They also described the fine, but quite distinguishable line, between what they termed 'glow' and the popular pale ethereal look, versus, the pasty pale skin hue derived from no sunshine. The key ingredient they believed was 'glow' or illuminosity for this is what makes the pale image still appear healthy.

Consequently, in some cases a clear pale skin with these elements of illuminosity was also often considered an index of beauty because of the interpretants' learned understanding of its link with youth, purity, innocence and health.

The indexicality of a perfect skin is also demonstrated in respondents' learned experiences that certain precipitating factors influence complexion. For example, it was suggested that lots of chocolate or greasy food tended to cause blemishes. Almost all respondents discussed the importance of skin in their make-up routines and the need for an even, not blotchy, appearance. This was a learned index of health and beauty for many.

Respondents also commented on how their partners would demonstrate jealous behaviour if they perceived that they were too dressed up or looked too alluring. This included the aspect of wearing full-face make-up to provide an even and flawless complexion.

Another index of health was perfect white teeth. Several respondents spoke of how they would wear red lipstick to help highlight the teeth to make them look whiter and hence healthier.

Red lipstick, on the other hand, definitely had sexual connotations with the strong colour being used to draw attention to the mouth. Lipstick and lip-liners were used to change the shape of a woman's lips, often making them appear larger and more sensual than they really were. Large, brightly coloured, red lips were considered by some as an index for sexuality. Previous literature would strongly support this (Etkoff, 1999; Pallingston, 1999).

## Age

A further index was the facial lines and wrinkles associated with age. This is a learned response, so that when one sees these signs on the face they are associated with

age and deterioration of youth. Consequently, the sign of make-up was perceived to make women look younger.

Women's inability to apply make-up was also seen as an index for age because of the high visibility of these lines and the older look obtained by wearing little to no make-up. This index is inclusive of the knowledge that individual's sight and age may make it difficult for them to apply make-up as they used to. In addition, the eyes beneath the make-up were also considered by one respondent to be a true index of age.

InterviewerT: *So when you are judging age is that somewhere that you tend to look, under the eyes?*

Respondent: *TI think so yeah, I mean you have a look at this one (Picture of Anna Murdoch) and you can tell. ... .. I mean I have just turned 34 and looking in the mirror and they are going to happen, that is where it happens isn't it around the eyes and I notice every morning there is this big wrinkle right above here. (Female 34)*

Many older women discussed changes in their face with age such as their lips getting thinner.

*As you get older your lips get thinner, as your teeth fall inwards...(Female 47)*

Respondents also believed that there were issues of indexicality related to the artefacts that they used in their make-up rituals. For example, learned experience teaches individuals what artefacts are most appropriate for the time and place, and for the age of the individual wearing them.

*Age and time have caused me to change my make-up routine. I used to wear a lot of eye liner and now I put it on and I just feel I look a bit hard (Female 34)*



The use of make-up in a certain way and manner was also indexical of specific times. For example one respondent used make-up in creating an authentic sixties look with pale lipsticks and large doe eyelashes that society had learned to signify this era.

## Status

Make-up was also considered to be indexical of social class. One woman made a comparison of working behind the console at a petrol station in various suburbs of Perth. Depending on the demographic of the suburb she was working in, she would decide whether to wear make-up or not. More up market suburbs she felt required make-up whilst working blue collar suburbs did not.

*It's a social class thing, a status thing almost. If I worked behind the BP station in Maddington I wouldn't bother as compared to Subiaco. ... Yes it is, it's a social class thing definitely...(Female 40)*

## New index

Indexicality plays an important role in the interpretation of the sign. It is often a learned experience that creates the index and this is also evident with the paternal influence of some women where make-up was linked with being a 'slut'. As discussed earlier in this section, one respondent's father was very strong on when she could wear make-up because of his learned interpretation of it as a sign of sexual promiscuity. Because of this link with sexual availability, many girls were not allowed to wear make-up until they left school and were working. One respondent even indicated that, at seventeen, she was still not allowed to wear make-up because she remained at school. Hence her father still perceived her role as being virginal and prohibited her from wearing make-up because of the sexual implications that he believed this sign conveyed.

*I probably would have got a hiding, yeah, he would have gone off his head*

*what are wearing that for, you must be a slut! (Female 34)*

The interpretation of a sign can change and it is usually through the index that this takes place. Learned experiences help the interpretant to understand a new meaning of the sign. For example, where once a father had been very dogmatic about his daughters wearing make-up because of the sexual connotations he attached to it, he was led to rethink his opinion after his first daughter demonstrated that his interpretation of the sign was inaccurate and that society now had a new understanding of this sign. Therefore, his subsequent daughters were allowed to wear make-up at a younger age because of this learned experience. In this way, the oldest daughter moulded the parents thinking and exposed them to new interpretations of the sign. In doing so, a new index is formed from his learned experiences about the sign of make-up.

Similarly, new indexes are constantly created. A further example is the change in societal views of sun-damaged skin. Because of greater awareness of the damage that the sun can do and the need for skincare, beauty has been redefined as a fairer complexion.

*I don't necessarily find that being brown is attractive and, for me, myself, I actually like being quite pale, a bit different maybe I don't mind it yeah, fair. (Female 47)*

### 6.6.3 Symbol

According to Peirce (1955, p. 115), the symbol component of the sign is the concept, and to create new signs requires thoughts involving concepts. In this way symbols can grow and lead to the development of new signs, which, once created, spread among the culture and expand in meaning with use and experience. As we have seen above, the momentum from new knowledge and experiences creates new indexes

which, in turn, become new concepts and symbols. And so the Borromean knot whirls with index becoming symbol and so forth, merging and changing in constant gyrating perpetual motion creating new signs ad infinitum.

In regard to the symbol of visible face make-up, this study confirms that there are specific laws and rules in make-up application that define the appearance code of society. Foundation goes on the face, mascara on the eyes and lipstick on the lips. The individual needs to adhere strictly to this code, for defects in the code are perceived by society to be even more damning.

*With my skin type I have to be really careful about what I put on because some colours just go bright orange on me, and also why I don't wear lipstick a lot is because it comes off all the time, it doesn't stay on, or if it does come off it comes off on your teeth so I would have to constantly put it on. I also have trouble wearing mascara and eye liner because it smudges even though it's waterproof. (Female 53)*

Many respondents also believed that make-up was mainly confined to use by females in Western Australia. It was considered a behaviour that girls consumed and was symbolic of being feminine

*I suppose being female, being feminine because guys don't often wear make-up. (Female 47)*

In regard to the sign of make-up because of its mask like characteristics, to gain a full picture of this sign there needs to be some discussion about false signs.

### False signs

False signs, where extra linguistic signs deceive others and oneself, are very evident within the study. This deception includes instances where people may mistake

appearance for reality, what Peirce terms deception. Many women perceived that their face without make-up was a false sign, as it did not represent them as they perceived themselves to look. To them, the real image of themselves was one with make-up upon their face.

*I don't know why but I just feel as though I am not, I don't look very good without it, I don't look good at all. ... ..I don't look attractive without make-up on at all, in my opinion anyway, I think putting on make-up makes me feel more attractive, enhances anything I have got, I am not very good on this, because I am not very strong on how I feel I look. (Female 58)*

Furthermore, some women would prefer to miss an event rather than present the non-self as this would not be congruent with how they feel about their appearance. In this way, to present without make-up was like a false icon as the visual representation was not true to the image they perceived to be the real self.

The issue of false signs is an interesting one as far as make-up goes because of the issue of 'what is the true self'? One respondent spoke of how she would never go out any more without make-up and how she perceived her true self to be one with make-up. However the conundrum comes when one questions what is the true self? Is it the image used daily with make-up on? The one she accepts as being a true representation of herself? Or is the true self still underneath? The majority of women in this study believed the true self to be the one they presented to the world and this usually included some form of make-up.

Women were astute at recognising false signs and had the ability to view icons in a realistic and critical way. Several respondents discussed their opinion of the projective stimuli in plate 3 (Appendix 2). This image of youth and beauty was perceived quickly

as not reflecting an authentic sign. Indeed, some women perceived the pictures of themselves as unauthentic icons and associated them with being plastic and artificial.

*Yeah I know but you know yeah I think she is very beautiful but I don't think she would look like that really, you know photos are, she would definitely be at her best there and I think the photo is probably touched up a bit to make her look even better. (Female 34)*

*She's very made up, she's very artificial looking it's just not a look I like and she looks so different because her face is plastered with make-up. When I look at that photo I say well that is artificial and think that without that make-up she would look very ordinary. (Female 53)*

Respondents perceived that the mass media was filled with false signs; numerous pictures did not reflect authenticity. Study participants were aware that images in beauty magazines were false icons and, whilst they would conform to society's appearance code themselves, deep down some had desires to rebel against this by not selecting these images when asked to choose a picture that was similar to or different from themselves.

*I have got this photo from Marie Claire Magazine and there were lots of pictures to choose of beautiful white women and I know that they are air brushing it but they have immaculate beautiful make-up and I just didn't want to pick somebody like that, because that's what society says is the way it should be, and the way we should be. I wanted to pick people that are more natural... (Female 34)*

## 6.7 SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on presenting the findings from phase two of the study and hence highlights the experiential perspective of the sign of make-up. It begins by identifying that the main factor driving women's desire to wear make-up is the need to adhere to a societal appearance code. It discusses this code and the benefits that women derive from adopting it: such as; status, power, sexual allurement and increased self-esteem.

The chapter proceeds to discuss the factors influencing this appearance code and women's consumption of it. The pull of looking like their mothers, sisters, role models or significant others and the influence of fathers are all identified as playing an important role in how women are socialised to the code. In addition, different settings, special occasions, stereotyping and societal roles are also highlighted as being important in interpreting the appearance code of make-up.

The impact of youth, subcultures, group belonging and experimentation is discussed with reference to make-up routines used by respondents. Other issues including demographic and cultural origins, facial adornments, sun damage, financial drivers and compliments all meld to create the individual's interpretation of the appearance code and how they conform or rebel against it accordingly. Three major themes emerged under this section of the appearance code. They were: power, self-esteem / sexual allurement and the self.

An analysis of visible face make-up under the context of ritual as proposed by Rook (1985) is also provided. This analysis examines aspects of the ritual artefact, the ritual script, the performance role, and the audience in relation to cosmetics and their consumption. It offers evidence to suggest that make-up be considered an extremely ritualistic behaviour rich in myth and tradition.

A discussion of make-up and its use as a transformational agent is also presented. Rites of passage, such as the transition to womanhood, are addressed along with a multitude of other life and role transitions. It is proposed that make-up is a liminal product which women consume in the process of such transformations.

Respondents' experiences with make-up are also documented and discussed at length, and these help provide some understanding of how women consume appearance in the context of everyday life.

Finally, the issues of signification are addressed and an analysis of the data under a Peircean framework of icon, index and symbol is presented. In particular, emphasis on the index and the experiential dimensions that this element of the sign represents is highlighted. The importance of indexicality in creating new signs and the impact this has on the sign of make-up are also noted, as are the ramifications of false signs.

# CHAPTER SIX: EXPERIENCING THE SIGN – FINDINGS PHASE TWO

*“Any old barn looks better with a coat of paint”. (Female, 48)*

## 6.1 ADOPTING THE CODE – REFLECTIONS OF SELF IN SOCIETY

This chapter discusses the findings from the second phase of the study and focuses on the experiential aspects of interpreting the sign of make-up. The experiences, histories, beliefs and behaviours of women interviewed and their daily interaction with cosmetics is documented. Once again, under the concepts of phenomenology, the interviews are analysed for emergent themes and bracketed for commonalities. These commonalities are explored under the constructs relevant to this study and outlined earlier in the literature review of this thesis.

Make-up is often considered a fashion item, with colours varying from season to season according to the latest ‘look’ that consumers are striving to replicate. Colour stories designed by fashion designers and make-up artists are readily changed each season and marketed to create new trends and demands in the market place. (D.Baird, personal communication, 18 September, 2001). Fashion itself is a code adopted by a group at a specific time and followed by members of that group in order to fit in with that community and its values (Belk, 1977; McCracken, 1986; Peis, 1998).

Similarly, evidence from this phase of the study indicated a strong theme of the need to conform to societal codes of fashion and customary appearance in order to gain



acceptance, status, recognition and to feel valued by society. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that they would wear make-up for themselves and for reasons of self – esteem. Underlying this universal response, the rationale for this behaviour was always linked to their need to conform to society’s code of appearance and the benefits they derived from doing so. As such, power, sexual allurements and self-esteem were all derivatives of conforming to this appearance code and each of these areas are addressed in this chapter.

The chapter also explores the ritualistic aspects of make-up. A thorough discussion of the ritualistic dimension of make-up is provided utilising the framework of Rook (1985). The ritual artefact, script, role and audience are all examined, as are the special transformational properties of make-up and the impact it has on the self, role identity and rites of passage. In experiencing the sign of make-up, how women consume appearance in everyday life is also considered.

The chapter concludes with a discussion on the signification of make-up and an analysis of the data using Peirce’s semiotic perspective. The icon, index and symbol are examined under this framework and explored with reference to the sign of make-up.

### 6.1.1 Adopting the code of society

In this study the reasons women gave for wearing make-up produced an extremely rich and diverse range of responses. Interestingly, all of these responses could be linked back to the desire of the individual to belong and be accepted within society.

The code itself is defined by the community’s customs and practices of how appearance should look in a certain role or setting. This code is heavily influenced by society’s concepts of beauty and what it values and considers beautiful. Within western society, the concept of beauty is heavily influenced by images portrayed in mass

communication mediums. The images of the perfectly slim, coiffured and made-up women bombard women daily in a conditioning process that makes this the normalised image for women within this culture (Thompson & Hirshman, 1995).

When discussing make-up and desired outcomes, respondents defined what they thought was beautiful. Responses varied, yet a common thread between these ideals were the even flawless skin, a face with high cheekbones, a classic Roman nose, a perfect full lip and clear and well-defined eyes. This links in with earlier work on beauty which found that symmetry of the face played an important part in defining beauty (Corson, 1972).

Women in this study indicated that they derived confidence from conforming to this beauty code of unblemished skin or perfected lips, and that their status and level within society was linked to this appearance. They perceived that others judged them as being of a lower social standing if they did not adhere to this code and, consequently, they would wear make-up and conform in order to gain power, credibility and status within society.

*Because that is how I always look if I am going, you know, somewhere, so that's how I make myself look, so if I put that on then I look normal.*  
(Female 41)

Other respondents discussed how they would critique their own appearance in comparison with societal norms, whilst others indicated that they would wear make-up in order to blend in and camouflage themselves amongst the populace so as not to draw any attention to themselves.

## Father influence

Many respondents discussed how they learnt what this appearance code was, as they experimented with different make-up outcomes, when they were growing up. Interestingly, in many cases, fathers had a strong influence on what they felt a 'nice girl' should look like in regard to wearing make-up. As one respondent reflects:

*My father wouldn't let us wear make-up until we started work. (Female, 58)*

In this case the paternal influence was strong and guided the individual's identity construction by advising on what a 'nice girl' should look like and what make-up should be worn for particular settings or roles. It was the father who influenced how she looked in these roles.

Similarly parental influence was apparent when respondents reflected on their experimental years as they passed through different phases of their lives. Consistently the code of what society revered as normal was progressively programmed into youthful minds. A lesson to be learnt, like so many others in youth.

*When I was young I suppose I went through that mod gothic stage, really heavy in black lipstick or really dark purple lips, and Mum and Dad used to go insane, "you are not going out like that", they would yell,... (Female 32)*

One respondent when reflecting on her use of make-up remembers following an accepted trend in eye-shadow colour and her father questioning her use of it.

*I had green eyes and wore green shadow,... and if you had been taught or told anything they possibly would have said that if you have got blue eyes you wear blue shadow, and if you have got green eyes you wear green, and if you have got brown eyes you wear brown shadow.... I don't know but I think that was the way it worked in those days its going back a while, so I*

*had green shadow, because my father would say, “why are your eyes going mouldy dear?” (Female 55)*

Respondents often reflected on how their fathers would dislike the use of strong or heavy make-up because of the connotations they linked with large amounts of make-up and women with loose morals. Respondents discussed how, as young girls, they experimented with different make-up outcomes, which were either accepted or rejected by their father and others with whom they interacted. In this way, the code of what make-up was appropriate for their age and setting was learnt. Interestingly, the strictness and approach to make-up appears to be influenced by the amount of make-up that their mother used, with fathers whose wife wore more make-up being more lenient and flexible with the amount of make-up that their daughters were allowed to wear.

*...mother was always a bright lipstick person, but she obviously knew the value of make-up because being a singer she had her stage make-up, I loved playing with her grease paint box and everything when I was young that was good fun.... (Female 55)*

### Looking like mothers

Despite rebelling and not wanting to look like their mother, daughters often invariably end up similar to them, for example in the above case where the mother was on the stage and used a lot of make-up. Now the daughter also wears a large amount of make-up despite a long period of rebellion and nonconformity. Indeed, in this instance the respondent felt she needed to create her own identity rather than be compared with her beautiful sisters and did this by rejecting and rebelling against the recommended ‘good taste’ of her mother and society to create her own look.

*I knew I was rebelling against mother, if mother said do something I did*

*the opposite as a matter of principle and even because I didn't like what she chose for me, she chose you know stodgy good taste,...(Female 55)*

Similarly, other cases reported where the mother would always wear her lipstick when she went out of the house and now the daughter follows this practice. This may be because of inherited similar facial features or because of the passing down of ritualised ways, however, it is a very consistent thread across many respondents.

In line with the emphasis on lipstick, eyes rated of equal importance for some, confirming previous data that women tended to be eye-or lip-focussed (qualitative data phase one). For example, in one instance the mother would always wear mascara and not leave the house without it. Today, the daughter is insistent on always wearing eyeliner. In this case the importance of highlighting a special facial feature (eyes) had been seemingly passed down from mother to daughter.

## Sisters

Respondents also reported their initial encounters with make-up and the response it generated from their family members. In one situation, the older daughter moulded parents' thinking about make-up. The parents became more accepting of make-up in society through their first daughter as they realised that the girls were wearing make-up younger and younger. The acceptance also came because they had experienced first hand that the wearing of make-up did not lead to their daughter being labelled as a fast woman or considered unacceptable by society. Consequently, the parents were more relaxed in their attitudes about wearing make-up with their second and subsequent offspring. In this manner they created a new index and formulated new learned experiences about the sign of make-up.

*... my sister was in the car absolutely going bananas because I was wearing make-up, I had lipstick and she was sitting next to me in the car having a huge fight with mum and dad, "how come she is allowed to wear make-up at 13 and I wasn't allowed to wear it until I was 16, its just not fair." (Female, 47)*

## Role models

Respondents also discussed the desire to adapt to society's trends in order to fit in and be part of it. In conforming to these trends, women consumed different make-up products according to what they felt they needed to help them achieve the appearance that was valued by society; eyes with lashes that would give facial definition; eye brows for very fair women; lip liners to even lips; and foundation to provide a clear even complexion. Respondents often adopted a look of a role model such as Audrey Hepburn, or other images depicted in mass communication that were revered as fitting society's concept of beauty. (Meyer, 1977; Peiss, 1998,) Alternatively, other people could serve as role models to influence and teach the make-up code to younger girls. According to respondents, women such as big sisters, work colleagues and peers all served to influence make-up outcomes of young women learning the code.

*I probably became a lot more aware of how I dressed and because you have role models in the office, people that you know wear make-up that look good, that dress well, that are confident and successful you tend to try and mimic them... (Female 40)*

In this way the people in the respondent's immediate sphere of influence shaped their make-up outcomes and guided them to what the make-up code was for particular settings, roles and levels in society.

## Different settings

There is an unwritten code of appearance for specific settings and situations. Those that don't conform are judged negatively and considered as either rebelling or of a lower status because they are unaware of the code. As such, respondents perceived they were judged by others when they did not follow the code. This applies to when a woman wears no make-up in a formal setting and also when she wears too much in an informal setting.

*I think because if I wear make-up to school I sort of feel that everybody is looking at me going, "oh she thinks she is just it!", you know, "she's got make-up on". And its actually a bit of a relief to not have to go through that routine in the morning,.... (Female, 33)*

## Extra ritual for special occasion

All respondents indicated the need to adjust their make-up according to the setting. The setting shall be discussed in further detail within the ritual section of this chapter, however of particular interest was the need to indulge in extra ritual for special occasions to gain acceptance by the group attending that occasion. Respondents discussed the make-up they would wear to special occasions and were asked how they would feel if they were attending the event without this make-up. Respondents indicated that they would feel vulnerable, lose confidence and find it difficult to cope. It appears that the code of conduct at these special events necessitates the extension of ritual on these occasions and those not conforming are judged harshly by the others.

*I would feel really awkward I think. Yes, terrible! Because I would feel I have made no effort to look nice for such a special occasion, 'cause everybody, well I think most people when they go to weddings go out of*

*their way to look their best, because it's such a special day. Yes I would feel terrible. (Female, 32)*

*It's part of the occasion, you know, you put your nice clothes on , you put your make-up or your nice lipstick or something like that and you look at yourself and think, yep, that looks alright I can go, you know I am happy with that thing, I don't think I am too vain or anything like that , but I just make a bit of an effort so I feel comfortable the way I look when I go out, I would feel uncomfortable if I had to go out without anything. (Female, 34)*

A common response from women interviewed when asked how they would feel about attending a special event without their make-up on was similar to the one that follows:

*People would think I was a commoner, like, "what are you doing here like that", you know, that the event wasn't important to me in order to get dressed. If I went with my husband it wouldn't be good enough for him either because you know he would expect a certain standard of grooming as well, it would be like going out without a shower. (Female 48)*

As such, women gain confidence from wearing an appearance that conforms to societal code. Some respondents indicated that although the make-up code on these special events was only useful for entrance purposes and for creating a good first impression it was still considered important to gain confidence and to fit in with the setting. For example, in one situation one respondent highlighted the need to use humour and personality to compensate for her lack of code adherence as she tried to convert the audience from total strangers to more intimate acquaintances in order to feel more at ease.



Another felt she would be considered not normal if she did not wear any make-up to a formal event. Women indicated that they would wear make-up because it was expected of them. Just like a code of conduct, there were unwritten rules about its use.

*...I think probably the reason that we wear make-up is because everybody else does, its just society and its just like getting married, you do it because it is sort of expected or its part of life; plus it makes you feel better I think, you feel good. I can't really remember when I stopped not wearing and started wearing it (make-up) but it was graduated I suppose from being sneaky and wearing the eye liner and mascara to school to then being allowed to do it because I worked. (Female, 32)*

## Stereotyping

Society judges those not conforming to the appearance code and associates negative attributes to the individual for not adopting the code appropriate to the setting. For example, a sloppy look of no make-up and unkempt hair in an interview setting was perceived to indicate that the individual may do a sloppy job.

*She hasn't gone to the effort of preparing herself completely for this, she is not taking it seriously. Yes, so she hasn't put the effort in here, would she put the effort in for the job? (Female, 57)*

In adopting the code it was considered by many that the 'total package' was important in order to be viewed favourably within society. Others commented on how appearance was 'the total package of hair make-up and clothes' and if one bit was misplaced, they would feel all wrong. Make-up was considered a key ingredient in creating the self that was presented to the world.

*...because it really is a package thing, make-up, hair, accessories and what*

*you're wearing, and its all part of the package, I mean , I feel you might have one bit right but to add that to all the rest that you might not be happy with and you feel all wrong. (Female 32)*

### Societal roles

Often women would conform to the code set by the practicalities of the profession. For example, one respondent who was a chicken farmer discussed how the duties of the job required them all to shower on and shower off for quarantine reasons. Consequently, the use of make-up in this role was considered pointless.

A travel agent suggested that everyone in her industry had subtle make-up and it was considered the make-up code for the role. Similarly, flight attendants were expected to wear make-up around the clock and look impeccable whether on or off duty. Consistently, women reported that they felt front line roles demanded presentation that adhered to well-groomed and professional appearance codes. Indeed, a code for make-up based on profession was very apparent and noted by all respondents:

*... with the Australian sun a lot of people tend to have a healthy glow so I don't think that would have been a major issue its just if you had looked like you need a little bit of help then work expected you to have some. (Female, 34)*

### Country verses city

There are also different codes depending on geographical location. For example, different codes exist for the city and the country, with the latter being much less formal and more relaxed in its approach.

*When I lived in Geraldton I never used to bother that much about make-up, for some reason it didn't seem as necessary to put a whole lot on,... it*

*wasn't expected, - no matter where you went. (Female, 40)*

Many respondents who had lived in regional Australia commented on how they would wear little, to no, make-up in these rural locations. They also felt the need to apply more make-up when visiting or moving to metropolitan Perth as they perceived the dress code for the city to be much more formal.

### Subcultures and experimentation in youth

Respondents also discussed and recognised that those wearing outlandish or nonconformist looks as depicted in the projective technique picture prompts (Appendix 2, Plate 2 and 8) were in fact demonstrating a need to belong to a certain group that had its own code. Despite being a minority group, these appearance codes, and the need to follow them, was often even stronger within the subcultures in order to gain the belonging and identity that was associated with them. One respondent describes how adopting the make-up code of a specific minority group was a sign for what the group stood for and its lifestyle. She felt beautiful when she had her Gothic make-up on and defined her identity by painting her face in this way.

*Oh that was more to do with the people I was hanging around with and what we used to do on the weekends. We were like heavily into music and just going out to nightclubs I suppose, anything but studying... Yeah, not just a statement but maybe to describe what I was into, what sort of music I was into, my favourite singer was Suzie Sue from Suzie and the Band, like she's a Goth, Goth girl and she did the eye make-up so I sort of looked up to her, I thought she was beautiful... (Female 32)*

Conversely, when shown the projective pictures that the Gothic look presented, some respondents felt that the individual depicted did this so they could stand out in a

crowd and they had adopted an image not readily accepted within society's norms because they were not confident with themselves.

Either way, Society judges by appearance and adherence to what is considered normal, as indicated by two women who worked in Customs. They stated that they were more likely to question and delay those not conforming. When asked how they would approach individuals depicted within the photo plates such as the Gothic and Venetian lady (Appendix 2, plate 2 and 8), their comments indicated that they were more likely to stop those not fitting into the customary appearance of society.

*Coming through customs hall. Yeah, you would look twice at it, yeah think we should frisk him. (Female 34)*

People not conforming to the make-up code are therefore more likely to be judged negatively and scrutinised by the rest of society.

Whilst it was considered acceptable for the young to experiment and try different looks, which often may be outlandish and not in line with main stream appearance norms, this did not extend to older individuals. If an older woman tried to mimic this experimentation they were quickly scorned, as this was considered unacceptable within the framework of society.

*... you wouldn't be doing that once you got over 50 or something would you? You would be looking pretty, you know. (Female 34)*

### Mature women

Most respondents believed that there was an accepted code for mature and older women wearing make-up. They considered that it could be an effective mask when applied with mastery, however, if the woman had strong flaws such as poor skin or

wrinkles, these could be made to stand out or look even worse when trying to hide them with lots of make-up.

*Because I think your skin goes dry and you get wrinkles and your eyes change as we.., I just think the more make-up you put on when you are older the older you look. (Female 32)*

Too much make-up in the elderly was viewed by some respondents as a mask indicating the individual was not confident with themselves. It was felt that make-up should be age-defying but stay within the code of being subtle, understated and non-alluring in the elderly. There was a fine line between looking younger naturally and looking young artificially.

The enigma of age and too much make-up is that old women look older and young girls look younger when it is applied too heavily or not with the correct technique.

*... I think as a young person you look younger because it looks like you are totally inexperienced and it looks really awful, and I think as an older person sometimes it indicates that you can't actually see so your eye sight is going, so you can't see. (Female, 50)*

In this example, it was considered that too much make-up in the young resulted from too little experience and mastery. Such code violations could be tolerated and, no doubt, would change with time. Too much make-up in the elderly, however, was met with greater disapproval because it was felt that, at this stage in their life, they should know the code and, by not following it, were demonstrating either, great rebellion and lack of care for society's values, or degenerative abilities which limited their capacity to perform the task properly.

Respondents also discussed how, when they were younger, they may have tried new trends such as the Mendhi depicted in the projective technique photos but, now that they were older, they would not dream of attempting this. This is because they felt that, unlike their youthful counterparts, it was considered unacceptable for older women to experiment with such things. To do so would incur the risk of negative societal labels such as ‘mutton dressed up as lamb’. It appears that society has extremely strict conservative codes of make-up for older women. The following table summarises society’s different approach to excessive make-up in relation to age.

**Table 6.1: Society’s Approach to Make-up Use**

	<b>Young</b>	<b>Old</b>
<b>Lots of make-up</b>	Look tarty	Look even older
<b>Experimentation</b>	OK to experiment	Need to age gracefully, look is conservative. It is not OK to experiment.

### Different cultures

It was considered to be acceptable for people belonging to a different culture not to wear make-up. For example, African women were considered beautiful within their own right without the need to wear make-up. It was perceived that their facial features were well defined and did not need make-up to enhance them. To this end some respondents felt that commercial make-up was more a Caucasian product than one for other cultures. This may be because these women are not being compared to the idealised beauty images perpetuated in the mass media daily (Ashmore et al., 1996). These women were considered beautiful, and their beauty measured in a different manner to that of the Caucasian women living in a Western society.

In line with this, different facial adornment is considered appropriate for each culture. Respondents indicated that Mendhi was considered acceptable for Indian women but not for Western Caucasian women as it was not considered coherent to our code of appearance. Comments about the projective pictures of women wearing Mendhi included the following:

*I don't like those either, I think they are certainly a fashion statement. If she was an Indian I would find that quite accepting because that's what they wear, but I don't see that as being beautiful personally, it's artistic but its not beautiful. (Female 40)*

#### Other facial adornments

As fashion changes within the community, different statements are accepted or rejected. Just as Gothic looks were once considered outrageous, these have been replaced with a series of body piercing and adornments. One respondent reflects:

*Everyone goes through that rebellion stage, you have groups of people that look different, whereas today it's more to do with piercings and things like that to differentiate groups, so its more extreme I guess today than it was then. (Female 32)*

Most women can also make the link between tribal and subcultural trends as depicted within the projective photo plates (Appendix 2).

*It's a way of expressing their personality again I think and to try and be a little confronting, you know shock someone, shock the oldies something like that, where as its just make-up and its no more drastic than say the tribal one really and we found that quite accepting straight away because it was obvious what it was. (Female 34)*

Socioenvironmental influences can impact on make-up use. For example, one respondent reported how she lived above a tattoo shop and after observing the practice agreed to have her ears tattooed. She liked the environment so adapted her appearance to feel part of that community. Interestingly, despite not conforming herself to a mainstream code, this respondent rejected alternative unconforming codes such as depicted in the projective stimuli.

*Because it looks silly like you are going to a fancy dress or something.*

*(Female, 41)*

### Sun damage

Recently there has been a change in cultural perceptions of facial skin colour through education. Women discussed how brown used to be considered healthy-looking and now white skin was accepted as a more sensible image. Through more awareness of damage from the sun and the need for skin care, the normalised image of beauty and what was considered a healthy look was changing. With this change a whole new range of cosmetics packed with sun filters and UV protection agents were developed.

*I think I have got good skin considering the abuse I put it through when I was younger, I was always toasting, I used to get so burnt that I used to have to come home and slather tomatoes over my face and everywhere to take the sting out of the sun burn. ...Now I don't find being brown all that attractive and for me myself I actually like being quite pale, a bit different maybe I don't mind it yeah, fair. (Female 47)*



**Figure 6.1: Respondent preferring pale complexion removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

### Financial reasons

The desire to conform to the appearance code was so intense in some cases that it moulded consumption patterns from a young age.

*...Mum and Dad weren't wealthy in any way shape or form, so it wasn't just a luxury of having a draw full, but I did work when I was 13 at the Squash Centre so I did have a little bit of money of my own so I probably spent it on this and that to wear make-up, things like that, even though you weren't really supposed to wear it to school. (Female 34)*

It could be argued that make-up is so entrenched within our culture that young girls, despite disposable income limitations and demographics, will spend their first earned dollars on acquiring cosmetics.

### Compliments

It would seem that many women believed that the perception of appearance in society needed to reflect the self and be congruent with the individual's goals in self identification. The key initial motivator for women in adjusting their image is to be valued in society.

One of the ways that women measure their acceptance or rejection of their fit within society is through compliments from others. Positive compliments would tend to raise the individual's self esteem and reinforce the behaviour adopted. Respondents reported that they would wear make-up to gain compliments from others. In so doing they confirmed that their appearance abided by society's values of beauty and was accepted by the community.

In one case it was very evident how much younger a smile made a respondent look. She discussed how her husband never gave her compliments, so she would often put make-up on her face and go out and get those compliments from others, thereby gaining the reassurance to build her self-esteem. Because her husband would never tell her she looked nice or even comment, she felt compelled to look for them from other people in order to gain acceptance within society.

### Emergent themes

Past studies have indicated that there is a set appearance, particularly for women, that is valued and considered to be beautiful by Western society (Etcoff, 1999; Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Heilman, 1998; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995). Studies have also demonstrated (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; McNeil, 1998; Richins, 1998) that people considered beautiful are more successful and enjoy higher status within the community than those not perceived to be so. Consequently it stands to reason that to adopt the appearance that society values or, at least to strive to, will result in benefits to the individual within that society. Evidence of this was extremely apparent within this study. Despite respondents talking about make-up as a sexual allurements, providing self-esteem, or a product from which they derived power and confidence, on further analysis and questioning these issues could all be linked to the need to conform to society's code.

The following sections of this chapter will discuss these side issues in more detail and provide information that will help the reader understand this link and analogy.

### 6.1.2 Power

Make-up is often described as ‘war paint’ and indeed some respondents in this study believe that, within Western society, it may still serve the same purpose. Whilst the battle ground is not as bloody, the stakes are still high and the most frequent place that this appears to be evident is within the corporate arena. The Executives interviewed could not imagine meeting with clients, or attending an important boardroom meeting, without wearing their make-up. They felt that it provided them with credibility, confidence, and power. Most importantly, it provided a picture that they were in control of the situation.

*I would do my hair and re-apply my lipstick to make myself look more professional and sharper.... Well the reason why I say sharper is because in my area it is very male dominated and at the level that I operate you would have to, I think you need to be well groomed, but still feminine and that is one way I think I demonstrate that....It's like your shield of confidence. (Female, 48)*

Women interviewees claimed that they would use full-face make-up for a business audience or an important meeting. They would readjust their look just prior to important meetings as they felt they needed to look ‘professional and sharper’. The above quote demonstrates the importance one respondent placed in reflecting an appearance of control and capability. She felt that full make-up was an essential component in creating this image. Working in this executive role the respondent felt she

was conforming to the expectations that the role demanded and, in doing so, gained power, control, and status in her daily encounters.

Interviewer: *Is it expected of you to wear make-up in the office environment?*

Respondent: *It isn't relayed verbally or in your contract or anything, it is just an expectation of the position that you hold that you wear, you have to be well groomed, it is part of your whole power position. Yeah, I mean it is an expectation that you will automatically be well groomed. (Female 48)*

Similarly, another respondent, when reflecting back to being a school principal discussed how she would use her appearance and particularly full-face make-up to support her authority and position.

Interviewer: *Did you ever feel that you were power dressing or had power make-up on?*

Respondent: *Oh yes. I was dressing for an occasion that this was my position and I needed to hold that position and I gained authority by the way I looked and presented myself. (Female 52)*

Several respondents discussed power dressing and the need to wear red or dark lipstick colours to key meetings despite the recent trend to more sheer and natural glosses. The significance of the colour and resemblance to markings used by tribal warriors as they went into battle is not lost.

Women often referred to make-up as a vehicle through which they could gain status within the community. It was a simple way that some women used to differentiate themselves from the masses and increase their status within society. They did this by

presenting an image of care and control to the community and thus gained a higher level of status within that community.

*Sort of makes you feel better I think doesn't it, wearing make-up makes you feel more confident, gives you a bit more confidence, so you don't look like the slobs down the road. You know I must admit, I always had a fear that I didn't want to turn into the thongs and shift brigade when I had kids, like some of the others did and I was always determined I was never going to do that. So I probably always made a bit more of an effort. ... .. Yeah, 'tracky' daks or the shift and the thongs, and they have a perm and they have two inches of straight hair and then frizz on the ends or they have dyed hair with two inches of roots showing. (Female 47)*

A strong theme emerging throughout the interviews was that 'to not wear make-up and present a well-groomed image' would lead others to have perceptions that they had 'let themselves go'. The link between 'no care for appearance' and 'lack of any care for other things' was common. Respondents felt that such an image was judged as being 'less intelligent and less intellectually capable', because they could not make the connection between not conforming to society's appearance code and their unkempt appearance being judged as a lack of care or control.

Make-up also was used as a prop by women when they were feeling tired and/or stressed to act as a mask of normality. It was used to signify that the individual was coping, as their appearance remained constant, even if they were not coping.

*... I was still doing a few extra bits that I shouldn't have taken on, so I felt very tired and probably needed to put the make-up on to look half way reasonable, ... (Female 34)*

Such a masking technique is illustrated when women discussed the importance of applying make-up when at home with the children. They did this to help them feel and present an image of togetherness, organised and ready for action, in control of their lives and its activities. A strong theme of make-up being linked to control emerged from many of the transcripts. This was because women felt it helped present a facade of control when this may not be the case for a plethora of reasons such as: no sleep, feeling depressed or vulnerable, crying, personal problems or stress.

### 6.1.3 Sexual allurement and the self

The number of respondents that indicated that they would wear make-up for sexual allurement was extremely limited. However, the benefit of receiving compliments from others and, in particular, the opposite sex did tend to drive the appearance outcome for some women. These women felt that maybe they still did subconsciously wear make-up to attract the opposite sex but it was not something they thought about or did intentionally.

*Your make-up and what you wear is a part of that self that you think that you are, and I don't know whether it's the self that other people think that I am, but you know, its more like I put make-up on for myself. I don't actually believe that I put it on for anybody else or for a man, or to look sexually attractive. No, no, I mean yeah, maybe as a result of that you might feel that you look more attractive or whatever but I always put it, I think I put it on for me. (Female34)*

In this case, as the respondent highlights, sexual attraction may result from conforming to society's code of make-up and the normalised image of beauty. However, the initial motivator is to be valued by society.

Lips and sexual allurement were often linked together. From comments that women made over feeling they needed to make their lips large and pouting, redder or shinier, it became evident that lipstick was a powerful artefact and attaches its rationale and reasons for use. It has been embraced and scorned throughout the centuries and is often linked with great sensuality because of its connotations with the labia. This stems from the fact that anthropologists suggest that women use cosmetics to simulate the body in a state of orgasm (Etkoff 1999; Pallington 1999).

Whilst women interviewed would be unaware of this association claimed by animal behaviourists, and would vehemently deny that this was the reason they wore lipstick or lip gloss, the need to moisturise the lips and the image of moisture on the lips could well be considered to be representative of a more sensual and sexual connotation of the moist labia.

*I don't always wear lipstick you know but I have, I need moisture on my lips so I would usually have on a bit of vaseline, I would have that on yeah.*  
(Female 57)

Women reported that paternal influence played a significant role in make-up use and perceptions of it in their youth. Fathers, it seems, often had the idea that large amounts of make-up were associated with being a slut or of loose moral fibre. The women interviewed claimed that their fathers believed that make-up was a sign of different roles within the community; it was considered acceptable for women to use it if they were working because they were considered to be independent and older. Consequently, they were allowed to be more provocative and indulge in the sexual connotations that the fathers perceived it conveyed. Girls of School age (17) or younger, however, were denied this behaviour because their role was still considered virginal and, hence, fathers denied the sexual implications that make-up may have had.

*If I put make-up on at home I probably would have got a hiding, yeah he would have gone off his head what are you wearing that for, you must be a slut. ...No, no I just knew my Dad, you know I had grown up with him and I knew what he was like and I wouldn't have been allowed to. My mum very rarely wore make-up, my sister did but she was a bit older and was working and that was a bit different, but because I was still at school that certainly wasn't allowed. (Female 34)*

The need to present well was often inherited from their mothers and some older respondents discussed how they would ready their appearance before their spouse arrived home each day. They felt that their partners valued this appearance and felt that they would gain disapproval if they did not conform to this image.

*He liked me to look nice and knew it was for him yeah. (Female 57)*

*I remember Mum always brushing her hair and putting her lipstick on just before Dad would come home, well always just before dinner (Female, 43)*

Women also discussed how at times in their lives make-up had formed an integral part in creating an appearance that was desired by their partners. This would necessitate them moulding themselves into a certain image that that person perceived as how a woman should look, be it demur, provocative or sexy.

Many of these women now wear make-up for themselves as opposed to adapting their appearance for other people. In one instance a woman did this and the man still went off to flirt with other women. He desired her to look a certain way, in this case fashionable and sexy as an extension of himself, just as in Belk's (1988) notion of possessions and the extended self. She was a commodity that signified what he was about.

*... oh yeah, I mean he didn't have any taste it was I suppose a sexual thing,*



*an alcoholic sex maniac I suppose really would sum him up. (Female 57)*

Some women discussed how their confidence decreased as they sexually matured. They felt awkward and clumsy and would use make-up to hide poor complexions or features they felt made them unappealing to the opposite sex.

Respondents claim that the reasons for using make-up would change throughout their lives.

*Well I must admit I always used to wear make-up years ago, I used to think I would wear make-up because it makes you look more attractive and its easier to get blokes you know and this but I have had one, I have got the bloke and I had him 20 years and I am certainly not looking for anyone else, so I sort of realise wearing make-up really is all about me feeling better about myself, my own self and nothing at all to do with him or anything, its how I perceive myself I suppose. (Female 47)*

#### 6.1.4 Self-esteem

Increased self-esteem was the overwhelming reason that women gave for wearing make-up. Issues of self-esteem and the confidence derived from altering their appearance to fit a self they perceived as reflecting who they wanted to be were common. This would reinforce findings from earlier studies (Ogilvie & Ryan, 2002), which indicate that women do not wear make-up (lipstick) as a sexual allurements, but more for their own self-esteem. Similar feelings were reflected by respondents in this study.

*It's just my own personal feeling that I feel I am more attractive with my make-up on but I feel stronger in my self if I know my face looks good... (Female 58)*

One respondent believed it was from undertaking the ritual itself that the feelings of positive self-esteem flow.

*... when I come back after I have had make-up on all day and I think, well you don't look any different than when you had just lipstick and eye brow pencil on so for some reason the actual ritual of putting it on and looking and thinking, oh yes you look nice, makes me feel better.... (Female 58)*

In most cases it was felt that make-up completed the picture in creating the individual's identity. Furthermore, they believed that there needed to be congruence between the perceived self and the portrayed self of an individual and that confidence came from aligning the two. Consequently, despite the paradox of people judging others on their appearance, most women claim that they wear make-up for themselves as opposed to what others think.

Confidence was an attribute that many women sought to gain by the wearing of visible face make-up. Indeed, many respondents felt that this was an important criterion in regard to the amount of face make-up they would use each day. This is because when they feel confident they are less likely to worry about their appearance and are inclined to use less make-up.

*... doesn't really matter how awful you look if you are happy with yourself, if you are happy with yourself it doesn't matter what any body else thinks because you just radiate your confidence, but if you think I look a bugger you can't go into yourself. (Female, 58)*

Make-up is also used as a shield to cover individuals' inferiority complexes and perceived inadequacies. Society's value of beauty dictates that the more beautiful enjoy higher status and are more valued by society (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Ectoff, 1999).

As such, most women are therefore driven to conform to a set appearance code to gain acceptance by the community.

*Because I was brought up with an inferiority complex for reasons various, and I was repeatedly told that I was unattractive and plain and had a knack of making myself look an absolute humbug, and you know, there were two beautiful daughters apart from me and so I thought, okay, so I am the ugly one, and I have never actually got over that one. I feel most of the time, I feel seriously plain and on bad days I feel ugly....I think okay, if you paint something on you can look passable, or you can feel as though you look passable, yeah. I am more likely to feel comfortable having put on half a face at least, it makes a big difference to me, if it's a total mess I feel seriously, you know, rotable... . (Female 57)*

Make-up serves as camouflage for others who wish not to stand out in the crowd and perhaps have a low opinion of themselves. By applying their make-up daily and conforming to the set appearances of Western society they gain confidence by blending into the background and not drawing attention to themselves.

Furthermore, women discussed how they would use face make-up to improve their perception of self. In this process, mood was considered an integral factor of attaining self-confidence and this would impact on the daily ritual of make-up. This is demonstrated in the following quote where one respondent discusses the need for extra make-up on days when they have low self-esteem.

*...on some days regardless of whether you are going out, you make more of an effort because you feel ugly and tackier, but on days when you feel terrific much less it's not required. (Female 58)*

Similar comments from other women interviewed highlight that the reason for wearing visible face make-up was for the positive feedback and improved mood that they would receive from undertaking this behaviour.

*Having my make-up on makes me feel good about myself and if you feel good about yourself then that's what you give off to other people and you get a positive response, but if you feel bad about yourself that's what you give off to other people and you get a negative response. (Female 40)*

Make-up plays an important role in identity construction too. For example, one respondent remembered when she had experimented with many different colours of eye shadow to make a statement about who she was, and what she wanted to be, in an effort to establish her identity. From this process she derived increased self-esteem as she gave voice to her own interpretation of beauty.

*During the eighties I had a lot more eye shadows on at once and I had a purple and a green and a flowery shirt that was purple, green and pink so my eye shadow reflected my shirt and they were bright. All different colours together like the green and the purple and the pink like a peacock. ... I laugh now, but I loved it then and I just thought that I was just gorgeous... (Female 34)*

Similarly, women would discuss the need to regain their identity after childbirth by reapplying their make-up. Through this process they were able to achieve a sense of control and confidence by returning to an identity with which they were comfortable. Achieving this familiar appearance was like some self-fulfilling prophecy, where individuals believed that, if they looked confident and in control, then the attributes of this state would actualise.

Respondent: ... *how I looked didn't worry me in hospital but when I got home with my son I started putting it on, because it made me feel better.*

Interviewer: *And how did it do that?*

Respondent: *Just made me feel like me, like I looked attractive so I felt more confident with life you know. (Female 33)*

Many women who talked of using make-up in their younger years to gain confidence now felt comfortable being put in a strange social situation with no make-up at all in the belief that they had the skills to ride it out on personality alone. This contrasts to when they were younger and they would never have been able to accomplish this task. These women now believed that their personality would eventually outweigh appearance, but that initially it would be a very uncomfortable situation. Given the choice, they all agreed that they would prefer to wear some make-up and avoid this potential scenario. In this circumstance, it seems the rationale for their belief and confidence stems from a need to justify their self-identity and provides an example of how the mind may compensate in strange situations to try and make the individual feel more confident in an environment where they would normally be marginalised.

When one respondent was discussing the extra grooming preparation required for a special occasion, she indicated that she felt this demonstrated a pride in self and showed that you liked your self-image. Consequently, she believed that she would use cosmetics and makeup her face for herself rather than for how others judged her appearance.

*I think it's because it shows that you like yourself. (Female 34)*

Associated with this, is that the effort taken to conform in any situation enhances the individual's self-esteem. Indeed, respondents indicated that they perceived that they

had a better time when they felt they looked good. Interviews suggested that this could be derived from the fact that women feel increased confidence because they more closely resemble the normalised image that society values.

*Cause I feel I am more attractive, I feel better about myself you know, its just a confidence thing, you feel better about yourself and have a better time, its like getting fat and being thin you know you always feel better when you are thin. (Female 47)*

Pampering rituals to increase self-esteem were also mentioned as a means to increase self-esteem. To spend a large amount of time on grooming your face was considered a pure luxury and women indicated that they would consume this behaviour at times just to feel good and indulge themselves.

In addition, most women reported carrying with them a 'make-up survival kit' just in case they were caught out and needed to adjust their image. This would include key products that they felt were essential to rectify any inconsistencies with their appearance, such as lipstick, eyeliner or powder compact. In this fashion, make-up provided a shield for many women, from which they derived self-confidence because they were always ready to alter their image in line with the set appearance code.

For others, self-confidence also comes from other benefits; for some in that they feel they look much older without make-up; that the flaws in their facial appearance are apparent and hence they feel self-conscious without it.

*...you know if I have slept in bed and get up and we have got a visitor and I have not gone through that make-up ritual I feel extremely vulnerable, I almost feel like they can see through me. (Female 37)*

Hence the need to make their appearance congruent with their self-impression was crucial and the individual would gain confidence and feel good when this was

achieved. In this manner, consumers are repetitive, habitual and often described as ritualistic in the routine required to align these two perceptions of appearance. The ritualistic aspects of consumers' consumption behaviours of make-up are described forthwith

## 6.2 RITUAL

Behaviour associated with the everyday grooming practices of human beings has been found to be ritualistic in nature (Beausoleil, 1994; McCracken, 1986; Rook, 1985). The use of face cosmetics in these grooming practices can also be defined as a ritualistic process using the framework identified by Rook (1985) of four tangible characteristics of a ritual process. Ogilvie and Ryan (2002) successfully used this framework to examine the ritual aspects of lipstick and demonstrated the highly symbolic and ceremonial context in which this product is used. Similarly, this framework is a useful tool to examine the ritualistic processes involved in the grooming behaviours of visible face make-up and these are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

### Ritual

Rituals differ from habits in that they are more dramatically scripted and acted out. They are likely to be larger more plural experiences whilst habits tended to be more individualistic behaviours (Rook, 1985). Whilst both habits and rituals are repeated in a similar sequence, rituals tend to generate the same emotions and feelings each time they are enacted unlike habits which may be devoid of any emotion. Rook (1985, p252) defines ritual as:

*...a type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviours that occur in a fixed, episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over*

*time. Ritual behaviour is dramatically scripted and acted out and is performed with formality, seriousness, and inner intensity.*

The use of visible make-up by women in this study was found to be extremely ritualistic in nature and these behaviours are outlined under the four key criteria described by Rook below.

### 6.2.1 The Ritual Artefact

Ritual artefacts are items that convey symbolic messages when used in the context of the ritual (Rook 1985). In this case, the cosmetic products themselves are the ritual artefacts, for their use is perceived to create significance and they are often associated with interpersonal communications. Artefacts are also often exchanged as gifts (Belk, 1979; Sherry, 1983) and cosmetics are a popular gift line for most women during festive occasions such as Christmas and birthdays. One respondent reported the use of cosmetics as a currency that was central to a bartering process where cosmetics were exchanged for piano lessons. For these reasons, make-up can be considered as a ritual artefact and the consumption behaviours and self-reports from the women interviewed would also confirm this.

Findings in this study indicate that each woman appears to have what they term an 'essential cosmetic'. It is the product that they believe to be central to their grooming ritual and it may be either eyebrow pencil, lipstick, eyeliner or face powder. This product is considered an extension of their self and is an essential component in the appearance they present to the world. Indeed, the selection of a key artefact by women often identified the aspect of the face that the individual considered important. It was usually selected to correct a perceived flaw in their facial features. For example, one respondent claimed she had 'piggy eyes' so would always wear mascara. Another would



always scrutinise another's eyebrows because she felt that she had none, and yet another complained of a fat face so she would always wear blusher to give her face definition.

*I always wear blusher because I have such a fat face, so it just gives me some cheeks. (Female 34)*

In each of these instances, the mascara, the eyebrow pencil and the blusher became central to the respondent's make-up routine and a key artefact in their daily grooming ritual. The product conveyed great meaning to participants because it allowed them to present an appearance that they perceived was congruent with who they were and, in this way, communicate with others in society.

Women had various artefacts that they felt were essential to complete their daily ritual before encountering certain audiences.

*I really don't feel I could go to the shop without lipstick and eyebrows, it just feels as though it doesn't look right. (Female 57)*

In this case the respondent perceived that these items of make-up were a necessary part of her 'self' and essential for certain audiences. She experienced great discomfort when she was unable to perform the ritual using these artefacts to create her perceived self. The artefacts of the lipstick and the eyebrow pencil were considered as extensions of the self (Belk, 1988).

The connotations linked with some products used in a certain way could also communicate messages. For example, some respondents believed that over use of blusher could be considered tarty and that very bright red lipstick was indicative of a 'painted lady' or someone with loose morals.

In contrast to this, women also believed that, with correct use of these artefacts, they could achieve higher status and transform themselves into something perceived to

be better. Hence, to increase their status and to gain acceptance, they would undertake that ritual because it offered this visual difference.

## Brands

Status was also reflected by the brand of cosmetic women wore. Brands with high brand equity were perceived to do a better job than less expensive unbranded products. Women discussed their make-up histories and how the brand of make-up they purchased would change depending on their life situation and their disposable income at the time. Women who purchased products by brand tended to move from the less expensive brands consumed in their youth, to brands with higher brand equity as they became more affluent, and conversely back to less expensive products once retiring from the workforce.

Consumption of the brand appeared to change with life transitions. For example, one respondent discussed changing to a cheaper brand once she retired for financial reasons. This would confirm earlier qualitative data that there were different products for different market segments, one being the new mum with little disposable income and another being the more elderly with less money available. Despite the need to change to a cheaper brand, this respondent still perceived that expensive brands were somehow better. This could be due to her feelings of extravagance when purchasing the products because she believed richer ritual was associated with these artefacts and their consumption.

*They are so nice, they feel light and feminine, very light, very feminine and yes the experience of putting it on, the presentation first and the experience of putting those lovely soft, cool creams on your face makes you feel beautiful it does....It's just that I can't afford it now. Yes, just saying that I have just realised what I am using now, I mean I use it, its fine, but it*

*doesn't make me feel like Lancome does when I put it on. Just because it's the cost probably it's the perception, the value of thinking this is like gold and rubbing it onto your face. (Female 58)*

From a ritualistic perspective such brands were considered better artefacts with more magic properties and were used for indulgence to make the individual feel good.

Whilst financial reasons impacted on consumption practices for many, others indicated that their key rationale for purchasing a product was the quality it offered and how well it did the job in helping to create the desired appearance.

*...in the past the difference was that I might have used a cheaper brand of foundation and from time to time I have actually thought, 'oh this can't be much different', and I have bought one in Coles and I have found a difference, because I like Estee Lauder and the cheaper ones don't seem to do the same job ... (Female 34)*

Many women interviewed appeared to be brand loyal with loyalty based on artefacts that were known and trusted. It would also seem that women became more resistant to changing the artefacts used in their daily make-up ritual as they became older. They did however, adapt their usage of these products and selected new techniques to suit the facial changes they were experiencing.

*... as you get older you don't have the same definition in your eyes so you do it with make-up, but then you would start getting limited because you have got creases, foundation tends to crease a bit more in the lines and eye shadow goes into creases and things like that so it does change, the way you put make-up does change as you grow. (Female 40)*

Fashion plays an important role in influencing ritual and establishing the appearance selected by individuals in their everyday encounters. This is influenced by

the mass media in communicating images and shaping the appearance chosen, therefore perpetuating the appropriate appearance code for each age group. An example is the subtle and softer make-up suggested for more mature women.

### Time poor

In today's busy, time-poor lifestyle many women discussed the need to adjust their ritual to compensate for their lifestyle. In doing so they were still able to include a grooming ritual within their tight time frame and the practicalities of working life. By adopting an image and ritual to meet these demands rather than going without, women still derive the benefits of the ceremony and the significant communication outcomes related to its performance.

*I start work at 5.00 in the morning and I don't get out of bed till about 4.15, so it's out of bed and straight in to the bathroom. I put my make-up and everything on and I am out the door and I am at work by 5.00, so I take about 20 minutes to do everything, so a very quick make-up routine.*  
(Female 47)

Ritual has also been shown to take precedence over sustenance. One respondent claimed that she would rather put make-up on and indulge in this ritual to gain the attributes it offers than have breakfast. This confirms the importance of appearance in daily lives and how we perceive ourselves and are perceived by others.

*On a Tuesday or Thursday morning I am in an extreme rush dropping kids off, and the other morning when I had to drop off because my husband was away it was a case of do I have time to put make-up on or do I have time to sit down and eat breakfast? So, I actually put some make-up on, ... (Female 35)*

## Lipstick

Lipstick was considered an important artefact by many in the ceremony of preparing the face. Ogilvie and Ryan (2002) discuss the historic perspective of this artefact and its massive influence on society over the years. Included amongst their findings were the powerful transformational properties of lipstick as a vehicle through which women could create and change their identity.

Respondents often talked of lipstick in a separate category to make-up with make-up meaning foundation, eye shadow and other products. It was considered an important addition to the face and an essential component of many make-up routines.

*I have got a friend who stopped wearing make-up Jackie she just wears lipstick,... (Female 58)*

Interestingly, all respondents discussed adapting the artefacts in the grooming ritual depending on the setting and the audience. For example, the use of a different lipstick for different places with darker and brighter colours reserved for going out.

*... and if I was going out I would try and use the brighter one, if I am at home I sort of use the pale one because I don't really like much make-up. (Female 52)*

One respondent even believed that lipstick was a barometer for the occasion with the brightness of the artefact identifying the occasion.

Without, what one described as her 'mask' of make-up, she felt uncertainty and discomfort, especially without her key artefact of lipstick. She describes the importance of this artefact and justifies reasons for wanting to wear it as she claims that the lips are a key part in the communication process. Consequently, the image she presents to the world needs to be consistent with wearing lipstick as people have learned that this is what she looks like and, hence, they anticipate an appearance that includes this artefact.

*I do like to wear lipstick, I see myself as quite plain even though I have got dark hair, I feel quite plain and I think the lipstick sort of highlights, you know, the first thing you see when you meet somebody. Yeah, you look at their lips or their eyes, so I wouldn't feel happy, no, I prefer to, if I could chose one, if I could have something it would be the lipstick I think.*  
(Female 34)

Even immediately after childbirth this respondent claimed she still needed that key artefact of lipstick and felt incomplete without it. Indeed, many women also assert that lipstick was the one product that they could not do without.

Often a cosmetic artefact that had particular significance for an individual could be linked to a past experience and be related to a specific occurrence. For example, a mother and her red lipstick. In this case the respondent vividly remembers her mother and the red lipstick that she would always wear. Consequently the red lipstick became symbolic to the daughter in representing her mother.

*I remember when I was about 4, I pinched my mum's lipstick and I hid it from her for weeks, because I wanted to wear it, and I must have realised I couldn't because she would know. After a few weeks she said to give it back to her, so I remember having an infatuation and that was red lipstick. That lipstick always used to remind me of Mum.* (Female 48)

Lipstick was often the first and last artefact to be used by women in their daily grooming rituals. Initially, because of its simplicity in application and the sensual implications associated with it, and lastly because women tended to use less make-up in the aging process and lipstick was the last of these to go.

Furthermore, women who were avid lipstick users talked of the many different colours that they possessed and how they would keep these for prolonged periods just in

case they needed that specific colour again. Once a product was considered an artefact and a necessary part of the ritual, varieties of this artefact were kept for great lengths of time in case they were needed again for some future ceremony.

### Mascara / Eyes

Similar to the use of lipstick, but not as common, was the perception by women that eyes were the key feature of their face and consequently products such as mascara and eye-liner were staple cosmetics that they could not do without. Indeed, one respondent discussed how eyeliner was the one constant in her life through many transitions and phases, whilst another believed the eyes were the ‘window to the soul’ and hence she would not go out without her eyes darkened with make-up.

*... like I said I would go out in my pyjamas if I had to just go to the shops, I just don't care, as long as I have got mascara on I can go anywhere.*

*(Female 34)*

Eye shadow appeared to be a useful artefact by which many women could differentiate the setting, the ritual script and the role that they were required to enact. More commonly women would only wear this product at night time or for more formal occasions.

*I wear eye shadow if I am going out to dinner or somewhere really special.*

*(Female 33)*

### Skin

A few considered face powder the key artefact in their grooming practices as clear skin and evenness of complexion was so often considered a necessary ingredient of beauty.

*I would probably have a bit of powder, you know, the compact powder just*

*to even out my complexion, or to hide any blemishes. (Female 32)*

### Combining artefacts

Finally, several women believed that there was a need for all the artefacts together to create their desired appearance; one on its own was considered out of place. For example, one participant even felt that lipstick on its own made her complexion look uneven, whilst another who wore lots of make-up everyday declared that her cosmetics represented a consistent daily mask that she could not, and would not, do without.

### Extension of ritual

Women discussed the use of cosmetic artefacts in the extension of the ritual process for special occasions. On these occasions they may use artefacts that are not normally used and paint/shape or distort parts of the face normally left unattended. For example, women spoke of only ever highlighting their eyebrows when they went out at night, while some would use lip liner to change the shape of their lips.

The elaborate extended ritual of self-care adopted on special occasions was considered by women to be a mark of femininity. Similarly, the wearing of make-up itself was described by one participant as a feminine ritual and a behaviour that was expected of women.

*Just all the effort that's gone into it, that would take hours, which is a feminine thing, its hard to explain, I expect it is more likely to be done by women than say by men. Anyway I think make-up is a feminine thing, I guess I wear it to feel more attractive and feminine, after all you look more like a girl when you wear make-up. Let's face it girls wear make-up and it's*



*something that girls do. (Female 32)*

The extra care, time and effort put into a woman's make-up before a special event appear to be part of a process of extending the occasion. This is not something that women can do everyday as it is too complex and time consuming, but on special occasions it enables the respondent to extend the length of the event and the anticipation and enjoyment associated with the occasion.

*...it is part of dressing up, its part of acknowledging that it's a special occasion you put your nice clothes on so you put your nice face on. (Female 37)*

Most women admitted that they had a habit of carrying a 'survival' make-up kit to adjust their image, even though they never or infrequently would use it. This behaviour itself also appears to be an extension of the ritual process, despite the fact that the extra ritual is not performed.

### Old recipes

Women were asked if they could remember any old beauty recipes that their mothers or others had taught them, or which had been handed down through the generations. Many talked of ways to highlight the hair with lemon juice or mayonnaise, or of creating a better facial complexion using egg yolk.

*Egg yolk on your face, 'cause that was for dry skin and it would make your skin go really hard, while you couldn't move, I remember that yeah. (Female 34)*

Another remembers using egg white and oatmeal and a range of other natural products in her beauty regime.

*...I don't think they came from my mother as such because she wasn't*

*really into make-up, however grandmother was certainly a lot better groomed and did a lot with / her face.... ... I remember having oatmeal and egg white plastered all over my face and my little brother coming into the room and going out screaming when he saw me, and then there was cucumbers on your eyes and lemons on your elbows, beer in your hair, and yeah, lemon in your hair too. (Female 51)*

One woman professed that she put vitamin E oil into Nivea crème as her mother before her had done for years. Others spoke of colouring the lips with cochineal and vegetable dyes, of applying cucumber to the eyes to decrease the puffiness, and of applying charcoal to their eyebrows. Whilst the cosmetic artefacts have changed, women have been compelled to paint their face in any way possible, often using everyday items as their artefacts for this ritual.

Interestingly, many women often subconsciously mimicked habits of their mothers. Evidence from this study suggests that women tended to adopt the very ones that the individual may have rebelled against or rejected earlier in life and, then later, these very same idiosyncrasies are incorporated into the daily grooming ritual of these women. The means of learning the ritual, and the techniques associated with its accomplished application, are part of the ritual script and are outlined and discussed in the next section.

## 6.2.2 The Ritual Script

The script identifies the process and the behaviour sequence of the artefact. As Rook (1985, p 253) purports, “a ritual script prescribes a consumption paradigm, which may include either extensive or relatively limited product usage.” The application of make-up has its own script, as evidenced in the overall sequence of its application.

Women report using the same daily routine in their grooming practices, and more specifically in their use of make-up. They will apply their face make-up in exactly the same order each day, using the same hand and method to apply the artefact. For example, left-handed women tended to prepare the left side of their face first, followed by the right, whilst the opposite was true for right-handed women.

Respondents usually began with the face as a canvas and concentrated on applying moisturisers followed by foundation and powder if they were worn. Preparing the eyes followed, next came the eye brows, blusher, and finally lipstick.

*I would have foundation, powder, mascara and blush. I put those on everyday, that is my standard ritual, those four items.... I have a shower, blow dry my hair and then the foundation goes on, the powder, the blush, the mascara, finished.... Every morning I do it before I leave the house, before I do my housework, before I come out of my room, I do those things.*  
(Female 37)

*Block out yeah, tinted block out, and then I will put my eye liner on, eye shadow, mascara, blush, comb my eyebrows and finally lipstick just before I walk out the door.* (Female 57)

Or, as one respondent discusses, the ritual is subconscious and often not related to any real thought or rationale for the action.

Respondent: *I have a shower, then put on my moisturiser, when that is dry I put the foundation on, sometimes I put one of those little concealer sticks, like if I am a bit tired or if I had a pimple I would... then I put the powder and a blusher and then I put the eye liner and mascara.*

Interviewer: *Which eye do you do first?*

Respondent: *The right one.*

Interviewer: *Do you always do it that way?*

Respondent: *Yep, when I think about it, I have never thought about it but yeah I do, but I don't put the lipstick on until I am just about out the door because the last thing I do is clean my teeth. (Female 34)*

Respondents claimed that, once they had established a certain way of doing their make-up, their ritual was set. They followed the same pattern of behaviour everyday, using the same products, in the same sequence, and often within a set time frame. Most reported that they had not changed this behaviour for a very long time.

The motivation to change only came when women saw, or actually tried, a new product in a trial process. Hence the success of make-up networking parties and cosmetic 'make-overs' in large department stores. Both these methods of inducement require the respondent to participate in the experiment. As most of these women had neither the time nor the inclination to change, they did not make themselves available to these avenues and consequently there was very little deviation in their routines from when they were first established.

Some respondents questioned the effectiveness of the artefacts and the script, however, they still took part in the same ritual despite wondering whether it made any difference or not, for to withdraw the ritual would leave the respondent with great uncertainty and discomfort.

*The first thing I do is put concealer under my dark lines, but that wears off and doesn't really work, and then the next thing I do is put mascara on, and then a tiny bit of blush on because I don't need a lot, and then I put a bit of lipstick on and that's it. (Female, 34)*

In addition, respondents also indicated that they would indulge in more intense ritual with greater use of artefacts when going out. However, a few perceived that the

outcome was the same. Whilst respondents indicated that they were aware that there was very little difference in the appearance outcome of different make-up routines, they still felt that, as an individual, they derived confidence from following these rituals for particular occasions.

*Yeah, although I don't see much difference when I do try and when I don't try so there you go, I do it for morale but the finish is not much different (Female, 52)*

### Learning the ritual script

The learning of the ritual script is often subconscious and the individual is not even aware that it is taking place.

*I don't know I must of put make-up on with a girlfriend, I don't think that I actually learnt it, I can't remember learning it from anywhere, maybe just through experimentation. (Female 35)*

A few respondents claimed that they learnt to apply their make-up through party plans. Avon, Nutrimetics and other cosmetic networking parties appear to be influential in teaching women how to apply make-up or adapt the products they were using.

The ritual script is learnt in many ways, including magazines, books and experimenting with peers. Additionally, respondents claimed that their older sisters, aunts and other relatives were instrumental in teaching them the ritual script in their teenage years.

*I think I was about fifteen or sixteen and my Aunty showed me how to put mascara on, yes she was staying with us for the weekend, and that's all I wore for years. (Female 58)*

*I wouldn't say they were strict guidelines, I would think there are some*

*protocol perhaps that has been instilled in us since we were young enough to put make-up on probably, that foundation goes on first, then your powder goes on, and then you do your mascara last, you know, those sorts of things are things that are taught to us by Nutrimetics ladies or the older sister or who ever, and I think personally once you get into that then that becomes your ritual. (Female 37)*

Mothers also were influential in teaching the ritual script to their daughters, as one respondent reflects.

*No, I used to just watch mum, yeah, always sit on the bath and watch her put hers (make-up) on. (Female 58)*

However, the role of the mother in teaching daughters about the ritual script is quickly diminishing and rapidly being replaced by mass media images and messages. From these mediums young girls today learn how to use the artefacts of the ritual and the appropriate order and methods of application. Through their interaction within society, they learn what to wear to be accepted and when to wear it. For example, one respondent claimed that the script for her facial make-up was exactly the same. However, what defined a different occasion and setting was the use of an assortment of diverse lipsticks. In this situation, her ritual script defined the use of lipstick as an important component in creating this transition between roles.

#### Artistry/skill

Performance of the script in itself requires mastery and skill of the artefacts and the techniques used in their application. One respondent claimed that she did not consider herself an expert in the ritual of applying make-up; she perceived that she did not get the desired effect that a professional make-up artist could achieve. Consequently,

she alleged that she could not transform herself fully into the desired image valued by society.

Similarly, another also claimed that she had still not mastered the ritual to her desired effect. Therefore, she did not like the image in the mirror and experienced feelings of discomfort upon looking at herself. In this case she felt she had performed enough ritual to pass under society's expected code, however she did not derive full confidence because she had not mastered the script to her desired level or expectation.

*I still say that I haven't really quite mastered it, when I look at myself compared to what other people do and their routines and things like that I am very basic, its just enough on to satisfy myself. I don't really like looking at myself, so I don't really like looking at myself in the mirror and it can be a hard thing, so I don't do much, I just do as much to satisfy myself and think yep, yep, you look presentable and that's all as much as I can hope for really (Female 34)*

### 6.2.3 Performance Role

Rook (1985) describes the ritual script as being played out by individuals adopting various ritual roles. In the case of make-up, the roles that women play whilst wearing make-up are many and varied and are dependent on the setting and the audience. Women indicated that they would adjust their facial make-up according to what role they were enacting at the time, be it relaxing at home, working in a professional capacity, or undertaking an especially symbolic event such as a wedding.

*Well, I feel for me just potting around the garden I would be fine with even no eye brows on, but just to go to the shop I really don't feel I could go to the shop without lipstick and eye brows, it just feels as though it doesn't*

*look right. (Female 57)*

Respondents indicated that their appearance had to be appropriate for the role or setting and that society had a code that was expected with regard to facial appearance for each of these roles.

*I mean you can't go to an interview for example with no make-up on you know, if you are going all dressed up and no make-up it wouldn't look right. (Female 51)*

What's more, women indicated that at night they would wear different make-up that was usually associated with the setting to which they were going. Some shift-workers interviewed reported wearing the same make-up day or night regardless of the time or lighting, because it was the make-up and appearance that was considered appropriate for the work-setting and the work-audience. Interestingly, different make-up artefacts were used to define the role in each setting, with more formal roles requiring more make-up, or make-up that was different from their everyday routine. For example, one respondent spoke of the different eye shadow she would wear for different occasions.

*...if you were going to the casino or maybe a wedding I would probably wear something shiny, but if I was just going to dinner it would probably just be matt, you know just something to highlight the eyes. (Female 34)*

Others reported using a separate artefact for night and day use. One woman would colour in her eyebrow especially for night roles. She was unaware why she behaved in this manner but noted that it was something that she always did. Others implied that they linked a woman's role to her appearance and felt that this was true for others' perceptions of them.

*I would feel really out of place if I wore lots of make-up to school, say like*



*for a Friday morning assembly because I know that everyone would come up to me and go, “where are you going today, are you going somewhere special?” and I’d be like, why do I have to go somewhere special to wear all this, do you know what I mean, like people just assume that ‘cause you have got that on that you are going somewhere special. (Female 34)*

Respondents also suggested that they liked to stay in control of the situation and, depending on the setting, would prepare for the audience and role they needed to enact by applying make-up accordingly. Similarly, there are settings and roles deemed inappropriate for make-up use. These tended to be outdoor, active and casual occasions such as boating or wood chopping.

*I wouldn’t wear make-up when we go out on the boat or you know when we go wood chopping in the bush for fire wood, it just doesn’t seem necessary. (Female 34)*

#### Setting – Location, surroundings and social environment

The geographical setting and climate would also influence the amount of make-up that women would wear. Several women discussed their time living in very hot climates and how in these conditions foundation was deemed not appropriate, as it would ‘melt’ off their faces. Indeed, it was climate that influenced one woman to avoid using all make-up altogether (with the exception of lipstick) and have her eyes tattooed and lashes dyed to avoid wearing mascara or eyeliner in the hot climatic conditions of Australia.

**Figure 6.2: Respondent with tattooed eyebrows, eyeliner and lip liner removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Akin to this, respondents talked of the change in dress codes and face make-up worn between places, describing how they once had ‘dressed up’ to go to town but now this was not an expectation to go to this setting. Women who had lived in Western Australian country towns throughout their life also spoke of the difference between the make-up code in smaller country towns (particularly warm ones) and Perth.

*The heat, yeah, you couldn't wear foundation up there because it would just melt off your skin, and everyone was more natural up there, just sort of a different way of life I guess. (Female 40)*

The ritual setting where the woman prepares for her various roles has undergone a change. Where applying make-up was once a social ritual performed at a dressing table with people passing through, it has now moved to a more private setting away from the public arena, now usually performed alone behind the closed door of a bathroom. One respondent commented on how the make-up ritual was becoming more private and insular where once it had not been so. She remarked on how women used to sit at their dressing tables and apply their make-up; as people came and went they would stop and talk, often having long discussions with their intimate audience in the process. Now

women perform this same ritual in the sterility of their bathrooms with limited communication involved; the ritual becomes more secluded and isolated.

*We would always have our dressing table and we would do all our beauty stuff sitting at our dressing table, and you had your draw with all your bits and bobs and you know, you have your cleanser and you would put it on and you would tissue it, and then you would do your toner, which is cotton wool and dab, dab, dab and you would do your face and it was all on your dressing table, none of this standing in the bathroom getting back ache doing it, it was a sitting down operation. ... .. And it was quite feminine and you know you would always sit at your dressing table and we may have had a cryptic mirror cause then you can sort of see yourself all round, and if someone was coming in when you were doing it they would sit and chat it was sort of a, I suppose it was a very female thing... (Female 57)*

Besides the bathroom, the setting for applying make-up has extended from the powder room to the car. Yet, again, this is a solitary behaviour which is performed alone. Rather than have the discomfort of not conforming to the appearance for a specific role, respondents said they would take their artefacts into the car and perform the ritual on the move before greeting the anticipated audience.

#### 6.2.4 Audience

The ritual audience for make-up ranges from the self, to the various representations of the public world. In presenting this range of images to the world, respondents noted the importance of the audience and, depending on who they were, would adapt their make-up accordingly. As Goffman (1960) discusses, a definite front stage / back stage became apparent with regard to the visible make-up that the

respondents would wear. The use of more visible face make-up in the women's appearance was considered important for the front stage whilst the use of little-to-no visible face make-up was reserved for relaxing at home with a more intimate audience.

In addition, the self is an important audience in terms of confidence and self-esteem. Often the family culture was the first influence for respondents as to when and what make-up to apply. Acceptance or rejection was received from spouses, significant others, work colleagues and the general community. In this way the audience guides the code that the respondent's community adopts and accepts as a normal and valued appearance.

Some respondents discussed how they felt that make-up was a necessary part of what made them who they were. They believed it was essential for their presentation to the world. They felt great discomfort when they were unable to perform the ritual to create the self they perceived they were. In this way, for these women, the artefact of make-up had become an extension of the self (Belk, 1988).

*... it is not as if it's a mask or anything, its just me. (Female 58)*

Indeed, one respondent indicated that she would prefer to miss an event than to present a self that was not congruent with how she perceived herself.

### Backstage / Private

The private audience consisted often of close friends and relatives or just the self. It was for these audiences that respondents would wear no, or very little, make-up. In these situations women felt they could relax without their make-up on because they were not being judged and had no need to be concerned with their appearance.

One respondent indicated that she was not comfortable with her 'backstage' appearance and hence would only wear no make-up when alone.

*It is only when I am at home and nobody is coming to visit that I would have absolutely nothing on my face. It very rarely happens, but when I do I avoid any mirrors because I don't feel comfortable at all... (Female 58)*

Another respondent indicated that she felt dirty and constrained if she was forced to wear front stage make-up in a back stage setting.

*At home I wear nothing, oh I would hate that, I'd feel dirty if I had make-up on at home. (Female 34)*

For most, the make-up ritual itself was performed in private, often behind closed bathroom doors where only the 'intimate audience' was able to view. One respondent discussed how her husband enjoyed watching her apply her make-up and found it fascinating to watch the skill and mastery required in its application.

*Yeah, he likes it (make-up) and says he likes to sit there and watch me put it on. He says it's fascinating. ... I am putting my mascara on and I am going are you right there, and he goes I am just watching and artist at work, god what a dag! (Female 34)*

Several had strong memories of their mothers preparing themselves for their husband's homecoming each evening. The need to be well presented for any audience, even the intimate ones, was considered important for these women. They felt that these behaviours were useful in transferring from mother to daughter the concepts of society's appearance code.

*... I remember late every afternoon she (mother) would go and tidy herself ready for Dad coming home. (Female 58)*

Make-up was not considered to be as important when the audience knew more about the individual than their appearance, or when the audience was perceived to be non-judgmental. Evidence from this study indicates that animals and children were

considered to be in this category. One respondent, who was a chicken farmer, said she had no need of make-up at work because the 'chooks' were her audience and hence she had no need to impress them.

### Front stage/Work

Other business women talked of how they believed visible face make-up was imperative for the business audience, particularly when they had important meetings. They would gain self confidence and power from the image they presented. Most women agreed that make-up was a shield from which they gained confidence. They perceived that it was all about presentation and presenting one self to create the image desired for the role and the audience.

*It's a shield, it's like, it indicates that you have taken trouble and that you are a caring person, grooming is important. To me, grooming like make-up which is visual, as well as hair to be clean and clothes to be clean, is a hygiene thing so you relate the two. (Female 48)*

*I always try and I think you have to present a bit of an image, I think its important anyway to present a bit of a professional image (Female 34)*

Others indicated that they would take more time and care with their make-up ritual when preparing for front stage events. Depending on the audience and its considered importance, the ritual would be increased and more make-up artefacts would be used.

The audience could impact significantly on the ritual performance. Where previously a set role influenced day or night make-up use, one respondent discussed how she would have different make-up routines for these times despite performing the same role in the same setting. She explained that this was because of the different audiences

one would encounter in that role at those times and hence each required a different appearance. After midnight she detailed how she would be in contact with more colourful characters who she perceived were less judgemental and so would wear no make-up whilst working these shifts. During the day however, more professional business people would be encountered and, consequently, more protocol was demanded.

*When I worked at the needle exchange it would depend when I worked, if I worked during the day I would wear make-up, but I did after midnight shifts and because it was open 24 hours, on these shifts I wouldn't bother wearing any make-up. (Female 34)*

In contrast, another woman indicated that, because of her official capacity in the immigration department regardless of what shift she worked, she would wear the same face make-up for her work role. This was her front stage image for the work audience and from it she derived authority and respect.

Moreover, many women voiced the need to wear make up because of the role they were in and the expectations of that role to conform to a certain appearance standard, be it professional, beauty or authority based.

*I worked at the Croatian club so they were open all the time, they used to have guys who would come in and they would expect you to look nice, and I know it's chauvinistic but to keep my job it was expected of me. (Female 34)*

Women felt it was important to create a good impression of themselves and the audiences' perception of their appearance was important to them. They also believed that the status of the audience was significant, and whether the individual was endeavouring to rise above, be on an equal footing to, or treat the audience as

unimportant in the scheme of things influenced their appearance. Additionally, it also seems, that the larger the audience, the more make-up women would wear.

*...because I work in my husband's office in a very male oriented place where they are all rough necks they are not suits, I don't see the necessity for it. (Female 40)*

Another issue is the congruence between the front stage appearance and the true image and the perception of the audience being privy to both. One respondent talked of how her husband became jealous when she applied too much make-up when she was going out with friends. He feared it may be alluring to others.

### Other Issues

Respondents reported adopting different techniques of the ritual with experience and age. Colours are more muted to suit the age group and reflect how society expects one of that age to look, therefore conforming to the valued societal norm.

Other respondents discussed how they would keep particular artefacts for selected audiences. For example, foundation may be kept for a more formal audience of people who are unknown to the respondent and who she may encounter in a more formal setting. Similarly with eye shadow, respondents indicated that they would wear this at night and only to more formal occasions. Respondents also suggested that often one artefact such as lipstick was the key ingredient or prop which prepared them for the front stage.

Despite the fact that men play such a pivotal role in influencing the societal code of the ritual itself, some respondents discussed how they believed the male audience didn't understand the make-up ritual and the artefacts used.

*... my husband thinks I am going to die with all the poisons going on my*



*skin, and I have tried to explain to him that I am not blocking off my skin because I don't wear foundation, he doesn't understand that some women wear foundation every single day of their lives and you would never ever see their skin because they wear foundation. (Female 39)*

Finally, all respondents believed that emotion influenced the appearance presented and often make-up would be used as a mask if women were feeling vulnerable or teary and did not want to draw attention to themselves. Alternatively, if women were feeling happy and confident and they did not wear make-up, it was because they were more ready to tackle comments from their immediate audience indicating that they were, or were not, conforming to society's code.

*But for me it depends, like some days you feel stronger in yourself than you do others and you can say well stuff the world, you know I don't care what I look like today this is how it is, but if you are vulnerable and teary and everything you don't want anyone to say, "god look at your face", and you stay crying, so yeah, its also a lot to do with emotions I think too. (Female 37)*

### 6.3 TRANSFORMATION

Van Gennep (1960) argues that during major phases of life transition consumers undergo a period of liminality where individuals divest their old identity and prepare to metamorphose into a new one. Noble and Walker (1997) describe this liminal state as "the instability, ambiguity, and suspended identity that can occur in the transition from one significant role to another" (p90). In this context, results from this study suggests that make-up represents an inexpensive and non-permanent means by which women can try on a new image and test the response to it by society. It offers a quick retreat should

the new image not meet with approval or be congruent with the image the individual is trying to create, unlike more permanent plastic surgery procedures (Schouten, 1991).

In this regard, it appears that make-up is an important vehicle in this liminal stage of the transformation process (Van Gennep 1960; Noble & Walker 1997). The new image is either accepted or rejected for another. Once accepted, the transformation is adopted and complete. This may occur quickly or even take years.

These issues of liminality were very evident when respondents spoke of how they would closet themselves away, experimenting alone and in secret, as they tried on different selves. In this liminal stage they would use make-up to transform themselves and their faces into an image that reflected the self they wanted to present to the world as representing themselves.

There is mastery involved in the transformation process and a perceived risk of failure in undertaking the process. The result may transform the individual into an undesired appearance, hence, to minimise this risk, they would experiment with the outcome in private until the result resembled an outcome with which they were comfortable. For example, one respondent discussed using lip liner and how she would never use this in public because she had not mastered the use of this artefact or accepted the make-up outcome it created.

*I am not very good at it and I could end up with odd shaped lips. (Female 34)*

*I would have tried out in secret using my sister's make-up I think, it wouldn't have been when she was around. (Female, 34)*

This identity construction process is also a result of how others consume their appearance and, hence, women would alter their image accordingly. For instance, one respondent had a friend who was a make-up artist and, when her friend would do her

make-up in the way that she thought would suit her, the first impression by the participant of her image as her friend perceived her to look, was not at first accepted. She consequently experimented and adapted it until she gradually adopted the new self that was first presented. The respondent indicated that it took some time to accept the new appearance and that she had to convince herself that it was right. In this way, the individual must undergo a liminal phase before the transformation is complete and a new appearance of self is accepted as being representative of them.

*Janet taught me how to put on a face so I have stuck to doing it because when she first taught me I thought, well I need make-up now, I am much older and I can't get away without it. I practice regularly, and because of the choice of colours and things I have to work through them all to try them. Normally I disagree with everything Janet does, and I have to start with a compromise and then gradually realise what she did was absolutely totally right, but I didn't like all of it anyway so I didn't do it. (Female 58)*

*I remember being carted off to Manchester to get make-up lessons. God I looked like an absolute painted doll, and I thought this is horrible having this, so I didn't bother at all, and I went back to the mascara and the pale lipstick, much to my mother's horror. (Female 57)*

Women will be critical of themselves if their make-up outcome is not congruent with the appearance they perceive reflects who they are. In another example, one respondent discussed how she had photographed herself going out somewhere special and had dressed up and applied foundation to her skin. On looking at the photos, she felt that her skin did not look 'natural' and that her image was not a true reflection of herself because of all the 'white stuff' on her face.

*I am sort of not keen on it either, its too, I don't know, it makes you look white or something doesn't it, usually I don't wear any base make-up, like look at the difference you know. (Female 41)*

**Figure 6.3: Respondent did not recognise image as self with foundation on removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Another respondent discussed how she would transform herself daily and rationalised why she felt this to be important.

*Yes the puffy face, the hair that looked like I had been pulled through the sheets backwards, and I think that is when I probably began to realise that even if I was staying at home, which I did for a long time, I still needed to do that for myself so that when I did duck down the shop, when someone did pop in, I had that little confidence boost of knowing that I didn't look as haggard as I felt inside. (Female 37)*

The transformation that women believed make-up brought to their face was considered essential for many to function normally and undergo their daily activities. One respondent highlights the importance of full make-up and in particular eyeliner as follows:

*My eyes look sick without it on... I just don't think they look as bright or something. (Female 25)*

In this instance the respondent's desired facial appearance needed to conform to a set look of 'all' or 'nothing', as she felt naked without her make-up shield. Moreover, the transformation was visual and dramatic as illustrated below.

**Figure 6.4: Respondent is transformed with make-up removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

**Figure 6.5: Transformation through make-up removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Once a respondent becomes confident with the transformation that the cosmetics create they tend to stick to them until the next transformation phase. This may come quickly or not at all.

*I have always worn these colours, and because they suit me' (Female, 37)*

Similarly, just as women can achieve a transformation of self through the use of make-up, they can also reach the same result by wearing less or no make-up. Whenever

the facial appearance is in contrast to the norm for that person, either with or without make-up, a new identity can be created when their appearance is altered in this manner.

Identity is created through presentation of the face to the world, and it is a means by which women define themselves and showcase the ideal 'self' they desire. For example, one respondent defined how make-up was an important part of her presentation in defining her individuality when she discussed a picture of someone she perceived as different to her. The picture was of a group of Buddhist monks, who had no make-up at all and shaven heads.

*I thought well they don't wear any make-up, their heads shaved, they have got these saffron robes around you know, and they all look the same, there is no individuality. (Female 57)*

Some would even use make-up in a total transformation to create a new identity for the evening. Using the prop of make-up for fancy dress and novelty evenings, individuals could create new personas to represent parts of themselves.

**Figure 6.6: Respondent uses props to create different identities removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.**

Preferred image

Respondents had a definite perception of which of the images they preferred and which they felt was the most representative of them. Many respondents indicated that

they liked the photos of themselves going out the best because they felt that they looked more glamorous. In conjunction to this, women also indicated that they favoured their workface as they felt this reflected the self they were most comfortable with. Either way, all respondents indicated that they preferred an image of themselves with a certain amount of make-up on, as opposed to pictures of them relaxing at home with no make-up. They felt the make-up assisted them to transform into the image that they perceived was more reflective of them.

One woman spoke of her inability to obtain the desired look of full lips. She felt she could not use red lipstick because this was not congruent with her perception of self. This is also seen in wedding parties where women who are required to wear make-up colours and routines different to their normal outcomes experience great discomfort and often require counselling ( Jenny Long, personal communication, September, 2002).

*I can't stand bright red lipstick and I think on myself, I personally look even uglier than normal. (Female 57)*

Most women indicated that visible face make-up represented to them a mask of confidence. Women would utilise make-up products to minimise perceived flaws they believed their face possessed. For example, they would transform lips with lip liner to make them fuller and bigger as opposed to having collagen injections. A less permanent transformation was preferred.

Interestingly, the transformation of a woman's image often impacted on the enjoyment of the occasion as one respondent describes her feelings at attending a wedding after having her make-up and hair done. She felt transformed into a 'beautiful princess':

*I felt really good and it's the first time I have ever had my make-up and hair done and I really liked what they did. So I felt really good and I was*

*getting heaps of compliments. People kept on coming up and saying “you look beautiful, you look really good, or you look gorgeous” and Brad kept saying it too and just all night they kept coming and I felt wonderful, like a princess or something. (Female 34)*

In this way women transform their appearance in a desire to conform to what society values as beautiful and receive positive reinforcement in the form of compliments to support this behaviour.

Indeed, some women have been wearing visible face make-up for so long it would not feel like their true face if they did not have it on.

*I have been wearing it since I was so young that I don't know any other way not to. (Female 34)*

Other respondents reported finding themselves through a new audience and its acceptance of their transformation.

*I got a lot of confidence back from working in a hotel down south. It was good to interact with people and just having to make a whole new set of friends and become a part of the community and things like that, so I became me as I am now. (Female 34)*

## Transitions

Respondents also suggested that transformation of the self continued to take place with age. Indeed, as they became older, one respondent indicated that it was not the appearance that she considered important but how she felt.

*I think it's just my age, I think you get to a stage where you don't really care or mind how you look it's how you feel, quite different. (Female 48)*



Another respondent discussed how her appearance had changed with age, with a perception that her skin was more sallow and needing extra colour. In this case the respondent transformed herself using make-up to compensate and achieve an appearance of self similar to when she was young. Consequently, she perceived that a lined face was indicative of being tired and, hence, the difference of a better appearance was to have less lines around the eyes.

Respondents reported wearing less make-up as they aged because they could not see as well to apply it any more. Sight and age make it difficult for some women to continue adopting the appearance code, hence the inability of these women to apply make-up as they had done before.

Age influenced various role transitions as well. One participant discussed leaving the security of a group subculture and its related appearance code to establish a new identity as she grew older and realised she had different priorities. In this case her make-up outcomes changed radically from the full Gothic make-up to a more subdued conservative appearance as she redefined who she was and what she stood for in society. When asked why she changed she responded:

*I think maybe because you're more settled within yourself, and you had to have your own style, which was less inclined to be influenced by bands and things, it's just something you grow out of I think. ... .. It's just a transition thing, even though those Gothic bands were still on-going you just decided, you got bored with it. (Female, 34)*

Within society people are expected to look a specific way. Individuals need to change their appearance when they undergo a role transition in order to fit into that role. Make-up was considered an important product which assisted in defining an individual's role in society and the transition from one role to another. For example, one respondent

discussed how, when she was fifteen and working, she would wear foundation because it was an acceptable practice for someone in that role to do.

Similarly, another respondent discussed the role of a mother and how, during this phase of her life, she had different priorities and time pressure than when she was working. Within this role she no longer had time to experiment any more.

*Well I didn't wear it often, didn't have time. (Female, 40)*

The role of the mother and the financial demographic of this group also frequently had limited audiences and outings.

*No, not a lot of time, not a lot of finance, and generally the only time you got out with the kids was when you went shopping or went visiting, then put it on, like that was your real outing in those days. (Female 48)*

Returning to the workforce after being at home for a lengthy period, raising a family was also considered a transitional phase in some women's lives. The importance of make-up is highlighted by a woman who describes how she felt when getting ready for work:

*Good, um like it's the old self coming back yeah, like being away doing something else but now sort of coming back to your home body and you are doing what you like you to do, and you are enjoying getting dressed up and preparing to get out there. (Female 48)*

Another woman talked of her need to reclaim her old identity and normality post-illness. After a long bout of post natal depression make-up was used to lift her mood and transform her persona.

*Sometimes I would be feeling really down but I would get up early and I would think right I have got to make an effort, so I would put lots of make-up on to give me a lift. I could still be down but I would do make-up to give*

*me a lift and other times I couldn't be bothered... (Female 39)*

Included in this concept of role transition is that of the transformation from mother to woman going out. Participants discussed this role change and transformation as significant because it was often so drastic, moving from an appearance that often had no make-up and was not considered sexually alluring to that of provocative female with the possibility of sexual connotations attached.

### Knowledge

Some respondents suggested that they would change their make-up routines due to knowledge. For example, one respondent talked of how she had a colour consultant advise her on her colour toning and since then her make-up changed to reflect this. She believed this lifted her face and transformed her in ways that made her skin look healthier and clearer and hence younger and more attractive.

*I went to have my colours done, and found out all the oranges and the greens that I love didn't really suit me. They said I had cool colours. It's actually amazing how it just enhances your face even with just lipstick on if you have got the right colour, I can actually see if I put an orange lipstick on that my skin goes sallow. (Female, 58)*

Several other respondents also discussed the benefits they felt that they derived from having their colours done and the positive effect this had on their skin toning and make-up usage.

*I have had my colours done, and I now see the logic of colours and why one chooses the wrong colour sometimes, because it makes you blend into the walls, if you wear the right colours, as you know, one stands out a bit, which one doesn't always feel like doing, but it does compliment your skin*

*tones, it makes you look sort of brighter rather than knackered, so I do try not to wear the brown lipsticks which I like. (Female 51)*

In this way these respondents learned information about colours and the impacts they had on their skin. As they perceived that this information helped them to transform into what society valued, it was used in the creation of their daily facial presentation.

In addition, increased awareness of the damaging effects of the sun on the face was very evident among women interviewed. Improved education has changed the products and cosmetics available today, with UV protection considered an essential attribute for many respondents to avoid the dryness, wrinkles and early aging effects of the sun. The appearance that society values as healthy and beautiful is changing with continual social marketing messages. Consequently, it is now considered more attractive to have a fair facial complexion rather than the dark bronzed images represented by the previous mass media images.

### 6.3.2 Rites of passage

Results also provided evidence that make-up serves as a rite of passage (Noble & Walker, 1997) within Western Australian society. Such transformations mark major identity reconstructions and it is noteworthy to see an everyday product such as make-up playing such a major role in these significant life changes.

#### Womanhood

The first and most evident rite of passage was the transition from adolescence to womanhood. In remembering the very first time that she wore make-up, one respondent reflects on the transformation this product made in her evolution from innocent child to young woman.

*I was twelve and I was going off to my school social, and I put green eye shadow on my upper lids, and probably a bit of mascara and a little lipstick, I felt very grown up. (Female 40)*

This woman also talked about how she learnt the ritual of applying make-up at a young age from her older siblings, and how they taught her this ritual as a rite of passage into womanhood. From this point on she felt she needed to master the ritual and would experiment with her peers to define herself within the community.

*I had an older sister,- I had a sister that was ten years older so she was well into it. She was the one that said when I was eleven that I had to shave my under arms and my legs because I was too hairy, and she sat me down and plucked my eye brows and showed me how to put make-up on, so I was very conscious of it from a young age. (Female 40)*

Some respondents also highlighted the importance of red lipstick as the colour of womanhood. This may be related to the sexual implications that earlier literature links with the lips (Etkoff, 1999; Pallington, 1999) and in particular the full red pouting lip.

Another respondent discussed how the importance of lipstick was passed from mother to daughter and how this artefact could be used as an emergency backup to transform one's image if, and when, necessary.

One respondent remembers how a role transition was probably the key for her wearing make-up and how, moving from the schoolyard to the work force despite being only fourteen, gave her a licence to indulge in this behaviour.

*I finished school early and had a job when I was only fourteen, so I would have been wearing make-up then (Female 47).*

Many other women reported that this role transition from childhood to womanhood was a precursor for their use of visible face make-up and that face cosmetics were symbolic of coming of age.

### Perception of Mother

Often women spoke of motherhood and the perception of this role in the society. It would seem that society accepts the image of a 'mother' with no or limited face make-up because this role is perceived as natural and non-sexual in nature. Interestingly, despite sexual allurement being an offshoot of conforming to a valued appearance code, one respondent did indicate how she would not make her face attractive because she was not available sexually. It would seem that this behaviour would link with her perceptions of how a woman should look as a mother.

*I got pregnant when I was nineteen and I had just turned twenty when I had Nathan and then a lot of it seemed irrelevant then the make-up things I probably didn't wear much at all (Female, 34)*

In line with these beliefs many women had a similar view that women undertaking this role did not require large amounts of cosmetics in their daily presentation to the world. In undergoing this transition to the mother persona, it was also often necessary to pass through a liminal phase before accepting the new appearance. One woman discussed how she was unclear about what a new mum should actually look like and found that make-up helped keep her identity intact. Each day in the hospital she would get up and put it on as she passed through this liminal phase into the role of mother.

Transcending into the role of the mother, respondents indicated that childbirth or the birth of a first child was often a stimulant to change or to downgrade their make-up

routine. However, respondents suggested that they still needed their key artefact. As one woman jokingly suggests,

*OK so that's the first thing never feed the baby, put the lipstick on first, the baby is screaming just got to get the lip liner on right (Female 34)*

In reality, the make-up ritual takes a secondary role to a new born child. However, women still desire to return to their ritual of make-up because of their need to consume an appearance that is valued in society. How women consume their appearance in their daily lives and its signification shall now be addressed.

### Consumption of appearance

Beauty was considered to be more than a mask by many women. The importance of facial bone structure and clear skin was considered the basis by many for what they perceived as beauty. Most women agreed that a clear skin was a real benefit and one of the central elements they felt that they needed to achieve in their quest to normalise their facial appearance.

*I don't wear any foundation at all, very rarely maybe once a year if I am lucky, I have been lucky with my skin. (Female 39)*

Another respondent, who also indicated that good, clear skin was a sign of beauty, included neatness and a sense of orderliness as well. She believed that make-up provided a sense of completeness for the desired appearance for the individual. It added the final touch for how they wish to be visualised by others.

Additionally, the significance of foundation lies in its ability to create an evenness of complexion so those women, without the inherent clear skin of others, can still gain the communication qualities that this attribute signifies. For example, respondents mentioned how they felt the complexion of their skin post childbirth may

have looked sallow and they would compensate for this by wearing more make-up and in particular foundation to hide these unwanted effects.

One middle aged woman felt that she looked older without make-up and her perception was that a little colour helped one look younger. This is consistent with findings from the initial semiotic analyses where the image of beauty is anti-aging and that a wrinkled and withered skin is not considered as beautiful, healthy or successful.

In many aspects, what many women considered beautiful also included an element of symmetry in the face. As one respondent described her impression of the projective stimuli (Appendix 2, plate 3), she identified the factors that signify beauty to her and compared her own image with them.

*Well her face is all proportionate rather perfect, she's got her make-up done perfectly, she's young, she's beautiful, she's all the things that I am not any more. (Female 40)*

Another participant indicated that she would make-up her face to draw attention to the face and away from other perceived faults in her body appearance, such as her larger size or short legs. In this way some respondents felt they could draw attention to their good features. Another used an attention grabbing statement on the face to hide other body inadequacies.

One woman described how she believed that her fair features needed definition because otherwise she felt her face looked flat and all one colour, making it impossible to distinguish her facial features. Others believed that their lips were the focal point of their face and would tend to always wear lipstick. Another respondent indicated that gloss, or even Vaseline, would be used when no colour was available just to keep the lips shiny.



Women discussed how their make-up routine may have changed over the years as their consumption of their own appearance fluctuated through various life transitions. As they aged they would tend to wear less eye make-up and more natural colours that blended with their eye colour more closely, as opposed to bright colours that would stand out.

*... they are more earthy colours to blend in with your eye colour and they just look a little bit, like you don't look like a clown, you know like bright eye shadow and stuff. (Female 34)*

Women undertook different make-up behaviours in order to gain different outcomes in the consumption of their own appearance. For example, one woman used make-up to distinguish herself from her twin sister and hence create an individual identity for herself. In contrast, another felt that she gained a certain amount of anonymity from the make-up she wore in her role as a customs official.

Almost all respondents discussed someone they knew who 'plastered' the make-up on. Interestingly, they would describe themselves as being different to these individuals despite the fact that many of the women would wear large amounts of make-up. In their comparison with these friends, it was not considered too much or over done. Once again the consumption of their own appearance was gauged in accordance with the behaviours of others in the community.

### Impact of parents on appearance

As highlighted in various sections throughout this chapter, parental influence had a significant impact on how these women consumed their appearance. Respondents often spoke of how their parents would drill them in the correct grooming procedure and how they should present to the world. For example,

*...as a child it was always drummed into me that even if you are going down to the shop you make yourself look presentable, you don't go down to the shop in your slippers and your torn pants and stuff that was just my upbringing you know. (Female 37)*

Similarly, another respondent remembered how beautiful her mother was and how she tried to mimic her make-up routine to achieve the same outcome.

*My mother is a very beautiful woman and she just wore a bit of eye liner, a little bit of mascara, and some blush when she went out. She had beautiful skin, it is very attractive and I try to look like her, don't know if it works but anyway...(Female, 39)*

Another respondent compares her routine with her mother's and comments on how her mother would rather be late than present without her front stage image. In this way she demonstrated a need to consume her appearance in a set and standardised way, a consumption pattern that has had significant impact on her daughter and her make-up routine to this day.

Respondent: *I grew up with a mother who never went out of the house without lipstick on.*

Interviewer: *Do you think you are the same now that you won't go out of the house without your lipstick on?*

Respondent: *I mean yeah probably, well I just feel better with it on, but mum would have all her make-up on and she wouldn't go anywhere without doing a routine, and I am not like that, I will throw some lipstick on or some lip gloss and go out, but she wouldn't do that, she would have to be all done up and her hair done perfectly. Yeah, she was always making everybody late because we*

*would all be waiting around, dad would be out in the car just about tooting the horn, and she would still be inside finishing her face off. (Female 48)*

## 6.5 SIGNIFICATION

When respondents were asked what visible face make-up signified to them, all participants indicated that in some way it helped them achieve increased self-esteem and self-confidence as described in previous sections of this chapter. Many women described how they would feel naked without facial cosmetics, because their face and appearance would not represent the self they wanted to portray to the public. Indeed, some women believed that an image of themselves without make-up did not fit the role they were undertaking and, hence, they displayed great discomfort at the idea of going without. Women commented on how they would feel vulnerable without make-up. They had a need for the mask-like characteristics it provided to feel dressed and 'nice'. They also perceived that they looked tired without make-up.

*I just feel like me, I just feel that its me and I feel that if I don't have make-up on I don't really want to look at anyone, ... I feel ugly. (Female 34)*

Many women believed that a lot of make-up was a sign of an artificial look. They linked large amounts of facial cosmetics, including foundation, eye make-up, blusher and lipstick, with the perception of something false and plastic, with this connotation being extended to the individual.

To really capture the image of beauty it seems that there needs to be a link between one's appearance and health, and many identified the importance of a clear perfect in skin as an important indicator of this. This is implied below where one respondent discusses her feelings towards the projective stimuli (Appendix 2, plate 3).

Respondent: *Yes I suppose she is beautiful but she looks healthy ... ..she has got lovely teeth obviously capped and all the rest but you know she looks healthy.*

Interviewer: *What is it that makes her look healthy, any ideas?*

Respondent: *Could be her eyes, nice teeth, clear skin. (Female, 53)*

As discussed previously, the elaborate extended ritual of make-up was considered as a mark of femininity and symbolic of being a girl. Indeed, in today's society, make-up is perceived as being part of the image of beauty for women.

The projective stimuli includes a range of appearances, from the images that signified beauty to pictures of shock and subculture trends (Appendix 2, plates 1-8). Most respondents felt the use of dark colours and the down-turned mouth in the make-up routine in these pictures was representative of 'horror' (Appendix 2, plate 2 & 8). They felt a sense of danger from viewing the individual in the picture, like a snarling dog warning not to approach. They felt it conveyed negative messages. Universally, all respondents felt that this unsmiling face signified an unwelcoming and unfriendly individual, and believed that the face represented the receptiveness of the individual to others as indicated by one woman's description of the projective stimuli:

*The downness of the mouth, the darkness around the eyes, and this I suppose its supposed to be like a vein,.... Oh yeah they are definitely dark, I mean I don't have any lipstick that is that colour,...yeah, no I don't like that at all, its awful. (Female 34)*

Another common response to these projective stimuli was that the face needed to reflect an identity and heavy Gothic make-up or garish antisocial facial adornments were considered a mask to hide behind. One respondent even believed it was analogous with the veils that Muslim women wear to conceal their identity. Indeed, many of the women interviewed felt that there was a rejection by mainstream society to heavily pierced

facial adornments because of the negative and fearful connotations attached to it by society.

Furthermore, the sign of a shaven head also had negative connotations for some:  
*... whether its just me over reacting to a shaven head or whether you can ever envisage seeing one of your children with a shaven head and understand what I am saying I don't know, but it's the connotation because it's either a prison thing, or it's a terminal illness cancer thing. (Female 58)*

Additionally, the Mendhi depicted on the picture in plate 5 (Appendix 2) was also considered only acceptable when attached to the Indian culture. When it was merged with a Western appearance, as in this example, it was considered out of place.

As such, all these stimuli represented a departure from the main-stream appearance code that society values and considers to be normal. The reason respondents rejected these images as representing the type of people who they would be keen to model or communicate with, is because of their digression from the accepted appearance code of Western society. By not being congruent with this code, these individuals are signifying other messages that are often received less favourably by the community.

### Facial features in communication

Many respondents described the importance of facial features in the communication process. Eyes were considered the 'window to the soul' and for some they reflected a person's character. Another suggested that eyes were an indicator of one's personality, whilst others spoke of the importance of the mouth and lips when attending a conversation.

*You know you focus on your eyes, because you look into peoples' eyes*

*when you talk to them, and when they are speaking to you, you look at their lips. (Female 47)*

A theme that emerged from the interviews was that people were drawn to the part of the face they were not comfortable with in themselves as they compared themselves with others. For example, one woman claimed she always looked at someone's nose after having an earlier rhinoplasty; another at someone's moles after having many removed herself; and finally another at someone's eyebrows because she perceived that she had none.

Often women would define beauty and identify perfection in an area that they perceived as inadequate or flawed in themselves. For example, where one might mention lips and another eyes each had a perception of beauty that incorporated that perceived dominant feature.

In considering the above, one respondent implied that she believed that make-up was more important than clothes and would feel confident going anywhere as long as she had mascara on.

*Cause I have got really light eye lashes and I have got little eyes so it makes me look like 'little piggy eyes' when I go out if I don't have anything on at all, so if I wear mascara I will go anywhere, I don't care what I am wearing or anything. (Female 34)*

On the other hand, some respondents discussed the importance of lips in the communication process and felt that it was important to have lipstick upon them.

*I do like to wear lipstick, I see myself as quite plain even though I have got dark hair. I think that lipstick sort of highlights you know, the first thing you see I think when you meet somebody, yeah to look at their lips or their eyes... (Female 34)*

In this way individuals perceived that the face was an intricate communication tool and the make-up upon it a complex sign of one's status, conformity and overall level of standing within the community. This silent language is learned through experience and hence has become a sign within the culture of Western Australia. In particular, the learned experience or indexicality attributed to this sign became apparent in various circumstances throughout the study. These and other analyses under the Peircean framework are discussed next.

## 6.6 PEIRCEAN ANALYSIS

In this section an analysis of the experiential dimension of make-up is presented. It is impossible to present every individual's experience with the sign of make-up so key themes that emerged from the data shall be discussed using Peirce's interpretation of the sign. These will be supported using quotes and experiences from participants to demonstrate the triadic nature of the sign of make-up, similar to other studies that have taken this approach (Grayson & Martinec, 2004).

### 6.6.1 Icon

As discussed in the theoretical framework (chapter 3), the icon is a sign that conveys meaning because of its close resemblance to the object. For example, one's reflection in the mirror is an icon; as it looks exactly the same as the person and is recognisable as a representation of the individual at that given time. In this study participants' photographs are the hypoicons of the sign of make-up because they represent an actual likeness to the object (Hawkes, 1973; Gottdeiner, 1995). However, the study revealed several interesting issues in regard to their true likeness.

Respondents were keen to see the photos of their different make-up encounters but were disappointed when they did not see a great deal of visual difference between the make-up outcomes for the four different settings.

*Well looking at them I don't see that there is any difference, so whether that is the fault of the camera or whatever. In actual fact this one here with nothing on to me now looks better to any of the other ones, although if I looked in the mirror and not at the photographs I would see differently.*

*(Female 53)*

This therefore begs the question of what constitutes a true icon. In this case the respondent felt that the photographs were not iconic of who she was and how she thought she looked. Others also alluded to these issues of iconicity when the photos did not represent the respondents' perception of their own faces. Participants commented on good and bad photos and these were judged on a criterion of similarity to their perceived self. The criterion for judging this, it seems, is linked to how women interpret their appearance and whether or not the photo is considered a true icon. From their point of view, if the photo was bad or showed the woman in a bad light, it was rejected as not being a true icon of the self.

One respondent also talked of being in control of the icon. She took an active interest in photography and described how, by being behind the camera, prevented her image being taken and, hence, she felt she had control over what was presented. From an artistic perspective she probably had higher expectations of her image to represent self-set ideals. Unfortunately, when the resulting images fell short of achieving this, she experienced a lack of confidence. The outcome was that she stereotyped herself as a less attractive person and believed that consequently she would be less successful.

*I studied photography at university, ... .. it was always a good excuse*



*because you are in front, you know, you have got the camera no one else is taking photos of you, cause I really hate having my photo taken. I don't have high thoughts of the way I look or anything like that you know.*

*(Female 34)*

The predominantly Christian culture of Western Australia was also influential in how people perceived some of the projective stimuli. In particular, the pictures of the Gothic and the Venus lady (Appendix 2, Plate 2 & 8) were considered to be demonic and representative of a fearful image. One woman felt this because of the symbolism of the colours, the dark eyes and the down-turned face and she linked these images with what her Christian culture perceived as evil. Several women believed that the Venus lady particularly was an icon of a more sinister and evil character.

*Yeah, the veins, the red, it's the dark, it's black and it's everything that embodies evil. (Female 40)*

Additionally, issues of iconicity were apparent when respondents underwent a transformation due to some life transition in which their make-up routine and visible facial appearance changed. During this process it takes time for the individual to recognise and accept the new image as a true reflection of self. In this instance there is confusion because the individual is still learning the sign of the new identity. During this process it is difficult for them to separate the two images and accept one over the other as a true icon of the self. Until the icon of the new make-up outcome is accepted as an authentic icon the respondent stays in a twilight zone of liminality.

Finally, most women believed that their front stage face was an hypoicon of themselves and that people interpreted their face with make-up on as the sign of who they were. For example, one respondent discussed seeing a picture of Pamela Anderson with no make-up on:

*Sometimes in magazines you see Pamela Anderson. It doesn't look like her with no make-up on, and you just think oh my god is that her? (Female 34)*

Women felt the same would be true for them if people saw them without make-up. These issues are discussed further under false signs but, to understand them, one first needs to examine the issues of indexicality and how they impact on women's make-up consumption behaviours.

## 6.6.2 Index

Unlike the icon, the index does not arise from the cultural customs but from some existential and causal connection between two entities (Gottdeiner, 1995 & Mick et al., 1999). An index works on the prior knowledge of the interpretant and the linkage of the two signs to create meaning; for instance, lightening and thunder, or, smoke and fire. The key themes that incorporate these elements of indexicality with regard to make-up are discussed below.

### Health

Findings from this study have indicated that most women believed that having a clear and perfect complexion was a sign of health and beauty. More specifically, having a 'glow' on the skin was an important index of health.

For example, one respondent had a fear of looking pale because of an earlier illness and used cosmetics to obtain this healthy glow, which she equated to being outdoors, fit and able. Because of her learned experiences, she interpreted the colour of a woman's skin as an index of health with the paleness she had once experienced being an index for infirmity.

*I wanted to make sure that I was still not like a white ghost, I had a real*

*thing about looking like a sick ghost sort of thing. I think about that or when people look white and they haven't been out in the sun a lot and they need to go out in the sun, to look healthy, so I put blush on to look healthy. I put a bit on here (she indicates to her cheeks) just to look a bit healthier, perhaps that is what it is, the colour just a healthy colour not like sun burn but healthy colour in the skin...(Female 39)*

The respondent continued to describe this skin tone as a healthy 'glow' to the skin, which she felt, was a sign of one's health. In this way, like many others, she believed from learned experiences that skin complexion and tone were indexical of health.

Other respondents also spoke of how they perceived what they termed 'colour' in their skin as signifying health.

*... it's just that she does have some colour in her skin I think, whereas mine is very pale so I think I need to enhance it. (Female 58)*

Another respondent concurred that colour is an index for health.

*I don't necessarily need eye mascara, because my eyes look fine when they are not made up but my lips are very pale and so is my skin so a bit of colour. (Female 37)*

Women felt the colour of a woman's skin needs to reflect health. To do this they believed that they should look slightly tanned (sun touched, but not brown), or if adopting the pale translucent look, they needed to have 'glow'. They also described the fine, but quite distinguishable line, between what they termed 'glow' and the popular pale ethereal look, versus, the pasty pale skin hue derived from no sunshine. The key ingredient they believed was 'glow' or illuminosity for this is what makes the pale image still appear healthy.

Consequently, in some cases a clear pale skin with these elements of illuminosity was also often considered an index of beauty because of the interpretants' learned understanding of its link with youth, purity, innocence and health.

The indexicality of a perfect skin is also demonstrated in respondents' learned experiences that certain precipitating factors influence complexion. For example, it was suggested that lots of chocolate or greasy food tended to cause blemishes. Almost all respondents discussed the importance of skin in their make-up routines and the need for an even, not blotchy, appearance. This was a learned index of health and beauty for many.

Respondents also commented on how their partners would demonstrate jealous behaviour if they perceived that they were too dressed up or looked too alluring. This included the aspect of wearing full-face make-up to provide an even and flawless complexion.

Another index of health was perfect white teeth. Several respondents spoke of how they would wear red lipstick to help highlight the teeth to make them look whiter and hence healthier.

Red lipstick, on the other hand, definitely had sexual connotations with the strong colour being used to draw attention to the mouth. Lipstick and lip-liners were used to change the shape of a woman's lips, often making them appear larger and more sensual than they really were. Large, brightly coloured, red lips were considered by some as an index for sexuality. Previous literature would strongly support this (Etcoff, 1999; Pallingston, 1999).

## Age

A further index was the facial lines and wrinkles associated with age. This is a learned response, so that when one sees these signs on the face they are associated with

age and deterioration of youth. Consequently, the sign of make-up was perceived to make women look younger.

Women's inability to apply make-up was also seen as an index for age because of the high visibility of these lines and the older look obtained by wearing little to no make-up. This index is inclusive of the knowledge that individual's sight and age may make it difficult for them to apply make-up as they used to. In addition, the eyes beneath the make-up were also considered by one respondent to be a true index of age.

Interviewer: *So when you are judging age is that somewhere that you tend to look, under the eyes?*

Respondent: *I think so yeah, I mean you have a look at this one (Picture of Anna Murdoch) and you can tell. ... .. I mean I have just turned 34 and looking in the mirror and they are going to happen, that is where it happens isn't it around the eyes and I notice every morning there is this big wrinkle right above here. (Female 34)*

Many older women discussed changes in their face with age such as their lips getting thinner.

*As you get older your lips get thinner, as your teeth fall inwards...(Female 47)*

Respondents also believed that there were issues of indexicality related to the artefacts that they used in their make-up rituals. For example, learned experience teaches individuals what artefacts are most appropriate for the time and place, and for the age of the individual wearing them.

*Age and time have caused me to change my make-up routine. I used to wear a lot of eye liner and now I put it on and I just feel I look a bit hard (Female 34)*

The use of make-up in a certain way and manner was also indexical of specific times. For example one respondent used make-up in creating an authentic sixties look with pale lipsticks and large doe eyelashes that society had learned to signify this era.

## Status

Make-up was also considered to be indexical of social class. One woman made a comparison of working behind the console at a petrol station in various suburbs of Perth. Depending on the demographic of the suburb she was working in, she would decide whether to wear make-up or not. More up market suburbs she felt required make-up whilst working blue collar suburbs did not.

*It's a social class thing, a status thing almost. If I worked behind the BP station in Maddington I wouldn't bother as compared to Subiaco. ... Yes it is, it's a social class thing definitely...(Female 40)*

## New index

Indexicality plays an important role in the interpretation of the sign. It is often a learned experience that creates the index and this is also evident with the paternal influence of some women where make-up was linked with being a 'slut'. As discussed earlier in this section, one respondent's father was very strong on when she could wear make-up because of his learned interpretation of it as a sign of sexual promiscuity. Because of this link with sexual availability, many girls were not allowed to wear make-up until they left school and were working. One respondent even indicated that, at seventeen, she was still not allowed to wear make-up because she remained at school. Hence her father still perceived her role as being virginal and prohibited her from wearing make-up because of the sexual implications that he believed this sign conveyed.

*I probably would have got a hiding, yeah, he would have gone off his head*

*what are wearing that for, you must be a slut! (Female 34)*

The interpretation of a sign can change and it is usually through the index that this takes place. Learned experiences help the interpretant to understand a new meaning of the sign. For example, where once a father had been very dogmatic about his daughters wearing make-up because of the sexual connotations he attached to it, he was led to rethink his opinion after his first daughter demonstrated that his interpretation of the sign was inaccurate and that society now had a new understanding of this sign. Therefore, his subsequent daughters were allowed to wear make-up at a younger age because of this learned experience. In this way, the oldest daughter moulded the parents thinking and exposed them to new interpretations of the sign. In doing so, a new index is formed from his learned experiences about the sign of make-up.

Similarly, new indexes are constantly created. A further example is the change in societal views of sun-damaged skin. Because of greater awareness of the damage that the sun can do and the need for skincare, beauty has been redefined as a fairer complexion.

*I don't necessarily find that being brown is attractive and, for me, myself, I actually like being quite pale, a bit different maybe I don't mind it yeah, fair. (Female 47)*

### 6.6.3 Symbol

According to Peirce (1955, p. 115), the symbol component of the sign is the concept, and to create new signs requires thoughts involving concepts. In this way symbols can grow and lead to the development of new signs, which, once created, spread among the culture and expand in meaning with use and experience. As we have seen above, the momentum from new knowledge and experiences creates new indexes

which, in turn, become new concepts and symbols. And so the Borromean knot whirls with index becoming symbol and so forth, merging and changing in constant gyrating perpetual motion creating new signs ad infinitum.

In regard to the symbol of visible face make-up, this study confirms that there are specific laws and rules in make-up application that define the appearance code of society. Foundation goes on the face, mascara on the eyes and lipstick on the lips. The individual needs to adhere strictly to this code, for defects in the code are perceived by society to be even more damning.

*With my skin type I have to be really careful about what I put on because some colours just go bright orange on me, and also why I don't wear lipstick a lot is because it comes off all the time, it doesn't stay on, or if it does come off it comes off on your teeth so I would have to constantly put it on. I also have trouble wearing mascara and eye liner because it smudges even though it's waterproof. (Female 53)*

Many respondents also believed that make-up was mainly confined to use by females in Western Australia. It was considered a behaviour that girls consumed and was symbolic of being feminine

*I suppose being female, being feminine because guys don't often wear make-up. (Female 47)*

In regard to the sign of make-up because of its mask like characteristics, to gain a full picture of this sign there needs to be some discussion about false signs.

### False signs

False signs, where extra linguistic signs deceive others and oneself, are very evident within the study. This deception includes instances where people may mistake



appearance for reality, what Peirce terms deception. Many women perceived that their face without make-up was a false sign, as it did not represent them as they perceived themselves to look. To them, the real image of themselves was one with make-up upon their face.

*I don't know why but I just feel as though I am not, I don't look very good without it, I don't look good at all. ... ..I don't look attractive without make-up on at all, in my opinion anyway, I think putting on make-up makes me feel more attractive, enhances anything I have got, I am not very good on this, because I am not very strong on how I feel I look. (Female 58)*

Furthermore, some women would prefer to miss an event rather than present the non-self as this would not be congruent with how they feel about their appearance. In this way, to present without make-up was like a false icon as the visual representation was not true to the image they perceived to be the real self.

The issue of false signs is an interesting one as far as make-up goes because of the issue of 'what is the true self'? One respondent spoke of how she would never go out any more without make-up and how she perceived her true self to be one with make-up. However the conundrum comes when one questions what is the true self? Is it the image used daily with make-up on? The one she accepts as being a true representation of herself? Or is the true self still underneath? The majority of women in this study believed the true self to be the one they presented to the world and this usually included some form of make-up.

Women were astute at recognising false signs and had the ability to view icons in a realistic and critical way. Several respondents discussed their opinion of the projective stimuli in plate 3 (Appendix 2). This image of youth and beauty was perceived quickly

as not reflecting an authentic sign. Indeed, some women perceived the pictures of themselves as unauthentic icons and associated them with being plastic and artificial.

*Yeah I know but you know yeah I think she is very beautiful but I don't think she would look like that really, you know photos are, she would definitely be at her best there and I think the photo is probably touched up a bit to make her look even better. (Female 34)*

*She's very made up, she's very artificial looking it's just not a look I like and she looks so different because her face is plastered with make-up. When I look at that photo I say well that is artificial and think that without that make-up she would look very ordinary. (Female 53)*

Respondents perceived that the mass media was filled with false signs; numerous pictures did not reflect authenticity. Study participants were aware that images in beauty magazines were false icons and, whilst they would conform to society's appearance code themselves, deep down some had desires to rebel against this by not selecting these images when asked to choose a picture that was similar to or different from themselves.

*I have got this photo from Marie Claire Magazine and there were lots of pictures to choose of beautiful white women and I know that they are air brushing it but they have immaculate beautiful make-up and I just didn't want to pick somebody like that, because that's what society says is the way it should be, and the way we should be. I wanted to pick people that are more natural... (Female 34)*

## 6.7 SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on presenting the findings from phase two of the study and hence highlights the experiential perspective of the sign of make-up. It begins by identifying that the main factor driving women's desire to wear make-up is the need to adhere to a societal appearance code. It discusses this code and the benefits that women derive from adopting it: such as; status, power, sexual allurement and increased self-esteem.

The chapter proceeds to discuss the factors influencing this appearance code and women's consumption of it. The pull of looking like their mothers, sisters, role models or significant others and the influence of fathers are all identified as playing an important role in how women are socialised to the code. In addition, different settings, special occasions, stereotyping and societal roles are also highlighted as being important in interpreting the appearance code of make-up.

The impact of youth, subcultures, group belonging and experimentation is discussed with reference to make-up routines used by respondents. Other issues including demographic and cultural origins, facial adornments, sun damage, financial drivers and compliments all meld to create the individual's interpretation of the appearance code and how they conform or rebel against it accordingly. Three major themes emerged under this section of the appearance code. They were: power, self-esteem / sexual allurement and the self.

An analysis of visible face make-up under the context of ritual as proposed by Rook (1985) is also provided. This analysis examines aspects of the ritual artefact, the ritual script, the performance role, and the audience in relation to cosmetics and their consumption. It offers evidence to suggest that make-up be considered an extremely ritualistic behaviour rich in myth and tradition.

A discussion of make-up and its use as a transformational agent is also presented. Rites of passage, such as the transition to womanhood, are addressed along with a multitude of other life and role transitions. It is proposed that make-up is a liminal product which women consume in the process of such transformations.

Respondents' experiences with make-up are also documented and discussed at length, and these help provide some understanding of how women consume appearance in the context of everyday life.

Finally, the issues of signification are addressed and an analysis of the data under a Peircean framework of icon, index and symbol is presented. In particular, emphasis on the index and the experiential dimensions that this element of the sign represents is highlighted. The importance of indexicality in creating new signs and the impact this has on the sign of make-up are also noted, as are the ramifications of false signs.

# CHAPTER 7

## DISCUSSION

This study examines the sign of make-up using two different semiotic perspectives. The significance of this process is that, by combining these approaches, a richer understanding of the sign of make-up becomes apparent.

In the first phase of the study the visual codes of make-up within Western Australian society were identified and defined as residual, dominant and emergent trends. These codes were mapped to provide a contextual picture of society's view of beauty and beauty images of the time. The maps present a window to the norms and values of the day and highlight the ideological platform that pervaded society at that point in time.

The second phase of the study explores a narrower focus by defining how Caucasian women aged thirty and over experience the sign of make-up in everyday life. It also provides insights into how individuals are socialised to the customs and codes of the sign of make-up and how, through these experiences, they gain meaning and mould their consumption behaviour. The findings from these two phases of the study are discussed and contrasted against the current literature.

## 7.0 PHASE ONE – COMMUNICATING THE SIGN

### 7.1 Power / status

Make-up has swung in and out of favour over the centuries and has been viewed as a medium that was symbolic of power, status and the mores of the individuals who wore it. Associated with this is the inextricable tie of make-up with the societal bodies of power. The historical context of make-up demonstrates that it has been linked to status from as early as Egyptian dynasties when the supply of this resource attracted a considerable power base. The literature (Corson, 1972; Gun, 1973) notes how initially it was the priests who were responsible for the distribution of this status based resource and who consequently gained considerable power from its supply to consumers. Findings from this study suggest that the contemporary link between cosmetics and power remains considerable and that a range of different power bases exist. Results also indicate that make-up and the appearance that women present to the world continues to be influential in status and standing in society. These concepts are discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### 7.1.1 Religion

It is no coincidence that the link between religion and cosmetics is a powerful theme that runs through the discourse of cosmetics. The ritualistic nature of cosmetics derives from their origins in sacred rites and practices where body painting and tattooing were commonly used to inscribe added meaning to religious ceremonies (Angeloglou, 1970; Gun, 1973). The battle ground for control of this resource took on new dimensions in Christian based societies, when a lack of personal adornment and an increased focus

on cleanliness became a power symbol during the rigid religious attitudes of early Christianity and the back lash against the decadence of the Roman Empire.

In European society, during the times of Puritanism, limited make-up was considered proper and respectful, whilst the use of visible make-up was viewed by the Church as demonic and sinful. This perception eventuated because soldiers, returning after the Crusades, brought back oils, unguents and a range of cosmetics that had been lost to European society for many years. Initially, only the wealthy could afford to purchase these imported products, however they quickly began to gather demand. Consequently, manufacture swiftly passed to the local witch who in the past had been responsible for brewing potions and remedies. The church rapidly felt its power base being eroded and, hence, the prelates of the time campaigned heavily against the demonic properties of these products. They reacted swiftly and decisively, calling many cosmetic manufacturers witches and burning them at the stake in their puritan drive to regain control (Angeloglou, 1970; Corson, 1972).

Remnants of these puritanic Christian values are reflected in the cosmetic regimes of women participating in this study. The image of the 'painted lady' or 'Jezobel' was often referred to, and was associated with, someone who wore heavy make-up and had a lax moral code. In this dimension, fathers were incredibly influential in defining what a suitable appearance was for their daughters. Therefore, the make-up that women wore whilst growing up often reflected the extent of the Christian values of their father. The impact of this was also carried forward into respondents' later years with either compliance with some minor adjustments to the appearance code recommended by their fathers, or total rebellion against it.

Women discussed how they had learned over time that certain make-up appearances were indicative of a 'tart', through the reaction from fathers, peers and

others in the community. The important aspect that this study highlights is that, even though society continually changes the appearance code and what it considers is acceptable, residual codes still linger and are often harboured throughout older generations. Hence, residual codes continue to be influential in society's interpretation of the sign of make-up. Consequently, power bases such as religion have a huge impact in shaping the appearance code and provide a starting point in understanding society's reaction to make-up.

### 7.1.2 Feminist power

Cosmetics have also been the product to facilitate the battle ground in other instances. The feminist movement use cosmetics as a symbolic product to demonstrate the paternalistic oppression of women. By attacking the large multinational companies, who they perceive have economic power over women through these products, they advocate that women should boycott these goods and refrain from wearing make-up. Also associated with this is the use of the female image as 'play thing' and 'sex toy'. Feminists perceive that the wearing and advertising of make-up perpetuates many of these demeaning stereotypes of women.

Participants in this study reflected the more liberal view of women in today's society and claim that their main reason for wearing make-up is for reasons of self confidence and individual attributions as opposed to alluring the opposite sex. This may well be due to the efforts of early suffragettes and the militant feminist movement of the early seventies (Cohen et al., 1996; Peis, 1998) who helped challenge society's valued ideal of beauty. In this study the use of cosmetics, and the need to wear them, appear to be more role dependent than stereotyped by gender. It is considered that women who



worked with children and animals have no need to wear make-up whilst for those working in an office environment or dealing in the service industry it is essential.

Feminists argue that women are still being exploited by cosmetics in their need to adhere to these appearance codes in the workplace. Professions, such as business, have a stronger male dominance and consequently have a different appearance code. Here, as in other settings, failure to adhere to this appearance code results in the risk of being ostracised, excluded and being less successful. Despite these consequences, most women interviewed, regardless of education and position within the organisation, claim this was not the reason that they wore make-up in this setting. They allege that the confidence they obtained from wearing make-up was the overriding driving motivator behind this behaviour.

The common assumption is that women wear make-up to attract the opposite sex (Etcoff, 1999; Pallington, 1999) and indeed evolutionary psychologists argue that self-decoration is an inherent component in the propagation of the species (Cary, 2000; Gad & Tripat, 2000; Goode, 2000). It seems from this study that receiving compliments from the opposite sex did influence some women in their appearance outcome. However, this is not the main reason the majority of women elect to wear, or not wear, make-up. What seems to be more influential is the need to adhere to the societal appearance code for the setting and, by adhering to this code, the women became more sexually alluring. Consequently, sexual allurements is a secondary outcome. The main reason is one of acceptance within society and the self confidence and status derived from this behaviour. Consumer researchers also comment on the status derived from adhering to societal appearance and behavioural codes (Belk, 1977; Englisss et al., 1994; Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Levy, 1996; McCracken, 1986; Richins, 1991 )

This study also indicates that advertising images are evolving with the earlier stereotypes of sexuality changing to represent an older, worldlier, successful woman. This is demonstrated through the semiotic maps with the image of a self confident, assured and successful woman progressively replacing the earlier sexual stereotypes used in advertising messages. This is probably driven by the changing attitudes to women within society. More women are working and gaining equality in the workforce, with more independence and more disposable income. This group consequently represents a huge economic market for cosmetic companies and, in order to communicate effectively with this audience and prosper from their patronage, they need to be aware that these consumers are more educated, media savvy, and not likely to be receptive to the patronising, paternalistic cosmetic advertising messages of old.

### 7.1.3 Economic power

The economic power of the large cosmetic multinational companies continues to have considerable influence over the image that women present to the world. The importance that these industries play in the GNP of many countries through employment and manufacture make them formidable opponents capable of influencing societal views through their mass communications and advertising campaigns (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Lury, 1996; Peis, 1998). Those seeking to challenge their ways do so at their peril because of these companies' economic, political and social clout.

Status is also reflected through the brand of cosmetics women wear. Brands with high brand equity are perceived to do a better job than less expensive unbranded products. Consumption of the brand appears to change with life transitions, depending on the level of disposable income. Products are often seen as extensions of self identity (Belk, 1988) reflecting the individual's status and stage of life. Many respondents appear

to be brand-loyal with this loyalty based on cosmetics that are known and trusted. However, the perception that more expensive products do a better job is strongly held by participants.

#### 7.1.4 Communication Power

Advertising has been demonstrated to have a persuasive influence on society's beauty ideals. Women naturally compare themselves with one another and with pictorial representations portrayed in the mass media (Engliss et al. 1994; Heilman, 1998; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995). These representations then pervade society to become standardised and valued as the ideal. They become the benchmark that defines the appearance 'code' women aspire to mimic (Thompson & Hirshman, 1995). And why wouldn't they want to mimic them? Studies have demonstrated that beautiful people are more likely to earn higher salaries, have better careers, be more outgoing in their social encounters and be more positive in their everyday interactions (Etcoff, 1999; Fabricant & Gould, 1993). Therefore, to adhere to the code and appear beautiful increases the individual's chances of success within that community. Subsequently, by exploring the discourse of make-up, it is possible to gain a snapshot of society and its values at the time through the visual communication offered by appearance.

This study defines the residual, dominant and emergent visible make-up codes of Australian society. In this initial semiotic analysis two beauty models emerge as future trends where cosmetics play a central role. The first is the young ethereal, mythical girl-like image not unlike images of nymphs, angels and muses narrated in stories. The look has clear, pale, translucent skin with a waifish figure that appears to transcend normal daily life activities and is in tune with nature or some spiritual realm. This representation is targeted at young girls who seek to mimic this image. The second is that of the

worldly, successful, more mature business woman of today. This look is one of slightly tanned, healthy skin with a large amount of make-up used to create the impression of a natural look. The image has the women as perfectly groomed with not a flaw or hair out of place. She conveys total control and readiness for any situation. In contrast, this representation is targeted at older women. It seems apparent from the findings in this study, that the female form is no longer just categorised into one stereotype. Distinct market segments are targeted by cosmetic companies using representations which depict the values that may entice and appeal to specific groups. These are accentuated in a narrower normalisation process to become the accepted norm for that specific age or group category. As such, the appearance code is defined and redefined with different, but tighter, boundaries for women to adhere to if they are to maintain their status within the community.

## 7.2 PHASE TWO – EXPERIENCING THE SIGN

Phase two of the study demonstrates how individuals are socialised to the appearance code. It explores how they experience everyday appearance and how the behaviour associated with adhering to the appearance code is ritualistic in nature.

This study not only defines how women communicate through make-up but how they experience appearance in their daily lives. Their roles, life transitions and construction of identity are played out through these appearance experiences and are moulded according to how successfully they meet the societal code of the time. The phenomenon of make-up is thereby code dependent, and within it symbolic consumption is rife. It is inextricably linked to the ritualistic behaviour that society adopts as normative, and includes life transitions, rites of passage, elements of magic and role

negotiation, as women emerge as active players in constructing and reconstructing their own self identity.

### 7.2.1 Rituals

Behaviour associated with the everyday grooming practices of human beings has been found to be ritualistic in nature (Beausoleil, 1994; McCracken, 1986; Rook, 1985). The use of face cosmetics in these grooming practices can also be defined as a ritualistic process using the framework identified by Rook (1985) of four tangible characteristics of a ritual process. Ogilvie and Ryan (2002) successfully used this framework to examine the ritual aspects of lipstick and demonstrated the highly symbolic and ceremonial context in which this product was used. Similarly, to explore the ritualistic behaviours associated with visible face make-up, this study also uses Rook's four dimensions of ritual (1985): the ritual artefact; ritual script; ritual performance; and audience as a framework to examine this phenomenon.

#### Ritual Artefact

Cosmetic products themselves can be categorised as ritual artefacts as their use is perceived to create significance and they are often associated with interpersonal communications. As artefacts, cosmetics are often exchanged as gifts (Belk, 1979; Sherry, 1983) and are a popular gift line for most women during festive occasions such as Christmas and birthdays.

This study indicates that women had one special artefact or 'essential cosmetic' that they felt they could not do without. This specific product, be it lipstick, eyebrow pencil or blusher, becomes central to the respondent's make-up routine and a key artefact in their daily grooming ritual. For these women the product conveys great meaning and importance because it allows them to present an appearance that they

perceive is congruent with whom they are and, with this image, interact with the world in a manner of their choosing. This supports Belk's (1988) theories of extended self where individual's symbolic consumption of products extends to group belongings, places, and even body parts and their alteration. Women believe that, with correct use of their cosmetic artefacts, they can achieve higher status and transform themselves into something they perceive as being better (Cerny, 1993; Levy, 1959). Hence, to achieve this increase in status, they undertake the grooming ritual because it is the visual difference achieved from applying make-up that causes this to happen.

Often a cosmetic artefact has particular significance for an individual and can be linked to a past experience or be related to a specific occurrence. For instance, one respondent's memories of her mother, where the red lipstick became symbolic to the daughter as representing the mother figure. Similarly, symbolic consumption of consumer products has been researched from a variety of viewpoints (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; Noble & Walker, 1997). Many consumer products have become symbols of specific lifestyles, group belonging or even of the consumption practices of the culture itself. Studies show that consumers are quick to interpret the language that these products represent and gain meaning from their use (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959). In this vein, consumer products, such as face make-up, are used today to differentiate individuals, just as the early markings of man had been used to claim clan identity and status. Now possessions signal a message about the individuals' position in society, idiosyncrasies and image of self within their community.

Another intriguing factor with cosmetic artefacts is the continual use of old fashioned remedies by contemporary women. This highlights the belief in tried and tested product consumption and also demonstrates the resurgence in ancient beauty remedies and the mysticism and magic that surrounds them. These recipes have been

handed down from mother to daughter and are in continual use despite availability of new and improved consumer products. Similar to the myths and stories handed down in other consumer research (Belk & Costa, 1998; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991) these recipes gain increased notoriety in the telling, and their tried and tested magical properties are seen to be more effective and better than commercial products.

Accordingly, recognising the potential market in these preparations and the increased interest by many consumers to 'new age' thinking, ancient remedies are successfully pervading the market place. Observational data obtained in this study confirms the heavy influence of ancient recipes in cosmetics today, with ingredients based on tried and tested preparations and advertising images used to harness the intrigue associated with these goods. Mysticism offers huge marketing potential because of its connotation with intrigue, the exotic and the spiritual holistic healing of old recipes. This, harnessed with a marketing message of social conscience, environmental sensitivity and no animal testing, makes a powerful marketing message to which many new age consumers have subscribed.

#### Learning the script:

The application of make-up has its own script, evidenced by the overall sequence of its application. Women use the same daily routine in their grooming practices and, more specifically, in their use of make-up. They put on their face make-up in exactly the same order each day, using the same method to apply the artefacts. Respondents claim that once they establish a certain way of doing their make-up that their ritual is set. They follow the same pattern of behaviour everyday, using the same products in the same sequence and often within a set time frame. These are all elements indicative of a ritual (Rook, 1985).

Women in this study indicate the learning of the ritual script is often subconscious and the individual is not even aware that it is taking place. The ritual script is learnt in many ways, including through the reading of magazines and books and by experimenting with peers in their teenage years. Other relatives such as older sisters and aunts are also reported to be instrumental in teaching the script.

A phenomenon of interest from this study is that women often subconsciously mimic the habits of their mothers. Data suggests that women tend to adopt the very make-up idiosyncrasies that they may have initially rebelled against in earlier life and, then later, these same habits are incorporated into their own daily grooming ritual. However, the role of mothers in teaching daughters the ritual script appears to be diminishing and is rapidly being replaced by mass media images and messages. From these mediums young girls today learn how to use the artefacts of the ritual and the appropriate order and methods of application. Through their interaction within society they learn what to wear to be accepted and when to wear it. In this way the normalisation process of the female form is perpetuated (Engliss et al., 1994; Lury, 1996; Heilman, 1998; Richins, 1991; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995) and the concept of beauty is standardised by the media images used to represent it (Bordo, 1990; Peis, 1998).

#### Performance Role:

Women adjust their facial make-up according to what role they are enacting, whether it is relaxing at home, working in a professional capacity or undertaking an especially symbolic event such as a wedding. It seemed important for respondents in this study to stay in control of the situation and, depending on the setting, they prepare for the audience and role they need to enact by applying the appropriate mask. Similarly, there are settings and roles deemed inappropriate for make-up use. These tend to be outdoor, active and casual occasions such as boating or wood chopping.



The geographical and climatic setting also has a major influence on the amount of make-up women consume, with women living in warmer climates wearing less make-up than those from cooler climates. Women in this study allege this is because of the practicalities of heat, and the belief that their make-up would ‘melt’ off their faces in hot climates. Place of residence also seems to have a bearing on the amount of make-up worn, with the perception that less formality is required in country regions than in the city. Consequently, role plays an important function in the ritual act. For this reason, role, and transcending one role to another, is elaborated upon later in this chapter under the context of role transition.

## Audience

The ritual audience for make-up ranges from the self to the various representations of the public world. In presenting this range of images to the world, respondents note the importance of the audience and, depending on who they were, adapt their make-up accordingly. As Goffman (1959) discusses, a definite front stage / back stage became apparent. The use of more visible face make-up in the women’s appearance is considered important for the front stage, whilst the use of little to no visible face make-up is reserved for relaxing at home with a more intimate audience.

Family culture is the first influential audience for many respondents as to when and what make-up to apply. Acceptance or rejection is received from spouses, significant others, work colleagues and the general community; and so in this way the audience guides the code that the respondent’s community adopts and accepts as normal and a valued appearance.

The private audience or backstage consists often of close friends and relatives, or just the self. As one respondent indicated, she was not comfortable with her ‘backstage’ appearance and hence only wears no make-up when alone. It was for these private

audiences that respondents wear no or very little make-up. In these situations women feel they can relax without their make-up on as they are not being judged and have no need to be concerned with their appearance.

Women in this study also reflect on their strong memories of their mothers preparing themselves for their husband's arrival home each evening. The need to be well presented for any audience, even the intimate ones, was considered important for these women and reflects behaviour considered appropriate for women of the time. Participants also commented on how their mothers felt that these behaviours were useful in transferring from mother to daughter the concepts of society's appearance code.

Other business women interviewed talked of how they believed visible face make-up was imperative for the business audience, particularly when they had important meetings because of the self confidence and power they derived from the image they presented.

Indeed, most women interviewed agreed that make-up is a shield from which they gain confidence. They perceive that it is all about presentation and presenting one's self to create the image desired for the role and the audience. Women indicate that they would take more time and care with their make-up ritual when preparing for front stage events and, depending on the audience and its considered importance, the ritual is increased and more make-up artefacts used.

All respondents believe that emotion influences the appearance presented to any audience and often make-up is used as a mask if women are feeling vulnerable or teary and do not wish to draw attention to themselves. Alternatively, if women are feeling happy and confident and they don't wear any or as much make-up, it is because they are more ready to tackle comments from their immediate audience indicating their conformity, or lack of compliance, to society's code.

## The Ritual Act

Everyday consumers adapt their appearance in line with society's dress code: including using adornment as a form of leisure and recreation; to express creativity and play; to mark a special occasion; as a means to add religious significance; or for enticing the opposite sex. Each mode of adornment is different and acts as a language about the intent of the wearer. For example, special festive adornment usually has different colours, materials, or designs than everyday attire, and can be seen as being symbolic of 'putting on a mood' (Roach and Eicher, 1979). The ritual happiness and cheerfulness associated with a wedding or the soberness experienced during a funeral is often signified by the adornment for the occasion. Roach and Eicher (1979) argue that the extent to which the mood is acquired often defines the level of social comfort that the individual experiences within that setting. This demonstrates the importance of adhering to the appropriate appearance code if individuals are to gain social comfort and acceptance in these settings. Every respondent indicated the high level of social anxiety they would experience if they were to attend a wedding or major function with no make-up on their faces. They perceived that they would be judged by other guests as not making any effort and not caring. This, they believed, may be construed as insulting as it mirrored that they did not consider the event important enough to make the extra effort.

A fascinating dimension to make-up application is the extension of the ritual act for special occasions. In these instances women would use artefacts not normally used and paint, shape, and distort parts of the face otherwise not attended. This process of extended self-care is considered by respondents to be a sign of femininity and the very act itself of wearing make-up a feminine behaviour. The extra care, time and effort put into a woman's make-up before a special event appear to be a way of extending the occasion. On special occasions it enables the respondent to extend the length of the

event and the anticipation and enjoyment associated with the event. Building on this, most participants admit they have a habit of carrying a 'survival' make-up kit to adjust their image even though they would never, or infrequently, use it. This behaviour itself also appears to be an extension of the ritual process even though the extra ritual itself is not performed.

McCracken (1986, p. 79) notes rituals involved with going out on a special occasion are a good example of how meaning is transferred from a consumer good to an individual. As he attests:

*Grooming rituals arm individuals who are 'going out' with the particularly glamorous, exalted, meaningful properties that exist in their 'best' consumer goods. Once captured and made resident in an individual, these meaningful properties give him/her new powers of confidence, aggression, and defence.*

This is a concept that is particularly relevant to make-up and its use by consumers for special events.

In today's busy, time-poor lifestyle many women discuss how they adjust their grooming ritual to compensate. They do this by shortening the ritual to fit a tight time-frame as they hurriedly prepare for work and/ or family needs, or electing to undertake and indulge in the ritual application of their make-up rather than having sustenance. In this way these women still derive the benefits of the ritual ceremony and the significant communication outcomes that they believe are linked to it.

The grooming ritual of make-up application is changing to accommodate these busy lifestyles and the length and setting of the ritual enactment has also undergone a dramatic transformation. Where once it was considered quite social for a woman to sit at her dressing table and dress her face, having a passing conversation with others in the

room, now these practices have been relegated to secrecy and the privacy of a bathroom with a closed door. Other researchers also note this change in practice (Beausoleil, 1994; Perrot, 1984; Chapkis, 1986). The ritual is no more isolated and private, with only very intimate others entering the realm where the ritual is enacted. Beausoleil (1994) also notes that when women undertake grooming practices collectively in a less private setting they usually do so with other women such as a mother, daughter or sister. The powder room therefore offers an interesting setting for further research into the dynamics within this ritual setting and the transformations that take place behind its closed doors.

### 7.2.3 Transformation

Women use visible face make-up to shape and create different identities. The powerful transformational properties of lipstick as a vehicle through which women can create and change their identity have been previously recorded (Ogilvie & Ryan, 2000). Findings from this study would also support this supposition, and transformations take the form of rites of passage, role transitions and even elements of magic. These transformations are discussed below.

Van Gennep (1960) argues that, during major phases of life transition, consumers undergo a period of liminality where individuals divest their old identity and prepare to metamorphose into a new one. Noble and Walker (1997) describe this liminal state as “the instability, ambiguity, and suspended identity that can occur in the transition from one significant role to another” (p 90). In this context, results from this study suggest that make-up represents an inexpensive and non-permanent means by which women can try on a new image and test the social response to it, unlike more permanent plastic surgery procedures (Schouten, 1991). It enables a quick retreat should the new image not

meet with approval or be congruent with the image the individual is trying to create. In this regard, make-up serves as an important vehicle in this liminal stage of the transformation process (van Genneep, 1960; Noble & Walker, 1997).

One of the important elements that characterises the liminoid state is the notion of play and the freedom to experiment with new interpretations (Schouten, 1991; Turner, 1974). Schouten (1991, p 421) claims that individuals in the liminal state are more likely to undertake 'identity play' and evaluate possible selves. Similarly in this study, women's make-up histories documented how they would try on new and different looks in the mirror until they perfected an image with which they were comfortable.

In undergoing a transformation, the new image is either accepted or rejected for another. Once accepted, the transformation process is complete. This process may occur quickly, or in some instances, may even take years. It also seems that when, the individual is more confident with the visual outcome that the cosmetics have created, they tend to stay with that appearance and its related ritual until the next transformation – which may happen rapidly, after an extended time, or sometimes not at all. This is similar to the transitional process described by other authors such as Schouten (1991) and Noble and Walker (1997).

So why do women want to transform themselves and reconstruct their identity? Fabricant and Gould (1993) purport that women use make-up and other external facial adornment to influence the non-verbal communications they wish to make. They claim that make-up has been used extensively to enhance the wearer's value and beauty in society. More specifically, the face itself is considered a window from which people may derive all sorts of information about the individual (Fabricant & Gould, 1993; Etkoff, 1999). Women in this study confirm these ideas and consider the face one of the most important parts of the body in the communication process. They feel that their

facial appearance has a significant influence on their status and standing in society, as well as defining who they are. The visible make-up used on the face is one way women can create identity as a means to define themselves and showcase their actual self.

Some researchers (Levinson, 1978, Schouten, 1991) propose that most people have relatively stable self-concepts. As Levinson (1978) notes, transition is usually stimulated by some triggering event and, before this is introduced, the nonliminal state is relatively stable and the individual ignores or endures the predisposing situation. As seen in this study, many women maintain the same cosmetic ritual for year upon year; unless transition in life or self occurs.

Schouten (1991) believes the triggering fact for these transitions may be explained through the desire for the 'possible self', particularly where the 'possible self' is perceived to be more appealing than the 'actual self'. This may explain why women change their make-up look and test out new appearances in an effort to reconstruct an identity that is congruent with how they wish to be perceived.

Depending on how desirable and attainable a possible self may be, (Markus & Nurius ,1986) people are motivated or repelled towards its consumption. Undesirable selves meet with rejection just as desirable ones are readily consumed. Schouten (1991) suggests that rejection occurs when the possible self is not desirable, unattainable or not congruent with whom the individual wishes to be. Rejection leads to continued liminality and the formation of yet another possible self. This is also demonstrated in this study when women wear make-up they are not comfortable with, for example, in make-overs for weddings, or when a certain look does not match their image of ideal self.

Similarly, just as women achieve a transformation of self through the use of different make-up routines, they also reach the same result by wearing less or no make-

up. Whenever the facial appearance is in contrast to the norm for the person either, with or without make-up, a new identity appears to be created when their appearance is altered in this manner. Participants in this study even use make-up in a total transformation to create a new identity for an evening. Using the prop of make-up for fancy dress and novelty evenings, individuals may create new personas to represent parts of themselves they would otherwise not feel comfortable projecting.

Conclusively, women in this study indicate that visible face make-up represents a mask of confidence and they will utilise make-up products to minimise perceived flaws they believe their face possessed. In this way, women transform their appearance in a desire to conform to what society values as beautiful and receive positive reinforcement in the form of compliments to support this behaviour.

### Rites of Passage

Transformation is also often seen in rites of passage or life-changing role transitions (Belk, 2001; Noble & Walker, 1997). As expected, the data from this research indicates that make-up serves as a rite of passage within Australian society. Such transformations mark major identity reconstructions and it is perplexing to observe an everyday product such as make-up playing such a major role in these significant life changes.

The first and most evident rite of passage is the transition from adolescence to womanhood. Face make-up is pivotal in the evolution from innocent child to young woman. Many women reported that this role transition from childhood to womanhood is a precursor for their use of visible face make-up and that face cosmetics are symbolic of 'coming of age'. The parallel association of sexual availability with this transformation mark it as an important transition from child to sexually desirable woman.



Similarly, women spoke of motherhood and the perception of this role in society. Society accepts the image of a 'mother' with no or limited face make-up because this role is perceived as natural and non-sexual in nature. Despite sexual allurement being an offshoot of conforming to a valued appearance code, one respondent did indicate how she would not make her face attractive because she was not available sexually. It seems that this behaviour links with her perceptions of how a woman should look as a mother.

In line with these beliefs, many informants have a similar view that women undertaking this role do not require large amounts of cosmetics in their daily presentation to the world. In undergoing this transition to the mother persona it is often necessary to pass through a liminal phase before accepting the new appearance. Respondents discuss how they are unclear about what a new mum should actually look like and find that make-up helps keep their identity intact. Each day in the hospital some explained how they would get up and put on their make-up as they passed through this liminal phase into the role of 'mother'.

Van Gennep (1960) proposes that important life changes such as these are characterised by three distinct phases. The first is separation, where the person removes themselves from their current position or place in the community. The second is transition, where the individual passes through a process of liminality where their identity is suspended and ambiguous. The third stage is incorporation, where the self is linked to the new role within society. Schouten (1991, p. 421), in his discussion of Van Gennep's analysis, purports that "liminality was a collective experience mediated by culturally prescribed rituals that afforded individuals the experience of *communitas* or shared psychological support throughout major status passages". In today's society liminality seems to be an increasingly isolated experience lacking the support of intimate groups of the past that had been involved in these significant rituals (Turner, 1974).

Consequently, new rituals have formed that use modern day possessions and activities from consumer culture (Mehta & Belk, 1991). These are used as the ritual artefacts and scripts (Rook, 1985) that inscribe meaning in these new rites.

These prepositions are supported in the use of make-up. Young girls try on different identities through a range of appearances with the kindred support of peers and advice on the script from the mass media. Similarly, more elderly women transform themselves and experience the liminal state in the presence of the beauty therapist or make-up artists whose expertise provide confidence to the individual for the new self that is being constructed.

Van Gennep suggests that the final process in these transitions is where the newly transformed individual emerges from the solitude of liminality back into the community. As Belk (1991, p. 31) notes, “this phase includes symbolic phenomena and actions that represent the individual’s entrance into a new, well- defined position in society”. This can be likened to women emerging from the bathroom with the new facial look. Belk (1991) proposes the metaphor that in these transformations there is a doorway where liminality and rituals reside on one side and, on the other, aggregation or acceptance back into the community take place. Aggregation takes place when the community admires and accepts the final appearance.

Throughout this transformation process rituals are performed at all phases of the transition: from before entering the liminal state, where women shower, cleanse and prepare their face similar to a blank canvass; to the actual process of applying the make-up; and finally, the woman emerges with the new self. The new self is complimented and the woman goes forth to reclaim her position and status within the community.

Another element of the transition process is that often individuals hold on to possessions that symbolise the past along with those associated with the new identity as

a means to help smooth the passage from one state to another (Belk, 1991; Noble & Walker, 1997). This may also be seen in the use of women's cosmetics and in particular lipstick, where masses of different colours and forms are hoarded just in case they need to slip back into the old identity again.

### Role transition

Respondents suggest that, besides transformation of the self occurring in major life transitions, it also continues to take place with age. Most respondents concur that, as they became older, it is not the appearance that is considered important but how they feel. Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) claim that the less confident an individual is within a certain role the more likely they are to use stereotypical representations of that role to feel comfortable and competent within it. Similarly, McAlexander and Schouten (1989) find that changes in appearance are symbolically important in coping with certain role transitions. This study finds that there are great differences between what the acceptable facial make-up code is, depending on the job and the relevant audience. In many instances make-up was used more by younger women and less intensely as they became older and more confident with their actual self.

Within society people are expected to have a specific appearance and individuals need to change this when they undergo a role transition in order to fit into that role. Make-up is considered an important product which assists in defining an individual's role in society and the transition from one role to another. For example, one respondent discussed how, when she was fifteen years old and working, she would wear foundation because it was an acceptable practice for someone who was working in an office position.

Similarly, another respondent discussed the role of a mother and how, during this phase of her life, she had different priorities and time pressures than when she was

working. Within this role she no longer had time to experiment with her facial appearance and her possible selves. In this role of the mother she, and many like her, frequently reported having limited audiences and outings and hence did not feel the need to make-up their faces.

Returning to the workforce after raising a family at home for a lengthy period was also considered a transitional phase in some women's lives. The importance of make-up is highlighted by women who describe getting ready for work and applying their make-up for this role as returning to their original self and regaining their old identity.

Included in this concept of role transition is that of transformation from 'mother at home' to 'woman going out'. Participants discussed this role change as significant because it is often so drastic, moving from an appearance that requires no make-up and is not considered sexually alluring, to that of provocative female with the possibility of sexual connotations attached. This transformation from one state to another is in many ways a magical experience for these women.

### 7.2.3 Magic

The use of make-up and the transformations that women achieve through its application has strong parallels to magic. Arnould et al. (1999) suggest that magic is reasserting itself in contemporary consumer culture and is deeply embedded in everyday practices and the transformational experiences stemming from them. The use of cosmetics can be considered as such a transformation and the daily routine of 'making-up' is encased in a magical formula as it is performed. The formula consists of three criteria, - 1) the individual must be prepared to undergo a state of transcendence, 2) the

matching of the ritualised procedure to the context and 3) the performance of the rite (Arnould et al., 1999). As Arnould et al. purport, the central theme of magic is that it transforms the individual in some way and then returns them to their original state, in the same way as a woman applies her make-up, engages the world and then returns to her original state with its removal. In this way it is believed that “magic ritualises people’s optimism, and enhances their faith in the victory of hope over fear” (Arnould et al., 1999, p. 3). In this situation, the hope of the individual’s acceptance within society, along with the derived secondary benefits they receive from wearing make-up like self confidence, status and sexual allurements. To provide the individual with hope over what may appear to be insurmountable, magic uses deep cultural scripts that harness cognitive and effective metaphors and work through the human body. As such, Arnould et al. purport, that magic is very much about power, and findings from this study support the belief that make-up possesses all the prerequisites to be considered in this category. It is rich in ritual with special scripts and symbolic artefacts used in closed sacralised rites, and it is perfused with power – religious, economic, political and sexual.

Historically sorcery was often used as a means of power to keep the status quo (Kapferer, 1997). Magic was utilised to explain the conflicts and contradictions of society and played an integral part as a mechanism to overcome or support repressive processes within a society. This is a recurring theme that is relevant to the attitudes that the Church held towards cosmetics at various stages throughout history.

Kapferer (1997) purports that sorcery, and understanding its consumption by humans, is a good way to comprehend their behaviour and, for this reason, is an appropriate dimension to use in the study of consumer behaviour because of its inexpressible link to the everyday struggle of human lives.

This is a useful metaphor to apply in this study for, whilst magic and science commonly overlap (Driver, 1991), the distinguishing feature in magical practices is ritual (Driver, 1991, Arnould et al, 1999). Rituals are “agents of transformation” and, whilst repetitive and exact, “are themselves transformed by the histories to which they belong.” (Driver, 1991, p.184). Driver uses the example of weddings, a rite of passage that creates great transformation to demonstrate how the ritual itself is subject to change through history. A similar analogy exists with cosmetics, where the daily ritual creates a magical transformation for many. The rites of the ritual, however, change with the practices of the day and become embedded in the society’s everyday behaviours. The historical overview presented earlier in this thesis confirms how make-up rituals have changed over time, yet these rites still maintain their ritualistic behavioural properties and hence should be considered as ‘magical’ transformations.

Closely aligned to magic is myth and, in today’s consumer culture, myths continue to have great relevance in the way people consume products. Advertising regularly capitalises on this. Frye’s tautology of four advertising themes (Stern, 1995) claims all advertising can be reduced to the four fundamental themes of comedy, tragedy, romance and irony; - the fundamental component being myth. Consequently myth still holds an extremely symbolic place within the fabric of most cultures. Even today, consumers are often motivated to action because of some underlying myth without giving any real thought to the rationale for that behaviour (Belk & Costa, 1998; Ogilvie et al., 2000). In ritualistic behaviour, such as the use of make-up, it would seem that underlying myths also play an important function in driving behaviours that are not necessarily based on logic but have their source in the myths, rituals and traditions of the culture. All of these are the building blocks for magic. Consequently myth, magic and make-up remain closely intertwined, - the transformations stemming from the make-up

ritual may therefore be considered magical and the behaviours associated with these rites are the end result of this amalgamation.

#### 7.2.4 Normalisation - Not victims but active players

This study concludes that women are not victims but active players in the consumption of make-up. Through their experiences they learn to understand the appearance code and what it communicates, as well as learning what society values and expects of them. It is how women experience the sign of make-up through which they gain meaning and it is also their experiences that shape their interpretation of the sign and mould aspects of indexicality.

Whilst some authors claim that indexes don't arise from the cultural customs but from some existential causal connection between two entities (Gottdeiner, 1995; Mick et al., 1999), this study suggests that cultural influences play a significant role in influencing the experiences that shape the interpretation of the sign and in particular the indexes of the sign.

Indexes are the intersection of two signs to create meaning and are learned interpretations, for example, lightning /thunder, clear perfect skin / health and beauty, where one sign leads to the existence of another. As experiences shape the knowledge base from which we draw understanding of these signs, it seems logical that the knowledge bases that determine our interpretation of the sign are at times influenced by our cultural surroundings. The notion that 'we are what we learn and know' is relevant here. Findings in this study suggest that, particularly with codes of appearance and the interpretation of the signs that constitute these appearance codes, consumer culture has had a large impact on how women understand the sign of visible face make-up. What is

considered beautiful is often shaped by the knowledge of what society values, as well as, to which group the individual can identify with and has a preference for belonging (Smith & Murray, 1999). This in itself is influenced by depictions of women in the mass media and the normalised form valued as beautiful (Engliss et al., 1994; Lury, 1996; Hielman, 1998; Richins, 1991; Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Thompson & Hirshman, 1995). In addition, individuals' experiences of society's reaction to certain appearance outcomes determine how the sign of make-up is interpreted by the individual and the community these people comprise. In this way new indexes are constantly created, the momentum for new knowledge and experiences creates new indexes which in turn become new concepts and symbols (Merrell, 2000).

This supports Merrell's (2000) idea that aspects of the sign change from representamen to interpretant to object and that they spin in perpetual movement as in his metaphor of the Boromean knot - change is continual. In this way new symbols and interpretations of the sign are created whilst old ones fade.

In regard to the symbol of visible face make-up this study confirms that in today's society there are specific laws and rules in make-up application that define the appearance code. Foundation goes on the face, mascara on the eyes and lipstick on the lips. There are specific appearance codes for situations, places and audiences. The individual needs to adhere strictly to these codes for defects in the code are judged harshly by society (Bordo, 1990 & 1991). The individual is then labelled and ostracised.

False signs where extra linguistic signs deceive others and oneself, are also evident with the sign of make-up. This deception includes occasions where people mistake appearance for reality, and what Peirce (Merrell, 2000) terms deception. In many instances women perceived that their face without make-up was a false sign, as it did not represent the self as they perceive it to look. To them, the real image of



themselves is one with make-up upon their face. Certain women even prefer to miss an event rather than present the non-self. To present without make-up is like a false icon, as the visual representation is not true to the reflection they perceive their identity to really be.

The issue of false signs is an interesting one in the instance of make-up as the concept of the true self emerges. Findings from this study indicate that women have multiple selves they present to the world but believe the true self to be the face they present most regularly to the world. This normally includes some form of make-up.

According to Beausoleil (1994), “women’s everyday make-up and appearance practices are indeed part of the social organisation of gender, race, class, femininity, sexuality, and the social construction of self” (p 33). To this end Beausoleil (1994) proposes that in understanding women’s use of visible face make-up it is more than adopting the normalised images depicted by mass media and increasingly about how women experience beauty and appearance within their everyday life that provides interesting dimensions in consumer behaviour. Recent studies (Beausoleil, 1994; Smith, 1990) take a different approach in proposing that women are not all victims of the normalisation process but are often willing agents who engage actively in defining social order. Indeed these authors claim that women are double subjects, in that they can be pawns of the process or alternatively, active and skilled participants, - a concept that is relevant to women and their use of make-up in society.

As Beausoleil (1994, p46) purports:

*“... we find women at work as active, skilled subjects, enjoying the decoration of their bodies, and while some counter images emerge from oppositional sites, some at least must emerge from the extrapolation of play, of expertise, of pleasure in the exercise of competence”.*

Beausoleil (1994) however, claims that women's experience with make-up and appearance in their everyday lives highlight dimensions not fully recognised by Goffman. Women, it seems, are orientated to one another and are in fact competent active players creating their own enjoyment through the make-up experience. Furthermore, women define who they are through this appearance and use it to elaborate the self (Beausoleil, 1994). For some women and in particular those that wear make-up regularly, identifying 'who they are' is only possible when wearing their make-up. This is also supported by Holt's (1995) typology of consumption in his fourth dimension of 'consumption for play'. These notions are fully corroborated by results from this study where the final overwhelming feeling from participants is that women are not victims, but active players carving their own identity as they wish to be seen under the cultural appearance code within their society.

This study demonstrates how women use make-up to interact with other consumers and how in their consumption of make-up all four metaphors of Holt's (1995) framework are pertinent in providing insights and understanding as to why women wear make-up. The experiential, the ritual and integration, the classification and semiotic meaning of make-up, and the autotelic aspects of play that women encounter as they create and interact with others through their appearance are all evident and have been discussed within this thesis. This has relevance because it is through understanding how women experience and consume appearance in everyday life that consumer behaviourists can gain insights into interpreting the sign of make-up. By interpreting the sign of make-up the researcher has a clearer comprehension of how and why such a simple everyday ritual pervades our culture and manifests itself so significantly in the conscious and subconscious actions and behaviours of women. Understanding the phenomenon of make-up and its associated behaviours is also significant as it provides

researchers with a window to the culture- its values, norms and composition - and offers a snapshot of Australian society, its underlying ideology as well as the consumer culture of the time.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

So why do women wear make-up? This study endeavours to answer this question using a communication and an experiential model of semiotics to explore the phenomena and the meaning of the sign of make-up. The purpose of the research is to gain insights into this aspect of everyday consumer behaviour, as well as to provide some comprehension of what make-up represents and signifies to women in contemporary Australia. The study elaborates on how visible face make-up affects the way women consume appearance in their everyday life and how they experience their own appearance in this context. It also details the influencing variables that assist to shape that experience and the role make-up plays in ascribing and creating the individual's identity within society.

Findings from this research indicate that the reasons why women wear make-up are multi faceted and influenced by a variety of stimuli; however, the most compelling reason that emerges is women's desire to conform to a societal appearance code. The code is strong in moulding and guiding facial appearance in every-day encounters and the benefits derived from adhering to this code are numerous. It seems that by conforming to the code the individual increases their chance of acceptance and success within their respective community.

In this study individuals perceived that the face is an intricate communication tool, and the make-up upon it a complex sign of one's status, level of conformity and

overall standing within the community. It is evident that this silent language of the 'sign' is learned through experience and in this way becomes accepted as a meaningful symbol within Australian culture.

To interpret and understand consumer signs such as make-up in daily life is valuable. It gives meaning to how everyday experiences permeate the cultural practices of society and how, by learned behaviour, individuals respond and interpret these signs. Signs become interwoven and inscribed within the society and become benchmarks for the values, practices, norms and mores of that civilisation. Hence, they offer a snapshot of consumer behaviour of the time.

Within this study, women's learned experience and the indexicality of the sign of make-up is explored. Individuals' experiences and what they learned from these experiences are shown to be indices of their own interpretation of appearance. This research identifies these indexes and the knowledge that shapes their creation. The information derived from this process provides a clearer view of how society interprets the sign of make-up. This is significant, for, in interpreting the sign, it also provides knowledge into the ritualistic nature of make-up and the conscious and subconscious behaviours associated with its use. Whilst many women believe they know why they wear make-up, when reflecting on their behaviour, they are often unsure of the reasons for their repetitive, ceremonial actions. The new knowledge offered by this research assists to improve understanding of these everyday rituals. This arms the researcher with a better appreciation of how consumer culture influences individuals' thinking and the ramifications that these thought processes have on product consumption. In a marketing context, this becomes increasingly relevant as it allows marketers the ability to better tailor their communications with consumers so as to design marketing strategies with maximum impact. For example, marketers can incorporate the importance of myth and

ritual into their product development, promotional material and packaging; and advertising messages can harness these concepts as they engage with consumers to form more relevant representations of everyday appearance.

This research is also significant as it presents a semiotic analysis from an individual perspective and examines the experiential dynamic of an everyday phenomenon,- an area that to date has had limited attention from consumer researchers. In addition, the research also offers significant advances in methodological design by introducing a new dual semiotic approach to explore this everyday consumer behaviour. The benefit of this new approach is that it delivers a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at hand by providing information on women's consumption of make-up from a communication as well as an experiential perspective. This holistic approach bestows added meaning to comprehending the everyday behaviour of wearing make-up and provides an excellent vehicle to explore how women actually do consume appearance in everyday life – a concept that to date has not been developed at any length within the marketing literature.

#### Directions for the future and further research

Extending from this research are several areas worthy of further study. Because of the importance make-up holds in the transition process, it would be useful to explore other liminal products such as hair colour, facial accessories like earrings and facial piercings, along with amulets and scent, and to examine their role in the transition process. Are they also acting as liminal products? What roles do these products play in creating the new self and are they as influential as make-up? Furthermore, do individuals consume these products as readily as make-up and, once consumed, what do they communicate about the wearer from both a communication angle as well as an individual experiential perspective? It would also be fascinating to understand what

triggers individuals to join or leave groups that modify their appearance in specific ways to demonstrate group membership, and to explore the dynamics and motivations guiding these transitions?

With the change in social attitudes to make-up, girls are wearing make-up at an increasingly younger age. Cosmetics have become a common contemporary gift line for very young girls. It would be interesting to explore how these girls are socialised to make-up and the impact dolls such as 'Barbie' and 'Bratz', toy make-up kits and other consumer products have on the use of make-up by this group. Expanding from this concept, how relevant are the experiences of the group in this study in influencing the indexes of these young girls – what 'baggage' do they bring to the interpretation of the sign and how is the sign changing because of it?

Another important concept to stem from this study is that of the powder room and the activities and behaviours associated with it. This special and often sacred place can have many faces - from the dark dingy night club bathroom, to the opulence of the old British Raj powder room, or the decadence of a five star marbled hotel. Each setting brings with it a different ambience and behaviour. The powder room is also interesting because it is the place where the transition takes place, the backstage where women adjust their look before re-entering the public arena. It is also the place for many other activities such as women's talk, girls comparing notes on their dates, and illicit behaviour such as drug use. In as much, the powder room offers a unique culture of its own that warrants further study. To explore the behaviours within this setting and the dynamics influencing this place, along with how the same individual may adapt their behaviour when in different powder rooms, would prove a fascinating project and add considerably to the knowledge base of consumer research.

Finally, it would also be worthwhile to discover whether other semiotic philosophies can be combined together to provide added and richer meaning to everyday consumer behaviours. In exploring these signs it would be intriguing to know what impact consumer culture has on the experiences that shape learning and the indices we derive from them. In this context, how we learn, and what we learn, and the ramifications this has on the interpretation of signs.

In conclusion, this research adds to the marketing literature by providing a new methodological approach to study everyday consumer phenomena. It provides rich detail on the ritualistic nature of make-up and the conscious and subconscious motivations linked to this behaviour. It also identifies the driving factors that propel women to wear make-up and why they partake in this ritual. This study also explores how women consume appearance in everyday life in contemporary Australia, all of which are noteworthy findings. Consequently, this study is significant as a research endeavour and, through its findings, offers valuable information for consumer researchers and professional marketers alike in their pursuit of appearance research.



# CHAPTER 9

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## 9.1 Collage References

The pictorial collages on the front cover and in figure 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 were assembled from pictorial representations taken from the following Australian print media.

*Almay: Hypo-allergenic*, c. 1999. "Courtney Thorne-Smith", promotional material Allmay and Priceline.

*Avon*, 2001. "Naturals: Naturally better buys", Campaign No. 5

*Avon*, 2001. "Look 3 years younger in 8 weeks or your money back", Campaign No. 7

*Ayurveda Life Wisdom*, 2000. Promotional material, The Body Shop, Mulgrave, Victoria: Australia

'*B*', November, 2000.

*Bride To Be*, Autumn, 1999. Vol. 107.

*Chic: Autumn/Winter Collection*, c. 2000. Promotional material, Lancome: Paris

"Cindy Crawford" in *The West Australian*, November 25, 2000.

*Cleo : Extra*, 'Summer Beauty Guide'. October, 1994

*Cosmopolitan*, April, 1996.

*Elle Australia*, September, 2001, No.139.

*Harris Scarfe*, Winter Sale Catalogue, 1999.

*Instinct*, c. 1999. Promotional material, Lancome: Paris

"Ita Buttrose" in *The West Australian*, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

*Lancome Mascaras*, c. 2000. Promotional material, Lancome: Paris

*L'oreal: Paris*, 2001. 'Passion: first look Spring 2001'. Promotional material, L'oreal: Paris

*Myers*, 1999. Personal photograph of cosmetic product display – taken Cannington store W.A., July, 1999.

*New Idea*, December 23, 2000.

*New Idea*, November 25, 2000.

*Nutrimetics Product Catalogue*, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2000.

*Nutrimetics Product Catalogue*, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2001.

*Nutrimetics Product Catalogue*, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2001.

*Nutrimetics Product Catalogue*, February, 2001

*Sisley: A Breakthrough Formula in the Anti-aging Battle*, c. 2000. Promotional material, Sisley: Paris

*Skinlights : Face Illuminators*, c. 2000. Promotional material, Revlon.

“Sunday” in *The Sunday Times*, November 18, 2001.

*The Australian Women’s Weekly*, August, 2001

*Wella Hair and Fashion Party*, December, 2001. Promotional material, Wella.

“Western Australian Fashion Week” in *The Sunday Times*, June 27, 1999.

*Woman’s Day*, September 15, 1997.

*Woman’s Day*, April 22, 2002.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix 1: Metropolitan Perth

Image removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.

### Legend

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1: Joondalup</b> | <b>4: Claremont</b>  |
| <b>2: Morley</b>    | <b>5: Cannington</b> |
| <b>3: Midland</b>   | <b>6: Fremantle</b>  |

## Appendix 2: Pictorial Projective Stimuli

### **Plate 1:**

Anna Murdoch Mann.

Photograph by Eddie Sanderson. *The Australian Women's Weekly*, August 2001.

Front cover page

### **Plate 2:**

“In Your Face”

Jenette Stevenson. Photograph by Frances Andrijich. *The West Magazine*, January 6, 2001. Front Cover and p 13. Newspaper House, Osbourne Park, Western Australia.

### **Plate 3:**

Nutrimetics girl

Promotional catalogue.2001 *Nutrimetics International (Australia) Pty Ltd.* Form No. 91033

### **Plate 4:**

“Japanese Girl”

1958, photograph by Sheldon Brody. *The Reinhold visuals collection*. Portfolio 5, Color

### **Plate 5:**

Mehndi Girl

Sumita Batra : (1999). *The art of mehndi with Liz Wilde*, London: Sevenoaks, p102

Picture credits: Lorraine Day

### **Plate 6:**

New Guinea Tribal Boy

Red ochre paint is applied to the face of a young boy, Mount Hagen highlands, New Guinea. (1973) *Itzhenry & Whiteside Limited*.

### **Plate7:**

Backstage

*W.A. Ballet Co.* – backstage No. 2 Series 3

Jasmin Roberts , Dancer

### **Plate 8:**

Innner Space – Outer Space.

*Return of the tribal: Piercing, tattooing, body painting and scarification*

Camphausen, R. C. (1997). Rochester: Vermont, Park Street Press.

Images removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.

PLATE 1: Anna Murdoch Mann    PLATE 2: 'In Your Face'

PLATE 3: 'Nutrimetics Girl'    PLATE 4: 'Japanese Girl'



Images removed for copyright reasons. Please refer to printed version.

PLATE 5: Mhendi Girl    PLATE 6: New Guinea Tribal Boy

PLATE 7: 'Backstage'    PLATE 8: 'Inner Space Outer Space'