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Physical Appearance and the Moral Conduct of the Female Subject in Inter-War Iceland

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ABSTRACT

In the writings of Icelandic public intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s we see the emergence of a discourse that links the physical appearance of women to their nature and moral standing. This chapter explores a selection of such writings and studies how their male authors linked female beauty to particular visions of social progress and the future of Icelandic society. The texts are seen as attempts to influence the conduct of the female citizen, effecting self-formative processes in aid of personal and social reform.

Á árunum milli stríða skrifuðu ýmsir íslenskir mektarmenn greinar í blöð og tímarit sem fjölluðu um hlutverk kvenna bæði í opinberu lífi og einkalífi. Meðal þessara skrifa er að finna umfjallanir þar sem útlit eða fegurð kvenna er tengd innræti þeirra og siðferðisþreki. Þannig fjölluðu höfundar á borð við Guðmund Finnbogason, Halldór Laxness, Guðmund Kamban og Grétar Fells um það hvernig útlit kvenna spegladi edli þeirra. Þótt þeir hafi haft gjörólíkar skoðanir á hlutverki kvenna og framtíðarskipan íslensks samsfélags hvöttu þeir allir konur til að hlúa að því sem þeir álitu náttúrubundna eiginleika og birtust ekki síst í útliti þeirra, líkamstjáningu eða fegurð. Í kaflanum eru þessi skrif tengd borgaralegri fagurfræði sem skilgreindi gagnverkandi áhrif hins góða og hins fagra, en slík fagurfræði var áberandi í umræðum um menningarmál á tímabilinu. Boðskapur þeirra menntamanna sem tjáðu sig á opinberum vettvangi um íslensku fyrirmyndarkonuna laut að því að sú kona sem hlúir að útliti sínu og framkomu, verri jafnframt að hlúa að sínum innra manni; að eigin göfuglyndi, siðferði og dyggðum. Með sama hætti álitu þeir að fegurð þeirra hefði áhrif á þá karla sem yrðu hennar aðnjótandi, myndi göfuga þá og efla. Hvort sem menntamennirnir álitu fyrirmyndarkonuna vera trúfasta eiginkonu, umhyggjusama móður, menningarlegan leiðtoga, barnslegan einfeldning eða sjálfstæða vitsmunaveru snérist umræðan um að tengja saman hið fagra og góða í fari kvenna og brýna þær til hegðunar sem þeir álitu vera til félagslegra og persónulegra framfara. Þótt framtíðarsýn þessara karla væri ólík skírskotuðu þeir allir til 'edliskosta' kvenna til að færa rök fyrir æskilegri hegðun þeirra.

INTRODUCTION

The beauty myth is always actually prescribing behaviour and not appearance.

*Naomi Wolf*¹

The objective of this chapter is to examine the ideal Icelandic female as a subject and citizen of the newly formed Icelandic nation-state by studying the opinions voiced by Icelandic intellectuals from the mid-1920s until the mid-1930s. More specifically, I am interested in exploring how physical appearance is linked to moral character and how reference to female beauty works as a prescriptive element in this discourse. Though these texts claim to provide an objective description of the nature of the female subject, they are prescriptive in that they offered male and female readers of the period strong indications as to how a woman should conduct herself to be loyal to her 'true self' as an Icelandic woman. In line with Naomi Wolf's dictum, cited above, I want to suggest that while the authors I cite are dealing in different ways with the physical appearance of women, their use of the imagery of universal beauty is instrumental in sustaining what they maintain to be ideal and moral behaviour.

The texts I explore appeared in newspapers and leading Icelandic journals and periodicals on culture and politics, which enjoyed widespread dissemination within Iceland. They were written by male intellectuals, academics and artists, who sought to pay homage to women by attributing to them a distinctive ability or nature that brought together beauty and virtue. A number of these male writers offer a detailed treatment of their argument, even adopting a scientific style that is supported by reference to scholarly works and research, while others only make brief reference to beauty as an ethical quality. The claims put forward in these texts were not unanimously accepted for a variety of reasons, with some even being considered highly controversial. Yet, on the whole they did carry credence with their readership, which was largely due to the standing of the authors, their method of reasoning and reference to 'serious' knowledge and the mode of publication.

By selecting these particular writings I want to link concerns with visual aesthetics that were emerging in the local vernacular at the time to issues related to the moral governance of the populace, that is, concerns with 'governing others'². I want to tease out how writings on the physical appearance of women can be seen as attempts to influence the personal conduct of individuals. These texts can be interlinked with other suggestions and claims that sought social reform and were voiced in the media and in political circles at the time. Such works were written at a time in which a nationalistic atmosphere prevailed in the country, when Icelanders were asking themselves fundamental questions about the kind of society and citizens they wanted to develop in their newly independent nation-state.

The focus of this chapter is to study the intent of the texts examined and to analyse how they relate to strategies of governance. Whilst no attention will be paid to their reception by women and the general population, it should be stressed, however, that this ap-

proach does not seek to efface or reject female reflexive agency in this matter. Women were without doubt active in accepting, appropriating, rejecting or ignoring these and other ideas about personal conduct. It is beyond the scope of this chapter, however, to explore how these ideas were reflected in the thought and behaviour of contemporary female subjects.

As already indicated, the discussion below will be confined to the physical appearance of females. This is because the beauty of men in general was seldom addressed, even though individual male bodies in sports or the visual arts may have been commented upon as being aesthetically pleasing. The physical appearance of men in general did not figure in contemporary Icelandic discourse to the same extent as the appearance of women. In Icelandic and other Western texts, beauty was often perceived as a quality that women possessed, while authors dealing with the qualities of men or individuals in general tended to emphasize other 'social' values.

This can arguably be attributed to the patriarchal order of things in Iceland, with women being the object of the male (and female) gaze in a male-governed discourse. This is not to suggest that women in Iceland had no interest in male physical appearance, but it does indicate that the issue was considered off limits in terms of serious written discourse that was almost exclusively produced by men. Male writers may have feared the stigma of homosexuality and women an appearance of vulgarity.

THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD

When reforming social commentary makes reference to the physical beauty of women and uses aesthetic/sensual considerations about personal appearance in order to substantiate claims about the nature of the ideal female subject and how a female citizen should conduct herself in order to be true to her alleged nature, it becomes a form of cultural politics. This type of social commentary operates as a field of interaction between political activity that aims to make a population conduct itself in a certain way and culture as an aesthetic undertaking and as a way of life. It involves techniques aimed at moving a population towards certain modes of conduct that are perceived as building blocks of the model society and the morally sound individual.

In general, such cultural politics draw on widely perceived ideas about the interactive relationship between the beautiful and the good and the associated connection between ugliness and evil. Such ideas have been prevalent at various times and since the 18th century have been associated with the emergence of bourgeois aesthetics. This interrelationship is most clearly manifested in ideas regarding the social impact of art, which can be seen as foundational for producing political interest in the arts. Thus, art as a medium of the beautiful has been seen to have had an elevating impact on the receiver, in terms of wellbeing, self development and moral standing³. An example of this position can be found in the views of Alexander Jóhannesson, an Icelandic Germanist

and later a university rector, who in 1919 made the following statement at the Reykjavík Student Society: “All art and all schools of art have indeed aimed at the same: to beautify and improve life”⁴. Yet, such beauty is not confined to the realms of the artistic in Jóhannesson’s mind. Nature’s beauty or the beauty of a human being can convey identical effects on an onlooker because, as Jóhannesson concludes, “whoever understands beauty in whatever form it appears, and has learned to love it, will instinctively become a good man; he will be all transformed both body and soul”⁵. The presence of a beautiful woman can thus be seen to contribute to the betterment of those who are exposed to her physical beauty just as a great piece of art may elevate the soul of an art lover to a higher moral plane or to a more developed selfhood.

As will be discussed below this way of reasoning also applies, according to the authors explored, to the effect a woman’s beauty has on herself on a moral level. The idea of the cultivating effect of beauty is translated into the assumption that a *truly* beautiful woman is also a virtuous woman. This seems to be the case even though the writers studied would obviously have been aware of the opposite assumption, most vividly illustrated in Oscar Wilde’s *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*. The key to this way of thinking may lie in the definition of beauty or the distinction between true and false beauty. Hence, according to Jóhannesson and those who shared his vision, the beauty of Mr. Gray would fall into the latter category.

NATURAL BEAUTY

In the 1920s the “status and role” of the “Icelandic woman” became a debated issue in local journals and newspapers. On the one hand, writings on this theme touched on the civic rights of women, but on the other hand, and often simultaneously, they dealt with emerging modernity in the style and fashion of young ladies in the rapidly growing city of Reykjavík⁶. The burgeoning capital was catching up with modernisation as experienced in neighbouring countries, with cultural establishments such as cinemas becoming central institutions amidst the cityscape. Many of the young women of Reykjavík modelled their appearance and attitudes on the glamorous heroines of European and American films⁷, in stark contrast to their mothers’ generation, the majority of whom had grown up in farming households and had usually had little or no visual encounters with urban culture and metropolitan trends in fashion. As a general trend in the Western world, the historian Arthur Marwick links the popularity of motion pictures to a “heightened preoccupation with female self-presentation in the twenties, as compared with the pre-war years”⁸. As Kimmo Ahonen asserts in the chapter entitled *My Husband Is an Alien! Suburban Dreams and Anxieties in the United States in the 1950s*, in this volume, the idea of beauty was central to the marketing of Hollywood films⁹.

This manifestation of modernity was distressing for many respectable citizens who were committed to social reform. The matter was addressed in an essay by Guðmundur

Finnbogason, a professor of applied psychology at the University of Iceland. Finnbogason directs his essay at Icelandic women, warning them against the use of cosmetics and makeup, which he finds physically and morally unwholesome. After describing the history of cosmetic use through the centuries, he turns to explore the “duty that women have to preserve their innate beauty and to increase it as much as they can”¹⁰. He goes on to state that the “maintenance and enhancement of beauty ... not least feminine beauty, is and should be one of the eternal objectives of mankind”¹¹. In this respect, he maintains that all individuals have a duty to take care of themselves, emphasizing the responsibility of women to safeguard their beauty. Thus, he argues that it should be “the pleasing duty of every woman to preserve the beauty bestowed upon her and seek to enhance it as much as possible as long as it does not disagree with other higher duties”¹².

However, Finnbogason states that beautification is not achieved by applying cosmetics to the human skin. On the contrary, true beauty can only be preserved and enhanced by “assisting nature in its toil”, because human beauty is “realised by the healthy and harmonious workings of the faculties, spiritual and physical, that humans possess”. According to the professor, these faculties are “within ourselves” and “are either in affable cooperation or at war with the forces of the external world”. Thus, he argues that it is “of the utmost importance to assist the internal forces, to constitute cooperation with the external forces that strengthen them and to provide them with fighting power against destructive forces”¹³. In order to validate his theory regarding the destructive capacity of cosmetics Finnbogason refers to the works of foreign specialists, citing at length a study by Dr. Ignaz Saudek, a German-Czech physician¹⁴. The intention was to convince his readers that the “use of makeup impedes the workings of the skin from which natural beauty stems: the living beauty of the complexion”. He continues in a similar didactic manner in order to explain that

the kind of beauty that is the true possession of the person originates in her nature. It is as a ray from the flame of life. Makeup, on the other hand, is a dead colour, smeared on the skin. It is indeed a mask that veils it. ... And nobody should imagine that it is a harmless game to falsify one’s appearance. The love of truth is the foundation of the highest duty of mankind, and each uncorrupted soul has an instinctive respect for what is genuine, [she] recognises that it is more important to be than to appear, that appearance is nothing but vanity and a shadow if it suggests something different than what lies beneath¹⁵.

Thus, Finnbogason constitutes a correlation between the use of cosmetics and the corruption of the soul. A female who uses makeup not only modifies her appearance, but also becomes entangled in a web of falsification and lies; she fails her duties and shuns what is authentic and true.

Within the Icelandic community, Finnbogason was a highly respected public intellectual. He was well known for his substantial part as a young man in the educational reforms of 1907 and for his philosophical and psychological writings. He was at the forefront of introducing aesthetics to Icelandic readers. Indeed, his book on the subject,

published in 1918, was the first of its kind to appear in Icelandic¹⁶. Having enjoyed a cosmopolitan education in Copenhagen, Paris and Berlin at the turn of the century, by the 1920s Finnbogason was considered to be rather conservative with regard to cultural matters. He was also an ardent nationalist, as were most Icelandic intellectuals at the time, and he was prone to look to Icelandic national history for role models and ideals to furnish his reformative social agenda. Thus, in his historical account of the use of makeup he extols the natural and healthy beauty of Icelandic women through the centuries, who, according to his sources, never used any sort of cosmetics. Against this ideal, he pitted ‘foreign’ women and their use of makeup that took on its most vulgar form “on the faces of prostitutes”¹⁷. In other words, he stresses the misguided morality of foreign prostitutes in contrast to the uncorrupted nature of the true Icelandic female, who becomes an ideal of purity and authenticity. Consequently, Finnbogason establishes a binary opposition that links the commitment of women to their nation to a concept of beauty based on their personal appearance.

Finnbogason’s academic background in psychology is one of the main factors that gives his essay gravitas. His manifesto on female beauty draws directly on his well-publicised doctoral thesis of 1911, in which he originally developed the notion of “sympathetic understanding”. In this dissertation he tackled the question of how people constitute interpersonal relations through their various senses. He argued that relations were constituted through the human ability to imagine the situation of others, or in other words the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another person. According to Finnbogason, this understanding was a defining element that helped to establish a sense of communality, which again was the basis of a good society¹⁸.

His remarkable dismissal of facial makeup as a falsifying mask can be read in the context of these ideas on relations between humans, or on the threads that lie ‘from soul to soul’. The face, he claims, is central for accessing the other: “The human face is the mirror of internal life”¹⁹. Thus, unveiled access to it is essential in order to acquire knowledge of the other person. This is reflective of sociologist Chris Jenks²⁰ claim that western society has come to emphasize sight as the principal provider of access to knowledge. Consequently, this has resulted in a belief that conflates visual ability with cognition²¹. Finnbogason sees cosmetics as an artificial barrier to direct personal communication, blocking the pathway people have for acquiring true knowledge about each other, a knowledge he perceives as foundational for social harmony²².

Finnbogason’s thesis of sympathetic understanding also had relevance for his concern for aesthetics, which he developed in his dissertation and in his book on aesthetics. It is through sympathetic understanding, he maintains, that people can truly appreciate beautiful music, paintings, sculptures etc. By looking at or listening to such works of art, an aesthete can gain access to the state of mind of the genius that created them. The beauty of a work of art conveys the elevated moral state in which it was created and disseminates it to the group of beneficiaries²³. Similarly, true female beauty not only

reflects the noble character of the lady who possesses it, but also has a reformatory effect on her fellow citizens.

THE MODERN WOMAN AND THE DOMESTICATED FLOWER

While many endorsed Finnbogason's celebration of "natural femininity", other male intellectuals (gallantly) took to defending the "modern woman". By the mid-1920s bobbed hair had become the trademark of fashionable young women. The young radical Halldór Laxness, who later received the Nobel Prize in literature, wrote of the *bubikopf* or *cheveux à la garçonne* as a symbol of the independent and cosmopolitan woman. In line with the proponents of this particular fashion statement, he maintained that short hair was "testimony of a new mentality, a new understanding of the status of women and their role in life; it is an exterior symbol of something that amounts to women's totally new outlook on life"²⁴.

The symbolism of the *bubikopf* relates to issues of emancipation, which may or may not have contributed to the negative reception expressed by men like Finnbogason. However, in a short note to the "Vaka" journal, Finnbogason seems only to be concerned with aesthetic considerations, commenting bluntly and with uncharacteristic ferocity:

Now a couple of years ago some job in Paris bobbed the braids of a beautiful girl, and instead of hanging him, as he deserved, women all over the world revenge this atrocity on their own person, by cutting off one of the most beautiful adornments that God has given them²⁵.

The act of women cutting their hair short, Finnbogason concludes, is an "offence against nature"²⁶.

Others were to follow Laxness' point of view. In an essay published in the "Eimreiðin" journal, the playwright and theatre director Guðmundur Kamban sought to describe and defend the emergence of "the independent and cosmopolitan woman" in Reykjavík. According to Kamban, the dissemination of international civilisation, which was mankind's "common yardstick of social behaviour", designed to keep barbarism at bay, had always been in the hands of women²⁷. Everywhere, he wrote, women have been the initiators and leaders in the quest for refinement in manners and morals: "Indeed, the international movement to civilisation has been the venture of women"²⁸. Moreover, he saw international fashion as playing an integral part in the drive towards civilisation. Thus, the way in which "the Reykjavík girl" adopted a modern style of dress, which he claimed was modelled on the beauty of ancient Greek attire, the bobbed hairstyle and the tasteful use of cosmetics, was an indication of her central role in the civilising process.

The young women of Reykjavík have in a matter of a few years been transformed, not only in clothing and attitude, but also in independence of taste. And it is a blind man who does not perceive that behind this external transformation one can glimpse its cause: a desire to beautify their surroundings, a desire for pleasant company, a desire to derive pleasure from life, for more beauty, for enhanced civility²⁹.

As in Finnbogason's essay on cosmetics, there is a flux in the above quotation between the descriptive and the prescriptive. Kamban addresses his young women readers directly: "The duty to civilise the nation is on your shoulders"³⁰. He tells them that dresses, hairstyles and makeup form only the exterior of the truly modern woman. He then goes on to praise the particular abilities of Icelandic women, alongside their particular duties and desire to lead society to an elevated state of beauty and morality.

Kamban's enthusiasm on behalf of the 'modern woman' can be contrasted to the image provided by the writer and theosophist Grétar Fells in an essay entitled "The woman", which appeared in the same journal. According to the journal's editor, the text is a "conscientious attempt to analyze the subject meticulously"³¹. Fells begins by advising his readers that "in order to appreciate the woman it is essential to be familiar with her distinct nature and role, and understand her psychological stance towards life"³². He goes on to outline the specific nature of "the woman" by projecting various binary oppositions that he believed could be discerned between the sexes, which reflected common perceptions about sexual differences. Women are thus seen to "usually have a more tenuous, delicate, playful and impulsive" emotional life than men. He informs his readers that the heart of a woman "is more mature than her brain", not that he intends this assertion to be interpreted as being a negative factor for women, because "sometimes the heart has more sense than the head". Rather he views the matter as being purely an objective description that illustrates the different nature of the sexes³³.

Furthermore, Fells believed motherhood to be the prime function of women, with good mothers being crucial in terms of the welfare and success of nations³⁴. He equates the "beauty and noble-mindedness" of the "ancient Greek nation" to the emphasis they placed on the healthy lifestyle of pregnant women and "that they would encounter, as much as possible, beautifying and ennobling influences" while pregnant. The writer also elaborates upon the notion that ennobling influences on mothers-to-be are translated into and reflected in ennobling methods of upbringing. However, he states that such methods demand discipline. Thus, Fells argues that a child needs to be disciplined, but the success of this approach is ultimately based on the mother's ability to discipline her own conduct: "He [sic] who intends to discipline others must first and foremost practice *self-discipline*"³⁵. Hence, the fate of the nation depends upon the mothers' abilities to discipline themselves. A mother must set an example for the child and therefore must discipline herself in order to maximise her true nature and calling as a mother. Fells states that "we [sic] must preserve the *woman within the woman*" in order to "cultivate and safeguard her special nature" from the moral dangers such as those suggested by feminism, a movement he considered "in general healthy and beneficial when not taken to the extreme"³⁶.

Fells concludes that the essence of femininity is reflected in 'flowerlike' qualities: "Every true and uncorrupted woman is a kind of *flower-soul* [*blómsál*]. The characteristics of a flower-soul are left open for interpretation by Fells, but he does argue that they involve "the grace of flower-nature [*blómeðli*] and a childlike outlook towards existence". What

is clear to Fells is that these qualities are extremely desirable and will only be manifested when a woman “is allowed to flourish” and reveal her true nature, that is, the way she is “and how she *should be*”³⁷.

GOVERNING BEHAVIOUR

A common feature of the above writings is that they all attempt to describe women by associating aspects of female appearance with their subjectivity. The positive elements of female appearance – which were deemed to constitute women’s beauty – were seen as closely bound to their positive traits as individuals (and vice-versa). As indicated above, such an association moves from being descriptive of looks and characteristics to being prescriptive of behaviour. Female (and male) readers were being advised on how to behave by these intellectuals who substantiated their claims by reference to serious knowledge: to the ancient Greeks, Icelandic history, cultivated behaviour, aesthetics, what is beautiful, what is good, what is moral etc. On these grounds, can it be maintained that these men were engaged in an activity, applying techniques and tactics, which Michel Foucault identified as a modern form of governance, ‘conducting the conduct’ of individuals and society?³⁸

It may seem to be overstretching the concept of governance to suggest that writings on female beauty might fall under such a rubric. We are arguably all too familiar with the fortunes of concepts like ‘culture’ and ‘politics’ which have been stretched and broadened by modern theorists, with the result that their connotations have become highly imprecise. The awkwardness of applying the concept of governance in order to signal how ‘beauty’ has been used to manipulate and develop the conduct of individuals arguably stems from the fact that state governments do not as a rule implement policies specifically related to beauty. Indeed, the Icelandic government has never operated a State Bureau of Beauty.

The state is not immune, however, to considerations of beauty and physical appearance. The controversy that broke out in the 1930s, between visual artists and the Icelandic government’s Cultural Council provides an example of state institutions being interested in questions of beauty. For more than a decade the Culture Council, which was responsible for buying new works of art on behalf of the state, resisted purchasing items that it perceived to be ugly and thus potentially morally treacherous. These works tended to overwhelmingly be the product of the younger generation of artists, who rejected the naturalistic imagery of the older generation³⁹. It can thus be maintained that the practical implementation of state art policy was indeed concerned with promoting what was deemed beautiful by the Cultural Council.

Issues of personal physical appearance were also of concern to the Icelandic state, as beauty was often associated with the healthy body⁴⁰. Yet, one must remember that in this regard governance is not limited to the preoccupations of state-run institutions. A whole variety of miscellaneous private enterprises undertake business on the basis of in-

terest in personal appearance. Growing concern with physical appearance in the inter-war years is reflected in the increased number of commercialised services on offer that were aimed at women and their appearance. The first hair salon for ladies, for instance, was established in Reykjavík in 1912. By 1942, the rising population of Reykjavík could choose between twenty-eight hair salons for women⁴¹.

This growing demand for services devoted to personal appearance among the Icelandic female population emerged during a period of increased affluence. However, the growing interest among Icelandic women in their personal appearance is not simply explained by rising levels of prosperity. One must also consider the increased volume of writings on female beauty and the population's exposure to visual imagery, such as films and advertisements that promoted fashion and style. Within this discourse, beauty is manifested as an intrinsic quality of all women, thereby suggesting a kind of democratisation of female beauty. The message of beauty-guides and advertisements directed at the female subject was: "You can become beautiful". Whether one paid heed to Finnbogason's warnings, Kamban's celebration of the modern woman or Fells' homage to the domesticated wife/mother, personal appearance and aspiring to beauty had become a matter of conscious identity forming for the female Icelander, a matter of disciplining the self into becoming beautiful and good, or – as many would have it – docile through self-regulation⁴².

The aesthetic rationale that linked beauty and social virtue went beyond an individual's self-formative process. Public intellectuals in Iceland, who posed as authorities on 'the female', linked their message to concerns for social reform. They advanced the idea that the female citizen of the emerging independent nation should cultivate certain personal aesthetic qualities that would lead to a community that could boast of its beautiful women, who conducted themselves ethically and led the way to Iceland becoming an exemplary civilised nation.

NOTES

- ¹ N. Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, London 1990, p. 14.
- ² M. Dean, *Governmentality. Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London 1999; N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom. Reframing Political Thought*, Cambridge 1999.
- ³ E. Belfiore, O. Bennett, *The Social Impact of the Arts. An Intellectual History*, Basingstoke 2008.
- ⁴ A. Jóhannesson, *Erindi um fegurð*, in "Andvaka", vol. 2, 1919, p. 137.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.
- ⁶ S. Matthíasdóttir, *Menningardeilur og kvenleiki á árunum milli stríða*, in A. Agnarsdóttir, et al. (eds.), *Kvenmaslóðir*, Reykjavík 2001; Id., *Hinn sanni Íslendingur. Þjóðerni, kyngevri og vald á Íslandi 1900-1930*, Reykjavík 2004, p. 145 and passim.
- ⁷ On the visual dissemination of beauty through motion pictures, Arthur Marwick notes: "The new industry of film was, by the time it had become fully organized in the 1920s, the greatest single source for the employment of beautiful people so far created". A. Marwick, *Beauty in History. Society, Politics and Personal Appearance c.1500 to the Present*, London 1988, p. 295.

- ⁸ Marwick, *Beauty* cit., p. 298.
- ⁹ Present volume, pp. 88-100.
- ¹⁰ G. Finnbogason, *Um andlitsfarða*, in "Íðunn", vol. 8, 1924, p. 105.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 106.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.
- ¹⁴ I. Saudek, *Kosmetik: Ein kurzer Abriss der ärztlichen Verschönerungskunde*, Leipzig 1915.
- ¹⁵ Finnbogason, *Um andlitsfarða* cit., pp. 108-109.
- ¹⁶ Id., *Frá sjónarheimi*, Reykjavík 1918.
- ¹⁷ Id., *Um andlitsfarða* cit., p. 104.
- ¹⁸ Id., *Den Sympatiske Forstaaelse*, Copenhagen 1911; J.L. Pind, *Frá sál til sálar. Ævi og verk Guðmundar Finnbogasonar sálfræðings*, Reykjavík 2006.
- ¹⁹ Finnbogason, *Um andlitsfarða* cit., p. 110.
- ²⁰ C. Jenks, *The Centrality of the Eye in Western Culture*, in Id. (ed.), *Visual Culture*, London 1995, p. 1.
- ²¹ See C. Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, New Haven 1990.
- ²² Perhaps this may be compared to the current uneasiness in many western societies with regard to headscarves worn by some Islamic women. One argument against the veil is that it inhibits the possibility to 'know' the veiled (female) person; a sentiment that has been linked to western (male) 'obsessions' with knowing the Other.
- ²³ Finnbogason, *Den Sympatiske* cit.
- ²⁴ H.K. Laxness, *Drengjakollurinn og íslenska konan*, in "Morgunblaðið", 9 August 1925, pp. 5-6.
- ²⁵ G. Finnbogason, *Hárið*, in "Vaka", vol. 1, 1927, p. 383.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 383.
- ²⁷ G. Kamban, *Reykjavíkurstúlkan*, in "Eimreiðin", vol. 35, 1929, p. 226.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 230.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 230.
- ³¹ G. Fells, *Konan*, in "Eimreiðin", vol. 41, 1935, p. 291.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 291.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 292.
- ³⁴ Cf. Kimmo Ahonen's discussion of the gender roles and domestication in post-World War II America in his chapter, cited above, in this volume.
- ³⁵ Fells, *Konan* cit., p. 294, emphasis original.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 294, emphasis original.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 296, emphasis original.
- ³⁸ M. Foucault, *Governmentality*, in G. Burchell, C. Gordon, P. Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*, New York 1991, pp. 87-104; Id., *Technologies of the Self*, in J.D. Faubion (ed.), *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*, London 2000, pp. 223-251; Dean, *Governmentality* cit.; Rose, *Powers* cit.
- ³⁹ A. Ingólfsson, *Listamannadeilur*, in B. Nordal (ed.), *Í deiglunni 1930-1944. Frá Alþingishátíð til lýðveldisstofnunar*, Reykjavík 1994, pp. 139-152.

- ⁴⁰ Marwick, *Beauty* cit., p. 296; S. Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, New York 1978.
- ⁴¹ B. Baldursdóttir, Þ. Þorvaldsdóttir, *Hár er höfuðdjásn. Saga háriðna á Íslandi*, Reykjavík forthcoming.
- ⁴² See T. Bennett, *Culture. A Reformer's Science*, London 1998, pp. 79-82.

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