

Awakening Beauty

An illustrated look at mankind's love and hatred of beauty

by

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Introduction

Beauty is one of those subjects that always seems to get people's attention. My own fascination with the subject came from my attraction to beautiful women. Much to my surprise, however, it didn't take long before I became as interested in what was behind the beautiful visage as I was with the package it came in. Beauty affects virtually every aspect of our emotional and cultural life. Even our physical health is impacted by beauty. On the other hand, when it comes to appreciating the profound importance of beauty, virtually no other subject is as well protected by a mantle of denial and dismissiveness. It seems to be accepted that serious authors and researchers don't write about beauty. The subject area, like beauty itself, is presumed to be only skin deep.

Beauty, as a subject area, is a seamless tapestry made up of many different colors, but always a part of the same fabric. This seamless quality to the subject area is reflected in this book. When we discuss plastic surgery, for example, we end up exploring beauty's relationship to sexuality. And when we explore the relationship between sexuality and beauty, we end up discussing the rich man/pretty woman connection.

My expertise on the subject of beauty is the culmination of twenty years of formal study and professional work. In the late 1980's I held a medical psychology fellowship in plastic surgery. My work in plastic surgery afforded me the opportunity to study, in depth, both patients and surgical procedures. Before that, I wrote a dissertation on the relationship between physical attractiveness, personality and family environment. In 1980 I conducted research at a large mental hospital in the Midwest, in an effort to ferret out the connection between physical attractiveness and mental illness. For seven years I held a position at a consulting firm as a developer, writer and teacher of various subjects related to beauty and attractiveness, with the sole purpose of increasing both for our clients. I have judged over 100 beauty pageants, including The Miss and Mrs. California USA Beauty Pageants. Ten years after the original publication of my research which identified, for the first time, the personalities of patients who undergo plastic surgery, I still receive requests from all over the world for reprints from surgeons and students interested in the relationship between beauty and personality.

My work in forensics has impressed upon me the value that comes from understanding beauty. After twenty years of study and work in the area, I say with some conviction that anyone

who thinks that beauty is only skin deep hasn't thought a lot about the subject. Understanding beauty provides a window into the soul of man. No matter who you are, your life has been changed by beauty.

Chapter I: Beautiful Women

There are two kinds of women: beautiful women, and women who want or have wanted to be beautiful. Beautiful women and those who want to be beautiful have spawned a multi-billion dollar beauty industry, an industry which sells hair color, plastic surgery, and everything imaginable in between. Beautiful women both feel and can arouse deep emotion, but it is not always positive emotion. For example, beautiful women are forever chasing greater beauty, while at the same time anxiously trying to fend off the effects of aging. Consider that unattractive women in pursuit of beauty often hate, with a passion, those women who already possess the beauty they so desperately desire.

Men, like women, are profoundly affected by beauty. Consider the shared human experience which gave rise to the song: "When You're in Love with a Beautiful Woman," made popular by the band Dr. Hook:

When you're in love with a beautiful woman, it's hard. When you're in love with a beautiful woman, you know it's hard, cause everybody wants her, everybody loves her, everybody wants to take your baby home.

When you're in love with a beautiful woman, you watch your friends. When you're in love with a beautiful woman, it never ends, you know that is crazy and you wanna trust her, then somebody hangs up when you answer the phone. When you're in love with a beautiful woman, you go it alone.

Maybe it's just an ego problem, problem is that I've been fooled before by fair-weather friends and faint hearted lovers, and every time it happens it just convinces me more.

When you're in love with a beautiful woman, you watch her eyes. When you're in love with a beautiful woman, you look for lies, 'cause everybody tempts her everybody tells her she's the most beautiful woman they know. When you're in love with a beautiful woman, you go it alone.

Chapter II: Makeup and Beauty

Cosmetics and makeup are a multi-billion dollar a year and growing international business. The following list of market study reports of this burgeoning worldwide business provides the reader with a sense of just how important beauty-care products are to commerce. What follows is a sampling of some of the market segments in the cosmetic industry: Lip Care; Lip Makeup; Medicated Skin Care; Toilet Soaps; Bath and Shower Care; Over-the-Counter Medicated Skin Care; Prescription Skin Care; Fragrances and Perfume; Hair Care; Oral Care; Shaving Men; Shaving Women; Deodorants; Facial Rejuvenation; Hair Colorants; Hair Perms; Feminine Hygiene; Nail Care; Eye Makeup; Face Depilatories; Body Depilatories; Grooming Aids (brushes, combs, etc.); Beauty Appliances (hair dryers, etc.); and a myriad of other items and products which promise an increase in beauty for the purchaser. What follows is a representative abstract for just one of these cosmetic and makeup market studies:

"The worldwide lip care products market is a small part of the cosmetics and personal care (C&P) market. The lip care market is highly competitive and mirrors the trends in the C&P market. The report includes a brief profile of the product, and explores the factors that play an important role in influencing the market, which includes trends in pricing, packaging, distribution, emerging niches and technology advances. Regional market analysis, followed by strategic developments such as product launches licensing details, and others are also included. Primary markets worldwide are analyzed with annual estimates and projections. Geographic markets individually addressed are -The United States; Canada; Japan; Europe - France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Spain, Russia, Rest of Western Europe, Eastern Europe; Asia-Pacific, The Middle East and Latin America. Product segments separately analyzed include lip revitalizers, chap stick, lip medex, lip balms/ointments and lip shield." (Abstract from: Lip Care Products. Published by Global Industry Analysts, Inc. (GIA) is a U.S. based world leader in business intelligence and strategy support).

The price for such a report, as identified above, is \$3,450. The cost is indicative of the value of this segment of the cosmetic industry.

Chapter III: Rich Man/Pretty Woman

In my professional life, I have spent a great deal of time around powerful men and beautiful women. One thing you learn early on is that the two go together. One or the other of these two groups have been my clients, my patients, my research subjects and my friends. Studies have shown that as the attractiveness of the girlfriend or wife increases, so does the income of her boyfriend or husband. Another thing you learn from experience is that the beautiful women in these rich man/pretty woman relationships will, sooner or later, become very unhappy.

My rich male clients are fond of telling the story about the three friends in a bar who notice the entrance of an absolutely stunning and beautiful woman. One friend points her out and exclaims: "Somewhere, someone is tired of that." The first time I heard that story I knew something profound was behind using the word "that" rather than "her" to refer to the woman.

To understand the rich man/pretty woman-"that" connection, you first have to understand that beautiful women begin life as pretty girls. Study after study has shown that pretty little girls are treated differently. That treatment is almost always positive from little boys and men alike. That treatment isn't always so predictably positive when it comes from other women or little girls, however.

A lifelong pattern of being the girl other girls love to hate begins as early as kindergarten. One of my little attractive female research subjects, age 5, had her hair spray-painted by two 7-year-old female students. I took it upon myself to investigate who these rogue spray painters might be. They turned out to be average-looking little girls with brown hair. After some clinical probing it became obvious that my little research subject's only sin was that she had been born beautiful, and that was enough to warrant the assault from the jealous girls.

One thing is for certain: as soon as the pretty little girl is seen by little boys, she gets attention. She learns that she has something that all the boys seem to like, and like a lot. Studies of seven year-old pretty girls find that their male classmates have already learned to shower them with gifts. The pretty girls at this age have already learned that they are entitled to have it their way, except from other little girls. Those "other" little girls learn a painful lesson that the gifts and attention showered upon pretty girls are denied them.

Chapter IV: The Cult of the Beautiful Egg

It is impossible to write about beauty without focusing upon what I call the cult of the beautiful egg. By way of background, let me say that the "egg" part of my terminology is uniquely biological and the "cult" part is uniquely sociological. The metaphor of the "beautiful egg" is a good one, because it does encompass both biology and sociology as it seeks to explain behavior of the sexes and everything that goes along with it, including beauty. The dynamics of the admixture of biology and sociology creates any number of psychological mechanisms which regulate our fascination with beauty.

To take the rich man/pretty woman match-up as just one example, this classic pairing between wealth and beauty is modulated and regulated by this cult. As previously mentioned, wealthy men and beautiful women correlate quite nicely with one another. The quest for beauty, however, is not limited to those who are already attractive or those who are wealthy. By analogy, in one sense the rich man/pretty woman match-up equates with the "big" leagues; while on the other hand, less attractive women and their lower status and less wealthy targets and suitors, make up the minor leagues. The analogy between the cult of the beautiful egg and minor league baseball is a good one, because as every baseball fan will attest, some of the most fiercely competitive baseball occurs in the minor leagues. In fact, the intensity with which some "little league" games are played suggests something very powerful about the motivation to win. So it is with the cult of the beautiful egg.

There is a timeless consistency to the cult of the beautiful egg. One can study how men and women mate, how women get along with one another, the customs of courtship or any other overview or specific segment of man's cultural history, and time and time again beauty is a dominant factor. For our purposes here we will focus on the beauty connection to the cult of the beautiful egg, because it provides not only a window, but a picture window, if you will, into mankind's fascination with beauty.

Mothers and daughters are inherently caught up in the cult of the beautiful egg. For example, a casual observer would find it remarkable that such a seemingly simple issue as when and how a daughter can put color on her lips could so often provide the backdrop for some of the worst emotional upsets between a mother and a daughter. It is the cult of the beautiful egg that fuels, with seemingly limitless energy, mother and daughter disputes over makeup, hemlines, necklines, shoes and any number of other modulators of beauty. Battles related to how daughters alter their beauty can and often do create rifts between mother and daughter that

Chapter V: Plastic Surgery

Elective-aesthetic surgery is unique among all types of surgeries, because it is the only operation that is completely motivated by psychological desire. Because elective-aesthetic surgery is completely motivated by psychological factors, cosmetic surgery is unique among all of the medical specialties. It is important to distinguish requests for reconstructive plastic surgery on the one hand and elective-aesthetic plastic surgery on the other. The latter request for surgery is motivated purely by a desire to look differently. The former request is often motivated by a need for a cosmetic repair or to improve function. The two are not always mutually exclusive. For example, sometimes by cosmetically improving the nose the surgeon improves function. The same is true for some blepharoplasty (eye lid) and mastopexy (breast reduction) surgeries.

The motivation to have elective aesthetic surgery is the only surgery which is driven by a psychological dissatisfaction with one's looks. A psychological dissatisfaction is the driving force behind all elective-aesthetic surgeries. A person may feel bad because their nose is too big, their breasts are too small, their thighs are too fat, their eyes are too droopy, their chin recedes, their brow is furrowed, their cheekbones are ill-defined, their lips are too thin, or a virtually never-ending list of dissatisfactions with one's "look."

Feeling bad about one's looks may manifest in any number of ways. It may manifest as a feeling of insecurity in social situations. It may show up as depression, anxiety, shyness or limiting self-consciousness. It may manifest as an obsession with the area of the body which is the source of the dissatisfaction. Feeling bad may express itself as a stomach ache, a rash or any number of other physical symptoms, each of which is an expression of the patient's dissatisfaction with how they look. Feeling bad about one's body, if you are a woman, is epidemic in America. A majority of teenage girls, for example, believe and feel that they are fat and unattractive.

Comestic Procedures

The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS), founded in 1967, is made up of 1,433 members in the U.S., as well as members in Canada and many other countries. According to the ASAPS, in 1999, over 4.6 million cosmetic surgical and non-surgical procedures were performed. There was a 66 percent increase in the total number of procedures performed between 1998 and 1999.

Chapter VI: Aging

Beauty, youth and economics are logical bed-fellows. Youth and beauty are made synonymous by virtue of the impact that joining the two has on economics. With each tick of the clock, a new product is developed which promises to turn back the clock. Aging and our hatred of the effect it has on beauty is the greatest economic boon to the beauty industry since the development of the photograph. Aging is bad because of the effect it has on beauty and health, in that order.

When do people begin to get old? Once again, culture helps to define what most of us term old. Despite being qualified for a senior discount or social security, if you look beautiful your chronological age doesn't matter. There remains only one surefire way to avoid the stigma of aging--don't look your age. Consider for a moment that in the absence of visual cues which betray our chronological age, the entire concept becomes academic for those looking at us. Look young and act young, and you are young.

During my research on the subject of elderly cosmetic surgery patients, I noted some of the subtle ways our culture defines aging. First of all, it is firmly established that the label of "elderly" is associated with many negative stereotypes in the United States. It seems that older persons themselves subscribe to these negative stereotypes, to an even greater degree than do younger persons. Income seems to affect the perception of age. Some researchers have found that working class Americans identified old age as starting at age 60, while higher socioeconomic status groups estimate old age as starting at 70 years of age.

One of the tried and true aphorisms about aging is that "you are as young as you feel." Well, not exactly. After all, if you feel good but look like a casting agent's ideal for an "old man," you will be treated like an "old man." Satchel Paige was quoted as saying that "age is a matter of mind over matter; if you don't mind, it don't matter." That is easier said than done when the treatment you receive from others is, to a large degree, defined by how you look.

Not only do others define their treatment of you based upon your attractiveness, but how you look to yourself helps to define how you feel about yourself. The "looking glass self" is a hundred-year-old model in human behavior which describes, in part, how self-concept develops. The idea is that the treatment we receive from others is used as information that forms the basis for our beliefs about ourselves. For example, if people are constantly asking if you

Chapter VII: President William Jefferson Clinton

In 1997, a year before the public had ever heard of Monica Lewinsky and the impeachment of Bill Clinton, I was interviewed by a writer who had learned of my work in plastic surgery and beauty. The writer became interested in my fascination with Bill Clinton, or to be more precise, my fascination with the visceral hatred that some people expressed toward President Bill Clinton, and that hatred's relationship to beauty.

Bill Clinton's ability to solicit visceral hatred did, indeed, have an attractiveness connection. President Clinton is one of those men who women find to be attractive. While President Clinton was allegedly out fondling his way to an ever more popular standing in the polls, some men were left on the sidelines: less well educated, less popular and almost by definition, less attractive. In an article that was to appear in a nationally known fashion magazine, I made note of Rush Limbaugh's notorious visceral hatred of President Clinton. Mr. Limbaugh wasn't alone in his hatred, which was shared by Congressmen Tom DeLay, Dan Burton and Dick Arme; and then Senator John Ashcroft, among others. (PHOTO CREDITS TOM DELAY, DAN BURTON, DICK ARMEY AND JOHN ASHCROFT) I contrasted such hatred to other politicians who were diametrically opposed to President Clinton's policies and who probably did not like Mr. Clinton, but who did not express a visceral hatred for the President, such as Senators Fred Thompson and John Warner. The galley had been set and my final edits made when an editor at the magazine pulled the article because it was, according to her, "too political and controversial." So much for good editorial judgment.

In studying this topic, it was rather easy to determine who hated Mr. Clinton, not only because his detractors could not keep their hatred a secret--their pursuit of the President was marked by teeth-gnashing hatred. Not since Jean Val Jean had anyone been pursued so fanatically as President Clinton. One of the more interesting characteristics about President Clinton's dogged pursuers, both men and women, is that as a group they struck me as significantly less attractive than were his supporters. But that wasn't the whole story. Besides being more unattractive as a group, they shared another characteristic, namely, they struck me as having a burning desire to be attractive and popular. I must stress that I am making a clear distinction between those who vehemently disagree with Bill Clinton's policies and those who viscerally hate him. It is the visceral hatred, not vehement disagreement, that betrays the unconscious forces at work, which is the focus of my treatise here.

The attractiveness connection to the impeachment of the President involved relative unattractiveness paired with the desire to be beautiful, persuasive and popular. Unattractive

Chapter VIII: Beauty Pageants

One of the more fascinating aspects of beauty pageants is that virtually everyone involved with pageants, including the contestants, deny that beauty is the driving force behind the pageant. This denial is stunning, considering that the events are called, after all, *beauty* pageants. Beauty is a four-letter word in the pageant business. (SEE PHOTO CREDIT, MISS AMERICA WEB PAGE HEADER) But it wasn't always that way. Up until the 1960's, no one seemed to have a problem acknowledging the importance of "beauty" in beauty pageants. It was during that decade that feminists became particularly vocal in their criticism of judging beauty in the form of pageants. One of the trends in the 1990's found women contestants who possessed neither beauty nor grace. This trend was a manifestation of the anti-beauty bias that had been heaped onto the pageant world by its most vocal critics. One of the more interesting aspects of this phenomenon is that the unattractive contestant's participation seems less political in its motive than a simple denial that beauty is still at the heart of the pageant world's *raison d'être*.

The internal workings of beauty pageants are as interesting as they are predictable. Miss Congeniality virtually never wins the pageant. (PHOTO CREDIT OF MISS UNIVERSE 2001 AND MISS CONGENIALITY). The evening gown segment of the competition is invariably described as the most beautiful part of the pageant, but it pales in importance to the swimsuit part of the competition when it comes to the judge's ultimate decision, despite the fact that both are traditionally weighted equally. When it comes to the interview portion of the contest, its power resides in the fact that the interview portion of the pageant can ruin a contestant's chances of winning, but can seldom, in the absence of beauty, win the pageant for her. This is true despite the fact that the interview portion of the judging traditionally carries as much weight as the swimsuit and evening gown categories. The same is true for the contestant's on-stage interview. A contestant's on-stage answer to the host's impromptu question can ruin her chances of winning the crown, but cannot win the pageant for her, in the absence of beauty. No matter how good a contestant's answer is on stage or how well she conducted her interview, if she is not beautiful, her chances of winning are near zero. It should be noted that the Miss America pageant circuit includes a talent segment, whereas the Miss USA pageant circuit does not include a specific skill or talent as one of its categories upon which the contestant is judged.

Chapter IX: Wardrobe

Wardrobe and our desire to present a beautiful image to others are inextricably linked. Once clothes with functional utility, such as outerwear in the Arctic, have been omitted from the designer's equation, clothes either enhance existing beauty, hide flaws or combine these two purposes. Even clothes which function as explicit uniforms, like police or military uniforms, incorporate designs which enhance beauty. Fashion designers are almost exclusively dedicated to the singular purpose of making the wearer of their clothes more noticeable, more alluring and more beautiful. One thoughtfully designed article of clothing brings together all the elements of fashion design that makes it both an art and a science.

Wardrobe is big business. Take, for example, the world's premier fabric show, the *Premier Vision*, a biannual affair displaying the best fabric in the world. During a typical four-day period, 40,000 visitors convene from around the globe just to look at fabric. At the exhibition you find somewhere around one and one-half million swatches manufactured by over 800 mills and from 14 countries. All of this material, in 1999, was displayed in a 42,000 square foot plant at the Parc d'Expositions de Paris, a convention complex near the Charles De Gaulle Airport. It is no wonder that such an exposition exists. In the year 2000, Americans spent approximately \$300 million *per day* on clothes.

The wardrobe business is made up of niches, e.g., the teen, maternity, uniform or sports-related markets, just to name a few. Color, line, cut, print and texture are manipulated by the designer to achieve the wardrobe's beautifying effect for each niche in the business. When clothes make the wearer feel more attractive, it achieves that effect by changing the wearer's sense of self. In that respect, wardrobe shares that characteristic with cosmetic surgery. One type of garment that particularly affects our sense of self is the swimsuit.

Swimwear

A swimsuit embodies every hope, dream and fear of the woman who wears it. The swimsuit is a designer's nightmare. It is one thing to design a flowing dress that is easy to get lost in. It is quite another to design a swimsuit that a woman with less than a perfect body will feel comfortable wearing in public. Women are never more conscious of their bodies than when wearing a swimsuit. Absent cover-up accessory garments, the swimsuit has to do a lot of camouflaging with very little material.

Chapter X: Murderous Rage

When JonBenet Ramsey was murdered, lots of people asked my opinion on the subject. I was asked partly because of my work in forensics and partly because of my experience with beauty pageants. What I was not asked about was the obvious fact that this little victim, like so many victims before her, was a beautiful victim. JonBenet was only one of over 900 children under the age of ten who were murdered in 1996. But she was beautiful; a beauty pageant contestant. (PHOTO CREDIT OF JON BENET FROM PEOPLE MAGAZINE AND THE RAMSEY FAMILY WEB PAGE)

What nobody seems to notice, except beautiful women, is that beauty makes its owner a target. The murderers of countless beautiful kids and adults undoubtedly focused upon the beauty of their victim. What is it about beauty that can generate murderous rage? In the instance of Selena's murderer, Yolanda Saldivar was a 35-year-old registered nurse from San Antonio who quit her job to become president of the Selena fan club and devote herself to managing the star's boutiques...that is, until she murdered Selena. (PHOTO CREDIT OF SELENA AND YOLANDA SALDIVAR)

When Robert John Bardo killed Rebecca Schaeffer, it was not coincidental that he killed a beautiful woman. (PHOTO CREDIT OF REBECCA SCHAEFFER FROM SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE) It was her beauty, after all, that entranced him, attracted him and predictably, rejected him. In the attempted murder trial known as the "cheerleader's mom" case, the intended victim was someone prettier than the would-be murderer's daughter. When Tanya Harding involved herself in the assault on Nancy Kerrigan, it was, once again, unattractive assaulting beauty.

This pattern in human behavior has manifested in our fairy tales. Take a good look at Maleficent, then take a good look at Princess Aurora. You may know Princess Aurora by her more popular name, Sleeping Beauty. The Wicked Queen from Snow White was obsessed with asking the question: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" What happens when you repeatedly ask that question, and the mirror repeatedly gives you the name of someone else? Take a good look at Cinderella and compare her to her sisters on the dimension of beauty. Pay close attention to the attractiveness of the Wicked Queen as she consults her

Chapter XI: Apples, Peaches, Pumpkin Pie

If you want to get a sense of the importance of beauty, pay attention to the sellers of this world. The sellers of cosmetic surgery and makeup understandably place a great deal of emphasis upon beauty. After all, it is beauty that they are selling. But take a look at the sellers of canned soup or automobiles, and you see the same thing: beauty and the attractiveness which comes from it can all be yours only if you eat this soup or drive this car. If you are lucky, if you buy the fancy car you can have the model who advertised it; or, if you are a woman, you can now have men tripping all over themselves just to say hello. That is the subliminal message: "You can have beauty if you buy my product."

Pity the poor praying mantis, I have yet to see one piece of cloisonné jewelry crafted in its image. On the other hand, consider the ladybug. Everywhere you look, you find not only cloisonné jewelry, but handbags, ash trays, wall stencils and countless other articles, all crafted in the image of the ladybug. The ladybug is an attractive, innocuous bug, while the praying mantis is an ugly, voracious insect which bites off the head of its mates, right? Actually, gardeners have a nickname for the ladybug: "Aphid Dragon." The ladybug hovers over aphids and sucks out their bodily fluids, ingesting its victims a drop at a time. Not exactly attractive behavior, wouldn't you agree? The fact remains that the ladybug is physically attractive, and the praying mantis is ugly. (PHOTO CREDIT OF LADY BUG INSPIRED ARTIFACTS AND PRAYING MANTIS)

Makeovers are not reserved for people: we also do it to our fruits and vegetables. Oranges aren't perfectly orange. They come off the tree an admixture of green, orange and yellow. Some types of oranges are cultivated for their beautiful peels. We don't always find Mother Nature's coloring pretty, so we dye oranges a perfect orange. We buy pretty oranges; we don't buy the ugly ones. We wax cucumbers, polish apples and dye and polish countless other foods in order to make them pretty. The prettiest foods are also the most appetizing. A poor presentation can ruin an otherwise delectable meal. We choose our homes, our cars, our furniture and a host of other material items based upon their beauty.

Volvo is a wonderful case study in the power of beauty. For years, Volvo made cars that were engineered with an eye toward safety and utility. Beauty was not one of Volvo's priorities. While the Big Three American Auto Makers were manufacturing beautiful death traps, Volvo was producing safe, reliable and ugly cars.

All that changed in 1999. An ad for the 1999 Volvo S-80 read: "A California body with a Swedish soul inside." In 1999, an S-80 television ad began with the voice-over of a sultry woman asking over and over: "How do I look, how do I look?" Volvo has gone to beauty

Chapter XII: Beauty and Substance

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld's standup routine includes the following remarks, and I paraphrase: "A person's looks don't impress anyone who's blind, but longer lasting, more substantial qualities do. If you ladies in the audience want to hit on a blind man, you'd better have something to say, and it better make sense." Seinfeld's satire on the subject forces one to ponder the fact that blind people, if they come to know you, almost always want to "feel" your face so that they can get a sense of how you look. Anecdotal evidence suggests that wealthy blind men often have beautiful girlfriends and wives.

Beauty and substance are naturally assumed to be mutually exclusive qualities. Beauty is on the outside and substance is on the inside, right? Talk about beauty and substance, and people naturally assume that these two elements are in a sort of zero sum relationship, i.e., the greater the beauty, the less substance is involved. And the converse is worth articulating: Really smart and meaningful people are not beautiful to look at, right?

Beauty and substance have a built-in gender factor. All is not necessarily rosy for men who are "just" attractive. Being "just" attractive if you are male virtually always means that you are not taken seriously. When you are "just" a beautiful woman you can be taken very seriously, not only professionally, but personally as well. The "just" beautiful woman can become the wife of a successful man, or she can make lots of money and be respected in any number of image-based endeavors. On the other hand, both men and women virtually always give the name "male bimbo" to "just" attractive men. The world is full of "pretty boys" who have no power, no money and who get no respect from either men or women.

As touched upon in our chapter on beauty pageants, there are special substance awards that are both designed to assuage the guilt associated with highlighting beauty and to recognize those women who, because of their relative absence of beauty, don't have a chance of winning the "beauty" pageant. Winners of essay awards, community service awards and the famous "Miss Congeniality Award," virtually never win the pageant. But is this because beautiful women are less substantive? Take, for example, the holder of the title 1999 Miss Thailand. This beautiful 24-year-old woman was as smart as she was beautiful. Apisamal Srirangsan, or should I say Dr. Apisamal Srirangsan, was Thailand's first beauty queen physician.

How did her peers deal with the beauty/substance equation? Nongpanga Limsuwan, a professor at Khon Kaen University in Thailand, has stated that a beauty queen cannot be a good psychiatrist, since patients can relate to her in an inappropriate way. At the Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok, some doctors have said that they would never have allowed Dr. Apisamal to train there if they had known she was Miss Thailand. (PHOTO CREDIT OF MISS THAILAND)

Chapter XIII: Beauty and Genetic Engineering

Mankind's fascination and obsession with beauty will undoubtedly take on new meaning in the decades ahead. One of the most telling contexts for mankind's future fascination with beauty will be in the field of genetic engineering. Without a doubt, mankind will learn to genetically engineer the beautiful body. Rudimentary gene manipulation has already been achieved. We can splice, cut and replace one gene for another. The vast majority of physical characteristics are controlled by numerous genes working together, that is, they are polygenic in nature. Eye color, on the other hand, is a single pair of genes or alleles. Learn the code, then make the change to the eye color allele, and you will be able to choose the color of your baby's eyes. Will everyone have blue eyes in the future?

In the year 2000, mankind compiled, for the first time, every part of the human DNA blueprint. We may not know, for example, where the nose genes are, but do know that somewhere in our new disorganized compendium those genes exist, awaiting identification and manipulation. As that technology evolves, the ability to identify, remove and replace genes at will is an inevitability.

The reader may find the following facts interesting as it relates to our genetic complement. Keep in mind as I recount some of the more interesting facts that the "wired in" universals of beauty are programmed into our genotype. Also keep in mind that whatever characteristics culture defines as beautiful, such as symmetry or blue eyes, those are also coded on the human genome. Here are some of the more interesting facts: We humans have approximately 35,000 genes. The fruit fly, by comparison, has 13,602 genes. Before the reader feels too special with regard to the size of his genome, some rice plants have over 50,000 genes. Of those genes, which are comprised of letter codes, the individual letters in the human being number approximately three billion. If written out, a human genetic code would require 200 phone-book sized volumes, each consisting of 1000 pages. Speaking of written code, if a person could type 60 words per minute for eight hours a day, it would take 50 years to type out the human genome. If all the DNA in our bodies was put end to end, it would be 600 times greater than the distance to the sun and back again. And speaking of beauty, the DNA of humans is 98% IDENTICAL to that of a chimpanzee. So those beautiful blue eyes, blond hair and symmetrical face and lips are located somewhere in that 2% difference between man and the great apes.

Chapter XIV: Howard Stern

I am sure that many readers will question the logic behind dedicating an entire chapter to Howard Stern in a book about beauty. The explanation for doing so is illustrative of the quest to understand the meanings behind beauty, so let me begin.

Howard Stern is the self-proclaimed "King of All Media," a title that the objective observer is hard-pressed to dismiss, given that he is, and has been for 20 years, the host of a very popular morning radio show, a best-selling author, an actor in a movie about his own life story entitled "Private Parts," and a producer of original television programming, as well as being a television personality at large. When Howard makes a guest appearance on any of the late-night talk shows, the Nielsen ratings predictably skyrocket.

Howard's morning radio program, which originates from New York City and is syndicated across the United States and some parts of Canada, along with being televised on the "E" television network nightly, provides the best opportunity for seasoned listeners and newcomers alike to appreciate the Stern-beauty connection. Longtime listeners of Howard's radio program know that he is obsessed with his own physical appearance as well as the appearance of others.

One of the reasons I have included a chapter under his name is that Howard has, over the years, spoken quite articulately and with great insight about the often subtle and frequently profound impact of physical appearance on virtually every aspect of our culture. His classroom on beauty, also known as his radio show, is often clever, entertaining, brilliant, self-deprecating and, as his critics rail, can be humiliating and cruel.

For those few who are not familiar with the Howard Stern radio program, here is a primer on the show's cast and format. Howard's live radio show is an extension of his personality. He invented a radio format (now so frequently copied that its originator is sometimes forgotten) wherein he and his coterie of friends interact as a family, including the discussion of personal matters, squabbles and familiar banter. Howard introduces into this mix the regular fare of show business guests who stop by to promote their latest project, a few "friends of the show," and Howard's stock in trade, a virtual bevy of strippers, topless dancers, porn stars and an endless stream of girls who audit Professor Stern's class on the importance of physical attractiveness.

Chapter XV: September 11, 2001

On September 11, 2001, the world changed forever. What followed the September 11 attacks was a crash course in Islamic fundamentalism, especially as practiced by the millions of devotees of Osama bin Laden. The steep learning curve of that crash course was focused upon trying to understand the hatred that millions upon millions of Muslim fundamentalists have for America. I should note at this point that in classical Arabic, no word exists for "fundamentalism." Arabic linguists have, therefore, coined the term "usuliyya," which means "basic principles." It is a term, rightly or wrongly, that has come to refer to what Westerners understand as a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam.

One element of the hatred Islamic fundamentalists have for the Western world has not received its due attention. This inattention is remarkable, because this one element permeates their attitudes about America. This one element affects virtually everything fundamentalists believe, and everything they do and practice. It is a constant modifier of not only the fundamentalist's daily lives, but one of the most articulated aspects of their hatred for America. It defines, on a daily basis, their very consciousness.

The perpetrators of the events on September 11 had and have very strong beliefs when it comes to the subject of feminine beauty. In fact, much of their hatred of Western culture is intertwined with their hatred of Western culture's emphasis upon beauty, with a particular focus upon the display of feminine beauty.

Tahera Aftab, an expert on both the subject of Islam and women, is a professor at Gettysburg College, located in Pennsylvania. According to Aftab, Islam requires women not to attract men, and specifically not to show their hair or their beauty. The Koran does not, however, specifically demand that women cover their face. It follows quite logically, however, that the more conservative, or fundamentalist, if you will, the particular political order which accedes power to its Muslim religious leaders, the more repressive will be the restrictions upon women's expression of their beauty. Whether it is the "Nikab" in Pakistan, the "Chador" in Iran, or the full body and face covering called the "Burqa" in Afghanistan, the purpose is always the same. Muslim women's wear is singularly designed to suppress physical attractiveness, a purpose which is exactly the opposite in the West.

The dichotomy between the West and the Muslim world is never clearer than when considering women's dress and the motivations which define its style. After the events of

Chapter XVI: Scientific Research

This chapter is designed for the reader who may wish to learn about some of the latest and most interesting scientific research on the subject of beauty. *Awakening Beauty* is rooted in scientific research. I chose, however, to not overly burden the reader with research citation after citation in the body of this work because I wanted to create a book that was fun and easy to read for everyone. Having expressed that thought, however, for those readers who may be interested in a brief overview of recent scientific research on beauty, I offer this chapter. As the reader will discover, many of the researchers who study physical attractiveness are thoughtful and incorporate clever methodologies in their studies that often yield very interesting findings.

The Pitfalls of “Thin”

An interesting study from England has put forth a very provocative explanation for the epidemic of eating disorders among young women in Western countries. This study confirmed one of the primary tenets of our chapter on *The Cult of the Beautiful Egg*, by documenting the virulent effect of sexual competition among women in a society which focuses upon culturally defined standards of beauty, in this instance, being thin. The researcher documented the proposition, to quote from the article: "The present-day environment of Western countries presents a range of conditions which have led to the overactivation or the disruption of the archaic female sexual strategy of maximizing mate value."

When "thin" is synonymous with being sexually desirable, while at the same time Nature herself is forever laying down fat deposits, it is no wonder that some women who are competing for such desirability will stop at nothing in order to "win." Men add to this female-female competitive frenzy by demanding unrealistic body shapes and sizes from their ideal mates. But what happens when you achieve the moniker of beautiful from others? Do you become less competitive and concerned about such things as weight?

By way of introduction to the next study, numerous researchers have looked at the relationship between one's own subjective sense of physical attractiveness and being concerned about one's weight and diet. Those studies seem to show that the prettier you subjectively feel, the less likely you are to be overly concerned about your weight and diet. As the next study informs us, however, the issue is not so simple nor is it straightforward.

In a study which documented one of the many liabilities associated with being beautiful, researchers from York University in Canada found that being objectively judged to be physically beautiful placed one at risk for developing an eating disorder. Importantly, these

Chapter XVII: What Does It All Mean?

We began this book by noting the importance of beauty in all of our lives. There remains, however, a hidden effect that derives its power from beauty's remarkable ability to siphon time, emotional energy and intellectual attention from socially relevant issues.

Young Americans spend more time thinking, worrying and engaging in beauty-related activities than they do caring for their family, their health, their emotional well-being, politics or just about anything else you can think of. One measure of the amount of time spent thinking about beauty is reflected in the amount of money America's youth spends on beauty related services and products. Teen Research Unlimited, a Chicago-based marketing company, reported that American teenagers spent \$155 billion in the year 2000 on beauty-related products and services. That figure increased from \$123 billion in 1997 and shows no sign of slowing down. To put that amount of money in perspective, according to the Pharmaceutical Manufacturer's Association, only \$26 billion or so was spent by drug companies in the year 2000 for research and development into new drugs designed to treat illness. One can only imagine what benefits would occur if America's youth spent their money on something as mundane as intellectual development, rather than beauty-related products and services.

Teen girls, as a whole, spend more time trying to emulate Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, or the most recent star du jour, than they do caring about their current and future health. In reality, the truth is much worse. Teens will harm their health and future survivability just so they can be pretty. Receiving a compliment about one's looks makes the average person feel better than complimenting them about their community service or their academic excellence.

One poignant example of how young women compromise their health and future survivability involves the relationship between tanning and skin cancer. In the year 2001, the American Cancer Society reported that the most frequent form of cancer for women between the ages of 25 and 29 is melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer. Over the last 25 hyper-image conscious years, the incidence of melanoma has increased 60 percent. Deborah Netburn researched the ever-increasing popularity of tanning among teen women when she wrote an investigative article in the summer of 2002 for the New York Times News Service. Netburn