



WOMEN
AND
JEWELRY

PETRA AHDE-DEAL

*A Social Approach to Wearing
and Possessing Jewelry*

WOMEN
AND
JEWELRY
PETRA AHDE-DEAL

To my mother and daughter

*The precious things a mother gives to her daughter
are only seldom made of gold.*

Aalto University publication series

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS 1/2013

Aalto University

School of Arts, Design and Architecture

Department of Design

Aalto ARTS Books

Helsinki

books.aalto.fi



441 697
Printed matter

© Petra Ahde-Deal

Graphic design: Minna Luoma

Photographs: Petra Ahde-Deal

Paper: Munken Lynx 120 & 300 g/m²

Typeface: Filosofia & Futura

ISBN 978-952-60-4708-9

ISBN 978-952-60-4709-6 (pdf)

ISSN-L 1799-4934

ISSN 1799-4934

ISSN 1799-4942 (pdf)

Printed in Unigrafia

Helsinki 2013

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Acknowledgements

Thank you Ilpo Koskinen for your incredible work as my supervisor. Your trust, support and encouragement have been crucial. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Kärt Summatavet and Kristina Niedderer for their great evaluations and wise insights during the final steps.

I am most grateful and indebted to the women who shared the stories of their jewelry with me. So many jewelry cases with not only jewelry but also precious stories were revealed to me. There were many interesting stories which did not end up in this book, but were truly important in building the perspective of women's jewelry.

Thanks to the Kalevala Women's Association for providing me with the narrative data. Also, Riitta Huuhtanen and Mari Kotka from Kalevala Koru Oy have given me important supportive comments during the journey.

The Design Connections Doctoral School at Aalto University has been a great home base. Many thanks to Turkka Keinonen, Tuuli Mattelmäki, Maarit Mäkelä and my fellow students for guiding and challenging my thoughts.

I would like to express my gratitude to Christena Nippert-Eng from the Illinois Institute of Technology, Department of Social Sciences for fruitful conversations and for giving me insights on American family life. I am also grateful to Judith Gregory from the Illinois Institute of Technology, Institute of Design for your hospitality at school and at home. Heartfelt thanks also to Troels Degn Johansson and Nina Lynge for their kindness during my visit to The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, The School of Design.

I would like to thank all the reviewers of the papers in which I have presented my ideas. I don't know who you are, but your valuable comments have helped me in finding my path. Also, all the co-authors during the course of this project deserve my sincere gratitude: Ilpo Koskinen, Kirsikka Vaajakallio, Sanna Sillgren (née Latva-Ranta), Jussi Mikkonen and Young Ae Hahn.

With your amazing work, graphic designer Minna Luoma, proofreader Hanna Sirén, and publishing editor Sanna Tyyri-Pohjonen, the pile of papers became a beautiful book. I also want to extend special thanks for editing the text to my husband Brendan and my mother-in-law Donna.

Many thanks for financial support to Antti ja Jenny Wihurin Säätiö and Aalto ARTS scholarship.

Last but not least, I want to express my endless appreciation for my friends and family. Without you this book would not exist. Special thanks to Kaisa Vuorinen for your comments on a draft of this book and your support throughout this endeavour. Finally, the greatest supporter has been my best friend and backbone, my husband Brendan. Thank you for your patience, love and support. I am also deeply grateful to my daughter Lumi for helping me understand the continuation of generations. You have also shown me that this journey has just been a little trip on the expedition of life.



1.

INTRODUCTION

There certainly are as many reasons to wear and possess jewelry as there are jewelry and women. However, these reasons can be categorized, and it is these categories that are discussed in this dissertation.

Wearing jewelry may be considered an embroidery of everyday life. Pieces of jewelry carry qualities, both external and internal, requiring them to be kept. Often, the pieces of jewelry are worn to preserve emotional attachments and memories from one's life. They keep our memories and connections to significant people around us fresh. They seem to be necessities which are hard to let go. The emotional attachments in jewelry work as preservatives, they make their biographies longer. In this study I am going to share my interpretation of discussions with 28 women and 464 written stories of why pieces of jewelry are such long-lasting objects in women's lives, even though they can be quite easily changed to currency.

So, they have something valuable that won't stay in my mind. They bring back and preserve all kinds of valuable memories. All the existing good things that I have would not stay in my thin mind. I have to take it through pictures or pieces of jewelry. I think I would feel unattached and lonely without these magical items. So, it is very true. I have felt that, even though sometimes I like being free and rootless.

(LINDA 59 YRS)

As Linda said during our discussion about her jewelry; for her the pieces of jewelry are vehicles to preserve and bring back memories. Linda was not the only one of 28 women with whom I discussed their jewelry to mention this. Often the whole personal history of the woman and her family was discussed through her jewelry case. Many times, most of the important dates of life were preserved in her jewelry case in the forms of jewelry pieces. No one claimed that they would not remember the happenings of their lives without jewelry, but it seemed to play an important role in their remembrance.

This book is based on my analysis of discussions with 28 women about wearing and possessing jewelry. The women are from Southern Finland and Midwestern USA, most of them from Helsinki and Chicago. The discussions followed self-documentation about their everyday wearing of jewelry which each woman conducted during nine days. Also, 464 narratives about women's jewelry gathered by the Kalevala Women's Association were

utilized in this study. The conclusions presented in this book are my interpretations of these fruitful discussions and stories. All the topics discussed cannot be presented in this book. Hence, I will present the topics which were continuously repeated by these women.

My aim from the start of this research project was to discuss jewelry with the wearers, with women themselves. The target was to ask about their personal perceptions of their own jewelry. This approach for the topic does not give the general answers why women possess and wear jewelry, but it gives insights from specific women who shared their stories about their jewelry. At the time of research, these women lived in two different countries, the USA and Finland. They are from various social, economic, ethnic, professional, cultural and religious backgrounds. The youngest woman was 33 and the oldest was 89 at the time of the interviews. They were granddaughters, daughters, mothers and grandmothers, as well as wives, widows, girlfriends, significant others, and single women. They were career women, working mothers, stay-at-home mothers, retired; they were on long term sick leave or on summer vacation. During this study, one of them got married; some celebrated Independence Day; and some participated in christenings, weddings, birthdays and funerals. During the self-documentation, one of the women was eight months pregnant, one had to take her son to the hospital, and one celebrated twenty years of service for her employer. This study took place within a pretty normal mix of the women's different roles and rituals in their lives: this study talks about everyday life spiced with celebrations.

My assumption is that pieces of jewelry as such do not carry meanings. They are just products made of some materials and designed to be worn. The social setting around the jewelry and the possessor of it may, and often does create personal meanings for the jewelry. These meanings would then be in the possessor's mind and possibly later, if she decides to share them, in the mind of her kin. Still in this perspective, the meanings are not in the products themselves, but rather in the thoughts of the possessors.

To respect the participants' privacy, some parts of the quotations of interviews (e.g. names and places) have been altered. However, the stories from narrative data are authentic, albeit translated when originally in Finnish, and sometimes with only excerpts used. All the pictures in this book are taken by me, most of them during the interviews.

In the following sections of this chapter, I first introduce the research questions and how this research contributes to studies about jewelry. Then I discuss the overall field within which the study is conducted. The focus here lies on other scholars' notions of the processes by which things become meaningful, in other words, how commodities become unique and personal objects. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the research areas discussed in this book. The main thread of the literature is to some extent based on the Durkheimian tradition. Chapter 3 introduces the research method and explains in detail how the research was conducted. The two different sets of data are explained here and also the way the analysis is done. In Chapter 4, I discuss rituals in more detail in light of the analyzed stories. Also, the rituals that the women in this study participated in are brought in here. In chapters 5–10, the empirical study is explored in detail according to the clustering of the main findings introduced in Chapter 3. The storyline in chapters 5–10 is based on

women's lives and follows somewhat chronologically the cycle of life. Chapter 5 discusses the jewelry of young women and is mostly based on the memories women talked about. In Chapter 6, I discuss the role of jewelry during womanhood and what kind of roles jewelry has in personal relationships. Chapter 7 discusses jewelry in more public relationships. Here the main thread is in the gift giving traditions and achievement recognition. Chapter 8 focuses on the powers of jewelry which were actually mentioned regardless of age but seemed to be mostly important to women middle-aged or older. Chapter 9 argues for the importance of the jewelry possessed by kin, often the maternal bloodline of the family. Relinquishing jewelry is explained here in the context of it often staying in the family. Also, different formulas for handing down jewelry are discussed here. Chapter 10 explains how pieces of jewelry sometimes work as physical tools when managing memories. They may carry pleasant memories but they may also be used to manage grief or yearning after someone passed away.

1.1 Research Question

The main question of this study was *why women possess and wear jewelry*. There are various answers to this question, maybe as many as there are women and their pieces of jewelry. Nevertheless, in this book I will present the conclusions based on the 28 women's stories of their jewelry, augmented by narratives from the Kalevala Women's Association. During the course of the study additional supporting research questions arose. When discussing reasons why to possess and wear jewelry, often women emphasized the emotional attachments they had with their jewelry. They also often explained how their jewelry had become meaningful to them. So mostly questions like *how emotional attachments with jewelry are created* and *how jewelry becomes meaningful* were discussed to support the main research question. Also questions about memories and the powers of jewelry arose from the data. So, the questions *how memories influence the possessing and wearing of jewelry* and *what are the powers of jewelry* will be discussed and presented in light of the empiria.

The way emotion is defined in this study is based on the sociological approach of Jack Katz (1999). He defines emotions as physical actions in our bodies that should be explained through social interactions. He notes that emotions are created during social interactions. He emphasizes that the nature of an emotion is the result of the social interaction which is meaningful to the one who experienced it as well as to the others in the situation. He bases this notion on his observations of how families interact at funny mirrors at amusement parks. There they exclude outsiders, creating laughter only within the family, across generations. According to Katz, emotions get stronger when there are others involved and when they are created together. The stronger the experience of the emotion is the better it will be remembered later in life.

However, when I discuss emotional attachments in this study, I am not referring to an actual physical emotion of a situation but rather to the feeling that it has created. As Katz explains, emotions, like anger, shame or fear, are experienced in the situation and are instant, the feelings we later relate to them have grown from the memories of those

instances. The emotional attachments discussed in this study also relate to subsequent feelings about actual experiences of the emotions in previous situations.

The meaningfulness of a product is a social attribute, which depends on the possessor. This study looks into deep meanings that will later turn into memories that will be incorporated into jewelry in the context of wearing it. Also, the acquisition of jewelry creates and influences the meaning and will be examined. It may have been inherited, received as a gift, or purchased for some particular reason. Often inherited pieces of jewelry carry meanings from the earlier possessors and generations. In the cases of inherited jewelry, their meanings often accumulate and they become extremely important for their possessors, sometimes so important that significance may prevent wearing them. Also examined is how methods or styles of wearing jewelry also gives meaning, especially social meaning. Having a ring on the ring finger tells others about the wearer's marital status, while the style of jewelry reveals information about the wearer's own fashion sense.

The question *why women are wearing and possessing jewelry* will be studied, explored, and explained by relating it to social practices. The research questions are observed in light of social practices which were situated in the research participants' lives during the data gathering or in their pasts where jewelry was included. These practices will be introduced throughout the book, yet most of them are related to rites of passage, family gatherings, ceremonial events or just in ordinary everyday life. In this book, the social practices are observed, following Durkheim's advice in predictable situations and settings (Durkheim 1980). So to say, they are often constructed by a predetermined script for the occasion, either ceremonial or mundane.

The meaningfulness grows from the emotional attachments that are created with jewelry. Often the social practices the woman and jewelry are involved in are related to rites of passage and traditions as mentioned above. These both exist within the cultures of the women and are often constructed of rituals. There are many rituals in women's lives that involve jewelry. Women receive jewelry as gifts on many traditional ritualistic gift giving occasions like Christmas, anniversaries, and birthdays. But, they also receive jewelry as gifts in ritualistic ceremonies related to rites of passage, like Bat Mitzvahs, confirmations, graduations, and weddings. Since many of these rituals take place on occasions celebrated with family, the family connections play a very important role when possessing and wearing jewelry. Social connections to family members and other people related to jewelry become alive and tangible with physical forms of jewelry.

So, the pieces of jewelry often start their life as mediators on occasions like weddings, but later become symbols of other people. For example, they may become symbols of the grandmother if the piece of jewelry was inherited from her. There are situations and rituals in which these symbols become voiced. For example, having inherited jewelry was common within the stories of the women. Often the inherited jewelry, or as they will be called in this book, multigenerationally possessed jewelry, had become extraordinarily important for women. The fact that it had been a possession of a meaningful person, like mother or grandmother, makes the emotional attachment with jewelry even stronger. Often multigenerational jewelry acts as mediators from earlier generations, eras and

occasions. They often carry memories from previous times and people, people who were important, but perhaps not personally known. This is why each possessor has to cherish and preserve not only the physical piece of jewelry but also the intangible features as stories and memories connected to it.

Insofar as jewelry functions as a mediator of different people, occasions, and eras, it may make women feel like part of something bigger than just themselves. This *bigger* is usually family or any somewhat larger kinship that a woman is part of. This particular insight is indebted to Durkheim and his classic study of religious forms among Aborigines and Native Americans (Durkheim 1980). With wearing or just possessing some particular pieces of jewelry, women can express their commitment and membership with this kin. They may feel that they gain some sort of powers from their kin members, current or passed away, who have been possessors of the jewelry or are in some other way related to it, e.g. the giver of the gift.

Women are also communicating many things with their jewelry. This communication is two-directional: it is with others and it is with possessor herself. Jewelry is often used in expressing and revealing something a woman wishes others to know. For example, this may be information about her social status, marital status, family income level, or religious commitment. Jewelry, however, is also used to bring back memories from women's own past or from their ancestors. Hence, pieces of jewelry are both private and public. There are many things women communicate to others via their jewelry but, at the same time, there is the hidden side – all the stories, secrets and memories that are only for the woman herself. When it comes to the latter, she is the only one who decides which hidden parts are available to others and what she actually wants to communicate with her jewelry. Thus, wearing an ordinary wedding band tells others that she is married, but for her it may represent loyalty and love and, if it is inherited, a significant connection to ancestors. This is similar to Nippert-Eng's (2010) notions about boundaries of privacy; we have tools like jewelry that are used to determine what is exposed to other people and what is kept unexposed.

However, sometimes information revealed through jewelry is done in a more abstract way, expressing *who I am* by showing hints of personal lifestyle and life values. The communication for the wearer herself is her connection with personal history, family history or kinship, through memories. These memories are often only for the possessor herself and others, the viewers, are not aware of them. Sometimes women adjust having their memories with them by choosing which jewelry to wear on which day. On one day they may need a connection to their grandmother, a blessing from her, and on another day, they may need a connection to the latest fashion trends to show their style. They would wear jewelry according to these needs.

Although the possessors of jewelry change once in a while over the course of piece's sometimes long biography, the actual processes of ownership are often difficult to unravel. The process of jewelry becoming meaningful often happens without conscious planning. It happens over the course of time, and hardly any of the women I studied explained to me that they had done it intentionally. It was just something that happened.

It is as if destiny plays a role: the meaning of a piece of jewelry is evident only in retrospect, and then it seems as if it had been planned by some force outside the possessor's control.

Nevertheless, the process through which jewelry becomes meaningful in everyday life often follows certain rules, which has been discussed also by previous scholars. Terminologies vary, but these rules focus on the process through which objects, whether mass-produced or unique, come to be incorporated into everyday life as they acquire personal meanings. However, when we are looking at the value of jewelry, we can distinguish three different values: market value, material value and subjective value. Material value and market value are objective values, which are determined by the law of supply and demand. Subjective value, in its turn, is determined only by personal affections and emotional attachments with the piece of jewelry.

1.2 Contributions to the Studies on Jewelry

It may seem obvious that women possess, wear and cherish jewelry because it is so common, especially in the cultures where this study was conducted. It may also be considered an anecdote that jewelry is subjectively meaningful for women, but there are few studies or literature that could explain why this is so in subjective cases. Literature about history (Tait 1986, Tillander-Godenhielm 2005, Holm 2004) and techniques of jewelry making (Untracht 1982) can be found, also about the fashion of jewelry and jewelry art (Ikonen 2004, Wright et al. 2008, Summatavet 2005, Astfalk 2005) and digital jewelry (Wallace et al 2007, Miner et al 2001). However, there are not too many scholars who have asked from the women themselves why they wear and possess jewelry. Some historical reviews on jewelry may give weight to pieces of jewelry being separate objects from women's emotions. Also, there are recent studies in the narrative contemporary jewelry art field which discuss the messages of jewelry (Parmar 2008, Cunningham 2007). However, both Parmar and Cunningham concentrate on the meaning of the jewelry that is created by the jeweller or the manufacturer. They are using the sentimental jewelry styles as inspiration for their contemporary jewelry art.

However, we can see a thread of recently evolving jewelry research within the design research field. Until now, most of the publications and dissertations within the design research field focus upon jewelry art, contemporary studio jewelry and digital jewelry. Whereas this book looks into the emotions which have grown from experiences women have had with their own jewelry. And, from this point of view has explained why women wear and possess jewelry.

Jewelry art is an old and well known field within the art field. However, the academic level of jewelry research is still rather new and defining itself. Petteri Ikonen (2004) has applied philosophy of pragmatism from John Dewey in his dissertation which concerns his own artistic work. Ikonen has studied jewelry art as a means to produce art that is related to artistic experiences. He studied his own work in the contemporary jewelry art field, by utilizing the tacit knowledge he found important when creating art. Whereas Ikonen's work concentrated on contemporary jewelry art, Kärt Summatavet (2005) found

traditional patterns in Estonian folk art inspiring as indicated in her dissertation. She looked into traditional Estonian crafts and used it as an inspiration for her own contemporary jewelry art work. She conducted detailed field interviews with two old and wise Estonian women and used their arcs of life as a base to define how patterns in traditional craft work can be utilized as an inspiration in her own art work.

Jayne Wallace has applied methods from Interaction Design in her dissertation about digital jewelry (2007). She specifically researched digital jewelry as being separate from digital gadgets that are carried on human bodies. Sometimes digital gadgets that are carried are assimilated into a decorative jewelry-like form. She, however, focused on digital jewelry made by jewelry artist (herself) respectful of the human body and aesthetics of jewelry. Her standpoint was to see how individual participants of her study experienced digital jewelry made and designed for their personal emotions. Wallace created practice-centered methodology to engage the end-users' personal histories in her own craft work while valuing the sensitivity of the craft. She focused on the personal sense of beauty which arises due to the personal experiences. She also discusses the importance of the connections that jewelry creates with people, occasions, culture, and history. However, from her standpoint, the connections create the personal understanding of beauty whereas I will show in this book how the connections are also related to the emotional attachments that women have with their jewelry.

Bharti Parmar's inspiring work on historical and contemporary sentimental jewelry (2008) has stimulated my thoughts on the feelings and emotions women have about their jewelry. Her research and art work is based on messages that are woven into Victorian time jewelry. Whereas her study is about the sentiments which engravers or makers of jewelry have put into them, my interest lies in the emotions that each wearer of each piece of jewelry has established by herself. So, Parmar looks into a similar topic of sentimental jewelry as I do, but from a different point of view. Her study is about jewelry that has been created to represent a certain emotion, such as love, loss, or mourning. My interest is in the feelings each individual has with her own jewelry.

Often women told me about jewelry they were wearing to remember lost loved ones. However, none of these items were originally designed specifically to be mourning jewelry as was fashionable during Victorian times, a tradition which Parmar researched. Some pieces of jewelry worn in memory of those lost, however, were modified a little if they had been inherited. Especially ones that were originally designed for men had been altered to suit women. As Parmar describes it, it was rather common to wear particular mourning jewelry in Victorian time England and France, especially ones made of human hair. There were many producers for this jewelry. Christiane Holm also has noted, in her dissertation (2004), the popularity of European eighteenth century mourning jewelry made of hair. Holm focuses on mourning jewelry as commercial products for reviving memories where long lasting bodily material such as hair is used.

Both Parmar and Holm also discuss well known ornaments and decoration for mourning jewelry during the Victorian era. This decoration and the overall appearance of the jewelry indicated to the viewer why it was being worn. Differing from Parmar's and

Holm's point of view, the emphasis in this study is in the personal perception of jewelry. According to women interviewed, pieces may be worn as mourning jewelry, but this is not necessarily clear to others. The wearer herself has given the meaning to her jewelry, not the producer or maker of it. The purpose of this study is to learn about individual women's feelings about their own jewelry. These feelings may not be obvious or shared.

Jack Cunningham has defined what contemporary European narrative jewelry is today (2007). He has looked into well known European contemporary studio jeweller's works in a historical, cultural and global context. Again, similarly to Parmar (2008) and Holm (2004), Cunningham examines the topic of narrative jewelry from the maker's side. He is also mostly interested in the narrative they have put into the jewelry. Complementing this interesting point of view, the focus of this study lies in the input the possessor has established in her jewelry. This input is from her own personal history and does not necessarily have too much to do with the narrative of the maker. As Cunningham (2007) also states, there is an interest in understanding the wearers' perspectives of contemporary narrative jewelry. This study may give some insight into that. However, this book is not specifically about today's studio jewelry, but about any piece of jewelry the women possess and wear. About those pieces of jewelry which sometimes look bulky, ordinary, or mundane to others but are truly special to their owners.

Nevertheless, other scholars, especially from the art history field have sometimes also focused on the reasons to have and wear jewelry, but in light of history. Ulla Tillander-Godenhielm has looked into this topic from the perspective of the imperial Russian awarding system (2005). Her research indicates that, official presentation gifts from the Russian emperors were sometimes jewelry, jettons, or other wearable objects received as rewards. These were worn for many reasons to show respect for the emperor, express personal achievements or, as in the cases of jettons, use as train tickets. In her dissertation she has focused on the reasons to have and wear jewelry as rewards. Dissimilarly, for example, Christiane Holm, has looked into the reasons to wear jewelry when processing mourning after loss of someone (2004). Her dissertation focuses on the eighteenth-century England mourning jewelry made of hair and on the habits of wearing it. It was common to express sorrow via jewelry, but at the same time carry the memories in the physical form of jewelry. Since the jewelry was made of hair, it physically created a connection between the living and the deceased people.

As shown above, there is a slight gap between jewelry research and design research. The historical jewelry studies sometimes look into the wearers' perspective and practice-led jewelry research which creates jewelry art within the jewelry research field. However, both often lack the presence of the current user and her experiences. Since Wallace (2007) has put emphasis on the importance of personal experiences with jewelry as inspiration for new products, Tillander-Godenhielm (2005) and Holm (2004) have looked into historical reasons to wear jewelry. And Cunningham (2007) has stated that users' experiences with studio jewelry could be delved into more deeply. Consequently, this study will build upon their works in the jewelry research field. As this study looks into personal reasons to wear and possess jewelry in social settings today, it will add specific viewpoint

of why women have and wear jewelry. This study can be situated in the gap between earlier jewelry research and current design research. It then enhances the jewelry research aspect within the design research field by building on the user experience standpoint.

1.3 Jewelry as Commodity

Jewelry made of precious materials is one of the easiest products to be shifted back to commodities and currency when the subjective tie is not meaningful enough. Most of the women told me that they would never be willing to sell their significant pieces of jewelry. However, they actually may have meant that they would not be willing to change the piece of jewelry to currency at its general market value.

In stories gathered in this study this, however, is a special case of value, and only important in special situations. In particular, this happens when couples separate. For example, Johanna and Rebecca are discussing their old wedding and engagement rings. In the following quotations, they both had decided to put them back into the circulation of goods after the relationships were over. Neither of them had any regret for doing this. Most women, however, kept all pieces of jewelry that were related to past relationships even if they did not wear them or even look at them. Women discussed that they had to keep them because they were part of their personal histories and they could not let go of the memories they carry.

P: Where are your previous engagement and wedding rings?

R: (laughing). Well, I did not keep them. I have recycled them. Really. They were not thick or anything. And, once they even had to cut them from my finger when my first son... it was a c-section, so in the operating room they used the cutting pliers to cut them. So I have felt should I really keep them. As a matter of fact, they were also cut when I divorced because I could not get them out. So, they were already broken. Now when I think about it again, why did I recycle them so anxiously. I took them there with some other broken jewelry.

P: Who cut them when you divorced?

R: It's not really important who did it, but the thing is that when I was divorced there wasn't any need to have them there and, because I couldn't get them out they needed to be cut again with the cutting pliers. (...) Even the divorce itself wasn't a big deal because we had been doing it for so long time, and when it finally happened it was just a relief.

(REBECCA 51 YRS)

And, so only in March this year I sold them all at a pawn shop: the wedding ring, Bat Mitzvah ring, and the original engagement ring. And I did not feel bad about it. I thought when I or if I do get married again I am not getting a used ring. I decided that, even I don't believe in God or what ever... suddenly I was like who knows what has happened to these peoples' marriages. And maybe that's why my marriage ended

up the way it is. And, my engagement ring, I really liked a lot, and I had gone to the jeweler to see if it could maybe be cut and flattened to make a necklace or something. And they would say that the diamonds are too small and they would pop out if they changed it or whatever... And at that point of time I just decided like (...) it was just something I just decided to get rid of. So, all those rings... I got rid of

P: Why this March?

J: I got divorced in April, we had already been separated a bit ... and I don't know... I was going to Europe for a work trip. And, I just decided to do it.

P: Did you need money or...

J: I did not need the money, but when I walked out with all this stuff. Really, I was thinking about this stuff, that I am not gonna wear it again, I am not gonna use it... and I am certainly not gonna use it... I cannot use this wedding ring if I am getting married again. I did not know what else to do with it. Some part of me was like I could see if somebody I know was getting married and give it to them as a gift... you know... something free. But then I thought that who wants a wedding ring from someone who just got divorced.

(JOHANNA, 34 YRS)

Even though Rebecca and Johanna had put their old meaningful rings back into the circulation of goods, it was rather rare. In this study, three interviewed women had done that.

A more common way to adjust the monetary value of jewelry was to upgrade the wedding rings during the marriage, especially on big wedding anniversaries. Emma, Karla, Eva, Linda, Margareta, Mia and Alisa told me about replacing their wedding or engagement rings with more expensive ones or just replacing the stone on the ring on anniversaries of the marriage. In cases of replacing the whole ring, most of the women kept the old ring for the sake of memories. But in cases of just upgrading the size of the diamond, the old diamond was sold for the sake of the new stone. So, often the diamonds themselves did not get singularized unlike the rings themselves as entities. Sometimes the wedding rings ended up as relatively expensive items because of the upgrade and, due to their age, even when the physical ring had been replaced, their subjective value had increased.

The material value of jewelry made of precious materials is the monetary value of the raw material used in the product plus the value of the labor time. Labor also includes equipment, branding, and marketing costs. The value of the materials used changes with economic trends differently than in other product categories. For jewelry made of precious materials, economic trends affect the material value, even after they are purchased. This does not happen in most product categories. Even if the price of aluminum and stainless steel follow economical trends, the material value of the products made of those, let's say kitchen gadgets, does not normally vary dramatically. The market value of jewelry is their exchange value, the amount of money which will be paid when buying a piece of jewelry. The market value is determined by the law of supply and demand, which

is affected by design, craftsmanship, brand, desire and availability. However, according to the women, neither the material value nor the market value play an important role for emotional attachments compared to the history of the piece of jewelry that constructs its subjective value. In other words, it does not matter much if the piece of jewelry was generally considered cheap or expensive in the first place, the market value does not explain emotional attachments.

Often jewelry is produced to last a long time. Materials, design and the technical solutions are made to last in everyday wearing for a long time, sometimes when talking about e.g. wedding rings they are made to last forever. The craftsmanship in jewelry is often so skillful that the material and market values last. The subjective value can not be added into the jewelry during production, but it may and often will build over time. The value of jewelry may consist of other kinds of social aspects, for example the pieces becoming collectables. Sometimes when they become collectables, they may have been manufactured by a certain brand or goldsmith, or have looks that are desirable. When they become collectables, their value is different in the eyes of collectors compared to others.

When emotional attachments are created, pieces of jewelry may become sacred objects for women. This shift from a mundane object at the jeweller's counter into a sacred object happens when significant experiences occur in a woman's life and jewelry becomes the mark of these experiences. Similarly, when Christena Nippert-Eng discusses the sacredness of products, she uses an example of a Christmas tree. When Christmas trees are dressed up for Christmas, they become centerpieces of family gatherings and children's fantasies. When they are stripped down and put to the curb to be taken by the garbage truck, they become trash (2010). Similar transitions happen with jewelry; just like attaching the ornaments on the Christmas tree, emotions are attached to the jewelry. As this book will show, jewelry may also lose its meaning. The analogy, however, only goes so far; as this book also shows, women seldom throw jewelry away and even when they do, they do this with agony.

1.4 Jewelry and Achievements: Jewelry in Social Communication

Another strand of literature touching jewelry relates to the presentation of self. Jewelry is acquired to celebrate achievements like promotions, and it is used to communicate these achievements to other people. Here, the locus of explanation is turned from internal to interpersonal relationships, to how jewelry participates in shaping social relationships.

Again, we may turn to Christena Nippert-Eng for help. In her studies of the boundaries of privacy, she once looked at purses and wallets. These *identity kits*, as she calls them, can carry a lot of private and public information about the possessor. And, they may also be used as tools to manage identity in certain moments of one's everyday life. She writes, "... as identity *kits*, wallets and purses aid participants in controlling how much other people know about them in any given situation by allowing them to selectively reveal only the aspects of their identity that they believe others should know" (Nippert-Eng 2010, pp.141–142). We could easily replace the words wallets and purses with jewelry. Jewelry, indeed,

is often worn to reveal some particular things about oneself but it is also worn to protect one's own privacy.

Also, Marsha Richins has discussed the private and public meanings of possessions (1994). She writes that when someone works on a possession, it becomes more meaningful privately. This same phenomenon was clearly seen in the data studied for this research. For example, women who had bought jewelry from their first salaries decades ago, still remembered the purchasing occasion and were often still wearing, or at least had kept, the jewelry in their jewelry cases. They also felt that those rather dated and significant jewelry items had captured a truly important part of their histories. The hard work done to earn the jewelry often makes it more meaningful and because of that, also a long-lasting product. So, during the time it has been one's possession it can absorb memories and stories. Indeed, women also discussed maintaining jewelry and the memories connected to jewelry as being work done on the jewelry.

This argument resonates with some stories studied for this thesis. The following quote is from a story told by a woman in her 60's while discussing her own and her friends' oldest and dearest jewelry. This is the first jewelry they have bought with their first salaries and they are still wearing them.

Pirkko's dearest piece of jewelry is Kuutar made of silver, a lovely piece of everyday jewelry which goes well with ascetic clothing. It is also a favorite of us others. Pirkko bought it with her very first own salary. Still today it reminds her of the happiness of that day. Marjatta had done the same thing. How sumptuous a teacher's first salary had felt! She had received it in a brown paper bag with a paystub from the principal himself. It had felt that it was enough for everything she had ever wished for in her life. So, Marjatta had decided to go to the jeweller and buy Hämäläisen emännän käädyt for herself. Made of silver, of course. Oh, they are still enviably beautiful, they don't disdain the age of the wearer.

(NARRATIVES)

Jewelry is often displayed on the wearer. Her body and outfit are completed with jewelry and so it works as a display of her possessions and her personal narrative. With this display, she then communicates with others. Rachel Hurdley also discusses how people build their identities with their possessions, displaying their inner selves by how their possessions are placed in their homes (2006). Hurdley emphasizes that the whole meaning of the home is constructed by the furnishings and decor within the home. This is similar to women's thoughts of their jewelry. Meanings of jewelry are reflecting women's perceptions of themselves. One could say that jewelry has a remarkable social impact when displayed on her person or in her home.

Analogies from products other than jewelry abound. For example, Eva Londos has similarly discussed how meanings in products are first created. Her study is about memories connected to childhood photos. In her viewpoint, each viewer of a photo would create her own meaning of it by attaching it to her own history (1997). This is similar to

the jewelry women own: the jewelry may have been mass-produced, but when a woman attaches it to her own life and history, it becomes meaningful and possibly singularized. That is to say, each product and piece of jewelry carries different meanings particular to the possessor.

Kaj Ilmonen talks about products acquiring importance to the possessor (2007). Ilmonen argues that the emotional attachments built with the possession make them singular and particular to the owner. Whereas, when Koskijoki (1997) characterizes products as vessels to carry memories, she emphasizes that meaningful products work as samples of the possessor's past life. So, these possessions communicate one's personal history to others. This is also discussed by Silverstone et al (1999) in their study about the domestication of information technology in households. Their belief is that products are displayed in the public sphere of the home, so the members of the household are communicating with others by their displayed possessions.

1.5 Singularization: From Commodity to a Unique, Personal Object

As with any other product, I claim that jewelry can be considered commodities as long as its subjective value is lower than their market value. Products with higher subjective value than market value, however, lose their position as commodities and become singular for the possessors. The subjective value of jewelry is often constructed of personal meanings connected to jewelry. Thus, pieces of jewelry without such meanings are often general commodities. They are products that are on the market and no-one has yet built a personal commitment to them. Or, they are pieces of jewelry that have, for one reason or another, returned back to the market after being someone's personal possession. Thus, pieces of jewelry without commitment are commodities, but with commitment they are personal possessions.

When pieces of jewelry become personal possessions they may end up as subjectively valuable items. The subjective value is often built on special occasions and relationships in one's personal history that includes the piece of jewelry. Often, jewelry plays an important role in meaningful moments in one's lifetime. In western cultures, it is often part of celebrations of achievement, religion, love, friendship, and inheritance. These personal moments related to jewelry make them subjectively significant.

Igor Kopytoff (1986) calls the emergence of subjective value *singularization*. It is a process whereby a product is not anymore public but has become singular for someone. Kopytoff notes that singularization can be experienced only individually. A piece of jewelry can be subjectively valuable and singularized for one person while it is a commodity for others. But according to the women in my study, pieces of jewelry can become singular for the whole family, or at least for the maternal bloodline of the family. In other words, for all those who are related to the jewelry and have some kind of commitment to it. As Kopytoff also notes, when the product is singularized, its general market value has disappeared and it may have become priceless for the possessor. Hence, the general market value of the product is the value if it were to be sold without considering the

subjective value. For Kopytoff, singularization can only be experienced individually and it only influences a personal definition of the monetary value, not general market value. This is evident in that subjectively valuable jewelry is seldom sold again, as long as it keeps its subjective value.

Many scholars have researched the social aspects of material goods, and also how social aspects influence the value of these goods. The value of possessions is truly subjective but is strongly influenced by the social surroundings. The intangible features the item carries, such as memories, powers and beliefs, are mostly constructed in the social settings of a possessor's life. These intangible and invisible features create the value of the item when it is no longer a commodity, but is now a personal singularized object. This subjective value has nothing or very little to do with monetary value.

In particular, this subjective value is built on the fact that the jewelry may look mundane and ordinary to the others, but it is not, because it has value to the possessor. As mentioned above, it is up to the possessor to decide whether to keep it private or share it. The private matters of jewelry affect only the subjective value unless it is historical jewelry or has been possessed by celebrities or royalty.

The shift from being a commodity to being a subjectively valuable object often only happens in the possessor's mind, and it retains the appearance of a commodity for others. There may not be any physical changes in the product itself. However, sometimes people put a personal sign of possession to their jewelry. These may be engravings of certain happenings or a new gem can be set to mark an important event. Also, scratches and detritions may be physical signs of possession and they may carry meaningful memories. This is why goldsmiths should not re-polish jewelry without asking permission from the possessor first, to avoid polishing away irreplaceable memories.

Few theoretical sources from design research are consistent with the psychological notion of singularization. For example, Pieter Desmet (2003) has focused on the invested physical energy in products and Richlins (1994) on the work done for the possessions. Both claim that the physical connection with a product makes the attachments created stronger. Wearing and using possessions shapes possessors' attitudes as well as their behavior. Possessors may learn to love or hate a particular product during their shared history. Or, as Mattelmäki describes it, a product may become a companion during this time in which it becomes irreplaceable and like an extension of the body (2006). If we follow these scholars, aided by physical connection the process of singularization takes place in the minds of people; it is an inherently private process. However, behind these private processes are rituals and stories that communicate the possessors' values.

Nippert-Eng underlines what people are willing to reveal of themselves through the things they carry in their wallets and purses (2010). An old used movie ticket may seem completely meaningless to outsiders, but finding it in the purse and touching it may bring the owner back to a meaningful moment from her past. As the private matters related to jewelry are normally intangible and invisible, the woman has the right to decide who, if anyone, gets to share them. In her book "Island of Privacy," Nippert-Eng (2010) discusses about the keepers and owners of many types of secrets. She distinguishes owners from

keepers. Owners have the right to share secrets, but keepers do not. However, the keepers of the secrets may become owners of the secrets when they get involved in them. Women told me repeatedly how jewelry carries stories and memories. Some of these stories and memories are secrets, some are not. Each owner of jewelry, who is also owner of a secret, has to decide whether to share or keep it. Sometimes secrets will be buried with the secret owners even if the physical piece of jewelry continues its journey through the generations.

1.6 Jewelry as Social Objects

When we search through existing perspectives on how jewelry becomes meaningful, we can find several arguments that, taken together, are all somehow partial. Clearly, all articulate something important about jewelry. Each perspective, however, also neglects evidence from other studies. A better, more abstract and balanced perspective is needed. The cue for such a perspective comes when we pay attention to one common thread in all these perspectives—their social basis. Every perspective in one way or another assumes the existence of other people or more general social processes, such as the market, and states that the value of jewelry comes from this social basis. Monetary values may be involved in this process, but not necessarily. Rituals in the singularization perspective are necessarily social, as are other people as an audience for those who want to communicate with others through jewelry.

Thus, this is a study about jewelry being part of the social life of the wearer. This is not about jewelry being independent artefacts, but more about them becoming and being aspects in social dimensions of their possessors. In this study pieces of jewelry are examined as part of the social interaction between people, not as independent creatures of fashion, crafts or art. Consequently, this study is not about pieces of jewelry but about the relationship the possessor creates with her own jewelry. It is about the connection between women and their jewelry. This connection often continues from the jewelry to the people and then to related occasions. Therefore, often a piece of jewelry works as a mediator to something bigger than what it seems to stand for. A modest chain on a woman's neck may look nice to others, but for the wearer it may represent true love and commitment to her husband and family. Consequently, it is connecting her to the relationship she has with her husband and also to the family they have created together. Pieces of jewelry often act as mediators between people, generations, and eras. These mediating features of jewelry make possessors part of something bigger, they make the possessors part of their kin.

This perspective has similarities to Durkheim's notions of totemic items. In his study in archaic societies in North America and Australia a century ago, totemic items connected their wearers to earlier generations of their tribe or clan. The wearers were able to gain powers from these past generations through wearing or worshipping the same totemic items. The totemic items also indicated that wearers were part of their kinship since only members of the clan were entitled to wear a particular totemic item. These might include representations of animals, plants or celestial objects that were used as

motifs on e.g. embroidery, tattoos, hairdos, jewelry or statues. (Durkheim 1980). These similarities struck me early on in this study, and became the leading cue for making sense of jewelry in women's lives. This study, however, does not claim that today's jewelry functions just like totems among the Australian aboriginals or Native Americans. Instead, jewelry must be understood in its interpretive context, which has a basis in ordinary social practices.

As already stated, the key motivation to conduct this study was to try to understand the reasons why women wear and possess jewelry. As many scholars before this study have indicated, designers should be able to understand the end users and the wearers of their designs (e.g. Rhea 1992, Koskinen 2003, Jääskö and Keinonen 2003, Battarbee 2004, Mattelmäki 2006, Russo and Hekkert 2007, Jalas 2006). Designers should also be able to communicate with the end users. The approach of this book, an interpretation of why women wear and possess jewelry, may help designers in their communication with future end users. The book is not only aimed at jewelry designers but for all who are dealing with the topic of emotional attachments in the person-product relationship.

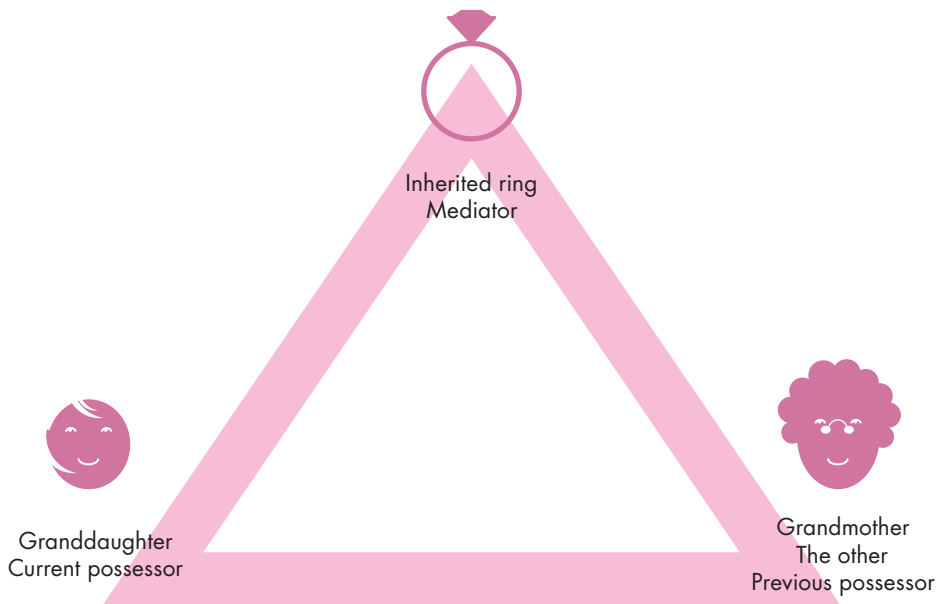


Figure 1.1 Interaction between a woman, her jewelry and the other can be seen as a triangular form in which (here) a ring is mediating the memories from the previous possessor. An inherited ring works as the physical token of memories from generations past, even though the current owner adds her own memories to it. In this example, the grandmother and the granddaughter alike may have their own secrets connected to the ring but altogether, the ring is connecting the two women.

This book is also aimed at scholars and designers who are interested in empathic social interaction between a possessor, the product, and the other. In this case the possessor is the woman, the product is jewelry and the other is the third party which the possessor is mediating and communicating with through her jewelry (see figure 1.1). It may be some occasion where the product had a role, for example a graduation party, or it can be some person who is connected to the history of the product, for example the giver of the graduation gift or the earlier possessor if the product was inherited. The other could also be a memory or a story that is connected with the product. Similar phenomena of things being part of social interaction between the possessor, the product, and the other can be seen within other product categories.

Almost any product may become meaningful to its possessor because of connections that evolve. As Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) have noted about products' social and personal mentality, the same can be seen in the results of this study. Clearly most of the products are used, worn, and possessed because of their two-fold characteristics of being both social and personal. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) argue that the products emphasize the possessors' individuality and at the same time they are connecting a possessor to her kin. Much as Durkheim (1980) has discussed in his studies about totemic items, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton argue that with meaningful possessions, people display their thinking and values to others. Also Miller (2010) argues that products, especially wearable ones, are media for showing belonging and togetherness with the person's social unity. According to Miller, the products around people frame their behavior by giving guidance on how to behave appropriately in given situations. In a study of Indian women wearing saris, Miller emphasizes how sari wearing women are labelled as Indian women over 17 years in age (2010). People define and are defined as who they are, in particular moments of time, by using and possessing certain products.

It is important to study possessors' interaction with their old products, especially with those that are still used, and not only concentrate on new or future objects. We can learn a lot from the past when asking people to describe their experiences with their belongings, as has been done in this research. This study focuses on women's jewelry but the results of the study may, at least to some extent, be applied to other product categories and the opposite gender. However, because various previous research projects about significant possessions have concluded differences in behaviour between the genders (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, Wallendorf and Arnould 1988), I am focusing on data regarding only women. As my research interest is about the emotional attachments women have with their jewelry, not in the different behavior of genders, the definition to study only women is natural.

A necklace featuring several bright orange, porous coral beads strung on a black cord. Two large, oval-shaped brass pendants with intricate scrollwork designs are attached to the necklace. The necklace is laid out on a white surface.

2.
JEWELRY
OVER
GENERATIONS:
SOCIAL
THEORIES
OF
JEWELRY

In this chapter I will discuss some social theories related to jewelry and rituals. In addition to personal forms of social significance, the meanings in jewelry get stronger in social situations. The underlined perspective on rituals as social settings arises from the Durkheimian tradition. Also, excerpts of the data from this study are used to illustrate the discourse of this chapter. The chapter will end with a discussion about contemporary narrative jewelry and how the scope of it differs from the standpoint of this book.

This book examines the reasons why women wear and possess jewelry. The main reasons for wearing and possessing are social motives. It is often said that jewelry is worn to express and emphasize one's individuality. This research shows that the reality is not so simple. If the wearer of jewelry is only emphasizing her individuality with her jewelry, the main reason for doing so is still social. In other words, as will be shown in this book, the main motives to possess and wear pieces of jewelry are rather different from emphasizing the wearer's individuality. The jewelry is worn to emphasize social connections and togetherness through its physical feature of being an individually worn item. These social connections may be with family, kin, friends, groups of like style, and political or religious points of view. Pieces of jewelry often have individual and personal meanings for the possessors. Nevertheless, even if the appearance of the jewelry is unique and individual, reasons to wear and possess it are social, in the way that by wearing certain jewelry women show that they belong to a social group (see also Durkheim 1980, Miller 2010).

Then came the '70s and the coup d'état in Chile. There was a counter at some solidarity concert where I bought this pendant. It is made of a shuck of a nut with an engraved depiction of a locked door of a jail surrounded by a rampart. Behind it, there is writing with pen "Presos Politicos, Chile -78". This piece of jewelry is a political statement on the liberty of speech and opinion. It is not as personal as are the earrings from Marimekko, but it has achieved its position within the memories. It is a story of the world and me from the time when we changed the world.

(NARRATIVES)

As described earlier, Émile Durkheim has discussed social relations expressed by wearables, e.g. hairdos, tattoos, jewelry, clothes and embroideries. Émile Durkheim is

often seen as one of the founding fathers of modern social sciences. He constructed his main theories in social science around the late 1800s and early 1900s. The main book from Durkheim that is utilized in this study is "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life" from 1912 (orig. French ed. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*). The key notion he had about religious life is that religious life is a social phenomenon that strengthens the cohesion within kinships.

Durkheim's study about religion was conducted within North American and Australian archaic societies. In these primitive cultures, he noted that people had a critical need to express their cohesion with their kin. Members of the kin always needed to express their unity with something bigger than themselves as individuals. Following Durkheim, this cohesion and unity was often emphasized with wearables. At the time in the societies Durkheim studied, it was important for the members of the kin to separate themselves from other kinships and express their unity to their own kinship. And, personal appearance was a clear means to identify and distinguish oneself with others. (Durkheim, 1980).

A similar phenomenon can be seen in today's reasons to wear and possess jewelry. Social cohesion that is felt and expressed via jewelry is often built on the history of the jewelry. Memories and social connections play important roles in how jewelry becomes meaningful. Pieces of jewelry often represent, just like in Durkheim's times, the succession of generations in families. The same pieces of jewelry may have been worn by members of past generations; they are worn by current generations; and it is understood that they will be worn by many generations in the future. Pieces of jewelry tie wearers to time and families through the physicality of products that surpass time; the social cohesion felt through jewelry does not only concern present connections within the kin, it also connects past and future generations. Also, just like in Durkheim's studies, deceased members of the kin are connected with current members via wearable things like jewelry which have a connection with both parties.

In this sense, women's jewelry can be considered today's totemic items. The social connections within families become almost tangible during social gatherings and celebrations. Often these gatherings are ceremonial and constructed of many rituals. As Durkheim has already said about the importance of rituals when constructing social connections, the same fact is clearly significant when discussing about jewelry with the women.

In the following quotation, Linda describes her outfit at her grandson's christening. She had wanted to wear jewelry that connects her to as many people as possible in the gathering. To this end, she wore a plastic bead necklace that her other son had made for her as a child 35 years ago, and souvenir earrings the new parents had once given her. Also, she was wearing a three-diamond band representing all three sons that she had received from them on one Mothers' Day. In addition, she had her ten year anniversary ring from her former husband, who had fathered her sons. All of these people also participated in the occasion.

P: The plastic bead necklace made by your oldest son. And then you have gone to the christening of your grandson.

L: Yes, he noticed that "that looks familiar". He did remember it. He turns 41 and it is quite a long time ago when he did it. When he gave it to me, even though he was so small, he said "You can't wear this to the dance". (...)

P: So, on what kind of occasion you wear it nowadays?

L: Yesterday I had it on at work. But, I haven't worn it a lot. I always get these seasons that I like to wear certain colors. Like now, violet and burgundy and red. (...) So, now I am wearing those.

P: Did the christening affect?

L: Yes, I also wanted to wear... I had the earrings from my other son and daughter-in-law, and the three-diamond band and, also the ten-year-anniversary ring. So, I had all sorts of old family stuff on.

(LINDA 59 YEARS)

Linda's story illustrates well how jewelry can connect women to others. These items are not just objects, they are nexus of complex social ties.

2.1 Jewelry as Self-Expression

As Durkheim's contemporary Georg Simmel (1986) noted, jewelry can be worn to please and impress other people as well as to express the social class one belongs to. Such pieces of jewelry at his time were usually items of fashion. Simmel's view has some validity in my data too, the women studied for this research purchased and wore jewelry for the sake of fashion. These items were more like costume jewelry and had often been purchased to fit a particular style or outfit. The contemporary jewelry was often also kept even though their time to be worn had been short. They also carried memories from the times worn, but did not often carry meaningful memories for a long time.

Women also wear jewelry as part of their everyday life and roles. Erving Goffman (1990) has studied impression management in everyday life. For him, objects are props that help people manage the impression they give to other people. These objects may be anything from the language used to clothing, jewelry, and living surroundings. For example, women have many different roles in their lives, already in everyday life they may be wives, mothers, friends, and employees. In ritualistic family gatherings, for example, they may be daughters, sisters, mothers, wives, aunts, and in-laws. Pieces of jewelry are not only defining the roles to others, but they also make women secure and self-confident, each in her own role. Jewelry may play an important function in maintaining everyday roles and, at the same time it may be used in distinguishing some roles from others. Some of these roles may be invisible to others, but the woman herself needs the jewelry as part of the supporting setting to manage the role.

Since pieces of jewelry are social products, reasons to wear and possess them grow from communal and social aspects. These personal and individual products have huge

social impact. They could also be called social markers since women are communicating about their social relations with jewelry. Women, however, also position themselves within their kin with the jewelry they possess and wear in many ways.

To begin with, people express their social class with jewelry, as Veblen (2001) suggested almost a century ago. This situation is similar today but what we express is not only social class but much more. The perceptions of the others seems to have an impact on what women wear since they are aware of the signals and messages sent via their jewelry.

Women may also express their religious persuasion by wearing crosses or other religious signs, like Heidi, who talks about the way in which she wears her cross in the following quotation.

The cross is something that is often gotten as a confirmation gift. The cross has somehow also become popular. Many celebrities wear crosses. But then one has to think if it has the real meaning anymore. I think that a Christian wears the cross because he believes in it. In its message.

(HEIDI 56 YRS)



Irene's necklace.

Nowadays, however, women not only express stable identities like social class and religion through their wearables, but also other components of life. For example, they express their interests, such as travelling, as Irene does in the following quotations.

I think of their origin but I like the fact of weaving them and that I didn't find them at the corner store. You know, that they are maybe something special for a certain place that I was in.

(...)

I: I don't know where it was originally. It looks to me that a lot of the stones were African. Oh, yeah and the silver things. I have something from Ethiopia. (...) I made this from beads I bought from a women's co-operative in Kenya because there they make ceramic beads. So, most of this I made and I made this necklace on leather.

This was my mother's. I brought her back these beads from ... I don't know... Thailand or something... and she had them made into this.

P: And then you got it.

I: Then I got it.

(IRENE 71 YRS)



A necklace made with beads Irene had given to her mother.

However, in line with the earlier theoretical discussion, often the main reason women wear jewelry is to carry their loved ones with them. This might be in the form of wedding rings or mementos of children or parents. Nevertheless, often these signs are understandable only for the wearer herself and others may not see what the wearer is carrying with her. Sometimes, though, the signs are so clear that there is no room for misinterpretation, like in cases of wedding and engagement rings, and crosses as pendants. Because of this, women can adjust the messages they send about themselves via their jewelry. However, there are cultural differences in the appearance of jewelry in the two countries. For example, Maria's ring finger ring in Finland was clearly not an engagement ring, nor did she want to give that signal by wearing it. But in the USA, a similar ring could easily have been misinterpreted as an engagement ring.

Emma has a similar looking ring, though made of precious materials, white gold and a diamond, whereas Maria's ring is not made of precious materials. Certainly, they do look alike.

M: Nowadays I wear all sorts of trinkets. Things that I buy here and there.

P: But anyways in the left hand ring finger?

M: Well, I have now worn this here. No one would get confused that this was any wedding or engagement ring. Sometimes people make jokes that it is a real diamond. And, I tell them that of course it is. (laughing) Why are they even asking anything like that? No one would mistakenly think that this was real.

P: So, where it is from?

M: From one clothing store. I was shopping for clothes and they were putting jewelry out and then I saw them. As far as I remember, the sales person had a similar one on and I got thrilled of it.

(MARIA 56 YRS)



Maria's ring is not a ring finger ring.



Emma's ring finger ring.

On some occasions women may wear fancier jewelry than in their everyday life, just to express that they appreciate the situation. Susanna told me how she wore better jewelry for her mother-in-law's birthday party. She emphasized that she wanted to express her respect for the occasion by wearing jewelry that made her appearance fancier.

I have had it also at work but maybe somehow I have wanted to...[save wearing it]. I'm thinking that way that it won't get broken. (...) Maybe because of that I have been saving it and kept it like that. And you also feel, like you know, when you have some piece of jewelry and you get the feeling that now I am going to wear this a little bit better one. Like when you are going to your mother-in-law's 75th birthday party.



Susanna's pearl necklace.

Then you respect her with your own appearance. This is the way I think, old fashioned.
(SUSANNA 51 YRS)

Susanna did not want to wear this fancy pearl necklace too often on mundane occasions because she was afraid it would get broken. The necklace was important to her because her husband had had it custom-made for her on a trip abroad.

2.2 Jewelry beyond Self-Expression

I find Simmel's, Veblen's, and Goffman's notions very insightful as first steps in understanding jewelry. They discuss *intangible features* of products – things that we do not see or know about if we are not involved with the products, if we do not know about the history or meanings. This is similar to what the women also discussed when talking about their jewelry. Jewelry, as independent physical products, is mostly out of the scope of this study, but intangible features, like memories, stories and beliefs regarding jewelry, are the focus of this research. Women often emphasized that intangible features of their jewelry were truly important to them. Often, the intangible features were the most important reasons why they possessed the jewelry and why they chose to wear it on certain days.

One significant difference between my data and Simmel's and Veblen's interpretations, is that for them, pieces of jewelry are mostly expensive objects for the upper class, whereas in my study, jewelry consists of fairly ordinary objects everyone can afford. Jewelry today can be made of a huge variety of materials and styles, and is available for all. Also, it seems that the price of jewelry is not the main determinant of the possessor's appropriation. Of course, the monetary value of the jewelry may influence its appropriation on a subjective level. For example, if someone bought a piece of jewelry with their first pay check decades ago, this piece may later represent work achievements and personal independence. Still, this is not the main reason that pieces of jewelry turn into cherished items kept in the family for generations.

However, most jewelry was worn and possessed to carry memories and to work as mediators of earlier occasions and generations. For this reason, this study is more about the hidden side, the side known only by the wearer. Émile Durkheim's notions about jewelry as totemic items were also about this invisible and intangible side of jewelry (1980). So, whereas Simmel sees jewelry as an attempt to please others, my interest in this study is about jewelry as subjectively meaningful objects with meanings secondary to adornment. This is also the main difference from a Goffmanian interpretation, in which jewelry provides a means for impression management, an attempt to induce other people to see the wearer in a certain way. Indeed, according to women, their everyday life roles are often supported by their jewelry, but more important for them are the ties.

In contrast to these views, which primarily associate objects like jewelry with communication, Durkheim describes the ways objects have powers that can be summoned up when needed on certain occasions, most typically ceremonies. This is exactly how several women, that I spoke with, believe jewelry works. However, these powers are not only summoned up in ceremonies nowadays, but also on everyday occasions. When needed, women wear jewelry that carries a certain power or connection to their ancestors. These powers, as intangible features, have accumulated in the piece of jewelry throughout its history. Often they are from earlier generations and, if so, the piece of jewelry works not only as a tool of empowerment, but also acted as a mediator to previous generations of the family.

Such a deep social connection differs from the communication-centered role Simmel, Veblen, and Goffman give to adornments. For them, the communication happens in the present time by pleasing others whereas Durkheim's communication is spiritual and between generations. Also, according to what I have learned from the women, jewelry connects them to their own biographies: they are devices for keeping memories alive. When other people appear in these stories, they are often from past generations. These stories affect decisions about what to wear or not, as Goffman's analysis of role performance implies. Still, there is a larger picture behind impression management. Fairly often, jewelry is worn on very special days in life, like weddings and confirmations. Here, the jewelry participates in community maintenance and creates connections between people every bit as much as it helps in role performance.

2.2.1 POSSESSING JEWELRY

There are also particular shared practices in possessing jewelry, especially with jewelry possessed by many generations in families. With the multigenerationally possessed jewelry, families have often created formulas, rules and practises for handing it down to the next generation. These determine the process for choosing the future possessor and guidelines for maintaining the jewelry, memories, and related stories. Also, wearing jewelry in the correct manner is an important social practice related to possessing jewelry, as we can see in the following quotation. It is important for each possessor to follow these rules and fulfill the practices.

My mother Edda's (...) engagement jewelry is the adornment of the family's brides' wedding dresses. (...) She [author's sister and current possessor] has brought it to the wedding occasions to adorn the wedding dresses. It has been at least on Riitta's, Elina's, Peppi's, Jaana's, and Mirja's wedding dresses. Some of them have worn it in the front in the middle and some of them at the side depending on the bride.

Now she is going to give the brooch to her son's daughter Sofia (...) who lives in Turku. Sofia will get confirmed next summer, I cannot remember if she is going to give the brooch already then, or is she going to wait for Sofia's wedding (???)

(NARRATIVES)

Often, however, the rules of possession are flexible. This flexibility makes the possession of the jewelry active. Often, the most important thing is not only to maintain and keep the jewelry in the family, but also to follow certain social practices concerning possession of the jewelry.

These practices vary from one society to another. For example, wearing engagement and wedding rings on the left hand ring finger is the normal way in both cultures where the study was conducted. It is not obvious, because in some countries, the engagement and wedding rings are worn on the right hand ring finger. However, it is normally consistent within each society how marital status is expressed via jewelry. One difference in social practices regarding engagement and wedding rings between Finland and the USA is that the rings are different. In the USA, the engagement ring is often a ring with a diamond or other decorations on it, and the wedding band is then modest without any ornaments or gems. Meanwhile, often in Finland the engagement ring would be like the American wedding band and the wedding ring would then be a ring with one or more diamonds or other decorations on it. In the USA, the husband would normally only wear the wedding band whereas in Finland the man would start wearing the band once they had become engaged. Because of this variation, in this book, wedding and engagement rings and bands are called ring finger rings.

2.2.2 LIFE CYCLE RITUALS: JEWELRY IN RITUALS

Since kin is very important for members, kinship ties are strengthened constantly with rituals. Most rituals that concern one's life are also related to one's kinship. Jewelry often plays an important role in these rituals. The rituals anchor people into their kinships, traditions, and also into their everyday life. So, the feeling of being part of the kinship gets strengthened with jewelry. The rituals are related to two different sorts of occasions, ones that are rites of passages, e.g. graduations and weddings and ones that are linked to culture, e.g. Thanksgiving and Christmas. Common to all these rituals is that they are repeated in the culture or within the kin, have been constructed for particular ceremonies, and they have become traditional. (Durkheim 1980, Miller 2010.)

Even though the rituals are similar within cultures, each family or kin has made their own adjustments in order to fulfill their own needs. However, they are often consistent in that the rituals are handed down to the future generations. People learn them during childhood and continue fulfilling them into adulthood and in each situation. In other words, participation of kin members in these common rituals and ceremonies affirms the group, and makes it more coherent. They are creating a social identity for the kinship.

Michaela di Leonardo (1984) has studied rituals and social connections within Italian immigrants in California. di Leonardo found that it was the women in the families who perpetuate family connections by organizing occasions, such as Christmases, birthdays and weddings with rituals. According to di Leonardo, men do respect the work women do to perpetuate family ties but do not necessarily contribute. By organizing these ritual filled family gatherings, women not only hand down the traditions in the families but also keep the families together. Pieces of jewelry, among other objects, often play a meaning-

ful role in ritualistic family gatherings. Families often use particular ornaments, tablecloths, tableware, and candelabras associated with the reason for getting together. These could be considered public adornments of the occasion, while clothing and jewelry could be considered personal adornments worn for the sake of the gathering. Personal adornments, however, especially those related to family and occasion, are also public adornments at the gatherings. For example a wedding would not feel like a wedding without particular personal, and at the same time, public artifacts like garments and jewelry. Many of these artifacts are part of the family related occasion not only for cultural or religious reasons, but also for individual reasons within each family. However, even if the primary reason to have them as part of the occasion has been cultural or religious, they will often, over time, become personally meaningful because of the memories connected to them.

Rothenbuhler, who has studied ritual communications, also underlines the need for symbols in the ritual. With symbols he means costumes, flags, and other essential parts that make the ritual look and function like it should. These same symbolic items may seem somewhat ordinary on other occasions but their meaning expands when they are part of the action of rituals (Rothenbuhler 1998). An example from the field of jewelry is the transformation in the meaning of a wedding ring. First it is just an ordinary craft project on a goldsmith's desk, when put on display at a store it becomes a commodity, when used as an essential part of a wedding ceremony it becomes a symbol of the unity of two persons, and after the wedding it becomes an indicator of one's marital status.

As Catherine Bell (1997), who has also studied rituals, puts it, rituals traditionally differ from other actions by their nonutilitarian and nonrational qualities. For example, she says that "shaking hands is a ritual, but planting potatoes is not" (Bell 1997, p. 46). According to this distinction, almost all jewelry wearing is ritualistic, but it makes a significant difference if a woman wears a plain golden band on her ring finger rather than wearing it on her index finger. Already the ritual of placing the band on the ring finger may be one of the biggest rites of passages in a woman's life. Then after that, the ring works as a sign of her marital status. Also, multigenerational jewelry is often an important part of rituals, especially when it is handed from one possessor to the next on ritualistic occasions. For example if the mother received the cross at her confirmation, then the daughter also gets it at the time of her confirmation. This is illustrated in the following quotation.

This modest cross in its simplicity was especially dear for me. It was telling me something about past times and about my mother's history. The engraving behind the cross said "16.6.46".

When I was in confirmation school, I secretly hoped to receive the cross as a confirmation gift. I got truly delighted when my mother gave me the cross on our way to the confirmation church. There was an engraving of that date, "20.6.71", behind it. (...)

When then my firstling grew up as a young maid, I wanted to attach her to the chain of generations of the family through this piece of jewelry. I gave the cross to her on her 15th birthday. I got it engraved, "Eeva 22.6.96". (...)

I would like to see this piece of jewelry to be passed to the future generations as well.

(NARRATIVES)

Bell emphasizes the same fact about rituals being a means to more firmly affix individuals within their community (1997) as did Durkheim already a century ago. There are two different kinds of ritualistic occasions – ceremonies, which include rites of passage like confirmations and graduations and others that are more culture and tradition related, like Christmas and birthdays.

In both types of ritualistic occasions there are actions and products that support the ritual. For example at Christmas, as many families celebrate it in Western cultures, the ritual includes the gathering of family members, eating, and exchanging gifts. When the people gather together at Christmas to fulfill this ritual succeed in their actions, their connection to the others is strengthened. Even if the rituals are often strictly traditional, they naturally adjust to the present day and the participants. The ceremonies that rituals reinforce are active and always evolving due to the members of the kin and their lives. However, the ceremonies, and the rituals themselves, have their characteristic features that will be recognizable and permanent even as times and people change. (Bell 1997)

These characteristic features of rituals are what get handed down to future generations and will stay in the families, mostly within the maternal bloodline of the families as di Leonardo describes (1984). Bell discusses about attaching oneself to one's kin with rituals and ceremonies (1997); the same was seen in the stories studied for this research. Women connect themselves to their kin with their jewelry. This connection is experienced with past, present and future generations. The women often felt that they were obligated to keep the rituals and ceremonies alive and maintain the jewelry for the future possessors.

As mentioned above, the times and the members of the kin influence the evolution of the rituals in the ceremonies. Rothenbuhler emphasizes the importance of the times in his discussion of rituals (1998). He notes that cycles of time are always marked by rituals as certain ritualistic occasions happen repeatedly like birthdays every year, Olympic games every fourth year, or confirmation at a certain point in one's life. Since rituals are marking time and are repeated, they also may become essential to collective memory. Rothenbuhler (1998), as well as Durkheim (1980), have discussed collective memories being passed down to new generations on ceremonial ritualistic occasions. Since rituals are associated with stability and traditions across generations, as Rothenbuhler puts it, they change very slowly. Changes in rituals may take generations even though there are always alterations based on the times and the family or kin which is fulfilling the ritual.

History, one's life experience, and the socio-economic and political atmosphere in cultures also have an impact on traditions. For example in Finland, during war times rituals changed a lot. Each ruling power influenced traditions and common celebrations during their time. Often jewelry that was part of rituals was transformed into currency

during hard times, either in the whole society or just within individual kinships. During the Second World War, the government ordered the gold to be collected from the citizens in order to use the money from its sale for rearmament. It was truly a patriotic action to give up jewelry that people had, which often was only ring finger rings, for the good cause.

The fact that a lot of jewelry was given to this collection influences the tradition of jewelry in Finland. There is not much jewelry made of precious materials older than WW II since most of it was given to the collectors. Sometimes, however, the emotional attachment with the jewelry was so strong that it was impossible to give the item to the collectors, even for patriotic reasons. And not all women wanted to give up their rings for the war after already giving their sons and husbands up for it.

No jewelry was worn in my childhood home, there wasn't any. My mother's engagement and wedding rings were the only ones. My father had exchanged his ring into an iron ring, which I don't remember him wearing ever. My mother did not relinquish her rings, it was enough that she had given her oldest son for the Winter War.

(NARRATIVES)

However, even though a lot of jewelry was lost during the war, the rituals were still operational parts of the traditions, but now, mostly without the traditional jewelry. The roles that the old jewelry had in these rituals were replaced with new ones. And also, some of the intangible features, like beliefs, stories, and powers, were transformed in the new pieces of jewelry. The most important aspect for people was to keep the rituals and the traditions alive, more so than the actual presence of the jewelry.

The rituals still worked to create attachments between members of the kin, with or without the original jewelry. Many of the Finnish women who participated in this research had stories concerning wartime and the jewelry that existed in their families before the war. Giving jewelry for the war effort was truly patriotic for the women and reinforced their kinship with their country and culture. By giving their jewelry, they helped their homeland maintain independence. In return, when giving their ring finger rings to collectors, they received rings made of iron, to symbolize their marital status.

2.3 The Secret Powers of Jewelry

As these examples show, jewelry has many roles in social life. Clearly, jewelry has powers that have their origins somewhere. These origins, according to the interpretation proposed in this study, are similar to the powers that Durkheim discussed in his study of religious life. Symbols, emblems, and totems are powerful because they are used on occasions in which the wearer feels empowered and rejuvenated by the feeling of being a part of a social collective. Just like in the societies of Durkheim's studies, wearers of jewelry today are communicating with their ancestors, with people presently around them, and with future possessors of the jewelry. Pieces of jewelry are more than objects; they connect generations. The main ways for these powers to operate is the possessor's awareness of

them and her belief in them. When there are pieces of jewelry in the family that have been possessed by more than one generation, wearing them and preserving the stories connected to them makes the passed generations present for the current possessors.

In this sense, jewelry can be seen as totems in Durkheim's study. Of course, they are not totems, but they do work as totems in anchoring women into their family and kin. For example, a ring can help one feel like part of the maternal bloodline in her family, as in the following story.

RING — A CHAIN OF MOTHERS?

In addition to my own engagement and wedding rings I always wear a thin gold ring on my left hand middle finger. It was originally my mother's engagement ring.

When my mother died in 1991, alongside a few other pieces of jewelry I got her engagement ring, a thin smooth ring that was fashionable at the time of her engagement. It has the engraving "Lauri 24.12.1933". Both were then a bit over twenty, 23 and 24. The wedding took place in October the following year. The first child was born two years before the Winter War and the second, myself, during the war.

From the moment I got the ring it felt somehow very important and valuable. However I knew I could not wear it as it was; an engagement ring is private, personal and carries a lot of feelings, anticipation, optimism about the future. Its meaning could never be the same to me. To me its significance would be in the memories.

I took the ring to a small jewelry store near my workplace that had a charming, very professional goldsmith. We designed a new look for the ring together, a slim setting of stones with a small blue sapphire in the middle and small diamonds on each side. The goldsmith explained to me that a new ring would be cheaper than modifying the old one, because the modifications had to be handmade. The ring turned out beautiful and yet it somehow kept its old modesty and simplicity. It is very precious to me.

The ring reminds me of the historical era when my parents, young people, young adults, lived, at the threshold of their shared lives with their hopes and expectations. They were under thirty when the war begun, and still young when it ended. When I was the same age, with children of my own, I started thinking about that time and tried to imagine myself living with all the fear, uncertainty, scarcity and worry that those times meant. My father was at war, my mother and the children in Helsinki during the bombings, from where she could however later send the children to a safer place, to the care of her parents and siblings. The worry about her husband, relatives and even the country pushed other plans and expectations into the background. The time for fulfilling them came several years later.

I have a wish that involves the ring. One day I want to give it to my own daughter and I hope that she will in turn pass it on to hers, and maybe the chain can continue even longer. One young woman's happy moment could continue in a women's, mothers' memento throughout generations.

(NARRATIVES)

In this story, the ring represents family and the connection with it very clearly. However, this connection may not be clear at all for others. There may not be any distinguishing form or ornaments in the jewelry because women do not need to express to others that they belong to a certain kinship. However, it is important for women that there are these intangible and invisible features that position them within their own kin. These are mostly understood and known only to the possessors themselves. Also knowing that a piece of jewelry has been in the family for generations makes it more valuable and meaningful. When a piece of jewelry has been possessed by many generations, it is often felt that the family is the owner of the jewelry, rather than the current possessor. For her, a piece indicates a social connection bigger than herself; this study concerns itself with the bigger connection.

In this chapter, I have examined the literature related to reasons to have jewelry. Many areas of discussion are brought together here in order to clarify the setting within which this study is conducted. Even though the earlier discussion emphasizes the importance of certain products in both rituals and everyday roles, along with narrative jewelry's role in managing emotions and sentiments, something is still missing. This something is the viewpoint of seeing today's everyday jewelry as an essential entity and part of a woman's life cycle. The following chapters will help bridge this gap and explain why women wear jewelry today. However, before going into the empirical part of this book, I will explain in detail the data and methods used in this study.

A pair of gold stud earrings with pearls and a pearl necklace. The earrings are gold with a pearl on each. The necklace is a long strand of pearls. The background is a light, textured surface.

3.
DATA
AND
METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study is based on two different data sets. First I approached the topic by exploring narratives women had written about their jewelry. These data, a pilot study, was gathered by the Kalevala Women's Association in Finland in 2007. The next phase was to gather data by interviewing women who had self-documented their everyday wearing of jewelry for me. I gathered this primary data, in 2009 in the USA and in Finland. I decided to use interviews as the main data gathering method because it adds a personal touch. Since the thoughts of the research participants were the topic of interest interviews were a natural choice of method (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2001).

The primary data gathering acted as a reflection of the pilot study. In the pilot study, the number of participants was high (464 stories), but was restrictive in that I could not ask follow-up questions of the women because the narratives were written stories gathered via a writing competition advertised in newspapers. Later, though, when I was designing the main study, I was able to indicate the interesting topics that had arisen in the pilot and discuss these in person with the new women. This double-phase study protocol allowed me to build upon the initial conclusions from the pilot study, and thus expand the main study. The initial conclusions were mostly strengthened by the main study and I also achieved a deeper understanding from the in-person discussions. Some of the initial ideas were discarded because they were not verified in the main data. Also, some new aspects were found during the self-documentation phase.

The participants in the pilot study were all Finns and they wrote their stories in Finnish. For the main study, I wanted to have a broader perspective and therefore studied women from two different countries, the USA and Finland. The purpose of gathering data from two different locations was not to compare them but rather to approach each story and participant as an individual and unique source of information. Even though the women were different from each other – demographics, socioeconomics, age, nationality, etc. – the stories about wearing and possessing jewelry were surprisingly similar.

Because of the data gathering protocol, there were similarities and differences in the two sets of data. This was expected due to the differences in data gathering methods. The narrative data had limitations from being gathered within a writing competition. People of course wanted to write beautiful stories, so some parts of the stories were colored. Also the one-sidedness of only seeing text, with hardly any visual material, created limitations

Method/Tool	Research participants	Description of the material	Finding research participants	Gathered by
Narratives (the pilot data)	464 stories from Finnish women.	Handwritings, typed texts, few images.	Participants entered a writing competition through newspaper ads.	Kalevala Women's Association for the purpose of preserving Finnish oral history.
The Probe Enhanced Interviews (the main data)	28 women, 13 from the Chicago area, USA, 15 from the Helsinki area, Finland.	Self-documentation kits for nine days and interviews. Sketches, handwritten stories, photos and audio files.	Snowball effect.	Author for the purpose of this study to build upon the pilot data.

Table 3.1 Description of two data sets utilized in this study.

for the analysis. However, the data from the Probes study had limitations as well. Utilizing the probes tool was arduous because of the multiple layers of constructing information. Nevertheless, I found that using these two different methods of gathering data truly supplementary to each other. The unique characteristics of each data set forced me to consider this study with a qualitative approach only.

From the narrative data, I had been able to draw the premise about social practises and networks playing an important role when possessing and wearing jewelry. The main reason to conduct the Probe Enhanced Interview Study was to see if this premise was valid when studying the same topic in a different research setting. Some initial conclusions from the pilot study were strengthened but the Probe Enhanced Interview Study also brought about some new insights. The different insights may have occurred because of the differences in the data gathering methods but also in how the inquiries were posed to the participants. In my Probe Enhanced Interview Study, I asked women to describe their ordinary way of wearing jewelry in their everyday life, whereas in the pilot they were asked to write under the title "Jewelry Speaks of Its Wearer" (in Finnish "Koru kertoo kantajastaan"). In this case, most of the women described their special jewelry and special occasions for wearing this jewelry. In other words, the basic settings and questions for gathering the data had different approaches and resulted in somewhat different information. The pilot study worked as inspiration in designing the Probe Enhanced Interview Study, and also worked as a tool to determine the clustering of the contents of the stories. These different approaches made the data richer than it would have been if it was just one sort of data.

3.2 Data Gathering

3.2.1 THE PILOT: NARRATIVES

The pilot study was conducted by studying stories women had written about their jewelry. The Kalevala Women's Association gathered stories of women's meaningful jewelry for their purpose of preserving Finnish narrative history. The stories were gathered through a writing competition. To guarantee variety in the entries, the association did not give any further guidelines for the competition other than the title "Jewelry Speaks of Its Wearer". The competition was advertised in the major Finnish newspapers, on the association's website, and in their own magazine. Also a jewelry manufacturing company, Kalevala Koru Oy (owned by the association) gathered stories via their website. They got hundreds of entries for the competition and they gave me 699 stories to use. Although these data was not originally gathered to serve academic purposes, it was useful as the base for the pilot study. The initial insights and the guidelines for the forthcoming Probe Enhanced Interview Study were drawn from the stories.

The narratives utilized in this study were written by women. No one was excluded from taking part in the writing competition, but most of the authors were middle-aged or older women. The male authors who participated in the writing competition wrote mainly about their significant women's (mothers', wives' daughters') jewelry, not their own personal belongings. Therefore, I did not study narratives from men. And in the later study, I decided to keep the research group similar to the authors of the stories: it seemed natural based on the writing competition. When studying these narratives, I had to keep in mind that only those who were interested in writing about their jewelry responded to the newspaper announcements. Therefore, these respondents do not represent all Finnish women's opinion of their jewelry, just how the people who decided to respond value their jewelry.

After sorting out the stories by male authors, the stories which were clearly fairy tales or poems, and those which were more or less lists of possessions, I had 464 stories to study further. Still the number was big to apply the qualitative approach, especially since the stories were so diverse. Nevertheless, the qualitative approach was the only approach I could apply because of the diversity of the stories as shown in the following sample story. Even though the data inspired me to study women's jewelry, other scholars have also found women's possessions interesting within the context of societal settings. Wallendorf and Arnould emphasize that the favorite possessions of young people are more functional whereas the favorite belongings of old people, and especially old women, are often personal and socially meaningful items (1988). Women have stated in even earlier studies that their most cherished possessions (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981) or favorite things (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988) are related to social ties rather than functional products, which is more common for men. Below is a sample story meant to give an idea of the narrative data.

JEWELRY SPEAKS OF ITS WEARER

I met him at 17 at an ice-skating ball on the Kimpinen skating ring in Lappeenranta. He wore a brown corduroy blouse and a driver's cap. He asked me to dance to "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg". I remember his scent. He smelled of fresh wind and clean clothes.

We met almost daily for two years. I studied at the girls' upper secondary school by the water tower and Pekka already worked in a car shop. I was three years younger than him. He walked me to my home gate after the ice-skating ball ended and invited me to the movies next Saturday to watch "Sven Tuuva".

We had box seats. We threw our coats on the coat rack. Pekka was wearing a light blue collared shirt, a tweed jacket and corduroy pants. I noticed that he wore a medallion on his neck. When the movie begun, he offered me candy from his Figarol pack and shyly held my hand.

I had not dated before. School and hobbies took up my time. I had spent my time on the sports field and among poetry and theatre ever since I was young. I did have boyfriends, but none of them had gently held my hand.

My home was on Valtakatu street opposite the military base's fence. I was my father's and mother's only child and I had been told that if a boy asks me out he has to come pick me up from home and escort me back.

I did not ask Pekka to come pick me up from home for our first date. I guessed that my mother would watch out the window when she knew I was going to the movies and would wait for me with the evening tea right after the movie ended. I did not want my mother to see me walking down the street holding hands with a boy. I turned to the teacher Uimonen's yard from the corner of Suonionkatu street and told Pekka that it was also the way to our yard.

I forbade him to come further than Uimonen's gate. Pekka asked me to wait and opened his coat. He took the medallion necklace from his neck and placed it around mine. "I have gotten this from my grandmother as a Confirmation present and my grandmother said that I can one day give it to the girl I fall in love with."

I ran to Uimonen's backyard and climbed on his garbage cans, from there onto the fence and jumped down to our back yard, catching my skirt on a nail that stuck out. The skirt fabric ripped and my mother stood in front of me.

"Where are you coming from?" asked my mother.

"From the movies," I said and looked my mother in the eyes.

"Is the Valtakatu street closed?"

"No, but my mother watches me from the window and I did not say that I was going to the movies with a boy."

"And because of that you had to rip your new pleated skirt," my mother noted with a smile in her eyes.

"Yes," I replied and stuffed the jewelry under my collar.

"What are you hiding on your neck?"

"I have a medallion."

"Let's go inside, it's raining and grandma is waiting with tea and pancakes."

The entrance hall smelled of tea and strawberry jam. Grandpa was sitting in an armchair in the living room and listening to a radio symphony concert. Grandma had set evening tea on the living room table and was waiting for us to come to the table, while dad was still in his study arranging his papers.

"Why does the girl have a ripped skirt?" grandma shrieked and yelled to my father to come right away.

My father came into the living room holding a pipe although that was not allowed. Grandpa closed the radio and stood up. Mother was almost laughing.

"Leena is practicing hurdles, but the fence was too high and had a nail sticking out."

"Wearing a new pleated skirt," grandma said and laughed with water in her eyes.

"It is only a skirt, thank God," dad sighed.

I went to my room to put on jeans. They waited for me at the table and grandpa had put on the radio. The melody floated in the air like silent birds and I knew that I was loved. I hugged each of them individually. Grandma poured tea and mother put pancakes on our plates.

"Leena has a boyfriend," mother said in a barely audible voice. Dad's and grandpa's faces darkened.

"I was present when the skirt ripped on the fence between teacher Uimonen's and ours. I was taking out the garbage and Leena fell onto the lid." Dad and grandpa started coughing, because their mouths were full and laughter bubbled in their throat.

"Leena also has something on her neck," mother whispered, not to disturb the symphony. Grandpa and dad stared seriously at my neck.

I pulled out the necklace from under my shirt for everyone to see.

"It is Kalevala Jewelry's Madonna medallion!" my grandma exclaimed and I told that I had gotten it from Pekka. I also said that it had belonged to Pekka's grandma.

"What's inside it?" my father asked and I showed that the medallion had a piece of Pekka's Figarol pack inside. Everyone smiled and looked at each other, but grandpa said that Pekka would have to pick me up from home the next time. So it happened and everyone liked Pekka.

"Such a thoughtful and beautiful boy," grandma praised.

"And behaves nicely," mother noted.

We went out for two years. The summer came when I was due to leave for Helsinki to study at the Diakonia College. I was still waiting for the results from the Theatre School entrance examinations. Pekka was already working in the car shop doing car repairs. We travelled to spend Midsummer at my aunt's family villa with my cousins.

I had a summer job in Lindholm's shop, and right after work Pekka came to get me with my rucksack and tube bag from my home. Before that he had had time to fetch and fasten Midsummer birches beside our stairs and grandma told how one birch had fallen down many times when Pekka had tried to attach it to the stair rail.

We bicycled to the Market shore where we had taken Kajava, our sailing boat, the night before. We took our bikes to the Dairy's yard so they would not disappear during our absence. The weather was sweltering hot. It looked like Kajava had recognized us from afar because it joyfully waved its mast. Travelling was slow because the wind did not aid us to reach Vehkataipale before midnight.

At night around 11 pm we were near the Lamposaari island. The surface of Saimaa was calm and quiet. Kajava had no engine and so Pekka went to the front to paddle, so that we could pass a narrow passage without any wind. The shores were full of tents and boats. People were getting ready for the big Midsummer celebration. I handled the steering and Pekka paddled in front. Suddenly Pekka turned around, standing up, his face looking at me with an agony-filled expression, clutching the paddle. I tried to tie up the rudder and run to the bow, but Pekka fell into Saimaa clenching the paddle in his fists. He turned his head and looked at me before he disappeared into the depths of Saimaa.

A man from the shore wearing swimming pants got in his small motor boat and headed toward Kajava. He switched off the engine and started diving, but had to stop because it no longer helped. I anchored my boat and set down the sails. The man took me to the Lamposaari sawmill where I could call the police. The police said that nothing could be done. They took me home and we notified Pekka's parents in the morning.

Hot July brought Pekka to the surface two weeks after Midsummer. The undercurrents had taken him far from his drowning site, and he had not been found in previous searches. Grandpa and dad had volunteered in the searches.

Sorrow affected me deeply. I did not go studying that year. At night when I could not sleep I held my medallion and felt Pekka near me, he had turned into my life's angel. We often reminisced about Pekka at home, and then grandma said that the jewelry would always speak to me about its wearer. Grandpa and dad lost their best fishing buddy and grandma a helper who was ready to help with fetching the Christmas tree and Midsummer birches so that grandpa did not have to go to the forest when dad was busy with work. I lost a loved one who I missed long and painfully. Pekka's parents and sisters asked for long: Why?

The recorded cause of death was an attack of illness, a vein had suddenly burst in his head. I got a grandson 35 years after the incident. I have often visited the Ristikangas cemetery with him. When he was little I told him about all the loved ones who we brought flowers to. Little Pekka listened carefully and found those sleeping under the

cemetery grass from our photo albums as soon as he learned to read. He won a Junior sailing competition on a small sailing boat at age 7.

Next Sunday is his Confirmation day. I will give him the Madonna medallion, which I would not give to anyone else because jewelry speaks of its wearer.

(NARRATIVES)

3.2.2 THE PROBE ENHANCED INTERVIEW STUDY

After studying the narrative data thoroughly the Probe Enhanced Interview Study was conducted. The purpose of starting this phase with the probes study was to sensitize the participants for the upcoming interviews and also to reflect on the initial insights of the pilot study. The idea for the probes study arose from the variety in the preliminary data from the pilot study. The stories provided were truly varied. They were mainly about memories and emotions connected to jewelry. And when the wearing of jewelry was mentioned, it was often about wearing it on special occasions. I wanted to examine the everyday wearing of jewelry more closely. I asked women to document their everyday wearing of jewelry using self-documentation kits I provided them. The Probe Enhanced Interview Study, including the self-documentation, were conducted in two locations, first in the Chicago area in the United States and then in the Helsinki area in Finland. The reason for investigating women in different locations was not to make a comparison study between practices in different cultures but rather to see possible similarities, and widen the variety of research participants. There were of course differences in behaviors between women in Finland and the United States, but the main reasons to wear and possess jewelry were rather alike.

The Design Probes tool is a self-documentation tool developed precisely for designers and design researchers to get inspirational and sensitive information from users (Mattelmäki 2006). I used the Design Probes tool to sensitize the participants to this truly personal topic before the interviews. They received probes kits before the interviews and were asked to self-document their everyday wearing of jewelry for nine days. I supposed that nine days, which in many cases included two weekends and five weekdays, would be a long enough time to find out about the differences in wearing jewelry between everyday life (often weekdays) and special occasions (often weekends) (see also Rybczynski 1991). Some of the participants kept the probes kits for a longer period of time even though they only documented nine days. They did not necessarily document days they wore the same jewelry as earlier, but rather waited for days they wore other pieces of jewelry.

The probes kits included nine cards, one for each day, on which participants were asked to write the story of the jewelry, describe the materials and the history of the jewelry, and illustrate the pieces of jewelry worn that day on the paper doll printed on the card.

The cards were placed in a black jewelry box with a disposable camera and instructions for how to use the kits. I wanted to make the self-documentation kits look attractive and be contained in jewelry boxes to make the participants feel important when receiving the kit. Each kit was placed in a paper bag and was delivered to the participant either by me or via

Draw your Wonders of the day to the Paper Doll
Include your pieces of jewelry, your clothes, shoes, purse, etc.

Write onto the picture:
1) About the materials and colors of your jewelry.
2) How did these pieces of jewelry become your possessions?
3) Why were you wearing them today?

1- 14k gold chain, "old" gold bracelet, fake gold earrings. Necklace made of white, clear dark blue & clear dark green beads
2- See over
3- Dressed in a hurry & gold chain is a standby. Bead necklace to give a dash of color.

Today is 7/6/09
How is your day?
Dash

Describe briefly today's happenings:
Cleaned apartment, took care of sick dog, visited a former-best friend, read, worked some on-line projects

Write the Story of your Jewelry here
Please, use the extra sheets if this area is not enough.

The gold chain was a 40th anniversary present and is one of 4-5 pieces in my jewelry box I could not live without. It came from Lois and Piro Scott in the "good old days" when there was a store downtown.

The bracelet was my husband's grandmother's and I got it because I have small wrists.

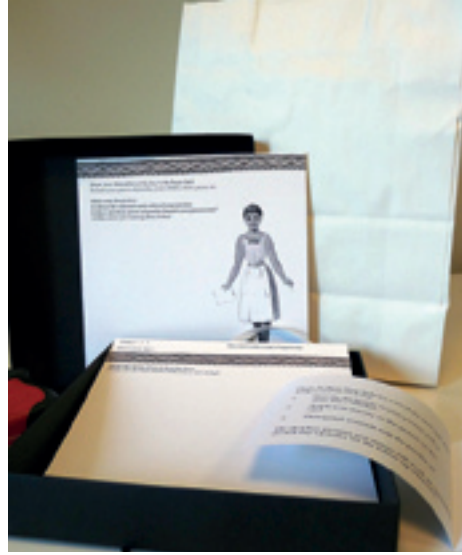
Earrings are costume jewelry but my gran daughter found the missing one carrying on the sidewalk in St. Paul MN. a day after I lost it there.

One of my elder daughter's friends made the bead necklace when she/they were in high school - beads were all natural. The ring? earrings? ring?

Visualize the lifespans of these pieces of jewelry on the timeline.

Timeline: 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s

A sample card from a self documentation kit. Here Isabella is telling about her ordinary busy day's jewelry.



The self-documentation kit.

mail. I felt that it was important to start the personal relationship with the participants as early as possible and I added a handwritten note to each kit. I wanted the participants to feel special because each woman and her jewelry are special.

The participants were asked to write about their jewelry, sketch it, and take a picture of themselves wearing the jewelry each day. I wanted to give participants the option to illustrate the jewelry by taking photos since not all are willing to sketch or draw, however the disposable cameras were not the best for capturing small items like jewelry. Nevertheless, most of the women used all three media to document their jewelry. Sketching, taking photos and writing supplemented each other as sources of information. My intention was not to receive the highest quality drawings, photos, or writings about their wearing of jewelry. Thinking of their jewelry for at least nine days, reliving their memories and handling their jewelry, got the participants sensitized to their jewelry for the interviews.

All together 28 women participated in the study, 13 in the Chicago area and 15 in the Helsinki area. It was relatively easy to find the participants for this study since it seems that most women have stories to tell about their jewelry. Often when women were sharing these stories, they also shared a lot of their personal lives and history. All of the participants were willing to reveal a part of themselves for the sake of this study. The women I studied were: Lydia (89 yrs, FIN), Isabella (84 yrs, US), Julia (79 yrs, FIN), Paula (78 yrs, FIN), Irene (71 yrs, US), Eva (69 yrs, US), Maija (60 yrs, FIN), Linda (59 yrs, FIN), Mia (58 yrs, US), Ida (58 yrs, FIN), Ella (57 yrs, FIN), Maria (56 yrs, FIN), Heidi (56 yrs, FIN), Laura (55 yrs, FIN), Ingrid (54 yrs, US), Margaretha (53 yrs, FIN), Amy (52 yrs, US), Emma (52 yrs, US), Sofia (51 yrs, FIN), Anita (51 yrs, US), Rebecca (51 yrs, FIN), Susanna (51 yrs, FIN), Karla (50 yrs, US), Sara (42 yrs, US), Iris (35 yrs, US), Johanna (34 yrs, US), Erika (33 yrs, FIN) and Alisa (33 yrs, US).

Since most contributors in the pilot data were middle-aged and older women, I wanted to have rather similar participants in the Probe Enhanced Interview Study. The women who participated were grandmothers, mothers or women who had the next generation in their family, but no children of their own. And of course, all of them were daughters. Since one of the main findings from the pilot study relates to multigenerational possessing, I was interested in studying different generations. From one family, a grandmother, mother, and daughter all participated in the study. Mother and daughter pairs from two other families participated as well. I used the snowball effect to find the participants and unfortunately I had to turn away many women who wanted to participate.

I found the Design Probes method to be an effective tool to sensitize women to the topic and get them ready for the upcoming interviews. Many times in the interviews we discussed truly touching and personal topics. I think that without the sensitizing self-documentation period before the interviews we could not have had discussions as deep as we did. Because of the self-documentation, I already knew a lot about these women and their jewelry before the interviews. I had an overview of their personal histories, knew about their everyday practices and about the people that were close to them. This allowed us to discuss the topic more deeply in a given amount of time.

3.3 Working with the Data

The data from the pilot study was on paper form. Some of the authors had written their stories by hand, some had used typewriters and some computer. The form in which I received the data was copies of the originals which are nowadays kept in *the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society* in Helsinki. Very few of the authors had included photos or sketches to illustrate their stories; most of them were just text. But I also did receive copies of the illustrations that did exist. Once I received the stories, I started reading them through and sorting the contents by creating clusters. Clusters were created rather intuitively each time a parallel factor was found. I did not know what these would be beforehand. Most of the contents of the stories were overlapping, e.g. many women emphasized the importance of jewelry staying in their family after the present possessor passed away. But still, each story in a given cluster may have other aspects that were worth clustering as well. So to say, the stories themselves were truly different from each other even though they were written about the same topic. Some of the stories were happy stories, some sad. Overall, a lot of emotions were described in them.

When I received the pilot data, it was simply a pile of papers –copies of handwritten and typed papers, or printed copies of emails. It was rather easy to handle because it was in a uniform tangible form. The main data, the Probe Enhanced Interview data, however, was more varied. It was gathered in two phases. In the first phase, the data was in the form of cards, which included handwritten stories and sketches of women's wearables, and photos taken with disposable cameras. In the second phase, the data was audio recordings of the interviews. After receiving the data from the first phase of the probes, I studied it and made an outline for each interview based on the content of the cards and pictures.

Each outline for an interview was slightly different because of the individuality of the research participants. In the interviews we mostly went through the stories from the cards in further detail and talked about jewelry that was not described on the cards. It was also a great opportunity to ask about sensitive things described “between the lines”. These were for example, the powers women gain when wearing jewelry and also the connection to earlier possessors they may have felt. Some of the participants wrote about these sensitive topics on their cards, but for many, they were difficult to write about. But then in the interviews these topics were not so hard to discuss.

The interviews tended to be more like discussions than interviews. Often I was invited to the participants’ homes and they had prepared something for us to eat or drink. These arrangements may have been made because the participants felt that they had a lot to talk about. Most of the interviews lasted about two hours; the shortest was 47 minutes and the longest four and a half hours. After the interviews I made transcripts of them and started a similar clustering operation as I had performed with the pilot data. However, at this stage, the clusters were still based on the interpretations from the pilot study.

3.4 Inference

In broad terms, the analysis of both data sets built on analytic induction (see also for example Seale 1999, Koskinen 2003). I read through all the pieces of data and tried to group them into homogeneous classes that were different from each other. The key role in this analysis went to deviant cases. For example, whenever I was faced with a narrative that did not fit my classification, I created a new category. The outcome was a classification system that is able to describe the data as a whole. This analysis happened on two levels: on the macro level, it produced the analytic scheme that became the foundation for the chapters; on the micro level, it produced analyses within chapters.

Other analytic procedures included validation through discourse and workshops. Each time I found an interesting topic or conclusion in the data I wrote about it, aiming to publish the writing at a design research conference. Writing was a useful tool for me to develop the topic. Also, the feedback and the review processes of the conferences where I published the writings, helped me better craft my initial ideas from the data. I also arranged data interpretation workshops with fellow researchers in order to see what kinds of interpretations others would have of the narratives.

3.4.1 WORKING WITH THE PILOT DATA

Working with the pilot data was a touching experience. When I received the huge pile of narratives I started exploring them by reading and clustering them based on their contents. Reading them was hard sometimes because the stories were truly emotional. Often, they made me emotional and I would cry. Nevertheless, after reading them all through several times I was able to put my natural emotions aside and start clustering them. I found a lot of similarities in the stories. I noted that most of the women wrote about similar things and it seemed that the title “Jewelry Speaks of Its Wearer” evoked

hundreds of unique narratives, although still with similar contents. Most of the clusters that I was able to establish were overlapping. In other words most of the stories included various parts which belonged to many of the clusters. First, I had 36 different clusters that were intuitively created from the stories. They described the physical aspects of the jewelry, reasons to have or receive jewelry, the mediating aspects of the jewelry, and so on. After studying these clusters, I found those that explain why women possess and wear jewelry most interesting. And most of the reasons for possessing and wearing were related to social practices and the social networks to which they belonged to. Based on this finding, I created the following six main clusters of the stories:

POWER JEWELRY

In 94 stories women described powers they gained from their jewelry. These powers were either private or collective. Private powers either provide something (e.g. happiness, joy, hope, stamina) or assist in life situations (e.g. in forgiving or surviving). Collective powers are commonly believed, and either cure (e.g. eye diseases or hearing problems) or act as symbols (e.g. signifying fertility, love or victory). (Ahde 2008.)

MULTIGENERATIONAL POSSESSING

Many authors felt that their jewelry was possessed by the family rather than themselves. They received the jewelry when there was a development in the family. Some of them also had restrictions and obligations concerning the possession, wearing, and future handing down process. Some of these pieces of jewelry had been in the family for several generations. (Ahde 2009a.)

EVERYDAY WEARING VS. SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Women described how their everyday wearing of jewelry differs from special occasions. In everyday wearing they often had more simple jewelry and mostly the same set that was occasionally colored with some more visible piece of jewelry. On special occasions, though, most of the women wore different sets which were much more noticeable. This could be fancier jewelry or jewelry with more family connections, like an inherited piece. Jewelry more meaningful to the family was worn on special occasions, whereas everyday jewelry was more often status jewelry (e.g. wedding rings, crosses). However, these stories were not about everyday jewelry, but rather about special occasion jewelry. Also, the women's roles in their everyday life and on special occasions varied. The variation in the roles was often expressed or emphasized via jewelry and the rest of the wearables. (Ahde 2009b, Ahde et al. 2009.)

MEMORY VEHICLES

Often, pieces of jewelry act as vehicles in which to carry memories over time. Possessors of jewelry tend to attach memories to their jewelry. They may be in tangible form (e.g. engravings) or intangible form (stories attached to jewelry). Often these memories are



Amy's artificial crystal necklace protects her from people outside her house.



Emma's bracelet is from her mother, who received it from Emma's father. Each time they had a child, he added a new charm on the mother's bracelet.



Iris's 20th birthday present from her parents. The pearls should only be worn on special occasions related to family.



Isabella's safety pins from her childhood bring back memories from more than eight decades. They were hers when she was a baby, now she's wearing them as a group of brooches.



Johanna had these earrings made for herself out of her fathers cufflinks. Wearing them brings back memories of her father.



Amy had bought this watch with her first own salary after her divorce. It worked as a reminder of her being a strong and independent woman.

handed down to new possessors along with the jewelry itself and therefore they stay in the families. (Ahde-Deal and Koskinen 2010.)

JEWELRY REPRESENTING ACHIEVEMENTS IN LIFE

Often pieces of jewelry are bought or received as gifts on important milestones in one's life. These are often age, work and study related, or social status related achievements. Many older women still remembered and had the first piece of jewelry they had bought by themselves with their first salary. Also, gifts for retiring were highly appreciated, as well as gifts on big birthdays and gifts for giving birth.

JEWELRY PROVOKING EMOTIONS

Sometimes wearing jewelry brings back memories, but also the memories provoke wearing jewelry. Some of the authors described wanting to wear a particular piece of jewelry to bring back certain memories, for example, when yearning after someone. Jewelry that provokes emotions also sometimes restricts wearing them. If the memories they bring back are difficult to handle, women tend to store the jewelry and never wear it. (Ahde-Deal 2010.)

Not everything that the authors discussed in their stories is represented in these six clusters, but the most interesting aspects of possessing and wearing jewelry are. I did not find the physical aspects of the jewelry described in the stories as interesting because of the limitations of the data. There were few images so I was not able to see the items themselves. The images presented here are from the later interviews describing similar matter. This was one of the driving reasons to gather another data set myself. During the Probe Enhanced Interview Study, I was actually able to see the pieces of jewelry and talk about their design with the research participants. As seen in the descriptions of the main clusters, many of the aspects are overlapping and in the beginning were included in more than one cluster.

3.4.2 NARRI: ANALYSIS IN WORKSHOPS

Since this was my first time conducting research, I faced some uncertainty in building the analysis. After all, my background is in crafts and I was not confident working alone with the huge amount of qualitative data. To gain confidence, I asked others' opinions about the same data. With the help of my colleagues, we organized three data interpreting sessions which we called *Narri* (Vaajakallio et al. 2009). These sessions were organized in three different locations, for three different purposes, and with three different groups of people contributing interpretations based on personal and professional insights. The same narrative data and game structure was applied in all three sessions. I had chosen 36 stories from the original data of 464 stories to be utilized in these sessions. I picked the stories that would best represent the overall data. These stories were then translated into English so that each participant of a session was able to read and understand the stories.

We utilized a design game structure when determining setting up the protocol of the sessions. We found the design game approach useful since we wanted to engage the participants in the situation as well as with the narratives. Each session started with the presentation of a pre-task which had been given to the participants beforehand. Their task was to bring, if possible, their own most cherished piece of jewelry and tell the others its story. This task was given to participants to get them more personally engaged in the topic than they might have been otherwise.

After completing the pre-tasks, the participants were given a package with stories and stationary items, e.g. pens and post-its, in specified colors. Each package also included instructions for the game. Also included were cards with numbers to identify the phase of exploration which each participant is exploring. In the first part of the game, we asked participants to read the stories by themselves and then mark the most important and interesting points and keywords with their own colored pens or post-its. In the second part of the game, each participant read out aloud their most interesting stories and pointed out the most interesting aspects. If others had the same ideas and keywords in their stories, they would now present these to the others. Also, they could physically create clusters by placing the stories on the table. In the game, we repeated these rounds of reading the stories, discussing them, and piling them on the table until all the stories had been covered. The last phase of the game varied a little within each game session due to the different interests of the participants.

The first game session was organized in Helsinki (Finland) for jewelry manufacturer Kalevala Koru Oy employees for the purpose of understanding their products' end users. The second game session was organized at the Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago (IL, USA) for PhD and MA design research students for the purpose of learning about the narrative method. The third game session was organized for jewelry design students at the Kuopio Academy of Design, Savonia University of Applied Sciences (Finland) as a starting point for a jewelry design project. The interpretations of the stories by participants in all three game sessions strengthened my own earlier interpretations and they also added some new aspects to my initial insights. I found it very valuable to hear other people's estimations and interpretations of the same data that I had been studying.

3.4.3 PROBE ENHANCED INTERVIEW STUDY

Analyzing the Probe Enhanced Interview Study happened in two phases which were built on each other. First, when I received the self-documentation kits, I developed the photographs and studied them thoroughly. In the kits, I had asked women to describe their everyday wearing of jewelry by telling the story of the jewelry, describing the jewelry itself, and visualizing the history of the jewelry. After studying the self-documentation kits, I created the outline for the interview based on the information I had received in the kit.

Some women paid a lot of attention to the self-documentation kit and revealed a lot of information about their everyday wearing of jewelry, whereas, others shared less in the self-documentation kits than they did in the interviews. Nevertheless, the most important part of the Probes study was the second phase, the interviews. The interviews were

normally held a few days after the completed self-documentation kit was received. The self-documentation kit acted as a sensitizing element for the forthcoming interview about emotional and often extremely touching topics. It was useful that the participants had had the self-documentation kits at home with them for some time before the interviews. During that time they had gone through their jewelry and memorized things related to their jewelry. This made it easier for them to talk openly about their jewelry. In addition, they also had time to decide what not to talk about and what to keep secret, which was also important. It was good that there was enough time for women to get ready for the forthcoming interviews.

The interviewees seemed surprisingly open and honest. Many of the participants had prepared their homes for the interviews; often the jewelry case was brought to the table where we had the interview over coffee, lunch or light dinner. Some of the interviews were held in cafés or on university premises. Oftentimes, I felt more like a friend than a researcher when I was doing the interviews.

The main reason to conduct the Probe Enhanced Interview Study was to see if the limitations of the narrative data would remain when the design and setting of the research were different. Because of the format of the writing competition, I was a little afraid that women in the narrative data were only writing about their most interesting pieces of jewelry, and not considering the everyday wearing of jewelry in their stories. This concern turned out to be accurate. Hardly anyone wrote about their most normal set of jewelry unless there was something extraordinary in it. In contrast, in the Probe Enhanced Interview Study, the basic set of jewelry was often described as the most important and something without which one would feel naked. Most of the women described this basic set of jewelry as something they could not leave home without. Common for the pieces from the basic set was that they were often touching the possessor's skin. In other words, they were mostly rings, necklaces, earrings, or bracelets. The other significant reason to conduct the Probe Enhanced Interview Study was to affirm the initial insights I had drawn from the narrative data. Each topic of the earlier mentioned clusters was discussed in the interviews, and often in the self-documentation kits as well. Therefore they remained important topics. But, in addition to those six clusters the women discussed the following topics:

AGE AND MATERIAL

Often women described how their taste in jewelry had developed over time. Most of the women had never gotten rid of any jewelry, so they had jewelry from all eras of their lives. The jewelry case often worked as a three dimensional diary, for the time in their lives when they had jewelry. In many cases, women had received and purchased jewelry made of silver when they were younger, and in their middle ages they acquired jewelry more often made of gold and precious stones. As older women, they could have all of these as well as natural materials like seeds, wood, and shell. In other words, their accumulated jewelry enhanced and became more varied as they aged (see also Summatavet 2005).



Isabella's bark brooch made by her granddaughter.



The alewife pin which represents the friendship and is always worn on dear friends' birthdays.

SISTERHOOD JEWELRY

Often women told of how they had bought jewelry similar to their own for their sisters or friends to express togetherness. Some women had bought the same jewelry together as a memento of a meaningful occasion. In the following quotation the group of friends had bought a rather unusual looking fish brooch made of fish from their shared trip (see also Durkheim 1980).

E. It is an alewife

P. What's that?

E. In 1967 Lake Michigan was overrun some of the Ocean run ships came through the St Lawrence canal to the great lakes and dumped there their water from the ship. And they brought those in from the ocean and they multiplied in the Lake Michigan and in all the Great Lakes and there were thousands of them and you would walk on the beach and it would stink... Good heavens the stink was coming from the dying ... Well finally up in Wisconsin at the resin art museum, my girlfriend and I drove up there and Mary said "look what's in the case" and I am like "that looks like an alewife" and the lady at the counter said "yes, there is a gentleman, an artist, who is making them and selling them for 10 dollars apiece and the money is going to the conservation of Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes". We had not, since 1967, had anything like that, because they put in another kind of fish which then became a problem. They put that fish in to get rid of those and then that fish became a problem. But this artist up in Wisconsin is making these and all the money goes to conservation of the Great Lakes. So, Mary, who had been with me in Michigan City on that year ... So, Mary and I got this idea that we are gonna be the alewife sisters. So, Mary and I stood there, and every fish is different of course because it is a real fish, every one has different colors, different color skin... So, we spent almost four hours shopping to find alewife pins for ourselves and our friends. And, this was my choice because you could probably see why, it has silvers and browns and.... it just has my colors. She took a totally different alewife. So, this coming Wednesday we are all coming together to celebrate my birthday and Lyn's birthday, we're both in August. So we're wearing our alewife pins. Now, is that dumb?

P. No (laughing)

E. That is really dumb! Alewife pins.

P. The alewife sisters. Do you always wear these when you see each other?

E. No, just on our birthdays. However, I have worn it to the office occasionally on something white, or grey, or whatever black and, somebody will say "is that a fish" I am like "yeah, what's wrong with a fish" "nothing". And they look at me like I got holes in my head. So, then I would tell them that is was for charity for the Great Lakes.

(EVA 69 YRS)

BASIC SET

All the women who participated in the probes study said that they had a 'basic set' of jewelry. This set, which mostly is worn all the time (except possibly when sleeping or going to the sauna), would often include wedding and engagement rings, important mementos or souvenirs, and inherited pieces of jewelry. Common to all of these is that they are worn on the skin and they are mostly made of precious metals, they are rather small items, and their designs are modest. Their designs have to be practical, since they are worn all the time and they have to fit in with other, often more poignant, pieces of jewelry worn

on special occasions. A basic set often follows one style even if the pieces of jewelry are purchased over a long period. However, pieces of a basic set do change during the life of a woman, but slowly, as we can see in the following quotation.

E: The basic set means: The engagement ring which is from Barcelona (...) We bought it there when we were visiting there. Actually, it was a birthday present, but he proposed right after the birthday. So, then we bought the ring there. The other one which is part of the basic set is of course the wedding ring. We got married last summer at the following week from summer solstice. Then these are also part of the basic set, I am always wearing them except in the sauna and shower. This Key of Life from Egypt. And this other one from Egypt. This one does not have any special story but the Key of Life has. I like it as a symbol. It is ancient Egyptian. It means long life and kind of happy life. It is the ANKH phone originally from the hieroglyphs. You can see it there in the writings on the walls everywhere. (...) This has slowly also become a part of the basic set, but I have only had for about a year. And I have bought it by myself. So these [the rings from Egypt] are gifts from friends. I don't anymore exactly remember from whom.

P: Why did you buy this one?

E: I bought it in Malta. I had a work trip there last spring. (...) There was a lot of beautiful jewelry. And, I was thinking that since I am getting married in summer I would get some bling bling ring for the other hand as well. So this kind of sparkling little ring on the other hand would make a nice balance (laughing). So, it was a good excuse. And, I also just liked it. So there is not anything greater than that. I just thought that it is nice and I would have some bling bling on the other finger as well.

(ERIKA 33 YRS)

MEDIATORS

Often in the discussions, the topic of jewelry as a mediator to other people or occasions arose. It was often recounted how these small items would take a person's mind to another time and space with just a thought, glance, or the physical touch of them. When women were discussing this phenomenon, it often sounded like their jewelry pieces had magical dimensions in them. Wearing, seeing, touching and thinking of jewelry provoked memories that connected the person from this moment to some event or to some person in her or her family's past.

Often I think of jewelry so that when I am... If I am wearing that now I put on the one my mother and father bought for me. So, I am thinking that way. I don't know where it comes from, someone could think that now I just hang that bauble on my neck. But somehow it always comes to my mind, the person from whom I have received it. Maybe I don't think about it each time with the ones from my husband, because he is here all the time. But with these that are from somewhere else.

(SUSANNA 51 YRS)


3.5 Research Ethics

Often when discussing truly emotional and personal experiences, people do not want them made public. This is especially true with stories about jewelry due to the wide variety of emotions; topics discussed may be extremely sensitive. Most of the stories I heard were touching and often there was crying during the interviews. In this book I do my best to keep the stories anonymous. Sometimes this required changing parts of the story. I have tried to keep the changes as small as possible to make the stories anonymous while still remaining authentic. Even though no faces of the participants are published in this book, sometimes pieces of jewelry are notably personal items and possibly recognizable.

Since it was easy to find research participants for the Probe Enhanced Interview Study and because of the large number of authors of the narratives, I felt that women were rather eager to share their stories about their jewelry. The narrative data which was gathered by the Kalevala Women's Association is nowadays held in *the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society*, and it is available for visitors to read. Also, stories from 54 authors were published as an anthology (Saarinen 2007). Each author signed a paper allowing the Kalevala Women's Association to give the stories to *the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society*, a public archive. So they already knew, upon entering the competition, that their stories might be published in the book (the anthology), and then stored in the archives. Also, when the jewelry manufacturing company was gathering stories via their website, they announced that the stories might be used for the company's benefit. Both the Kalevala Women's Association and the jewelry manufacturing company awarded the authors of the best stories with jewelry sets.

Nothing concrete like this was promised to the women who participated in the Probe Enhanced Interview Study. They were asked to self-document their daily jewelry wearing for nine days and to be interviewed. All together, participating in this study took a lot of their time for which I am truly grateful to all the participants. The interviews were held during their valuable free time, often on weekends or during the evenings. Even so, I was not able to compensate them for the time and effort they invested into this study. The only thing the research participants gained from this study was the discussion and their personal recounts of their own jewelry. Contrary to the narrative data, the data from the Probes study is not archived publicly, but is only for my use and interpretation.

As mentioned in the Introduction, all details that could identify the interviewees have been removed. Names are pseudonyms invented for this study, again in the interest of protecting the anonymity of the participants. However, the stories and excerpts of the narrative data are authentic, although translations.



4.
SOME
RITUALS
RELATED
TO
JEWELRY
AND
AGE

For women, wearing and possessing jewelry supports and sustains their womanhood and femininity. Jewelry also works as a vehicle for bestowing womanhood upon the following generation. When daughters are playing with their mother's jewelry as children and later receiving, purchasing, or inheriting their own jewelry, they are already familiar with the concepts of adornment and jewelry. Jewelry is one means of bestowing womanhood upon the next generation. Proper female habits of possessing, wearing and valuing jewelry are learned from the earlier generation in many types of rituals. These habits are the focus of this chapter, which looks specifically at how jewelry is related to age.

The importance of rituals in communicating transgenerational knowledge is well-known in many walks of life. Families have their own traditions for events such as weddings and graduations. Susanne Friese describes the ritualistic possessing and wearing of wedding dresses in her study about the value of the wedding dress (2001). Wedding dresses are often kept as mementos of the wedding, even though they will not be worn again. Rituals related to weddings are also meaningful when discussing jewelry. Engagement rings, wedding rings, morning gifts, and anniversary gifts are all related to this one transitional ritual in a woman's life. However, they may influence a woman's life and exist forever.

Pieces of jewelry play important roles in the actions of rituals. Rituals and traditions of possessing jewelry may differ from those related to wearing jewelry. Often, being a new possessor of a piece of jewelry means that you have been chosen to be the one. Especially in cases where there has been an earlier possessor of the jewelry in the family, it means that for some particular reason you are the new possessor. As expected, women that I interviewed described many types of rituals to me. These rituals are described in Table 4.1. There are also other rituals concerning women's lives, but these are the ones that were discussed, and will be described more thoroughly here and in chapters 5-10.

As the table suggests, many events in women's lives can be observed through their jewelry. A woman's age, both the social and physical age, are often expressed to others via the jewelry worn. Often, jewelry indicates the wearer's social age by showing her marital status, profession, style, and household income level. Her physical age can be expressed by jewelry as well, but these are again related to rituals like confirmation and bat mitzvah – which are rituals of a certain age.

	Youth	Young women	Womanhood	Elderly women
Confirmation and Bat Mitzvah	X			
Graduation	X	X	X	
Engagement		X	X	
Wedding		X	X	
Morning gift		X	X	
Wedding anniversaries		X	X	X
Giving birth		X	X	
Work and professional life related rituals (promotions, achievements, etc.)		X	X	
Mothers' Day		X	X	X
Retirement				X
Relinquishment				X
Birthdays	X	X	X	X
Inheritance	X	X	X	X
Christmas and Seasonal gifts	X	X	X	X

Table 4.1. This table indicates the occasions and rituals in which the possession and wearing of jewelry is involved. In this table, age is categorized according to how the women in the interviews discussed it. Sometimes the interviewee's exact age was not mentioned, but due to the discussions, I was somewhat able to determine their ages according to the events in their lives. Their ages are illustrated in this table based on the interviews. The data for Youth and Young women here is mainly based on memories since the youngest interviewee was 33. Women in their *Youth* in this table are women who are not yet independent from their childhood homes; *Young women* are women independent from their childhood homes but under 33 years of age. *Womanhood* here means 33 to ~60 years old women and *Elderly women* are ~60 to 89 year old women. The oldest interviewee was 89.

Of course, we can also read from jewelry information such as the wearer's interests, hobbies, family ties, religion, and places of travel. However, the style a woman wants to express through her jewelry is often the combination of all the other detail.

Wearing jewelry is not only dictated by style because many other obligations affect the way in which women are supposed to wear jewelry. For example, if one has a piece of jewelry that was always given to the oldest daughter on her engagement day, it is obvious that the style of the piece does not necessarily stem from the current possessor, although she may adjust her style to fit this new piece of jewelry. This is somewhat similar to the notions of Silverstone et al. (1999) in their study about the domestication of information technologies (IT) at home. They have noted that once a new item in a home has become part of the everyday life of a household, it may start changing the household. So, the newcomer, whether it is a piece of IT or a piece of jewelry, will start shaping the house or the possessor in order to become an even more permanent part of that entity. This may happen when one gets a new piece of jewelry and then has to purchase other jewelry or clothing to wear with the newcomer.

Women may stop wearing a particular piece of jewelry due to the style or for some other reason. It could be incompatible physically. For example, a necklace seems too short, a ring become too small, or earrings are not visible enough. In these cases, a woman has two options: either she modifies the jewelry to fit her current physical features or she preserves it for the next possessor or her own later use. Some women are afraid of losing their jewelry and, because of that, are not able to wear it, especially in cases when jewelry is worn out. They are afraid of breaking or losing it. Also, sad memories linked to jewelry prevent some women from wearing it.

Several women, with whom I talked, told me how their way of wearing jewelry had changed over the years. Most of them said that when they were younger they liked simpler looking silver colored jewelry, but in the course of ageing they had started to prefer more complex looking golden or gold colored jewelry. This makes sense, perhaps, from the perspective of the income level of an ordinary woman. Young women, perhaps students, or the people giving them gifts, may not have money to spend on expensive jewelry made of gold. Later on, however, when women are more settled, they may have improved their income level and have some money to spend on jewelry.

Importantly, the purchasing price and the color of the material are not always tied. Often older women, especially in Finland, are wearing jewelry made of bronze (gold color jewelry) or, especially women in the United States, gold plated jewelry with a lot of colorful gems. And in both countries, older women wear colorful beads made of glass, paper, or seeds – with an ethnic look. Also, colorful jewelry with complicated looks, made by the women themselves or people they know, is popular among older women. These pieces are not necessarily made by professional jewelers, but by women whose hobbies are beading or another type of jewelry making. When the subjects are younger, their jewelry is often more simple and made of white metals like silver and white gold. Mostly there are no gems or the gems are white or colorless. Also, these younger women seldom make jewelry themselves, or wear jewelry made by their friends.

Often I wear some beads made of seeds or paper, similar to what African women wear. And I have pretty many pieces that I've brought back from there, because I always wanted to buy from some person who had made them and was selling them.

(JULIA 79 YRS)

Some of the women said that in their active everyday life, with small children, they did not have time to think about jewelry and it was also practical to not wear jewelry. This is how Iris and Linda describe their changes in wearing jewelry because of motherhood and practices related to housework and children:

Yeah! Yeah, since I got him [her son] I do not really wear hanging ones [earrings] because he pulls. It is so scary to me. And, maybe that is why I got away from this stuff. Maybe I always choose the diamond one [stud]. He does not pull.

(IRIS 35 YRS)

I wanted to think of my jewelry also when I am not wearing them. I normally wear my jewelry only when I go out, so at home I am natural, or without adornments. But, I guess it's because of the role, at home I am... I mean I have been a mother and wife and been working at home. So, then it is practical that you don't have rings in your fingers and, it is only practical that you don't have jewelry on at home. So that you can bake and wash dishes and they won't bother. And, nothing gets into them, like bacteria and so on. Or, that the kids won't pull my earrings. So, in that sense they are for outside home use only. Of course there have been times when some piece of jewelry has become so meaningful that I have felt that I won't ever take it off. But now those times have passed.

(LINDA 59 YRS)

Kärt Summatavet has studied women, and their age related to jewelry habits in her doctoral dissertation (2005). Her study is about Estonian women and transformation of their jewelry wearing manners studied through two older women's life stories and a cultural study in Estonia. Even though her aim was to use the information as artistic inspiration for her own jewelry art work, I can strongly relate her ideas to my findings.

In the interviews I conducted, women often described their jewelry possessions through their jewelry cases. Often these descriptions were given in chronological order. It was like reading their diaries. The oldest jewelry was often described as something which was hardly ever worn anymore, but still kept in the jewelry case. The newer ones were more in everyday use. Often women told me how they would browse through their jewelry cases to remember events and moments in time via pieces of jewelry. The variations in appearance of the jewelry from different times in their lives were huge. There were also variations in meaningfulness: some of the oldest pieces of jewelry were still the most important ones, whereas some of them had lost their meanings. For instance, if the oldest

ones were a widow's ring finger rings, they likely still had the attachments. But if they were class rings from a school class they had lost connection with, then the meanings had faded.

According to Summatavet, for Estonian women materials are related to age and fertility among other things. In Estonian tradition and folklore, different metals are given clear hierarchical meanings and copper, silver, and gold recur as a kind of hidden code. For Summatavet's art project, copper symbolizes the initial stage of a woman's arc of life, because the first metal ornaments a small girl gets are sometimes made of copper or bronze which are less valuable. Silver jewelry is for protection, and healing and it symbolizes the growth of a woman and the transitions of a girl into her marriage and a new stage of life. The status of a wise old woman is comparable to that of gold (Summatavet 2005). These meanings for different materials stemmed from age-old cultural traditions, not from wearers' individual styles. Nevertheless, a similar transition in the meaning of different material is found in my study. For instance, in the following quotation Ella explains her abandonment of her silver jewelry. She was thinking that she was too old to wear silver jewelry in her late 40's. But, now about ten years later she is thinking that neither the material itself nor the value matters, it is that the memories and the connections to something are more important to her.

P: Was there a particular reason that these got buried in your jewel case?

E: The reason was that all my silver jewelry got buried for some time. I got somehow, at some point... I don't know how old I was then. Maybe approaching 50. So, I got that feeling that now I am so old and silver jewelry is young people's jewelry. So, that I have to have golden jewelry. Especially the earrings have to be golden. But slowly it has changed so that now it does not matter anymore. I have received golden jewelry, but seldom (laughing). For some weird reason. I get these silver jewelry much more often. So, anymore it does not matter if they are made of gold or silver. But, I clearly had that feeling that: "I am a golden person; I have to have golden jewelry". That, silver does not fit for a woman my age.

P: And, then anyway you returned back...

E: Well, silver is beautiful. I do like golden jewelry as well, but if I had earrings that size made of gold... not with our income. There are very beautiful chains and everything but, for me it is not important how much they cost. The most important are the memories and that they are linked to something.

(ELLA 58 YRS)

Some rituals also are related to a woman's age and to achievements in her life. Often, the possession and wearing of jewelry is related to these.

The handing down of jewelry in families often follows certain formulas. For example, the oldest daughter gets a certain ring on her engagement day. With the ring, however, comes obligations for the possessor. She has to maintain the piece of jewelry and the history and memories related to it. She also needs to determine the future possessor and

later hand the piece of jewelry down to her. Ritualistic ways of wearing jewelry differ from just possessing it, because the act of wearing is always part of visual social interactions, whereas possessing may only involve those who know about the jewelry and its inheritance. Wearing jewelry in rituals has more meanings due to the social setting. During the ritual, the act of wearing jewelry often plays a role in the ritual as a sign of the successful transition and change in a woman's life. Wearing it after the ritual often acts as a sign of social status or the accomplishment of something important in one's life. Again, these signs are not always clear to the viewers of jewelry but they are obvious to the wearers themselves.

Gift giving and inheriting are based on strong traditions as part of rituals, and they influence not only the wearing of jewelry but also the next generation possessors of the jewelry. Sometimes traditions are the whole reason a piece of jewelry is part of the ritual. For example, Mother's Day gifts are often jewelry, and traditions connected to the occasion may determine traditional rituals in each family. For example, when and how the gift is given, what is said when giving it, who the giver is, who has chosen the piece of jewelry and how it is wrapped may all be based on tradition. All these questions are unique to each family and determine part of the day's rituals.

As chapters 5–10 will show, ritualistic processes are often part of one's life especially when social status transitions are involved, such as weddings and graduations. They are also part of other culturally established and celebrated occasions such as Christmas and Mother's Day.

A gold-colored chainmail necklace is shown, laid out in a circle. The necklace is made of interlocking metal rings, creating a mesh-like texture. In the center of the necklace, there is a light gray rectangular box containing the text "5. YOUTH AND YOUNG WOMEN" in a pink, serif font.

5.
YOUTH
AND
YOUNG
WOMEN

In this chapter, I will discuss some rituals related to youth and young womanhood where jewelry plays a role. These are based on the memories women shared with me about their youth and young womanhood. The youngest person interviewed was 33 years old; that is why the discussion for most of the interviewed women is based on the memories. Some of the authors of the narrative data were younger than 33, but since I did not have access to the exact ages of all the authors, I can not draw conclusions on that. By youth, I mean the period in which women are not yet independent from their parents but are about to make the transition to independence. Young women are already independent from their childhood homes but are under 33 years old. Most of the women still had jewelry from these times. Hardly any of them were wearing it anymore but they still had kept the jewelry. Pieces of jewelry were often kept in a safe, because their emotional value had grown large over time. Keeping old jewelry in a safe had a purpose: the pieces were kept to be given to the next generation one day.

Certain rituals can occur at various times in a woman's life, as shown in Table 4.1, due to cultural differences, personal choices, or other reasons. For example, some women go to school at a later age and will graduate later, while some get married at an older age than others. They may also remarry at a later age. Nevertheless the transitional rituals studied in this chapter typically happen when women are young.

Most of the oldest pieces of the women's jewelry had been received as gifts, especially the ones from youth, since hardly anyone had their own money at that time. These pieces of jewelry were often rather inexpensive, but there is an exception: ring finger rings. When these rings were acquired, most of the women had already left their childhood homes or were about to leave. Often jewelry from this era of a woman's life is among their oldest personal possessions. Of course, most of the inherited pieces of jewelry are older still, but typically these were given to women later than pieces they got when they were young.

Naturally, not all jewelry from this stage of life survives decades, mostly because of physical and technical weaknesses, as such jewelry may have been inexpensive. Also, because these were often the only jewelry items women had at that time, they frequently wore out or were lost. Some women, like Susanna in the following quotation, described how they do not dare to wear their oldest pieces of jewelry anymore because they are afraid of losing them or of them becoming damaged beyond repair. Mostly, women were afraid of losing the accumulated memories within the piece of jewelry if they lost it.

P: This is the graduation gift from your sister.

S: It just has the problem that I have worn it so much at the time that, the loop which attaches it to the chain is really worn out. So I just rarely dare to wear it. (...)

But it is really small and cute, in between the golden metals there is one white pearl. So, it's kind of three-dimensional. The pearl is there inside so that it's not attached to anything.

P: When do you normally then wear it?

S: Wearing it nowadays is more and more rare, because it's gone like that. I used to wear it maybe for ten years all the time.

P: When you got it?

S: Yes, when I was young and then it maybe [had got worn out]... Then at some point I noticed how thin it had become. And then it just kind of got left in some box. And, sometimes I remember to take it from there. (...)

Yes, they are that kind of jewelry that when I wear them I always attach them to my youth and to my aunt. Otherwise my jewelry is quite neutral in that sense. They maybe don't have that kind of history

(SUSANNA 51 YRS)

On the topic of jewelry from youth, some women also reminisced about their class rings and how they had exchanged them with their boyfriends. This tradition sounded more or less like a rehearsal for exchanging ring finger rings. However, the sizes of the rings did not often match – after all, these rings were bought for boys. For this reason, these rings were often worn on wristbands, bangles, or wristwatches.

In the fall of 1973 you and I exchanged class rings. You got a light silver ring, decorated by five columns and a stylized, rounded letter A. You gave me a wide ring covered with silver roses. It was too large for me, so I put it to dangle from my turquoise watch strap.

One bright afternoon I was in a gloomy mood. I sat in the window table of the vocational business school with a few class mates. I was sipping Perry soda and nibbling a sticky and sweet Berliner doughnut. I peered at a sleepy street lined with Siberian pines that went across the suburban area.

The evening came. We met. It happened just as I had expected. You wanted to end the relationship. We returned the rings to each other. Mine was worn and scratched. I could see that you had worn it at work. That consoled me a little. I went into the dark night feeling blue. I could not sleep. In the early morning hours I listened to the sound of the freeway. (...)

(NARRATIVES)

5.1 Graduation and Confirmation Jewelry

The most important rituals involving jewelry in youth and young women's lives are graduations and confirmation or Bat Mitzvah. Class rings aside, most women stated that their oldest pieces of jewelry were crosses from Confirmation or jewelry from Bat Mitzvah. Hardly any of the women wore these pieces of jewelry, but most still had them. It was obvious that women kept these gifts in their possession because of the memories related to them. However, many of these pieces had disappeared.

5.2 Ring Finger Rings

Most of the women interviewed were wearing ring finger rings. All except one had worn them at some point in their lives. Many memories connected to the ring finger rings were from young womanhood, though not always so: some women were engaged at a more mature age.

Interestingly, when talking about their engagement and proposal, women often acted and sounded much younger than they were. It was as if this talk somehow brought them back to their youth. The sign and message of ring finger rings is simple in Finland and America. Still, women had several reasons for wearing them. Some of the married women wore ring finger rings because they wanted to express commitment and love, whereas some were wearing them because of the tradition in their society. Also, there were differences in the ways of wearing them. For example, for Sofia, who got married at a later age, it did not matter which ring she wore on her ring finger. The important thing was that she wore a ring on her ring finger.

I don't have anything that the wedding ring always should be here [points at the ring finger]. I can change it and wear whichever ring in the place of the wedding ring.
(SOFIA 51 YRS)

She thought that the message was the same regardless of the ring she wore. She never liked the ornament on her original engagement ring and, so she was wearing it turned inwards so it would look like just a plain band. When she got married and chose her wedding ring, she chose one that did not fit on her finger with the engagement ring. This gave her a good reason to stop wearing the engagement ring. Nevertheless, she did not necessarily wear the wedding ring; any ring on the ring finger was enough to make the statement. After getting married, she also stopped wearing the engagement ring. It was enough for her that there was a ring on her ring finger.

Just because of that [the appearance of the engagement ring] I wanted to have that kind of a wedding ring, it's because my husband had chosen the engagement ring just by himself. And it was like... like this. I think this is like... In any case this does not have anything to do with my taste. I never liked wearing it. When I did, I always

turned it so that the diamond and the ornament were inside my hand. So that it looked like just a band. Because, I thought that this looked just like it was from an Easter egg. That was the reason why I wanted to have a wedding ring that looked like it was two rings. And, then because this [wedding ring] is also wavy I told my husband that unfortunately I can't wear the original engagement ring anymore. Even though, that was the reason to get the double band. But, you understand me. I just can't wear anything like that. It was like...

(SOFIA 51 YRS)

Also, several women I talked to in America had been upgrading their engagement rings during the years they had been married. It was more or less common among American participants to get the ring reset with a more expensive diamond at big anniversaries, while most Finnish women were wearing their original engagement bands and wedding rings. Many of them had gotten new rings for anniversaries, but they were mostly worn as any other rings.

Overall, the Finnish engagement bands and wedding rings were more modest than the American rings. In Finland, the tradition is that a woman gets a band as a sign of being engaged and a decorated ring as a wedding ring. In the American tradition, a woman gets a decorated engagement ring, and then a modest band when she gets married. Maria, a Finn who had been divorced for ten years, was wearing a substantial ring with a clear stone on her ring finger as we saw earlier (p. 31). She said that she could do it because it would not give anyone the wrong idea: no one would think that it was an engagement ring or a wedding ring. It was just too big and too substantial for that in Finnish tradition. In American culture, however, a similar looking ring could have been an engagement ring, and so would send a different message.



Maria's grandmothers old wedding ring.

I have gotten this from my grandmother. It's grandmother's wedding ring from year...[hands me the ring for me to see the engraving].

P: It's so old that it's made of thick material.

M: Yes, and I was wearing it at some point. But I did not remember that. But, it was in the jewelry case.

P: It is 2.8.1923

M: When I was married I always wore it on the other hand. I somehow thought that way because grandmother was so dear to me. Somehow, because she gave it to me and there is something like that. So, I have been thinking of it and want to keep it safe.

But, lately I have not worn it because when being divorced I did not want have that kind of a ring. Now I tried it on and it fits this finger and I could start wearing it again. So, I like it because it's quite simple and plain.

(MARIA 56 YRS)

Maria's most important piece of jewelry was her grandmother's old engagement band that she had inherited a long time ago. She really wanted to be able to wear it because of the dear memories related to her grandmother. She was, however, afraid of wearing it because it could send the wrong message even though she was not wearing it on the ring finger. Two generations later, it still looks like a traditional Finnish-style engagement band.

Being married or engaged is not the only thing communicated by a ring on the ring finger. The style of the ring also illustrates certain things about the wearer. American women's ring finger rings sometimes communicate the family's current level of income, whereas in Finland, the ring indicates the level of income at the time of getting married. In America, updating the size of the diamond on wedding anniversaries provides a method for this communication. The Finns, in contrast, neither cared about the monetary value of their ring finger rings nor were interested in expressing their wealth through jewelry.

This one which looks like the surface of the moon is the engagement ring. It was very fashionable in 1971, I still like it and I have not seen anyone else having the same one. We both have these same rings. Then this one is the wedding ring from year '73, and it has "huge" diamonds in it as you can see. This was... two poor students, so this was barely what we could afford.

(ELLA 57 YRS)

Even though ring finger rings are often classically styled and meant to be worn forever, the styles of the rings still raised some concerns in my interviews. Sometimes women just could not like the rings that were chosen for them, as we saw earlier in this chapter when we met Sofia. Alisa had also gotten a ring she did not like. Unlike Sofia, Alisa had not worn the engagement ring but had bought new rings for herself and her husband when they got married. The first one was made of yellow gold with a blue stone while she wanted one made of white gold with a colourless gem. So, while they were engaged she wore the ring a couple of times to tell others the happy news, but for the wedding day, she bought the ring she wanted. She had also received new rings as anniversary gifts on their 5th and 10th wedding anniversaries, and wore them after the anniversaries, but then went back to wearing the ring finger ring she had purchased with one colourless gem. She told me how the simple style of the original wedding ring represents love and commitment better than more substantial rings with several diamonds. Wearing just a simple white gold ring with one stone represents her marriage and simplicity perfectly.

Erika, who had gotten married recently, had ring finger rings in a completely different style from her other jewelry. Whereas, most of the other women had a somewhat coherent style in the jewelry they wore. Most of Erika's other jewelry was from countries she had previously lived in, from travels (souvenirs more or less), from friends or from flea markets. Now that she had settled down, her wedding ring was a golden ring with five diamonds on it. Most of her other everyday jewelry was made of cheap materials. In

contrast, gold and diamonds in a wedding ring catch the viewers' eye because of the unexpected mixture of styles and materials.

In the first place I did not want to have this kind of traditional 5-diamond band but rather something more special. I had some options that were little wavy and I went to fit them and see them. But then in the end this one had little more bling bling, so I thought that maybe I should get one with more sparkle. The ones with ornaments had so much smaller stones that they did not sparkle. And I am little bit like a magpie, so that I always have to have everything that shines.

P: Well, it is different from your basic set, as you said it's not special as a wedding ring but for your style it is.

E: That's true. All the others are just from somewhere around the world.

(...)

But then in the end we had two choices. My husband liked the other one more. It was the wavy one with less sparkle. But, then I thought that I want this one. So, the opinion changed quite much during the search. In the beginning I did not even try on the 5-diamond bands because I thought I didn't want anything so traditional.

(ERIKA 33 YRS)

5.3 A Note on Engagement Gifts

Older Finnish women I talked with often told me about the tradition of engagement gifts. This tradition is vanishing, but in earlier times, especially in rural areas, the fiancé who was about to propose was to bring an engagement gift back from the trip to the goldsmith. Sometimes they had to travel a long way to get to the town or city to make these purchases. This was a gift in addition to the engagement ring. Engagement rings both, then and now in Finland, were typically modest golden bands. Both parties would wear them, and upon getting married, the bride was to get a new ring. In the memories of Finnish women, the engagement gift was another sort of jewelry, sometimes a ring but with a colored gem stone. Paula describes her engagement gift which was bought by her future husband, at the same time as the engagement rings, in a nearby town.

The engagement ring is from Kuopio, on the other side of the street from the old bus station, there was a jeweller's store. Henrik bought it there. And he also bought the other one. The one with a stone.

PA: Was the other one an engagement gift?

P: Supposedly it was the engagement gift, this one. But now I have not worn it... for a long time.

(PAULA 78 YRS)

It could also have been a bracelet, as Heidi below describes. The engagement gift was from her future husband when they became engaged in 1972. It could also be a clock hanging on a neck chain or some other kind jewelry.

Actually now it reminds me of my engagement gift. I got it when the engagement rings were bought, then normally the man buys a gift for the woman. It can be a watch or, another piece of jewelry, like a necklace. I got a bracelet. It was also handmade in some workshop. Extremely skillful, made of loops. It is that kind of a thing that is received in 1972, so it is a treasure. It has emotional value, I don't know the monetary value of it but it has the emotional value.

(HEIDI 56 YRS)



Heidi's engagement gift, a bracelet.

This old tradition of an engagement gift has mostly vanished but it has been partly replaced with the tradition of giving jewelry as a morning gift on the morning after the wedding. In earlier times the morning gift was also something valuable, especially in the countryside where it was typically a cow or a piece of land rather than jewelry. The reason to give an engagement gift as well as the morning gift and the ring finger rings was to secure the future of the wife. Loss of income could occur in cases of sickness, accident, or death. Thus these possessions played the role that insurance and divorce settlements now play.

In this chapter I have discussed the jewelry from youth and young womanhood. Especially the ring finger rings were still worn on an everyday basis and cherished as very important pieces of jewelry. Besides ring finger rings, jewelry received as graduation, confirmation, and engagement gifts were from this era of a woman's life. These were often the oldest jewelry possessions of a woman, carrying memories from a long period of time. Since many of them were received as gifts from family members, they also carried memories of people. Especially in the situations where the givers were either absent or deceased, the jewelry had become important mementos of them. However, not all the jewelry from those days was from family members but also sometimes from friends or boyfriends who were no longer important. In these cases, the jewelry represented the time of youth rather than the givers of the gifts. Women were not necessarily wearing these pieces of jewelry anymore. Sometimes it was because they were so important because of their long biography that they were afraid of losing them; sometimes it was just because it did not fit their current style or physical form.



6.
JEWELRY
IN
WOMANHOOD



This chapter is about jewelry as it relates to the lives of mature, adult women. Jewelry related to maternity, relationships, and divorces was often mentioned when we discussed jewelry from this period of life. We can see the marital statuses of the women in Table 6.1. Most women were in relationships during the study and all of them had had relationships at some point in their lives. Nineteen of them were wives; four were single, five were widows, seven were divorced and one was just not in a relationship at that point in time. I cannot draw strict boundaries for womanhood, since this period in a woman's life takes many forms. Their ages and life experiences vary in the modern world.

28	women
22	mothers
12	grandmothers
19	currently married, 15 never divorced
7	divorced
5	widows
3	significant others
4	single
1	never been married

Table 6.1. Marital and maternal statuses of research participants

6.1 Motherhood

As a stage in a woman's life, adulthood or womanhood is the time with extensive responsibilities taking care of a family. The stories repeatedly told of how in their prime, women pushed themselves to the background. They took care of children, parents, their spouse, pets, and the house; these came before their own needs. This was particularly the case with mothers: they told me again and again of how they put the well-being of others before their own.

In terms of jewelry, the shift to motherhood was evident in many ways. When women were younger, they paid a lot of attention to their appearance. They bought and wore jewelry and cared about fashion. When they had children, they pushed these concerns to

the background. In particular, this was the case for mothers with young children. When children got older, however, women started to have more time for themselves. It was as if they started getting their femininity back, and they started putting more effort into their appearance. Below Alisa describes how her way of adorning herself changed after becoming a wife and mother.

Maybe, I guess when I was single and without children that was ...[different]. I had more time and I went shopping more and if I saw something ...[I got it]. Now that I don't have time anymore and I spend the money on something else because this is not as important as it used to be.

P: So, would you say that being a mother changed ...

A: Yeah, oh yeah, definitely. I used to be more stylish and into my looks and I just liked the girly stuff and that just changed. I don't know if I grew out of it or if I just don't put so much emphasis on it. And, it was hard in the beginning because it was a good change but then I got used to it and it's normal but for a period of a time I would feel kind of naked without it.

(ALISA 33 YRS)

Many of the women told me about getting jewelry from their husbands after giving birth which will be discussed in more detail in section 7.1.1 Birth Presents. These pieces were almost the only new pieces of jewelry they got when their children were very young.

Motherhood considerably changed the habits of wearing jewelry. Again and again, women described physical reasons for wearing jewelry when having small children. For example, Iris, who was eight months pregnant during the interview, could no longer wear her ring finger rings because her fingers were swollen. She also had a son who was five. After he was born, she had had to stop wearing any hanging earrings, because her son would grasp and pull them. At the time of the interview, she was only able to wear stud earrings on a daily basis. She could only wear more elaborate pieces of jewelry, like necklaces, on special occasions.

Linda had had similar experiences with hanging earrings when her three sons were young, and also when they had children and she was taking care of her grandchildren. Linda also described how she stopped wearing jewelry at home when her children were young. At the time she prepared meals at home and baked often, and she felt that the rings would carry too much bacteria. She stopped wearing jewelry at home almost four decades ago and has never started up again. She has a bowl on top of the drawer in the hallway where she keeps her jewelry – taking from it when leaving home, and returning jewelry to it when coming back.

Of course, there were financial reasons too. When there were young children, the way in which families spent money often changed radically. Jewelry became a luxury; there were more important things to buy. As Alisa said in the above quote, with children, she no longer had time or money to spend on herself. When the children were young, money that was previously spent on jewelry and cosmetics was now spent on the necessities of children.

For mothers jewelry was a matter of convenience rather than a conscious statement of style. What they wanted to express with jewelry was their personal well-being and style, not the latest fashion. Similarly, when women got older, the reasons to adorn themselves became more and more social. Jewelry reflects new social roles and relationships that come with motherhood.

6.2 After the Love Has Gone: Jewelry after Relationships

Wedding and engagement rings play many roles in loving relationships in western cultures. Based on the women I interviewed, there are many expectations about giving and receiving jewelry in a relationship. Most of the women who participated in this research were currently in a relationship, and all of them had had relationships in the past. Additionally, they had jewelry which they had received in their current or previous relationships. After discussing engagements and weddings in Chapter 5, this chapter focuses on what happens to jewelry after divorce.

6.2.1 WEDDING AND ENGAGEMENT RINGS

Obviously, women who had gotten divorced could not wear their old ring finger rings in their new marriages. However, there were many memories associated with these pieces. For this reason, possessing ring finger rings from previous marriages could be a complicated affair.

There were several solutions to this problem. Some had kept jewelry from their previous marriages but were not wearing it. Maria mentioned that she wanted to keep her rings in the back of the jewelry case so that she would not need to see them when taking jewelry from the case. She took them out for the interview, but did not want to see them on a daily basis. She described her relationship to the engagement ring that she had never liked. She had been too shy to express what she wanted when she and her future husband were buying the rings.

P: But, back then you were wearing your wedding and engagement rings?

M: Yes, I wore them. Those were the ones I wore.

P: What has happened to them now?

M: Actually, now when I was looking at these, I was wondering where they could be and I found them in one of these jewelry cases (laughing). I don't remember anymore which one it was. I never liked them.

P: Why did you not like them?

M: Well, I was really shy back then and, of course still am. When we were picking up this, this was the one I did not want to have. I did not like the surface of it. But it was my husband's choice and I did not like it. I would have wanted some more elegant. So that's why I never liked it.



Maria's ring finger rings.

P: So this one is your wedding ring. Did you pick it up?

M: I did pick it up. The diamond is really small, but back then we were students and did not have too much money.

(MARIA, 56 YRS)

Some women had sold their rings. Johanna was recently divorced and was not able to wear any rings on her left hand. She sold her rings in order to get them out of her sight. Not particularly for money but instead, to be rid of them, a bit like Maria, who kept her rings hidden in her jewelry case. Johanna's solution, however, was permanent. Johanna told me that she was not able to wear any rings on any finger on her left hand yet. For her, wearing rings would have been an all too powerful reminder of the marriage gone sour.

As I said in the cards, I don't wear anything on my left hand anymore. I think that for me rings are ... I used to wear rings on my middle finger, but I think that the ring finger is actually an attractive finger. You'll see... my mom and I have really very similar hands and we have very long fingers, which is, I think that we both can wear kind of more substantial rings, but I do think that the ring finger is a nice finger to wear rings on. I never wear rings on my pinkie and I rarely wear them on my middle finger now and I sometimes wear them on my index finger. And, I don't wear anything on my left hand.

(JOHANNA 34 YRS)

Even the divorced women who were single never wore their ring finger rings. They thought that wearing engagement or wedding rings was improper because of the strong statement and message. Even Linda, who really liked her engagement ring was hesitant to wear it. In the following quote, she is thinking about whether to change its appearance so that she can wear it again. But still, she feels that she cannot do it. It would change the characteristics of the ring too much: it was designed as an engagement ring, and should retain that character.

I have the engagement ring and it is a Kalevala ring and I really like it. But somehow I think that I can not wear it. It is somehow a little frustrating. I have been thinking that I could ask someone to put a stone in it, so it wouldn't be... Then it would be a little different. But, then on the other hand, it is created to be that kind of a ring, so one shouldn't add anything to it. So I really like that ring but I just can't wear it. But, instead of the wedding ring I had been wearing the 10th anniversary ring for a long time. It got the status of that. I have not wanted to take it [original wedding ring] ... sell it. So, it is something that I don't know what do with. Maybe one day I'll figure out what I am going to do with it.

(LINDA, 59 YRS)

6.2.2 GIFTS FROM FORMER HUSBANDS

Women get many types of jewelry from their husbands as gifts. Wedding and engagement rings are special cases aside from these gifts. Even though women felt that there was a taboo against wearing wedding and engagement rings after the relationship had ended, they were far less strict about these other types of jewelry.

For example, Johanna had received a beautiful diamond ring from her ex-husband as a five-year anniversary ring. When they were still married, she sometimes wore that instead of the original engagement ring. Even though it had sometimes replaced the engagement ring during their marriage, she did not feel any restriction in wearing it after the divorce. However, she was wearing this ring on her right hand whereas she had worn it on the left hand during the marriage. She felt she had the right to wear it because she had deserved it for being a good wife.

As she also mentions in the following quotation, she felt it was her ring, not a shared possession of the former couple. Sometimes women described their relationship jewelry, especially the ring finger rings, more as the couple's shared possession than just the woman's.

P: And earlier you mentioned that the fifth anniversary ring would be the ring...

J: Yeah, replacing the engagement ring... Maybe, I don't know. I was always thinking that we would be able to work through the issues we had. And then I wanted the ring that he would want me to wear and he would be proud of me having this ring. (...)

P: But for some reason you did not sell this with your other rings...

J: I like that ring (laughing)

P: So, is it about the appearance of the ring?

J: I guess. I still sometimes wish that it would be the other ring, but it's... you know I get compliments on this ring... and frankly, it was like ... it was a lot of money and I right now, I think that the ring was ever been given to me so ... and maybe because our relationship was off at that point of time, so maybe I consider this my ring. Or, that I was owed for being such a good wife even though it was the relationship that was ending but that [the ring] was something that I deserved.

(JOHANNA 34 YRS)

Similarly, Linda was still wearing a 10th anniversary ring she had gotten from her ex-husband. Much like Johanna, she felt that she had given so much to the relationship that she was entitled to wear this special anniversary ring. It did not have the connotation and message of the wearer being married, especially when it was not worn on the ring finger.

It's hard to put it in this way, but I think that the 10th anniversary ring is valuable. And, I am wearing it because for ten years I was doing... for ten years I was a good wife, in that sense that believed in our marriage, kept trying and I was a devoted mother and wife. Somehow I feel that I deserved it.

(LINDA 59 YRS)

For Linda and Johanna, these rings were valuable because of the work they had put into their relationships. Even though these were valuable diamond rings, their value did not only lie in their monetary value.

Their feelings towards their anniversary rings had similarities to gift giving in archaic cultures. As Marcel Mauss (2006) noted in his classic description of gift giving, there are no gifts without obligations. Each recipient of a gift is obligated to give something in return. For Linda and Johanna, the rings were reciprocal gifts of their action for being good wives and that is why they were wearing them after their marriages.

6.2.3 GIFTS FROM BOYFRIENDS

Women had also received jewelry as gifts from boyfriends. They were treated much like gifts from husbands, but with more freedom. Eva had been widowed for 25 years and had had long-term boyfriends since that time. These boyfriends had given her several pieces of jewelry as gifts. In general, she saw these just like Linda and Johanna saw the gifts from their husbands: she deserved them because she had given so much to the relationships.

The difference from Johanna and Linda is that Eva's pieces were from boyfriends. She once loved them, but did not have any emotional connection to them anymore. Consequently, she wore her rings because she liked their appearance. If they went well together with the rest of her outfit, she felt no hesitation about wearing them. She treated the jewelry from her deceased husband very differently. They were cherished and worn in memory of him.



Eva's emerald rings.

E: These I wear with that.

P: So, where is this emerald from?

E: Well, since my husband died there has been a series of long-term relationships (laughing). So, each one is from a different long-term relationship.

P: You mean each one of these?

E: The emerald is from Walter and the band, emerald and diamond, is from Tom. But I don't have any emotional attachments to the men, nor do I have to those rings. It's just this that they kind of go with the emerald necklace.

P: So, you don't feel that there would be restriction to wear these if you don't have attachment with the men anymore?

E: No, I don't see them. I mean I don't see the people anymore. I mean if I did it would not matter either. I don't care. I figured that I gave as much to the relationship as they did so why.... you know.

(EVA 69 YRS)

Ring finger rings were not the only reminders of past relationships; other jewelry they had received from men who were no longer in their lives also functioned this way.

Linda had received one necklace from her previous boyfriend. She wore the necklace when it suited her outfit, because she liked the appearance and the craftsmanship of it. But the way it looked was the only positive reason to wear it. As she said in the following quotation, she felt a bit bitter when wearing the necklace.

P: Then, this is from your boyfriend. Is he your now your boyfriend?

S: No, I knew him only for a short time. Our friendship did not continue. So, I wear that one with some bitter feelings. I have to admit that it was an impressive relationship, but some things were not completely resolved.

(...)

I wore it on that day because the same pattern continues in the shirt. And, I have done it by myself.

(LINDA 59 YRS)

Some of the women kept and wore the jewelry they had gotten from earlier boyfriends or husbands. It reminded them of the previous relationships. But not all of the women were able to wear those pieces of jewelry. They might have been connected to memories that were too painful or they just felt that it was wrong to wear them. Nevertheless, wearing jewelry from previous relationships was not necessarily related to feelings for that person. Maria, for example, was wearing jewelry she had received from her ex-boyfriend because she liked the jewelry, the appearance of it.

M: The bracelet was a gift. I've been alone for ten years and there was something going on with a man. But it... I wasn't satisfied with the situation and I ended the relationship, but he... We were travelling and there was a lot of amber for sale. And, I was looking at those and then he bought this bracelet for me as a gift. I have worn it a lot. So, those are the memories connected to it. It goes well for me; at least the others are saying that it goes well for me.

P: In what kind of occasions are you wearing it?

M: I used to wear it regularly almost every day. But, when I decided to end the relationship I have been wearing it more seldom. I just don't want to put it on or wear it. Sometimes when I wear it it's because it goes well with the outfit.

(MARIA 56 YRS)

6.3 Transition Jewelry

Jewelry is a unique product group. Pieces of jewelry are often loved, sometimes hated, but hardly ever thrown away. They are often related to emotionally rich occasions, and therefore related to the emotions from the occasions. Jewelry also seems to age with possessors and stay in their lives. There are various reasons why women tend to love, hate or build

some kind of emotional attachment with their jewelry. In this section I will talk about transition jewelry. Transition jewelry is used as tools in working through transitions in women's lives. They make the change tangible and thereby easier to handle. Some of these transition pieces were purchased by the women themselves, some had been gifts from men. Also, some pieces of transition jewelry had to be kept but could not be worn. As I will show, there are various reasons to keep these pieces even if they are not worn.

6.3.1 LAST ATTEMPTS

Both Ida and Maria told me stories about pieces of jewelry that were received just before divorces. They both described the reason for getting the piece of jewelry as the spouse's weak attempt to keep the relationship alive. In these relationships, the husbands had hardly ever given their spouses jewelry before the hard times in the relationship. But then when they were about to divorce, the men started buying these relatively expensive gifts. Both women described this as a sort of last attempt to make the marriage work. Sadly, the jewelry had not been the right medicine to prevent divorce.

Ida told me about a bracelet that her father had given her mother just a year before their divorce. It was a thick golden bracelet with an engraving of their names and a Christmas date. Her mother received this bracelet on Christmas 1962 and they divorced in 1963. Now Ida has the bracelet and really likes its appearance. She wears the bracelet on special occasions such as her own wedding which took place during this study. So, even though she is clearly aware of the reason for the gift, it did not prevent her from wearing it on her special day. For her, the bracelet signifies her mother, who can no longer wear it because of illness. And fortunately, it does not act as a mediator of the divorce of her parents, but rather as a memento of them. Also she really likes the appearance of it.



Ida's mother's old bracelet.

P: And then you had an older bracelet which is your mother's old.

I: Yes, it is here. This is what my mother got from my father when they were about to divorce around 1963. Or, they got divorced in 1963, and in that situation once my father had bought this for my mother. Is there any engraving?

P: At Christmas '62 from Mauno to Lyyli.

I: Yeah, and then in 1963 they got divorced. So, it was some kind of last attempt. Oh no.

(IDA 58 YRS)

When Maria and her former husband decided to get divorced, he also started giving her jewelry as gifts. Before that she had hardly ever received any jewelry from him as gifts. The nicest gift she received was the hanging silver earrings below. She said that she seldom wears them now because of the memories. However, she does wear them some-

times because she really likes their appearance, although they do not often go with her outfits as they are such big items.

M: Yes, this was when we had an anniversary. I think it was the 20th. These are related to those sad memories. Our life together was starting to be in its end. And, then he wanted to buy something for me. So, he went to buy these. I really liked them and they are beautiful, but on the other hand they are quite demanding. I don't like wearing the hanging ones too much. But if they go well with the outfit, then they are okay. But, those kinds of feeling are related to them. Kind of sad feeling that is related to the ending of our life together. And to everything that has been there and I had to face. In that way it is difficult to wear them. (...)

P: Here you mention that they are kept aside in their original box.

M: Yes, I have also hid them. Well, I don't want to see them. They are really beautiful and I really like the Kalevala Jewelry because they are traditional and elegant and beautiful. But, these are kept aside in the back of the jewelry case because I do not want to bump into them. Because of the memories. The unpleasant memories.

(MARIA 56 YRS)



Maria's earrings.

Neither Maria nor Ida had even thought about getting rid of, selling or giving away these pieces of jewelry. Even though they are associated with sad memories, they are still kept and sometimes worn.

Ida also talked about an old engagement ring that was still in her jewelry case but had never been worn. She had had a boyfriend some twenty years ago whom she had stopped seeing. The boyfriend did not want to believe that the relationship was finished and decided to buy engagement rings. So he bought the rings and had them engraved with their names and the date. She did not want to see him anymore, so he put her ring in an envelope and put it in her post box and started to wear his ring. She heard from their common friends that they were engaged. She has never worn the ring but still has it and laughs at the memory of this last attempt.

I: What is this one? Can you see any engraving in it?

P: It says Frans 16.5.1989

I: Well, I'll tell you. It is an engagement ring. I had a boyfriend called Frans. He was really smitten, as I was in the beginning, but then later I wasn't anymore. So, he just couldn't believe that I did not want to be with him anymore and he wanted to get engaged. So, one day he came and put this through the mail box. And, then he told



The engagement band Ida once got.

everyone. And he put a ring in his own finger and told everyone that now we are engaged. (laughing) Through the mail box because I did not open the door or I wasn't at home. Anyway, I did not want to see him anymore. So then he came and put it through the mail box. So, I have never worn it but still have kept it.
(IDA 58 YRS)

In the following quotation, Margareta is telling me about a new wedding ring, which she had a jeweler make for her. She already knew that the marriage would be over soon, and she no longer wanted to wear the original wedding and engagement rings. She made the ring as a protest to express her feelings about the relationship. She took her mother's engagement and wedding rings that she had inherited and her own engagement and wedding rings. Then she asked the jeweller to make a new ring for her according to her own design. However, the ring was sized to the ring finger and when they finally got divorced she was not able to wear it anymore. Also, she did not want to resize it because the ring looked so much like a wedding ring. She did not want to give the wrong signal to people around her and to herself – after all, it was a symbol of a failed marriage.



Margareta's ring.

M: The engagement ring was a funny story. We decided extempore to get engaged. And, I bought the rings and they weren't more than 50 marks back in '89. They were terrible thin. My husband was getting married for the second time. Since I was his second wife he did not want to make it a big deal. It was just basic stuff; pretty thin. Well, the wedding ring was little fancier, it was 850 marks from another store and it had a diamond. It was like very basic looking ring. Then at some point I decided, because

I had got my mothers engagement ring and wedding ring that had a diamond. I did not know anything about those [materials] but I decided to put them all together. My wedding ring, engagement ring and my mother's rings and then I got this made for me.

P: Did this happen when you were still married?

M: Yes.

(...)

P: So, what happened with this?

M: Well, it became little too thick and it does not fit any other finger than my left hand ring finger. And, I also don't want to wear it anymore because it brings to my mind... Firstly, it gives a message to others that I still was married. And since I am

not, I don't want to wear it. And, I don't want to fix it to fit any other finger, so it's just as is now. I don't know to whom I could give it or, what I'll do with it. (...)

By the way, another thing which is related to this marriage ring or wedding ring is that, at that point the love had ended and I did not want to wear the original wedding ring anymore. That's why I made this one. It was a clear manifesto. I can still remember the situation. My husband did not like it. Or, I don't know what he was thinking, but I think that he did not like it. That's the understanding I got of it. But, at that time I did not ask too much anymore.

(MARGARETA 53 YRS)

Rebecca's ex-husband had the habit of often giving her gifts. At first she liked it, but then during their years together she started to feel that the pieces of jewelry she got were compensation for something that was missing from the relationship. However, although these pieces had a sour emotional undercurrent, her husband knew what he was doing: he was building her a set she really liked. Therefore, she does not have any restrictions in wearing jewelry from her ex-husband. She and her current husband have even completed the set that her ex-husband started. Thus, nowadays she is wearing a jewelry set from different husbands, and the set is her favorite. The reasons for wearing this set, however, do not stem from the relationships: she wears it because she loves its appearance and design. It also fits her busy and sporty lifestyle.

P: Because this one is from your ex-husband, does it bring back any memories from that time...

R: So much, that he was that kind of a person who was always buying all sorts of jewelry. He was really careful with all birthdays and all things like when a child was born or something. He always bought something. What ever was the situation, there was always some flowers or jewelry. In the end I didn't really like it anymore that much because I felt it was compensation for something else missing in that relationship. And, then I didn't like that. I explained to my current husband that I don't like any flowers or jewelry. I think that all that's just bull shit. And, I sincerely thought like that. But, now when we've been together for 12 years, I could sometimes have some flowers or jewelry. So, I think that nowadays I am just normal in this sense. But no, no pain when wearing these.

(REBECCA 51 YRS)

Every woman told me that it was extremely hard to abandon jewelry. Women keep jewelry they do not have a strong connection to, and they even keep jewelry when there is an unpleasant connection. A good example is Ida, who had kept the engagement ring from a man she did not want to be engaged to 20 years ago. The main reasons were not monetary. Of course, gold is an expensive material that is easy to convert to cash, but the main reasons for keeping jewelry were related instead to their emotional value. It did not matter if the emotions had changed or even faded completely over the decades. They could

be all sorts of emotions, bitter or sad, or warm and caring. These emotions are the building blocks of which jewelry is made.

6.3.2 JEWELRY IN SELF-HEALING

Some women had bought rings for themselves after their relationships ended. These rings work as part of the process of healing from earlier relationships. They were mainly bought for therapeutic reasons: they brought joy into the buyer's life. They often described how these pieces of jewelry were a part of a larger change in style and appearance. After the relationship, they started to invest in their personal well-being, and wearable things like jewelry was typically described as part of this healing process.

Sometimes, these pieces of jewelry also functioned as rewards for the decision to live independently again. For example, Laura had bought a diamond ring for herself after starting her life alone after the divorce. This diamond ring was much fancier and also more expensive than any other jewelry she had bought for herself. All of her other jewelry made of gold and diamonds were either received as gifts in her relationships or inherited.



Laura's ring.

L: Well, this one is... I bought it in 2000

P: Was there a particular reason to buy it?

L: It was a time of changes in my life. I had recently divorced and for the sake of the new millennium. And, maybe a little to spoil myself because I was going through an obscure phase in my life.

(LAURA 55 YRS)

Sofia had also rewarded herself after the break-up of a troubled relationship. She had dreamed about buying one particular ring for a long time. And, right after the break-up with her ex-boyfriend she felt entitled to make the decision and buy the ring she wanted just for herself. She also indulged herself with massage and swimming; the ring was one part of her self-reconstruction after the romance had gone.

P: So, this one is Cartier's Eternity ring.

S: Yeah, I just remembered that it had a real name (...) I think it is one of the most beautiful rings that has ever been made. I think it is really beautiful.

P: This has been your breaking up ring?

S: Yes, I bought it just for me. It was that kind of, even though in the beginning I told that I have had good long relationships with men, this was something completely opposite. So, I had a crush, I thought I was in love, but really it was just a crush, with a couple of years older man.

(...)

Then in the end I felt really bad in there. And, when the situation solved and we finally broke up. It was not a very long relationship but now when I think of it, it felt

like 30 years. It was so painful. So, when we broke up, I knew that I really feel bad. But, I also realized that I have to pull myself together. And, get things that cheer me up and make me stronger. For example I bought a card for 20 times of massage. So, I went for massage and swimming and, then I bought this for myself. I kind of gave everything I wanted for myself. Everything. That's what I felt and then I bought that ring. It was because it felt... I had been looking for that one already for a longer time and I liked it. But, that was the reason why I bought it.

P: You didn't get the cheapest one...

S: No, because definitely my point was "You can get whatever you want to cheer you up". So, it was like that. I did not buy the cheapest one but the one I wanted.

P: How did you wear it back then and has that changed...

S: I have always worn it in my right hand. When I bought it I wore it a lot but now it is more seldom. I wear it every now and then. Like all the other rings, I wear them every now and then. Of course I wear my wedding ring mostly, but this one is in the category of now and then.

P: What does it bring back to your mind?

S: This brings power into my mind. It gives power to me. It's interesting that it's not bringing back anything bad but definitely some kind of power.

P: Did you feel the power already when you bought it?

S: Clearly. You know "Yes!" (laughing)

(SOFIA 51 YRS)



Sofia's ring.

Both Sofia and Laura had spent a fair amount of money on their transitional jewelry after their break-ups. They had felt that after the relationship was over, they had to pamper themselves a little with a nice piece of jewelry. Hence, these pieces of jewelry were not only for adornment, but also for making the transition easier to handle with the help of a physical form.

Transitional jewelry can function as healing devices in reconstructing the self after personal crises. They were often purchased after relationships ended to make the act of transition to single life tangible. As seen above, women often purchased jewelry to reward themselves for being strong and independent. The shift from being part of a couple to being a single woman was easier to handle with a physical piece helping to structure this transition. Having and wearing transitional jewelry had the power to heal. Seeing and touching the jewelry made it easier for them to live with their new status and that way, empowered them.

6.4 Widows and Jewelry

Eva, Julia, Lydia, Maija, and Irene were widows, and they were deeply attached to jewelry they had received from their husbands. These pieces were invariably linked to vivid emotional experiences and memories. These memories were general: they were about people and marriage in general rather than about some particular occasion. Mostly, jewelry from husbands who had passed away carried warm and loving memories.



Irene's wedding ring, on left.

Each of the widows had their own particular way to keep and wear their wedding and engagement rings. Eva, who had lost her husband 25 years ago, occasionally wore the engagement and wedding rings with the rest of her wearable things when it fit and did not feel that there was any restriction against this. In contrast, Irene, who had been widowed for five years, had moved her wedding ring from her left to her right hand a year after the loss of her husband.

But this was the wedding ring until I was widowed; I always wore this on my left hand. And, then a year after my husband died I moved it to my right hand.

(IRENE 71 YRS)

She wore the ring every day, but as she said, on her right hand. She wanted to wear it every day but it did not feel right to wear it on the left hand ring finger. The solution works: she is wearing it all the time but not giving viewers the wrong message.



Lydia's ring finger rings.

Yet another practice was to keep the rings in secret places. Julia did not wear her wedding and engagement rings at all, but kept them in a secret place. She did not even want to show me the rings or to talk about them. She just mentioned that they are in a safe place that only she knows about. She takes them out to see and touch them when she wants to revive memories of her husband and marriage.

Lydia was widowed while she lived in an elderly house with her late husband. She still wore her engagement and wedding rings but because of changes in her knuckles due to an illness, on her little finger. For her, it was obvious that she must wear them for the rest of her life. Here she explains how they were engaged and married.

As far as I remember it was the third time when we met. Anyway, it was Christmas. We had been writing to each other from summer 'til Christmas and got engaged at Christmas. As I told, it was kind of fast. And these are so fragile. These are still the ones. The rings were thin like these back then, we were lucky to get something. Because those times there still wasn't any gold available... the war times. So, at Christmas was the engagement and we got married in April.

(LYDIA, 89 YRS)

Jewelry is often related to relationships of love as we have seen in the discussion about ring finger rings. In this chapter I have discussed jewelry that widows wear to have their deceased husbands close to them, to connect them physically to the men their husbands were. As also noted in this chapter, sometimes pieces of jewelry represent love that has ended in sad ways and which restricts its wearing. Jewelry can also be used to help oneself heal from love relationships which have ended.



7.
CELEBRATING
ACHIEVEMENTS
AND
CREATING
TRADITIONS
WITH
GIFTS

According to Marcel Mauss, an anthropologist who studied gift-giving habits in traditional Polynesian societies, each receiver of a gift also receives obligations related to the gift. The receiver is always obligated to give a reciprocal gift to the giver (Mauss 2006). However, in families and close relationships it is hard to say which is the first gift and which is a response because gift related gestures are not necessarily made with physical objects. Furthermore, when the reason for a gift is an achievement, there may be little reason for reciprocation.

Many significant events in life are celebrated with gifts. For example, when a new mother receives a piece of jewelry as a gift from the father, it is a sort of a reciprocal gift for giving a child to the family. This implies that the mother is not obligated to give another reciprocal gift. Today's market forces and global culture also have a strong influence on material culture and on gift giving traditions. Still, although the forms in gift giving traditions have evolved by culture and over time, the basic rules of gift giving today are roughly similar to those Mauss described almost a century ago.

There are also gifts that do not create obligations for individuals alone, but for whole family lines. For example, when a piece of jewelry has been in a family for a long time, maybe for generations, and it is given to a new possessor in the family, this does not mean that the receiver must reciprocate immediately. Rather, the return gift is expected to be given maybe decades later to generations not yet born. These obligations include taking care of the piece of jewelry and finding the next possessor for it. They also consist of keeping the stories and memories alive and passing these to future possessors. These gifts create obligations that may extend over generations. This multigenerational possessing will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

According to the women, there are three main reasons for gift giving. Firstly, women described the gifts they had received after attaining an important goal in their lives. They often received gifts for graduation, for giving birth, for working for a certain employer for many years, and for retirement. Secondly, many gifts are given out of habit. Occasions on which this kind of gift giving happens include birthdays, anniversaries, and Christmas. These gifts create obligations, but not in the same manner as those pieces that bind families together. Although, these gifts may create ties that bind people together, it is not in any obvious way. Finally, and as a special case, women talked about how they sometimes reward themselves, like after graduating at a later age or accomplishing something very

significant. An interesting note about these self-rewards is that although they seem to be acquired for personal reasons, they often end up in the larger cycle of family gifts, transmitting knowledge and traditions from one generation to the next.

7.1 Gift Giving among Family

Jewelry given as gifts to celebrate some of the main events in a family can become quite important for the family. Ring finger rings were discussed earlier in this book. In addition to weddings, the women I interviewed mostly told me about two other events where jewelry is received: giving birth and anniversaries.

7.1.1 PRESENTS FOR GIVING BIRTH

Giving birth is dense with rituals in most cultures. These rituals are not only related to jewelry, but are rather related to bodily changes and the new life. Earlier these may have included, for example, cleaning the mother's body when transforming her into her new role as a mother. Nowadays one of the foremost forms of celebrating a mother-to-be is to host a baby shower for her. Often at baby showers, the women who are already mothers share their knowledge of mothering and give the new mother gifts for carrying out her new role successfully (Fisher and Gainer 1993). In addition to this, jewelry as gifts also plays a small role in giving birth. Many of the women said that their husbands had rewarded them with jewelry after giving birth.

In the following quotation Emma is talking about a bracelet she had received from her mother who had received it from Emma's father (see picture on p. 53). Emma has four siblings and after each child her father gave her mother a new heart-shaped charm for her mother's silver bracelet. There are three other charms on the bracelet as well, one is from her parents' first trip together to a World Fair, one has five keys and represents their five children, and the last one is a horseshoe shaped charm with a flat round disc in it. The disc has letters on it and when one spins it the letters construct the sentence "I Love You".

P: So, do you have any pieces from your mom or any earlier generations?

E: I do. I have a charm bracelet that was my mom's that my dad given her probably when they first met. My mom is 82, so that was a long time ago. My dad passed away when I was little girl. So, I have that. That's about it, though.

P: How did it end up as your possession?

E: My mom gave it to me. She had a couple pieces; she gave something to my sister. I think it was a locket and she gave me the charm bracelet because she did not wear it anymore. Then, she had her wedding ring reset long time ago. And, she had a gold setting and she gave that to my youngest brother and he had a diamond put into it when he got engaged for his wife. But, she did not have a lot jewelry. She was very young, she was 38 when my dad died. She had five kids to take care of so she wasn't ... wear a lot of jewelry. But, I still have that charm bracelet. But it is pretty delicate, so I don't... I am pretty careful with that.



Emma's mother's old bracelet.

P: Can I see that?

E: Sure, I'll get it. (...) Isn't it terrible? I put in the safe place...

P: Oh, it is so beautiful. And you said that your mom got it as...

E: From my dad

P: When they had just met?

E: Actually, each thing here... he would add into it. I don't know... You see there is five hearts, and there were five kids.

P: Do you know which is yours?

E: No. And, this... this is ... when you spin it... you see these letters... when you spin it says "I Love You".

(EMMA 52 YRS)

Each part of this bracelet has a meaning and an associated story. Each heart-shape charm represents new life in the family. For Emma, they also signify her parents. She is not wearing this bracelet anymore because it is so delicate and she is afraid of losing it. Quite simply, it carries too many memories to be subjected to the risk of getting lost. Instead, she keeps it in a safe place.

Emma was not the only woman who told me how fathers were often "rewarding" the mothers when they had given birth. This phenomenon is well-known in the industry as well. Some companies in the USA and Finland have collections for this purpose. However, no woman that I studied had received this particular "pushing present" jewelry, as it is sometimes called in the United States. Rather, they had jewelry that was specifically created for them, or contributed to their pre-existing jewelry collections.

7.1.2 ANNIVERSARIES

All of the women in my study had received many kinds of gifts from their significant others. A good deal of these gifts consisted of jewelry. A special case among these gifts were wedding anniversary gifts on anniversaries like the 5th, 10th, 20th, 30th and 40th and so forth. These gifts are sometimes related to obligations over and above just the occasion itself. As I mentioned earlier, especially among American women, the original diamond on an engagement ring can be updated on the most important wedding anniversaries.

In the following quotation Anita talks about her updated ring, which she would like to have updated again. She was engaged 26 years ago and was married the following year. After being married for ten years, she had received her current diamond ring but now, fifteen years after receiving it, she is not pleased with it anymore. When she received the anniversary ring, she chose it together with her husband and she got the ring she loved. Now she thinks that yellow gold is not her style anymore and she would like to have a new one made of white metal.



Anita's original engagement ring.



Anita's new ring finger rings.

A: Well, this isn't actually my engagement ring. I got this for my ten year anniversary. So, my engagement ring is upstairs in a box. But, for our ten year anniversary I got a new diamond and a new setting. And then I actually had to get a new band because my original wedding band was wider. So it was too wide and I couldn't wear both of them together. So, my husband and I both got these like very flat bands, just simple bands for our tenth anniversary. Now, since then... I don't wear [yellow gold]... I mean gold is not my favorite... even though it is coming back again. I own lots of gold.

But I've always wanted to do white gold or platinum. But, just had never... It's been in a low priority for last... So, I do kind of feel that it sticks out and it doesn't really go with me but I still wear it every day. Because, I want to. But, I would love to switch to white gold I haven't got there yet. Some day.

*P: How about the original engagement ring?
(goes to get the ring)
(...)*

But, it's pretty and I like the princess cut and it is little more modern than this. It's more me. But, like I said, the yellow gold setting... every time I look it I can just say it is wrong. It should be different.

P: But back on that time that wasn't wrong?

A: Oh no, it wasn't. Yellow gold was still in and

it is still in. And I thought the setting was so cool because... but you know how you change... you're what you like and what you don't like.

(...)

P: Can I take pictures of them?

A: Sure. (puts her hands under the faucet) I've gained so much weight, I can't get them off. This is another reason why I can't get resetting. I can't get them off.

(ANITA, 51 YRS)

Marcel Mauss has discussed the reciprocal gift exchange where the gift giving and receiving action is a sort of an ongoing loop (2006). According to him, the receiver is always obligated to give a reciprocal gift back to the giver. In the case of anniversary gifts, women who receive expensive gifts from their husbands are not expected to reciprocate. The anniversary gift from the husband is for receiving something else in the relationship. It is as if being a wife or providing children are good enough reasons to justify these gifts. Obviously, women also give gifts in relationships, but they are often rather more practical than jewelry: for example, clothes, records, or knives. Also, even though the upgraded ring finger rings were gifts for wives they were often considered possessions of the couple rather than just the wife.

7.2 Habits of Gift Exchange on Special Days

In both countries, there are cultural traditions and habits that gift giving is supposed to follow. Among the women I studied these habits had more personal than cultural or national variation. The traditions were mostly the same; they consist of giving seasonal gifts like Christmas gifts, Mother's Day gifts, and birthday gifts. Jewelry sales peak around Christmas time and Mother's Day in both countries.

At Christmas, jewelry is mostly received from the spouse, whereas on Mother's Day, jewelry is often from the spouse, the children, or from both. Most jewelry given as birthday gifts is also from the spouse, except on the milestone birthdays like the 40th, 50th, 60th etc. On these big birthdays women often receive more expensive jewelry or a set of jewelry from a bigger group of people including family and friends. The women, with whom I spoke, mostly received jewelry as ordinary birthday gifts only from their nuclear family or from their siblings.

So, I get jewelry on name days, birthdays, and Mother's days and sometimes without any reason and also from travels. I haven't got any other jewelry except the 40th birthday present from others than my husband. And then this one. And for confirmation present I got a ring with a pearl from my mother's aunt. I can't remember of each which Mother's day I got them. But then there are those which I remember very well.

(ELLA 58 YRS)

Some women had received so many gifts that they could not say which special days the gifts were from, as Ella's story illustrates. After being married for decades, it must be a little blurry which piece of jewelry was received on which birthday or anniversary. However, women clearly remembered which pieces of jewelry were from their husbands and which were, for example, from their children, parents or friends.

Normally men gave pieces of jewelry as gifts to women. Women had seldom bought expensive jewelry for themselves unless there had been some remarkable reason for reward. In consequence, most of the jewelry which was expensive or made of precious metals was received as gifts.



Karla's ring.

K: Oh yeah, I decided to pull out the ring and wear it. And, then like I say, I have to be careful because my fingers swell up and I can not get the ring off. So, it must be quite the right size whereas this one [wedding ring] I never take off.

P: And, this was an anniversary...

K: I got that... I think on a different anniversary, that is from the same friend, the jeweller. When my husband doesn't know what to get he goes to his shop.

P: So, do you get a lot of jewelry from your husband?

K: Yes, most of my jewelry is from my husband. I never kind of got tempted to buy jewelry; most of the jewelry I bought was these beads. But, usually through the years I guess wherever I have, you know, some women, they like to go buy jewelry and stuff, but I never was too... Usually just if it was a gift

(KARLA 50 YRS)



Paula's pendant.

7.2.1 MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day is celebrated in both countries. It is celebrated on the second Sunday of May and most of the women described their families' traditions related to it. The traditions varied a lot between families and generations. What was common to all families was that the mothers and grandmothers received gifts and attention. These gifts were received from spouses, children and grandchildren. Often a meal is prepared for the mothers, or the whole family eats out to celebrate the day. Jewelry is a typical gift, and sometimes they were handmade by the children or grandchildren.

PA: How about this one which is casted. This has been a gift or...

P: It has also been [a gift]... They have brought a Mothers' day gift for grandmother or... When she was little she always came with a gift.

PA: So, are you wearing this one?

P: Sometimes I do with a woollen sweater. There were two of those, but I have dropped the other one. So, these were done by my granddaughter.

(PAULA 78 YRS)

7.2.2 CHRISTMAS AND HOLIDAY SEASON GIFTS

Not all the women who were interviewed were Christian, but all of them still followed some kind of gift giving tradition during Christmas time. In both countries, Christmas is a major holiday, and is widely celebrated regardless of its religious element. Gifts are an important part of the rituals and ceremonies of the Holiday Season. Gifts exchanged during the Holiday Season are also sometimes called Holiday gifts. Holiday Season is used to describe all celebrations around the winter solstice without reference to a specific culture, religion, or holiday. Holiday gifts are not only meaningful to the receivers, but also to the givers. Especially if the receiver is a family member like the mother, the husband and the children are often involved in the process of finding and getting the gift. In other words, finding a gift is a social action that may bring families together for the planning, finding and buying of the gift.

Maybe for this reason, pieces of jewelry received as Christmas gifts often evoke memories a long time afterwards, as was evident in the interviews. The gift givers often come to mind when the possessor is wearing these pieces of jewelry. Below Mia describes a Holiday gift she had received from her husband decades ago. She did not indicate the exact year of the Holiday Season, but more importantly, she describes the feeling she gets when she holds or wears the set of pearls. She still feels her husband's generosity and love when she sees the set.

P: So, they are kind of old.

M: Yeah, they are really beautiful. And, I always wore them just for dress. (...)

But there was a man from Japan who was a pearl expert who came to see us and was choosing the set. So he did choose them all. So they are beautifully matched, really really beautiful.

P: So, what sort of memories these evoke when you are wearing them?

M: I think mostly that I was younger. I was in early thirties or all that. And, we were going out and it was fun and also holiday. Holiday gifts and how dear that is that he would choose that for me. I was always surprised what he picked for me. And, he loves to buy jewelry, which all my friends are always amazed by. Because, he will go somewhere, and they'll be looking, you know, and their husbands are like... And, I always said: "Well, you should buy something, well, this is nice, this is nice. How about this?" And they are always surprised. Sometimes I am surprised too because I don't necessarily want to buy things. So, it evokes that kind of generosity and his love for me and that he wants me to have things. So it's nice.

(MIA 58 YRS)

Most memories related to Holiday Season gifts were positive, touching, and beautiful. Still, whether positive or negative, these memories were the reason a piece of jewelry became a keepsake. In the following quotation Maria talks about the necklace she had received from her former husband on their first Christmas together. Now, they have been divorced for more than ten years and she does not want to be reminded of that marriage. She keeps the necklace in her drawer and does not take it out often.



Maria's necklace.

This is the first piece of jewelry I got from my husband. It was when we had just... We were only dating on that time. I got this one as a Christmas present on the first Christmas. Back then he wanted to buy me these. And they are related to apprehensive and... Or maybe not even apprehensive but bad feeling when I am handling or pulling out the jewelry from that time.

P: So they are bringing back memories?

M: Yes, a lot.

P: So, do you ever wear this?

M: Sometimes, but not much. I didn't wear it too much either back then. I have always handled it carefully. So, it won't get broken.

(...) So, I didn't [wear it] either back then. I think it's quite demanding. It is quite beautiful if you are wearing some simple black outfit. But for a reason or other, I just haven't been wearing it. But, I have kept it as some sort of memento. Anyway, I just can't misplace it.

(MARIA 56 YRS)

As this quote suggests, it is painful to get rid of pieces of jewelry, regardless of whether the memories are pleasant or unpleasant. These memories create strong connections and attachments to jewelry. In Maria's case, the memories are not always pleasant and may prevent wearing a piece of jewelry but still they cause her to keep it.

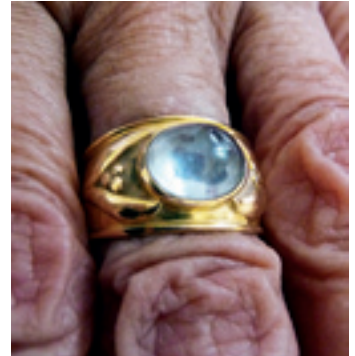
7.2.3 BIRTHDAY GIFTS

Like Holiday Season gifts, birthday gifts may involve more than just one giver and the receiver. They are often chosen carefully, especially for round birthdays like the 40th, 50th, 60th etc, since on these occasions gifts are often rather expensive and come from the whole family. In the following quotation Irene talks about a moonstone ring which she received from her husband, but was chosen by her mother since her husband did not trust in his ability to choose. This was a gift for an important birthday, so it must have been very important at that time, now decades ago.

This ring, my mother picked this ring out... I love moon stones... And, it isn't antique, I just had it cleaned and I rarely take it off.

P: And what was the occasion your mother gave it to you?

I: I think it was an important birthday, like 40th of 50th or something, but I've had this for many years. So, my mother helped but husband bought it for me. But my mother picked it out. Because he said "I don't know what she'll like. She'll like what you like". So, she picked it out.
(IRENE 71 YRS)



Irene's ring.

Some gifts are social objects in an even wider sense. One interviewed woman revealed that on their special days, a group of friends and women from the same neighborhood gave a certain brand of beads to each other. Karla had received these beads on her birthday. These beads are social gifts in two ways: first they are given by the group of friends, second, as each friend has similar beads, they have become representations of the group. Of course, other people have these same beads as well since they are from a big brand, but for this group of friends, they represent group coherence and friendship.

P: So the long necklace with the beads in it was a gift.

K: Yes.

P: So, from your friend.

K: Right. I got these Trollbeads.

(...)

K: Yeah, and I got them from my neighbours when I had a birthday like couple of years ago. They started giving me these Trollbeads and then I've been collecting them. So you can add them and take them off and you can put different colors. And then just to show about the necklace and then you can just put them there too. So, this jewelry I like, kind of I've been wearing it more than I usually wear stuff. Because you can put all black and white and something that is really... Oh, this is their ring they make that goes with their bracelet.

P: So, what was the reason to receive the gift?

K: The bracelet I got from two neighbors for my birthday with the few beads and then every time I had a birthday they gave me another beads and I bought myself a few beads. So, I kind of expanded it.

(KARLA 50 YRS)



Karla's necklace.



Karla's bracelet.

7.3 Achievements and Gifts

Next I will discuss achievement related gifts. According to the women, in the lifetime of a woman she often has many substantial achievements. Often the achievements in a woman's life are related to her career or education. On these occasions women receive gifts in family or career related rituals, or they reward themselves. It seems that women rarely buy expensive jewelry for themselves. These achievements, however, are good reasons to purchase jewelry for oneself.

7.3.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AT WORK

Many women were rewarded for work related achievements. Sometimes they had gotten gifts from their employers and sometimes from their co-workers. Some of the gifts were inexpensive souvenir jewelry from their bosses' work trips, like Alisa's bracelet described in the quotation below. Others were quite valuable, such as retirement gifts or gifts given to loyal employees who had been working at the same place for years.

Often women who had received jewelry as gifts from their employers or bosses expressed that they felt appreciated at their job. It may have been a small gesture from the employer to bring a souvenir from abroad, but nonetheless, it was an important sign of appreciation for a job well done, as Alisa explains.



Alisa's bracelet.

And this, because this showed the appreciation of my boss.

And, it was just such a nice gesture that she thought of me. And it was my first colorful piece I think, the only colorful piece that I wear.

(ALISA 33 YRS)

Susanna had been working for a governmental guest during an important international political meeting. After the meeting, the minister who she had taken care of gave her a brooch as an expression of gratitude for her devotion. She was surprised by this gesture because, as she describes in the following quotation, she was only doing her job. However, this gift made her feel special as it told her that the minister had appreciated her work.

S: I got this one when the big conference was organized here. And, then they called me from the Council of State and asked if I could be the Liaison Officer for the Prime Minister during the conference. And then I thought, when I saw it, because I'm not wearing brooches – I have some of them but I rarely wear them, maybe on some occasions – So I was thinking that is this some kind of trinket? But, it is Swarovski crystal. And, I don't understand anything of these. But, then someone at work told me that

they are valuable pieces, not trinkets at all. But, I am not good at wearing brooches, but sometimes I do.

P: How did it feel to get this from the Prime Minister?

S: The whole conference was extremely interesting. I didn't expect anything. It was my work duty and I was getting paid for it and I was just doing my job. So, of course it felt good that he respected my work. And, it was something personal from him. So, it was nice. It is just seldom that...[I wear it]. Brooches should become more fashionable. Or, it would be fun if they did. At some point of time people wore a lot of brooches.

(SUSANNA 51 YRS)

Often pieces of jewelry received from employers were completely different from the receivers' style, like in Susanna's and Alisa's cases. A bracelet Alisa got from her boss was the first and the only colorful piece of jewelry she had ever had, but she enjoyed wearing it nevertheless. The important aspect was that it had been given to her, not its appearance. Susanna first thought that the brooch she received was a trinket, but after she learned that the brand was well-known, she started to like and wear it more frequently. She hoped that brooches like hers come into fashion again so that she could wear it even more regularly, not only on fancier occasions which is where she wears it at the moment. The givers of Susanna's brooch and Alisa's bracelet were Asian, which is perhaps why the gifts did not match the women's Western tastes, but they had changed their ways of wearing jewelry to include these pieces.

7.3.2 EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Women had also received jewelry as graduation gifts. Graduation jewelry was often kept safe but hardly ever worn since decades later its style had become old-fashioned. However, women still said that these were among their most important pieces of jewelry. This may be because of the achievement itself, because of the people who gave the gift, or because these pieces were relatively old and had been in women's lives for a long period of time.

For example, Susanna who is now 51 years old, told me about her high school graduation gift from her sister that she wore every day for about ten years (p. 72). It became her amulet, a trusted companion during those years. As the piece of jewelry is now so fragile, Susanna does not dare to wear it much anymore. Still, possessing it takes her thoughts back to the times of being a young woman.

Of course, some education related gifts are received at a mature age. Iris passed a language test in her new home country, and received a pendant as a gift from her husband. Her husband had promised to give her a gift when she passed the test and when she finally did it, they spent a considerable amount of time together finding a suitable piece of jewelry. Her husband finally bought her a unique platinum pendant with diamonds on the platinum chain from a famous luxury store in New York. When she first got it, it was a trophy; now the pendant works as a pleasant reminder of her achievement.

I: This one is when we were in New York. My husband bought this for me.

P: Was it a special gift or?

I: Yes. Actually there is some English ability test, it a TOEFL, but it is not a TOEFL test but it is a TOEIC test. It is a similar test to the TOEFL and then he promised me when I get over 800 points he will buy me something and this time I get 847 and before that I had got six hundred something. So I jumped up the score. So, I asked him to get this for me. I bought this from the Barneys store, Barneys New York, and, it is actually a Japanese artist, designed by a Japanese artist. But it's like not many. It is like only one jewelry, she made it one by one.

P: So it is a unique...

I: Yeah yeah yeah, that's why I liked it. And, so it is the story about this.

P: So, you picked it by yourself?

I: We both went to pick it. We wanted some special one.

(IRIS 35 YRS)

7.4 Souvenir Jewelry

Some occasions commemorated with jewelry are more mundane than educational and work related achievements. In particular, women buy and often get jewelry as souvenirs from travels. Jewelry is an easy product to buy as a souvenir, since it is usually rather small, but still functions as a reminder of travels to other countries or cultures. Sofia told a story of her earrings whose appearance she did not like. She was still wearing them regularly because they always drew her thoughts to a beautiful journey to Italy years ago.



Sofia's earrings.

P: And then you have worn earrings that are some sort of memento from your travels in Italy 1997.

S: Oh yeah, those. They are really awful. Horrible.

P: Why are they horrible?

S: They are pretty horrible. But I wear them quite often because I have a blouse the same color. (...) I got these from the people in the village.

P: Tell me more about it. Why would anyone give earrings as a gift for a tourist?

S: It was 1997 and I was just wondering where I should travel during my vacation. Then my former secretary had moved to Italy with her husband and she kept asking me to visit them. And, then I decided to go. But, their apartment wasn't big enough for all of us. And, I didn't want to live with them even though I wanted to hang out with her. Her husband's company had an apartment that was empty and he said that I could

stay there. It was in the next village. (...) I was there alone for two or three weeks and then my friend came also. And, since I didn't know the village, each time when I

came back from my journeys, just before it was too dark, I went back to my neighbourhood. And, there was this little bar full of local people. And, I remember when I went there for the first time; there was crazy gabble of the day's happenings. And, when I opened the door, there was huge silence. No outsider had ever gone there. No one. Then I anyway bravely walked to the counter and ordered coffee and *avec*. It was a very small bar, just four tables of which three were full. I took my stuff and went to the fourth table. Everyone was still quiet and stared at me. Then the old lady whose children were running the place said: "La companigia" meaning that come here. And, then I sat there with them. I couldn't speak Italian and they couldn't speak any other language. But then slowly I got to know them and started to speak a little Italian. And we became very good friends. And, then I was wondering because each night when I left this young man from that family came to the street to stare at me. First I was afraid that he would follow me and I was little shocked of what will happen now. But nothing, he just came there to stare at me until I had walked to my gate and opened it and, then he went away. Each night he came to see that I got home. When I realized that I started to wave him goodnight from my gate and he waved back and went away. It was nice. They kind of started to look after me. And then they told me that there is a market tomorrow. I had just told them that a friend of mine is coming. And, she also got a different pair of earrings when we left the village. We kind of became members of the village.

P: What kind of occasion was it when you got the earrings?

S: We had been talking that it was our last night. And then they wanted to organize something in the bar. We had a little party there and, there was dancing and music and everything. And, then they gave the jewelry for us and thanked us for having been there. They were sincere people. They all were like... couples and old people and also one drunken village idiot.

P: So, what does wearing them bring to your mind?

S: Well, the whole time in Italy. It was so wonderful there, the whole time. And, the warmth of the villagers, it was something very charming.

P: But you don't like the appearance of these?

S: My opinion is that these are not... I would have not bought these for myself. Never. But, I wear them every now and then.

(SOFIA, 51 YRS)

On her trip, she had become friends with people in the village where she stayed. Her earrings still remind her of that moment in time. This seems to be common with souvenir jewelry, regardless of whether these pieces were bought by the woman herself, or whether they were received as gifts.

This is not the whole story, however. When jewelry was brought as a souvenir from someone else's trip, it triggered memories of the giver, the occasion of getting the gift, or, perhaps something different. In Ingrid's case, souvenir jewelry reminded her of a book that had made an impact on her years ago.

I: The oldest piece of jewelry I think that I have may be a pendant that was given to me by a co-worker maybe 30 years ago. She brought it back from Poland, she went to visit family and I've just always kept it as a little small pendant. I don't know the value of it or anything as far as monetary, but it has just meant a lot to me that my co-worker Alli gave that to me. And the fact that it was from Poland, I read a book many years ago when I was a child, called "Escape from Warsaw". And, so I was always interested in the Polish culture and so when she brought back this little piece it just meant a lot to me and I still have it. I don't really wear it anymore but I just keep it in the jewelry box.

P: Have you ever thought about the future of that piece?

I: No, not really. I've always intended to have another small chain that I could wear it on. But it has to be something very small and delicate because it is just a small piece, like a raised flower on it or something. No I haven't. I just keep it in the jewelry box and when ever I just look into it and see it, it reminds me of her.

P: Were you close co-workers or close friends or...

I: Well, we were not necessarily that close. I just really appreciated the fact that she thought about me when she was far away and brought something back for me that was so pretty, so I always kept it. But we lost touch when I left and went to another company. I have no idea what happened to her.

P: So what was the reason for her to give it to you?

I: I don't know. She just wanted to bring me something back. When she went on her trip maybe I may have mentioned to her about my feelings about Poland of having read that book ... and I am not sure. She may have told me and I just don't remember because it was so long ago. It was like one of my first jobs or something.

P: So, it was a souvenir?

I: Yeah, but I really wouldn't call it a souvenir because it's not like it was one of those little balls like have the snow that you shake. It wasn't that kind of thing or key chain or something. It was just a real pretty piece of jewelry.

(INGRID 54 YRS)

Thus, souvenir jewelry sometimes becomes a vehicle that keeps memories alive. It may signify time spent together with family and friends, and often it is these social experiences that form the core of its value. Jewelry as such may be cheap, kitschy, and discordant with the woman's style. Its value, however, does not lie in the object, but in the good times it represents.

7.5 Rewarding Oneself

Rewarding oneself was often mentioned in work related situations. After important achievements, women felt that they had earned a certain piece of jewelry not as a gift but as an independent personal reward.

For example, in the following quotation, Ingrid talks about how she rewarded herself with a necklace from a conference she attended. She had dreamed about retailing goods for a long time, but had not yet had a chance to do it full-time. However, before attending the conference she started to feel that retailing goods as a full-time job could be possible. This is why she rewarded herself at this first annual retailers' conference she attended. She did not like the piece of jewelry particularly, but since it was the official conference jewelry that year, she bought it and is still wearing it.

This particular necklace, I am not that crazy about it, but it is a special necklace from ... that they did for the conference, they have an annual conference and this was my first time attending. So, this is like the conference necklace and it's only for representatives, customers can't buy this. So, since it was my first conference I decided to get it. Like I said, I am not that crazy about it. I wouldn't choose this if it had been just a regular piece in the catalogue. But, it's special to me in that respect.

(INGRID 54 YRS)

Buying jewelry for oneself was more common among the American participants than with the Finns. It seemed that the Finns needed to have a particularly important reason to justify buying something for themselves, whereas American women sometimes described how they bought jewelry that pleased them. This was not adequate reason for most Finnish women, who saw such behaviour as indulgent. In the following quotation, a woman is talking about how she felt justified in buying a piece of jewelry for herself after receiving a commission for her work. She felt she needed to have a memento of this act.

In fall 2003 I received a commission for writing work. And, I thought that it was quite a big appreciation of my work. I decided to sacrifice the money for a piece of jewelry, which I could proudly wear for rest of my life as a memento of my rewarded work.

(NARRATIVES)

Interestingly, however, these pieces of jewelry may enter the family gift cycle. For example, pieces of jewelry bought by grandmothers to celebrate their achievements could be handed down to daughters and granddaughters to keep the stories of the achievement alive. Thus, even when the reasons for buying a piece of jewelry are individual in the first place, the piece may still become a social object that carries memories and identities from one generation to another.

In this chapter, I have explained how jewelry given as gifts may support traditions. Women often receive jewelry as gifts from family members and loved ones. Others

may also give gifts of jewelry, but more likely on major occasions like round birthdays or retirement. Jewelry often has an important role in rituals and traditions, helping to perpetuate them. Mother's Day and the Holiday Season have strong gift traditions and jewelry is often revealed when women unwrap their presents. Jewelry received as gifts will, in subsequent wearing, remind women of those who gave the gift and also of the occasions on which the gifts were given.

In this chapter I also discussed how jewelry is related to achievements in life. When a woman reaches a certain step in her life she often receives gifts of jewelry. This may happen after giving birth or due to career related achievements. Some women reward themselves after reaching career milestones; later these rewards work as trophies representing the achievements.



8.
THE
POWERS
OF
JEWELRY

In archaic societies studied by Durkheim, items with mediating powers were totems. Totems were often images from nature, such as animals, places, or weather conditions. Totemic items mediated the power from the things they represented; a person wearing an item representative of her clan's totem would gain the power of the totem. For example, if the totem represented rain, the wearer would have the power of rain when under the influence of the totemic item. The totemic items could be pieces of jewelry, but also things like tattoos, hairdos, and patterns in clothing. They could also be small items that people carried with them such as pieces of fabric, blankets, or small statues. They could also be large representations of totems as totem poles, paintings, drawings, or formulations of the landscape. (Durkheim 1980).

This chapter argues that although in contemporary society we do not have totems in the sense that Durkheim described them, we still have things that represent powers and function like totems. These items are kept and worn because they represent and mediate powers beyond the individual. This is a matter of belief. In Durkheim's time as well as today, it is belief in the powers of products that make these powers exist (Durkheim 1980, Lévi-Strauss 1963). Pieces of jewelry were often described as these *power products* as Karla said in the following quotation.

P: So, this was a gift from your husband on Christmas?

K: Again.

P: Which Christmas?

K: I think that was... I had just had Elena, my daughter, so that was a long time... seventeen years ago. Crosses were kind of getting popular and stuff. Sometimes I put on that cross when I feel I need help or something. I think it brings me some luck. You know, in prayers or something I say "well I'll wear my cross". Like in my mom's funeral I wear my cross so, I like pray sometimes. One time in church they said that you should not wear the cross now though, because... I don't know, they said some reason that people really should not wear them as necklaces. Because it is spiritually, it's more for when Jesus died. I don't know, I don't really... I didn't listen because I had a lot of crosses. And, I never thought, that one should not wear them so... but I heard the priest said that once, just recently. But a lot of people wear crosses, you know. But I notice that I tend to go for the cross when I think I need a little help or something.



Karla's crosses.

Which is not the time you should wear it...all the time, not just when you are looking for a... something, you know, when you feel troubled or something.

P: So, did you have any ... that sort of feeling on that day?

K: I think so; I cannot remember what it was. Something minor, but I ... yeah... I think it was something with one of the kids. You know, and then I just go to the cross. Because I have a feeling that other little pieces are ... they are crosses too sometimes... that I wear.

(KARLA 50 YRS)

Jewelry can have many kinds of power, ranging from personal to common. An example of a common power is in religious symbols, as expressed in the quote above. The cross is power jewelry that mediates power from God or another religious figure. These

items also empower people in personal matters, as Karla says: she wears her crosses when she needs power from religion.

Many scholars in addition to Durkheim (1980), including Paine (2004) and Lévi-Strauss (1963), have made similar observations about the powers of products. According to Paine, power products could be divided into three categories: amulets, talismans, and charms (Paine 2004).

- Amulets are protective products that protect the possessor with intangible features. They do not physically protect but they have powers that protect the wearer or possessor.
- Talismans mediate power from somewhere else, for example from other generations. Talismans often play important roles on ritualistic occasions.
- Charms bring something into a possessor's or wearer's life. Charms can bring luck, love, or fertility, among other things.

Mostly, powers related to amulets, charms and talismans are believed commonly within a society. But the social beliefs are also adjusted with personal experiences and beliefs. As the women I talked with focused more on personal rather than communal beliefs, personal beliefs are the main topic of this chapter.

8.1 Qualities of the Powers

Several women said that they had gained different kinds of power from jewelry they possess or wear. This power may be abstract, such as bringing good luck, or it can be more concrete like healing from sickness. The abstract power and the healing power act in a

particular way for each person, family, kin or culture, and they will only work if they are believed in. They can be believed in culturally, personally, or by certain members of the family or extended family.

Often power is inherited from earlier generations. Many women described the power as the feeling of being connected to earlier possessors. In cases of Native American jewelry or Finnish traditional jewelry; the wearers felt the connection to their ancestors and even to their culture. In the USA, Native American traditional craft jewelry were highly valued items around the 1960s and 1970s. For some of the women, they are still highly valued craft jewelry that represents American cultural history. The largest Finnish jewelry manufacturer, Kalevala Jewelry, produces jewelry whose design is often based on archaeological jewelry with traditional Finnish patterns. Most of the Finnish women who participated in this study possessed products from Kalevala Jewelry. This jewelry was highly valued among the participants. Women also described gaining powers from their ancestors, especially from the powerful women in their cultures and histories. Within the Native American and traditional Finnish jewelry, often the ornaments, shapes, or patterns were traditional or even historical, even though the actual piece of jewelry was contemporary.

Powers were repeatedly discussed in the narratives of the pilot data, and then later in the Probes Enhanced Interview Study. In the pilot data, the powers of jewelry were mentioned in 94 stories, and most of the women in the interviews talked about the powers they gained from their jewelry. Some of them treated the powers as a very natural thing. However, a few told me that even talking about this almost superstitious aspect of jewelry was not appropriate. Nevertheless, they knew other women, sometimes even earlier possessors that gained powers from their jewelry. This topic was well-known even for those few women who had not gained these powers personally.

Some of the powers were associated with family rituals, such as a wedding ring that symbolizes love and commitment. Often the power jewelry was given to the new possessor on a family occasion, like on Christmas or a birthday. On these occasions, the powers were handed down to the new possessor with the jewelry and a story related to it. Some of the powers gained were strictly personal and not even revealed to this most recent possessor, or to me. Some of the women explained to me that it is something they are not able to talk about or tell just anyone. Sometimes women explained how they had bought or received pieces of jewelry in order to turn them into power jewelry. This was particularly the case with pieces of jewelry known to have powers throughout a whole society, such as amber's healing powers around the Baltic Sea as described in the following excerpt from the story presented later (p. 137).

The story of my amber necklace starts beyond four generations. There was my grandmother's grandfather, vicar Karl Gabriel Lyra (1786–1872), who was the possessor and the wearer of this necklace. He really wore the necklace to cure his rheumatism. (...)

Sometimes I have worn the necklace a lot, of course depending on clothing and the occasion. Still, each time I've remembered its long story and all the people who may

also have worn it. It might not be monetarily valuable; anyhow it is a memento and a rare object.

(NARRATIVES)



Amy's evil eye.

Also, the evil eye is a well-known protective item used for many pieces of jewelry. In the following quotation, Amy explains why she wears the evil eye. The belief in the evil eye is originally from the Near East, but has now spread to many other cultures as well.

A: Yeah, sometimes when I go... when someone comes to my house I don't know, or I know does not like me, I just protect myself. I just wear this with gold.

(...)

A: Yes. This is a evil eye. It protects you from the evil eye. You know, someone who wish you not well, you have to wear something to, you know, to protect you. This is a belief from Arabia, you know, this is not a Polish belief, but this is from East side like from Arabic countries.

(AMY 52 YRS)

These powers consist of experiences connected to the piece of jewelry. If the piece of jewelry has previously given power to someone (including the current possessor), it is often thought that it will give power again.

The origin of these powers is belief in them: they cannot heal or help unless they are believed in. For example, in the following quotation a woman talks about a common belief related to bird's legs being symbols of fertility, a belief she shares. When she wanted a baby, she wore a pendant with this symbol, gained the power, and had her baby. At the end of the story, the writer says that she cannot prove the power of the jewelry, but it does not seem to matter as long as she believes in this power.

For many years we had been trying to have a baby. But it always ended in the beginning of the pregnancy. Then I got a "Hattulan lintu" pendant made of bronze from my husband. I studied the beliefs that were linked to the bird character and the webbed feet of it. Deep in my thoughts I hoped that this piece of jewelry would give some fertility also for me. I had anyway received it from my loved one. The pendant became my secret amulet. And what did I know, soon I was pregnant and this pregnancy produced fruit – a little son. The pendant became my most cherished piece of jewelry. I cannot prove the power in it, but the memory of my life's most important event stays in this piece of jewelry.

(NARRATIVES)

The powers women gain from their jewelry are related to how these women acquire and use their jewelry. They are also related to how this jewelry is taken care of and kept in the family for the future. The pieces of jewelry that have these powers become valued beyond their monetary, social, or cultural value; power jewelry gains a special place in the folklore of the family. Because of these powers, this jewelry tends to stay in families longer than jewelry without this quality. As a consequence, there are unwritten laws about obligations regarding these pieces. They may be guidelines for determining the future possessors, guaranteeing proper care, and longevity within the family. Often in fact, women expressed that for them, the owner of power jewelry is the family or even the kinship, not the current possessor herself.

As discussed earlier, there are no powers in jewelry without a belief in these powers. These beliefs transform some pieces of jewelry into tools or mediators of power. This is caused not by the physical piece, but instead by the beliefs. They change behaviors and interpretations, and may even become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Thus, the same mass produced piece of jewelry may be extremely valuable power jewelry for a particular person, while for another, it is but a memento. In the quotation about the bird pendant, the author describes her belief in the fertility-related powers of a mass produced pendant. Another woman, a former dancer, had the same pendant, but for her it was only a brooch. For her, the rapidly moving legs of the bird symbolized action and her previous profession as a dancer; her daughter had given her this brooch because of the bird's legs. And for her, it was a memento from her daughter, not specifically power jewelry.

L: My daughter bought it for me for my 80th birthday. I can't remember the name of this one and I have lost the box for it. But, I guess there were these. I have now lately also seen some... quite many wearing these. There are ones made of gold and bronze and then this silver one. You can see this same model a lot. And also, there was a picture of this one in the newspaper when they were talking about Kalevala Jewelry.

P: Why did your daughter pick out this one?

L: Well because, she said because of the legs. She meant that I have such fast legs, but they don't jolt like that anymore. So, because of the legs.

(LYDIA 89 YRS)



Lydia's brooch.

8.2 Wearing Power Jewelry

As the stories have shown, power jewelry is worn to gain certain powers. Wearing these pieces validates the powers in jewelry, and gives them the possibility to act. The women told me that power jewelry needs to be worn actively in order to keep its power fresh. This

means that a piece of power jewelry needs to be worn each time there is a need to evoke its powers.

In the following story, the author writes about how the same bracelet transferred luck from her grandmother to her and then to all three of her children on their final exams at high school. The bracelet evoked luck on the final exams when worn properly. This bracelet also mediated on other occasions. It gave power during periods of grief and loss, and also comfort for the fear of flying.

THE POWER OF JEWELRY

"Daddy, what was that glistening in the box?" Something bright caught the eyes of a child in a desk drawer, among old pens. It even clinked! My daddy picked up a broken watch strap, made from really thin coins. Why was it in there, why weren't the coins like the familiar coins in my purse?

I grew and could climb on the chair myself. I could even drag open the drawer — creak it said and smelled of old pens and wood. I twiddled the coins in my small fingers, made them clink and wondered.

At some point my daddy told me that his grandma Taava had deposited the coins when Finland had become independent and the silver coins decorated with two-headed eagles were no longer in use. Daddy's Confirmation present had been that large set of coins from which the watch strap had been made.

Daddy went to heaven that autumn, when I was finishing my last year of high school. I cried in the church park on my way to school. No more fishing buddy, no more story teller. I had daddy's flowers and birds with me, along with the day's bitter sun and the night's moonlight. —After getting through the teary autumn to Christmas I got an odd present: the old watch strap! It was fixed into a bracelet for me. The coins shone clean, and they had received new attaching silver rings. The coins swung around in a circle, jingling brightly.

The sun was melting the snow when my high school's final exams started. With the silver coins on my wrist I stepped into the hall and started writing "Am I the Master of My Own Happiness". I no longer remember whether I thought that I was. In the warmth of the sun I felt the blessing of my old grandmother Taava, spreading into the exam hall through my jewelry. I completed all the exams with the bracelet on my wrist, and on all succeeded with calm hard work. With the white graduation cap and the coin bracelet on my wrist I said goodbye to my old school. I took the bracelet with me to Helsinki, to the university entrance exam. Six times 25 and three times 50 pennies were my dear possession. The oldest coin had turned 74, I had turned 18. Many sweat drops flowed during those ordeals, but the blessing of the jewelry seems to have accompanied me.

Some loops had already become worn during the bracelet's travels, until the new generation began to wonder about the coins. My children's friends had not seen anything like them either. The loops were fixed and the blessing did not disappear! Nearly 30 years after my high school exams my own son did the exams with the brace-

let in his pocket, and later my daughters with the bracelet on their wrist. All received whispers of good luck and wisdom for their efforts from their old grandma from above.

My jewelry cases have become full during the course of my life. The bracelet has had years off and sometimes even gotten dark. During rough moments I have searched out the bracelet once again and attached it to my wrist in moments of grief and fear. It has gotten me through a flight over the Atlantic, the loss of loved ones and terrible fights. Pieces of jewelry come and go. The blessed coin bracelet waits for the curious eyes and life dreams of a new generation. The oldest coin turns 117 years old this year, and most of the others commemorate the 90 years of Finnish independence.

(NARRATIVES)

The coin bracelet mentioned in the story gains its powers through the beliefs of three generations of the family. It had helped them on several different occasions and for that reason is highly respected. As the story shows, personal ownership of the power jewelry is not absolutely necessary to gain these powers. The owner can be someone else or even the family. It is enough that the powers are believed in and respected, and the piece is in the family.

Some pieces of jewelry are only worn to evoke certain powers when they are needed. However, some other pieces are worn all the time so that the powers are always working. In particular, if a piece of jewelry prevents bad luck, it may be worn all the time for this purpose. In the next quotation, Amy talks about how she is always wearing her crystal necklace to protect her from others' bad intentions outside her home.

A: I have a lot of beliefs, but she will say "mom you are crazy". You know beliefs for crystals, crystals you are supposed to have at home.

Crystals heal yourself and like the amethyst make you calm. And make your nerve system better and make your spirit more better. I did not wear this necklace too much.

This is like artificial crystal. When someone go and we wear it like this [the viewer gets light in his eyes from the jewelry]. When you have blue eyes [Amy has blue eyes], you are very weak person because you don't have power. That's why I sometimes wear this necklace, because it make the [viewer's] eyes go to the crystals not to me you know. We have a third eye here [pointing to her décolletage], you know, and the third eye, when you have it open it is dangerous for you and people doesn't like you when



Amy's amethyst necklace.



Amy's artificial crystal necklace.

it hurts you. That's my belief, my husband's belief. We are different people; we believe different things you know. When he comes here and sees you, he can tell all your illness watching you only. He was born with this ability, it is like this. So I believe in crystals and I drink like from crystals glasses mostly. I don't like regular glasses, just crystal glasses.

P: So how much do you think that believing in these, or having these beliefs influences on wearing these pieces?

A: You know, mostly when I go outside I wear the crystals, you know, because I meet a lot of people. When I am staying at home I don't wear that because I don't need it. I need protect when I go out. That's most important I think.

(AMY 52 YRS)

8.3 How Powers Enter Jewelry through Experiences and Stories

Not all pieces of jewelry become power jewelry, and most jewelry is worn for other reasons. However, most women that I talked to possessed at least a few pieces of power jewelry. Interestingly, these pieces seldom have power when they are new. The powers in the jewelry have been gained during a long shared history with the possessor or her ancestors. Experiences are required to turn jewelry into power jewelry, such as very emotional experiences or occasions in which some inexplicable powers have been involved.

As discussed earlier, jewelry has many roles in many kinds of gift giving rituals. Especially in ritualistic events that are rich with tradition, pieces of jewelry may play an active role. In the following excerpt, a woman is writing about her pendants' power to bring good luck. It had gained this quality in two ways. First, it was won in a lottery. Then it was given as a gift to the current possessor with good luck wishes inspired by the fact that good luck was required to get it in the first place. Hence, this pendant brings good luck.

I had already reached confirmation age when a lottery ticket seller came to our house. My grandmother bought one ticket, and there it was, the winning one. The prize was Kalevala Jewelry's Hannun vaakuna. I was just in confirmation school and grandmother gave it to me as a confirmation present, hoping that it would bring luck to my life.

(NARRATIVES)

All powers of jewelry are not necessarily positive or pleasant because they are dependent on earlier experiences. For example, Irene tells about her bad luck bracelets in the following excerpt. They became bad luck bracelets immediately when she bought them, because she felt that she had paid too much for them. Also, she experienced a series of misfortunes right after she came home from buying them. For these reasons, she believes that the bracelets give her bad luck. Currently she wants to get rid of them.

I: These are the bad luck bracelets.

P: And why...

I: Because I always swear... there is a woman out here... oh, wait, my best friend's daughter knows this woman out here who makes jewelry. She is a married woman with kids. And she sells it to stores here which charge a lot of money. It's wooden beads, old wooden beads and then vintage other things, pieces on it. Okay. So, my friend says, I met my friend for lunch and she said "Well, I am going with my daughter, come with us, we are going to look at the bead stuff". And, while I was there I did something I've got to stop doing in my life. Which is; if you go into a store and if it is small and you are just with one other person, and you try on these different things. Sometimes I really think, I don't really like this, but don't wanna be rude so I'll buy something and then I never wear it. And, so, I got... she said to me "I'll give it to you for 20 dollars less each" so, I bought them. And I put them on and then that night I fell in the garage. I mean I took a huge fall when I was looking and talking to my boyfriend when he was getting out of his car. I fell in the garage in the cement floor on the recycling box and really took a hard fall. And, then like two other things happened and I thought "That's it! I shouldn't have bought them". So, called my friend and I said they are headed to your way. Because, you love them. She wears them all the time. I said "For you they are not bad luck, because you like them, but for me they are bad luck". So, right now they are sitting on my desk, and I am gonna put them into an envelope and send them to her. I don't want them in the house.

(IRENE 71 YRS)



Irene's bracelets.

The final phase in the emergence of powers in jewelry consists of acquiring the memories and stories that go with that jewelry. These stories and memories have to be repeated and embellished upon in the possessor's mind and fairly often, or she needs to share them with her family or with other women. When these stories get repeated and remembered, they may eventually become beliefs that are impossible to break down.

This is a crucial part in the creation of power jewelry. The powers have to be believed in to make them real for people. Jewelry does not transform into power jewelry unless the owners believe in these powers and maintain these beliefs through stories. Experiences are the first requirement, stories the second. Only after a piece goes through these two processes does it come to function as a mediator of some higher power. The following figure illustrates the transformation of jewelry into power jewelry (Fig 8.1).

The process captured in the figure is not linear because the power of a piece strengthens each time people believe it has executed its powers again. For example, when a piece of jewelry again evokes a lucky feeling, people become more convinced that it has powers. New experiences refresh memories and consolidate beliefs about powers in a piece.

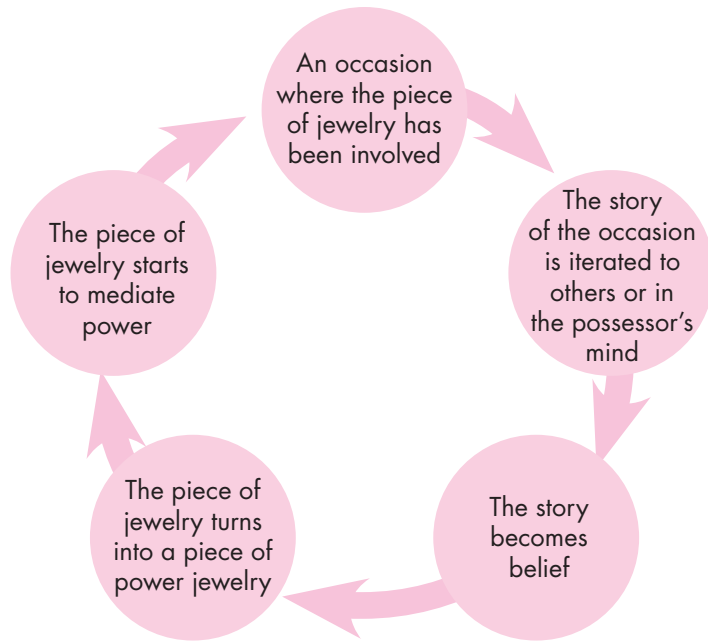


Figure 8.1. How jewelry becomes power jewelry. The loop starts on an occasion, e.g. happy, in which jewelry has been involved. Then, step by step, the jewelry becomes power jewelry when new experiences and explanations are attached to it. This loop can continue forever and the powers may strengthen or acquire features.

The power of jewelry is in these beliefs. When a piece of jewelry has become power jewelry, it may start exercising its powers on practically any occasion that it is needed. Karla described this when she was talking about the crosses she wears each time she needs strength in a difficult situation (pp. 113–114). How these self-fulfilling processes actually work is beyond the scope of this book. We may, however, conclude that those crosses give her strength because she believes in their power and that way becomes more self-confident. This leads to a virtual cycle. She attributes these powers to religious beliefs, but other pieces of power jewelry function in a similar way.

Jewelry holds many kinds of powers. These powers are used in different ways as discussed in this chapter. Sometimes they heal or cure from physical diseases but they also can be protective or provide, for example, luck when needed. The power women find in their jewelry today is relatively similar to that which people found in their totemic items in Durkheim's study of archaic societies. There totemic items provided powers that were needed in particular situations and were summoned when needed. Nowadays,

women have access to powers that they need through their power objects, jewelry in this case. The main requirement for power to exist in jewelry is belief in it. Often these beliefs are based on earlier personal or public experiences of power, but they can also be culturally believed powers. Women wear power jewelry when they need to evoke the power in their everyday life.

A necklace made of purple amethyst chips and pearls. The necklace is composed of numerous small, faceted amethyst chips interspersed with larger, round pearls. The pearls have a lustrous, iridescent sheen. The necklace is laid out in a curved path across the page.

9.
MULTIGENERATIONAL
POSSESSING

Often jewelry, especially meaningful jewelry, ends up being possessed for decades. It may also be possessed by many generations in the same family or kin. In this book, I call jewelry possessed by many generations multigenerationally possessed jewelry.

Multigenerational possessing happens when the possessor feels that jewelry needs to be saved to preserve something larger, which it represents. Often the need to preserve jewelry is related to memories or to the powers it carries. Women often construct systems or formulas for regulating multigenerational possessing. These systems and formulas may operate for generations. Sometimes a woman feels that these pieces belong to the entire family rather than to her alone. As possession concerns many people in the family or kin, these formulas can get complicated. When a family or kinship “owns” the jewelry, its meanings, powers and memories may become particularly strong since many people have experienced them over successive generations.

9.1 Jewelry with Children in Mind

Most of the women I talked with were concerned about the future of their jewelry. Often they had already planned who the future possessor would be and why that particular person should be chosen. Especially with inherited pieces of jewelry, it was often obvious that these would stay in the family. However, women also had bought jewelry they then hoped would stay in the family. The following story is long, but illustrates well how the writer would like to see an old ring that she owns as a possession of future generations in the family.

JEWELRY SPEAKS

A shriek comes from the yard. I'm frightened. What has happened to the child! I leave my cooking and run outside.

— Mom, I found it.

— What did you find?

— I found your jewelry.

The summer of 1983 had been rainy, and defying the weather I had washed my rag rugs. Drying them was difficult because it was always raining. Whenever the sun came out even for a while, I carried the rugs out to the drying rack. While carrying the rugs back and forth my ring had lost its gemstone. All of us Pöyhönen women searched for the gemstone from the grass and alongside the path. Without any luck. I had already given up hope of finding the gemstone, which was very valuable to me and already had a hundred years of history behind it. I had worn the inherited seal ring for over twenty years. When I inherited it, I was not wearing an engagement ring yet on my left hand ring finger. So I gave the ring I got the best place on my hands, and there it stayed for thirty-seven years, until at the age of sixty I gave it to the finder of the gemstone – my daughter Kaisa. My mother’s sister – Aunt Eva – had also carried the ring on her left hand ring finger for most of her life, over forty years.

– Where did you find it?

– There on the grass.

– What good eyesight you have. How did your eyes spot the gemstone among the grass?

– I thought it was a black salt liquorice candy.

Oh, yes. Candy has miraculous power in the life of a four-year-old child. The gemstone did indeed resemble a black salt liquorice candy. It was black and rectangle-shaped. I was happy when the jewel that I valued was found and at that moment promised:

– Kaisa, when you become a big girl, you can have this family heirloom.

– Is it valuable?

– Yes. At least to me.

I had heard the story of the ring from my mother when I received it after my aunt had died, but I had never thought about its monetary value, because it didn’t matter to me. Now I was curious to find out what an expert would say about my ring. I took the ring and stone to have it set and at the same time asked the goldsmith for information about it. He found five different stamps on the ring, which told that the ring had been made in 1901 in the Vaasa region by a local goldsmith, from eighteen carat gold, and the item was hallmarked by the state. The ring had been made as a seal ring from Onyx stone and the gemstone had apparently been engraved in Italy to depict a Roman soldier or the goddess Artemis/Diana. I hope it would portray the goddess Artemis, who has been seen as a protector of wild nature and hunting, the mistress of birth and death, and to whom the elk and the bear are sacred animals. To me the elk means something grand and valuable – respect for life. I hope that Kaisa will in time find out the symbolism behind the engraving, or would at least make up her own stories for it and the emotions that the stone awakes in her.

In the summer of 1966 my mother told me the story of the ring. That summer I was in Helsinki, researching the history of study circle activity in various NGOs' archives. One morning in June my mother called me and said that Aunt Eva, my mother's sister, had not been given much longer to live. Death was already approaching. We knew the situation, so the news did not come as a shock. I took out my calendar and thought, I wonder if Aunt Eva makes it until prayer Sunday. Prayer Sunday came. I was in the Vammala hospital alone then, by my aunt's death bed, while my mother was taking care of the cows. I thought again, I wonder if my aunt makes it until the beginning of the church service on the radio. The first hymn started to play on the central radio, when my aunt took her last breath. I opened the window and was shocked. I could not even cry. It felt as if I had almost summoned death.

After my aunt's funeral my mother handed me Aunt Eva's ring:

– This belongs to you.

– Who has Aunt Eva gotten this from? What's the story behind the ring?

My mother told me how my grandma and grandpa had met. My grandma had stayed in America for five years when she was young, taking care of her brother's children. A friend of hers in Finland had gotten a child and asked grandma to be the godmother. Grandma had said yes and came to visit Finland. Her intention was to go back, but that never happened. At the christening ceremony in Kurkijoki my grandma's eyes caught a young man. Grandma asked:

– Who is that handsome man? Is he free?

– Yes, Juho is a free man alright, but he is dating a girl named Varvas ("toe").

– I see. I'll go to the pharmacy and buy some ointment. That should get rid of the extra toe.

The extra toe disappeared, and grandma took her place. Grandma never went back to America, but instead got engaged to Juho, visited her home in Vaasa and returned to Kurkijoki. As a souvenir she brought back a present for her fiancé, the ring I now had. I was then reminded of a gypsy woman, who had in the spring read my palm and said that before the end of the year I would get an engagement gift. I thought that she told me I was getting engaged. I laughed. I did not even have a suitable fiancé candidate in sight. But the ring I got was not an engagement ring after all, it was that engagement gift.

My grandpa wore the ring for over twenty years until he died. My grandpa died in his fifties in a hay barn because of a heart attack. My mother had visited her home in Kurkijoki for summer vacation and returned back to work at the Petäjävesi pharmacy. Mother had a dream where someone told her:

– You came back seven days too soon.

Exactly seven days after going to work my mother's father collapsed into a pile of hay. My mother travelled back for the funeral, to the other side of Finland. Even at other times my mother had mystical premonitions in her dreams, which were difficult to believe in.

The ring moved on from grandpa to my mother's sister, who gave me the engagement gift, to be given forward on my sixtieth birthday to my daughter, who had found the lost treasure when she was young – the black gemstone of the keepsake ring. The ring continues its life, carrying its own and its wearers' stories forward.

(NARRATIVES)

One detail is interesting in this story: the ring the author is writing about had belonged to her grandfather. Jewelry can also go from men to women. This process tends to go in one direction only: women often have to redesign the jewelry to physically fit themselves. However, the ring in this story was suitable for the writer without any changes. Just as often, such changes were made to fit a woman's style. For the author of *The Power of Jewelry*, the story about the coin bracelet (pp. 118–119), the chain was changed to make it a stylistically better fit. Similarly, women sometimes redesign jewelry inherited from the paternal family line.

The future of jewelry is a matter of concern for women when they possess it. Occasionally, considerations of future ownership influence the way in which women plan the purchase. For example, Iris who had a son and was pregnant with her second son, told me about her friend who has a daughter. When a woman is aware of future possessors when purchasing jewelry, the purchase can be more expensive. After all, it had already been decided that the piece will have a long biography. As it will be possessed at least by two generations, spending a considerable sum is justified. Iris's friend, unlike Iris, will wear jewelry and then pass it down to her daughter. And Iris, is a bit wistful that her friend has a reason to purchase nicer jewelry.

I may wear those ones even when I get old. ...Hmmm. ...I want a daughter. (laughing). Yes, because some of my friends say, who have a daughter, I can give this to my daughter. Even if it is so expensive it is good to wear for me and my daughter.

(IRIS, 35 YRS)

9.2 The Future of the Jewelry: Formulas for Handing Down Jewelry

During the interviews, women repeatedly mentioned concerns about the future of their jewelry. They want to preserve it and make sure that the future owners also have the possibility to be delighted by it. Often the future was planned in detail. It was also often known to the family; these plans are executed when the appropriate occasion comes.

As always with obligations, the handing down protocols of multigenerationally possessed jewelry not only restrict their use, but also make it easier for the current keeper

to find the future keeper. Sometimes these protocols are clear and strict formulas that indicate who can and will be the future keeper. For example, in some families the oldest daughter always inherits certain jewelry. Says one writer in the narrative data:

Grandmother's mother's engagement ring with two small rubies is dear to me as well. It is always given to the oldest daughter on her engagement day.
(NARRATIVES)

However, it is sometimes more complicated because of family structure. For example, if there are no daughters in the family, then the current possessor has to find another way to choose the future possessor.

The trick, in these cases, is to determine who can best keep alive the stories and obligations that go with the jewelry. After all, the actual piece of jewelry is not the only thing that is handed down when the piece of jewelry gets a new possessor. The keepership also brings obligations with it. Each possessor has to maintain and take care of the valuable family possession. The stories, memories, and powers have to be preserved and communicated to future generations. Taking care of objects is a sign of their significance (Ilmonen 2007). People show their attachment to loved objects by repairing and caring for them as well as by making them visible at homes or by wearing them. It is one way people express who they are, by using objects as vehicles of identity.

Multigenerationally possessed objects have to be meaningful in some way to get this treatment. In the following quotation, Maija talks about her and her deceased husband's wedding rings. These rings have been given to their daughter, and although she is not wearing them, she still possesses them and keeps them for the future.

M: Yes, but I gave them to my daughter. My first husband died in 1997, so his wedding ring and my wedding ring are now possessions of my daughter.

P: Is she wearing them?

M: I don't know. I doubt it. But they are in a way safe there.

P: Why did you want to pass them on?

M: Well, I think that they belonged to her. And, I also found my mother's engagement ring from her legacy. That had an engraving which said Greta and Oliver. I gave that one also for my daughter like "Here is some mother's inheritance and grandmother's inheritance for you". So, there they are now with her. She has a son, so she shouldn't care to give these to a son. I guess girls inherit their mothers' jewelry more often.

(MAIJA 60 YRS)

In the stories and interviews, three different ways of handing down jewelry were described most frequently. These will be referred to as the schematic tradition, the mutable tradition and the habitual tradition.

9.2.1 SCHEMATIC TRADITION

Many families had created schematic traditions for handing down their jewelry. Sometimes these handing down protocols had been in the family for generations. It was obvious that the current possessor was not only responsible for maintaining the histories of their jewelry, but also for considering its future. As the following story shows, these traditions were followed strictly. The story is about a family heirloom, which has just been given to a ten-year-old girl. The pendant has been in her family for five generations, and it has always been given from a mother to a daughter with its story. The girl's mother had made a card with pictures of each possessor to go with the pendant to maintain the story for the future.



Oona's birthday card.

I got this piece of jewelry from my mother when I turned ten. It is a pendant, and it is made of silver and enamel. It portrays Mary and baby Jesus. On the back is the engraving "Andenken von deiner Mutter", memento from your mother.

The jewelry was first given by my grandmother's grandmother to her daughter. She was Austrian, and that is why the text is in German. The pendant has always passed from mother to daughter, and that is why I got it from my mother. When I got the piece of jewelry, my mother had made a card to go with it, having the names, pictures and birth years of all the people who have worn it. Mother also wrote the story of the pendant on the card.

The pendant is important to me, because I got it from my mother. It is important because it will always remind me of my mother and also grandmother, who I have never met. My grandmother had already died when mother was young.

I hope that I will have a daughter one day and can give the pendant to her. This is my most loved piece of jewelry ever.

(NARRATIVES)

As noted above, it is not always easy to keep traditions immutable if family relations change or if there are no daughters. In this case families compromise: they keep the traditions as strictly as possible, but adjust them according to the circumstances. In order to continue the tradition, the current possessor has an obligation to find a suitable person to give the piece of jewelry to. For example, in the following quotation a woman describes why she chose her goddaughter and niece to be the future possessor.

Mother's relief was obvious when I told her that I did not want to have a great celebration nor any gifts for my graduation. She anyway wanted to celebrate me and asked what I would think if she gave her earrings for me. I thought it was a great ample gift.

(...)

To whom would the earrings go after me? Since I do not have kids of my own I have thought that I would give them to my and my husband's goddaughter, to my sister's daughter Marja, so that they would stay on the mother's side of the family.

(NARRATIVES)

9.2.2 MUTABLE TRADITION

There were also certain pieces of jewelry that were to be kept in the family even though the family had not created strict formulas for handing them down to younger generations. In these cases, jewelry was handed down without any strict formulas as the most important thing was to keep it in the family.

In the following quotation, the narrator tells the history of a family heirloom, in this case a brooch. For this family, it has been very important to keep the brooch in the family. In this family, each possessor, however, has been free to decide who the future possessor will be. The brooch had first been a wedding anniversary gift from the writer's father to her mother; then the author inherited it; later she gave it as a 50th birthday present for her goddaughter. Now the writer wonders to whom it should go next.

As a civil servant with a low income and at the same time provider for a big family, my father could not afford to buy jewelry. But now he gifted his silver bride with a brooch.

(...) I got it [the brooch], and I wore it a lot as well, in everyday life and on festive occasions (...)

Silja is my goddaughter and when she turned 50 years old I was wondering what I could give her. Then I realized! Osmonsolmu [the brooch] belongs to her. (...) She also has not only two daughters but also two granddaughters.

(NARRATIVES)

9.2.3 HABITUAL TRADITIONS

Sometimes it is not the actual physical piece of jewelry that is handed down to the next possessor, but a habit related to jewelry. When these habits are handed down in families they may become traditions of their own. Just like physical pieces of jewelry, these habits connect families and kin over generations.

In the following quotation the writer describes the tradition of custom-made rings in her family. In this family, children get a graduation ring, but each ring is redesigned using the rings of earlier generations. In designing these graduation rings, children are expected to use the same materials that have been used by their parents and their grandparents.

...I would receive a golden ring from her as a high school graduation gift! Though, I would need to design it by myself.

(...)The ring gift has become a tradition for us. Our three daughters have all designed their own rings, though not yet for high school graduation gifts, but for other graduation gifts...

(...) May the ring tradition continue!

(NARRATIVES)

Also, the manner of wearing can be handed down as a family habit, as the woman in the following quotation describes (see also p. 33). In her family, a particular brooch is always worn by the bride on her wedding day. The brooch is kept in the family by one of its female members. Each bride gets it from this family member to wear it for her wedding. As this example shows, a piece of jewelry does not have to be possessed by the wearer; it is enough that it stays in the family. The act of wearing it on the wedding day is relevant, not who owns it. This habit has become a family tradition over generations.

My mother Edda's (...) engagement jewelry is the adornment of the family's brides' wedding dresses. (...) She [author's sister and current possessor] has brought it to the wedding occasions to adorn the wedding dresses. It has been at least on Riitta's, Elina's, Peppi's, Jaana's, and Mirja's wedding dresses. Some of them have worn it in the front in the middle and some of them at the side depending on the bride.

Now she is going to give the brooch to her son's daughter Sofia (...) who lives in Turku. Sofia will get confirmed next summer, I cannot remember if she is going to give the brooch already then, or is she going to wait for Sofia's wedding (???)

(NARRATIVES)

9.3 Inheritance

In several cases the future of jewelry is not predetermined. In these cases, rules about inheritance become the key mechanisms for handing down jewelry from one generation to another. In particular, when there is no will, jewelry is often distributed among the family members. This requires a determination of the best recipient for each piece.

One guideline for passing jewelry down the family line is to find someone who is willing to learn and foster the stories connected to the jewelry. In particular, when pieces of jewelry are meaningful they are hardly ever sold, even if their retail value would be high. These stories become keys in finding a new possessor.

Of course, the stories may get buried with the deceased. This often leads to attempts to restore bits of the history. Even if an inherited piece of jewelry lacks some parts of its history, it may end up as multigenerationally possessed jewelry. In the following interview quote, Maija describes how she found a small magnifying lens on her mother's desk after she died the past summer. Now she is wearing it to keep her mother's memory alive even though she knows nothing of its history. Knowledge about the history is not integral to her; a connection to her mother is the reason to wear the lens as a piece of jewelry.

M: Well, I don't know where it came from [the small magnifying lens]. I just found it on my mother's desk and I had that chain, so I decided to put it on it. And, it's pretty cool because it reflects the different colors of the clothing you are wearing underneath it. So, when I am wearing a green blouse, it looks really peculiar.

P: But your mother used this for reading?

M: Supposedly, yes. I never saw her use it but there it was on the desk.

P: Is this an everyday piece of jewelry for you?

M: Everyday, yes. It's a funny piece.

P: Do you wear it a lot?

M: Actually this summer I got the idea, I have worn it a lot this summer.

P: Is there any memories that are linked or...

M: Well, I call it the memory jewelry. This summer was a bit hard, so... But I always remember my mother every time I wear the jewelry.

(MAIJA 60 YRS)

When pieces of jewelry are received through inheritance after the owner's death, the unknown stories may bring surprises. For example, Maija described a process of dividing her mother's estate after she passed away. Her mother neither gave her jewelry to her children before her death, nor had a will concerning jewelry. Her five children had taken her jewelry to a goldsmith who had divided it into five bags, one given to each sibling. This method produced a fair result without emotional attachments. Although this method did not pay any attention to stories or powers in their mother's jewelry, bits and pieces of these stories and powers were there. For instance, Maija's bag contained pieces of jewelry which carried stories of her mother's history that Maija had not been aware of before.

As Maija's case shows, the stories and powers in jewelry are not always known to children and grandchildren, who sometimes have no desire to know them. It is always a choice of the previous possessor if and what she is willing to share. Sometimes, however, details like engravings and hallmarks reveal surprising things. This happened to Maija when she received her mother's jewelry. Due to the hallmark of the country where her mother's old ring was manufactured, a new secret of her mother's history with her lover was revealed. Maija had thought that her mother's foreign lover had gotten the ring in his home country. Before seeing the hallmark, she had never known that the lover had journeyed to her mother's country. The hallmark, however, revealed where the ring had been bought.

M: So my mother got it in 1984 and I got it this summer. And, I didn't know about the history of this one.

P: So, again what was the engraving in it?

M: Do I remember correctly? Was it Greta 1.1., so it would have been a birthday present from her foreign lover.

P: It says Greta and 31.12...

M: Aha, well then it is...

P: 80, but did you know that this one has been produced here?

M: Is it?

P: Yes.

M: Oh dear, oh dear. Well, okay.

P: I don't know, does it change the story?

M: No it does not. So now there's a new secret. She really had her birthday on 1st of January, so somehow it's related to that. Well.

(MAIJA 60 YRS)

Inherited jewelry can bring surprises like this. All the siblings knew about the jewelry, but they did not know which pieces they would receive. However, this is an exception. Most jewelry received as an inheritance comes with obligations regarding its future. Jewelry needs to be physically taken care of but equally important are the stories and memories associated with it. It is also important to find a future possessor, someone who will care for the pieces and pass them on to the subsequent generation, even if some pieces include painful stories and memories and are not pleasant to wear. It may take a long time before the new possessor is able to wear them. Often, in these cases, women either redesigned the jewelry or just let time pass, waiting for the right time to wear them.

9.4 Sons as Temporary Inheritors

Often the maternal bloodline was important when choosing the future possessor, but it was not just daughters who received their mother's jewelry. Usually this was because there were only sons in the family, or there were no children at all. Iris was in this situation, with son and pregnant with another son. However, she considers the appearance of her jewelry timeless, so she could still wear her jewelry for a long time.

P: So, have you ever thought what will happen to these pieces in the future

I: Maybe I will keep it, since I do not have daughter. If I have daughter I want give it to my daughter, but since it is a boy.

P: You already know it is a boy?

I: Yes. I might give it to my son's wife. I am not sure. But, those things does not choose age so I can use those until I am 80 years old so maybe I will keep having it.

(IRIS 35 YRS)

Iris was not concerned about giving her jewelry to her sons' future wives, but for many women breaking the bloodline was a subject of concern. They were afraid of the jewelry getting lost if it was given to someone outside the bloodline. Often, even when jewelry was planned to be given to daughters, this was not always possible if there was no daughters. In these cases, women needed to give careful consideration to the future possessor.

Sometimes the future possessor was a son, who would just have the jewelry until he might one day have a daughter. Sometimes women would skip a generation and give the jewelry straight to a granddaughter, if possible. And in cases where women did not have their own children, they often considered their goddaughters, nieces, or their close friends' daughters as the future possessors of their jewelry. Sofia describes here how she would give bracelets to the daughter of a deceased but good friend. The bracelets had been purchased while she travelled together with this friend.

Now I really need to think about this because I don't have a daughter. And, my little sister is only four years younger than I am. I really should think to whom I really want to give this one and this one. And for what reason? Well, something like this, it's not valuable at all in the sense that it costs something like one euro. But I don't want it to end up hanging at some flea market when I am dead. Instead, I would like to see someone who knows about our travels to have it. That reminds me, I will give it to Nina's daughter. I'll give all the jewelry from that trip to Nina's daughter. That's how I should think of it, so that it has something for the receiver.

(SOFIA, 51 YRS)

As Sofia says, she thinks it is important to give the bracelets to someone who is somehow connected to them and knows the story behind the jewelry. Sofia and her friend Nina had a wonderful trip to Latin America years ago and these bracelets act as mediators not only of the memories from the trip but also of her good friend who passed away a few years after the trip. So, she thinks that Nina's daughter is the one who ought to be the future possessor of these bracelets. She could appreciate the jewelry because she is connected to them. Also, she can share the memory of her mother with Sofia.

Laura was also concerned about the future of her jewelry since she does not have daughters. She has two sons and is concerned about giving the jewelry to a son's wife because she is not part of the maternal bloodline of the family. So, she had decided to give the jewelry to her, but with the condition that it would one day be given to her granddaughter. She thinks it is safer if the future possessor is the granddaughter rather than her daughter-in-law if there would be a divorce. In her opinion, with this condition, in case of a divorce the jewelry would still stay in the family and as a possession of the maternal bloodline of the family.

P: So have you thought about the future of the jewelry that is from your mother?

L: Well, yesterday when my both sons were visiting, my sons, and the older son's wife and my first grandchild, seven-month-old girl Amanda. So they are going to attend

to a big party, my daughter-in-law and my son. So, I asked from my daughter-in-law if she wanted to borrow some of my jewelry to wear at the party. Then she picked up a silver necklace with some amber flowers in it. She was really fascinated about it because she has a pair of earring that would go with it. And, I told her that this is then a long-term loan and when the time is right she should give it to Amanda. I don't need it back because I am not wearing it. So, on the spot I discussed with my sons that one day all my jewelry would go to their daughters. In a sense it's pretty natural. Of course sometimes when I think of my grandmother, they were peasants, and they didn't have jewelry and people in the countryside didn't wear jewelry. And, my mother who was one of twelve and all the others were much older. So if they had anything all the older siblings have inherited it all. So, from that part of the family I don't have any jewelry. Then my fathers' mother was the wife of a very rich merchant. She had very expensive pieces of jewelry, but it all went to her daughter, my father's sister. She is now deceased but then they went to her daughters and their daughters. So, I think it is just natural that it goes this way.

(...)

*But, then I don't know what to do if my younger son doesn't have daughters and my older one has, so, to whom they will then go. I think I have to do something... (...)
Giving my jewelry to my sons' wives feels a little... There is always the risk that in case of divorce, the jewelry will end up somewhere.*

(LAURA 55 YRS)

Common to passing jewelry on to the next generation was the concern that the jewelry would stay in good hands. Future possessors are chosen carefully to guarantee that the jewelry gives joy and powers for generations to come. There are obligations concerning multigenerationally possessed jewelry and the current possessor has to be sure that the future possessor will fulfill these obligations. These obligations may concern preserving and maintaining the jewelry, but they may also concern finding appropriate and subsequent possessors. Maintaining and preserving jewelry does not only concern the physical piece, but also stories, memories, and powers related to the piece.

9.5 The Ownership of Jewelry: Owners and Keepers

Often, women talked about meaningful jewelry as if the owner of the piece was the family, not the individual women. They were keepers rather than owners. Keepers have it only for a period of time. It is their duty to give it to a new keeper some day.

It is the keeper's responsibility to take care of the jewelry. She needs to keep the jewelry, care for it, and preserve the stories related to it. Usually, the keeper conscientiously honors these responsibilities. Typically, she proudly stores important facts related to the jewelry, as well as powers and beliefs related to it. The following story illustrates how the current possessor has diligently stored her family history. She has also changed the piece of jewelry to fit herself so that she is able to wear it and keep its history alive.

The story of my amber necklace starts beyond four generations. There was my grandmother's grandfather, vicar Karl Gabriel Lyra (1786–1872), who was the possessor and the wearer of this necklace. He really wore the necklace to cure his rheumatism. It seems that amber electrifies easily, so it feels warm against the skin. The story does not tell where the necklace is from, but it somehow looks very "original" since it is made of odd size unfinished beads. The color of the beads varies from quite dark to little lighter. The variation of color is what gives the beads a lively glow.

There were seven daughters in the family of Karl Gabriel, of whom the oldest Venla Agata (1820–1872) got the necklace. From her they went to her daughter Hilma Adolfina (1856–1921) my grandmother.

My mother Hilja Suoma (1888–1985) did not wear the necklace. At some point in time it had broken and some of the beads had gotten lost therefore it had become quite short. Not until my oldest sister Päivi (1913–1955), who received the necklace, got it repaired by adding length with new little beads. She was wearing it a lot. I inherited it from her. In the middle of the necklace there was one much bigger bead which I thought did not fit there. In the '60s I took the necklace to the little jeweller's store on Fredrikinkatu. A young goldsmith Björn Wecksröm had just opened this studio. I asked him if it was possible to reshape the big bead to fit some other piece of jewelry, for example a ring. He promised to do it, but in the end it got shaped into a narrow stone that fit a modern silver brooch and small earrings. But to my surprise the color had changed to yellow! Now when time has passed and I have been wearing it the color has changed back to what it was. Sometimes I have worn the necklace a lot, of course depending on clothing and the occasion. Still, each time I've remembered its long story and all the people who may also have worn it. It might not be monetarily valuable; anyhow it is a memento and a rare object.

(NARRATIVES)

She had the amber in the necklace repurposed as a pair of earrings and a brooch. The author is the sixth possessor of this family heirloom. She may feel that her amber jewelry belongs to the whole family rather than to her individually, but still she is the one who is responsible for it.

Much like in Durkheim's study of totemic items, each representative of kin can use the totem and gain power from it but none would possess the totem. It is simply possessed by the kinship. Also it gives power to the whole kin as well as its members (1980). Similar ideas of ownership operate today when we focus on multigenerationally possessed jewelry. Women often consider their jewelry to be possessed by their family or kin.

Obviously, the meaning of kin today is different from societies Durkheim studied. In modern societies, people have many indicators of kin. These other indicators are, for example, social status and bloodlines including names, professions, and trophies such as houses and summer homes. However, even in modern societies, people still like to express their belonging and connectedness to their kin through adornments. As shown, these adornments are considered possessions of many generations. For example, Iris's

friend (p. 128) saw her jewelry not only as her possession, but also as her daughter's. Often, this ownership extends over several generations; the most extended example of multigenerational possessing in my study was five generations.

All this has changed the meaning of jewelry. In times past, expensive wedding rings, morning gifts and engagement gifts were like insurance in case of accident or illness. In contemporary society, however, they are much like family heirlooms that keep alive memories and traditions instead of guaranteeing family wealth.

So, the real ownership of jewelry can be a complicated question. In cases of expensive gifts between a couple, the jewelry is often considered as their joint possession. Accordingly, upgrading the diamond in a ring is often the result of a decision made together; it may not be an ordinary anniversary gift that follows gift tradition. Similar collective possessing happens when a piece of jewelry has been in the family for a long time and has transformed into a memento and family heirloom. In these cases, the monetary value of the jewelry is not necessarily as important as its value in preserving the family history.

9.6 Relinquishment

Letting go of jewelry is a multifaceted task. On the one hand, the current possessor usually wants the next generation to enjoy the jewelry. On the other hand, it is difficult to let go of something meaningful. Emotional attachments typical to jewelry often make it very difficult to relinquish. This makes the task of choosing the future possessors even more difficult.

One solution to this problem is to keep it in the family. Keeping it in the family, of course, is also one way to avoid letting it go completely: since it will still stay in the family, it is possible to see it, touch it, and enjoy its powers. While the current possessor must let go of the physical form of the jewelry, it will, with its stories, memories, and history still do its work for her family. Often it stays so close to the previous possessor that she will see the piece of jewelry in use. Knowing and trusting the future possessor also makes the process of relinquishment easier.

In cases of impending death, something similar may happen. When planning the future of jewelry, a woman may include her plans in her will, whether written or verbal. This is what Laura's mother did with her jewelry.

Neither did my mother write any will about how the jewelry should be divided. She just verbally told us. And, I am sure she also told my sister that the most valuable one will go to her. But, she trusted us that we would handle the matter in the appropriate way. But, I can imagine that for some handing down jewelry may lead to conflicts if it's not taken care of in advance.

(LAURA 55 YRS)

Sometimes there are concerns as to whether the planned future possessor deserves the jewelry. As Laura mentioned earlier, she was worried about one day giving her mother's old jewelry to the wives of her sons because they are not part of her bloodline.

This chapter explains the importance of jewelry in tying generations together. It is not only current generations that are tied together with jewelry but also past and future generations. This is similar to Durkheim's notions about totemic items connecting people from the past and the future to the present. According to him, totems connected generations since the powers and beliefs related to totems were passed down to future generations, as is often the case with jewelry in today's families.

As shown in this chapter, passing jewelry down is not a simple task but requires serious planning. It is important for women to secure the future of their jewelry. Because of this, families have often created certain formulas for the purpose of handing down jewelry. These formulas are singular to each family and they are followed as strictly as possible based on the structure of the family.

10.
JEWELRY
AS
PHYSICAL
REPRESENTATION
OF
MEMORIES

Tiffany & Co. 925



As discussed in the previous chapter, the current keeper of the jewelry is usually aware of its history, but not always. Sometimes this history is lost when a keeper passes away, but just as often there are other concerns that result in the same outcome.

In particular, earlier keepers may want to protect the new generation from sad stories connected to the jewelry. In the following quotation, Laura talks about jewelry inherited from her mother which she thinks was received as compensation for something bad that happened, but she is just guessing. Nevertheless, she wears these pieces of jewelry and keeps them among her important possessions. Even though she assumes that the history of the jewelry is painful, she is able to wear them and in that way, bring them to life.

There may be all sorts of drama related to my jewelry from my mother's life that I am not even aware of. But, on the other hand, I am not sure if it's important to know. For me it's most important that my mother loved me so much and then wanted to give all this for me. So, that she felt that I was really close to her. (...)

I am quite sure that some of this jewelry might be those that... My father was often unfaithful to my mother. Their marriage was extremely stormy, it lasted a week less than 50 years when my mother died. I am sure that some of this jewelry is some kind of compensation jewelry when my father has tried to patch up the marriage. So, he has bribed my mother with expensive jewelry because he was such a bad husband. Good father for us kids but an awful husband.

(LAURA 55 YRS)

As this story shows, jewelry often functions as a physical representation of family memories.

10.1 Jewelry as a Link to Family History

Memories represented by jewelry are usually connected to people and times past. For example, a mother and daughter may be connected by possessing similar jewelry, as in the case of Johanna and Eva. They have similar rings, though in different colors. These rings also connect them to certain people and times in their family. For Eva, the ring connects

her to the times she and her late husband spent travelling through Indian reservations in the USA. For Johanna, the ring links her to her mother, who gave her the ring.

JOHANNA, EVA'S DAUGHTER:

This... I got from a family trip. So, that's a new style of American Indian ring. This my mother bought for me, which I love and I lost one of the corals.

Which I know I can replace. And this... the reason why I love this so much is one of the things I think you will see on my mother. Because she has a flower ring that is in turquoise which is, I think is both my sister's and mine...like a favorite thing. And, I know that she picked it to talk about. And I think I look at that coral ring as sort of my own flower ring like hers. But the Indians, they used that cork underneath and they



Johanna's ring.

just put the prawns around and so they were really delicate. I mean if you were out in the South West it works well, but in Chicago, with like construction and expansion there is just so high probability that you can lose a stone. So, I lost one stone and then I replaced it and this was a second stone I lost. But I haven't yet done it, but I really would love to wear it again. So, I should.

P: So, how old are these?

A: I don't know. The pink and blue one are, I think, contemporary, or newish. But for me... they are from 90s.

(JOHANNA 34 YRS)



Eva's ring.

EVA, JOHANNA'S MOTHER:

The ring is one of my favorite pieces of all time. I once lost this in Lake Michigan, I was swimming and the water was cold, and I was heartsick. You talk about being attached... to this flower turquoise ring ... I thought I was gonna have a heart attack.

P: Why is this so important?

S: Probably just because I love it. And, probably because it is from that era when we were selling the jewelry through newspaper, and of course that's all tied in with visiting all... we went to every American Indian reservation. To all of them out there. It was like 14...15.

Maybe more. There is an Indian head that is carved into a mountain, just south of where the four presidents are carved in a mountain in South Dakota. We visited that art studio. I don't know... I know one of your comments was an emotional attachment, but I think I said in the card, I am not attached to diamonds and pearls (laughing) I mean you can replace them, you know. You can

replace them, even like my mother-in-laws diamond and my engagement ring, it has a monetary value but, they are hardly one of a kind. I mean they are, but they are not, they could be, if you gave them to a jeweller he could copy it tomorrow.

P: Yes, and this is different?

E: Yes it is because I have seen other flowered rings but not like that one. I've seen little ones. And, they are not hand made. That's another thing, some of the tribes, they had started... somebody went out there and said "you know, if you make these by machine..." So if you should ever look at Indian jewelry, you have to very careful, just like you would be with anything else. And be sure that handmade piece is opposite of machine made.

(EVA, 69 YRS)

As is obvious here, keeping memories alive with pieces of jewelry is one of the most important reasons to possess jewelry. Women's rings preserved memories of their family history.

Jewelry helped women keep their memories tangible and the way they stored it in their jewelry cases helped them keep these memories organized. A good example of this is shown in the very first quotation of this book (p. 9). In that quote, Linda describes how pieces of jewelry act as triggers for bringing back memories. For her, in fact, jewelry functions as a prompt: even though she may forget memories which are still valuable, pieces of jewelry and photographs work as visual and tangible activators for reviving them. These objects also help her manage her feelings of loneliness and detachment.

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) and Nippert-Eng (1996) have noticed a similar phenomenon with photographs that people have in their homes or workplace. They act as a force to bring back memories. Just like these photographs, jewelry brings back memories and emotions related to people, occasions, and events. Also like photographs, jewelry represents meaningful social networks.

Sometimes women use jewelry to bring back specific memories of events and people. Other times, they may wear a particular piece of jewelry to keep the memory of a particular person close to them. Most of these memories would be remembered without jewelry as well, but jewelry plays a supporting role in the complex process of storytelling. Pieces of jewelry actively trigger memories. For instance, Alisa describes below how her bracelet works as a tangible representation of the twin daughters she lost.

I was pregnant before I had my daughter ... and I was pregnant with twins and... when I was five months pregnant I went into labour and they didn't survive. So we had two girls and we had to bury them and all that. (...) I also got this from my husband. It's a bracelet with a heart with their names on it. So that was right after that happened. (...) I wanted to have something to ... not to remember, because I would always remember but, I wanted to have something close to me. For some reason, that they would be close to me. So, when we baptized them we gave them these names



Alisa's bracelet.

*and so, I put their names on the heart
on the bracelet and I would wear it
everyday. Just to kind of have them with
me.*

(ALISA 33 YRS)

As she says, she would never forget what happened, but she wants to keep the daughters as close as possible. Her bracelet works perfectly for this.

As with Alisa's bracelet, pieces of jewelry often work as a tool for handling grief or yearning after someone. They are often received or purchased to be mementos of certain events or lost loved ones. Similarly, inherited pieces

are often initially used as tools to work through sadness and grief. In some cases, new possessors are not ready to wear them at first, but when they have processed their grief, they may come to terms with the pieces and start to wear them. Often, women mentioned how important actually touching the jewelry is to them. As Alisa says above, wearing the bracelet evokes the memory of her twin daughters.

As Stuart Walker explains in his study of prayer beads and their meaning, touching them is an important part of praying (2006). When beads are used over a long period of time for praying, touching them actually changes their physical form. Similarly, the form of more conventional jewelry changes over time. This is due to normal wear and tear, but also because of intentional changes. For example, women have engravings put on mass-produced pieces of jewelry to make it more individual. Alisa had the names of her lost twin daughters' engraved on her bracelet to make it more personal.

10.2 Jewelry as Mediators

In social science literature, possessions are often described as representations of the self (e.g. Belk 1988, Goffman 1990, Peteri 2006, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, Wolff 1964, Richins 1994). In this view, people use possessions such as jewelry to connect themselves to specific elements in the material world and to communicate their desired selves to others. Obviously, this view has more than a grain of truth to it. Jewelry is often worn and possessed in this sense, and on many occasions it functions as a mediator of the self to others. Additionally, pieces of jewelry also work as adornments which make a woman look more "put together" within certain social demands.

However, pieces of jewelry also function as mediators for women's personal histories and memories. They connect women to meaningful people and events in their life; to those which are somehow worth remembering. Women have decided to keep these people

and events close in their lives. Often, jewelry works as a trigger that elicits memories of special occasions, like a first date or giving birth. They also keep memories of special people like grandmothers or spouses alive. It is these connections that give women power – power to face the hardships in life, the power to be fertile, or the power to be proud of themselves and their kin. In the following quotation the writer describes how her custom-made ring made of her mother’s engagement and wedding rings connects her to the chain of generations. She also describes how the ring reminds her of the safety of home and how it helps her overcome feelings of loneliness and grief.

When I had moved away from my childhood home the ring brought back good memories from there. It also brought comfort at the moments of yearning and longing. It told the story of my close ones, it had my mother’s engagement and wedding rings melted in it. It connected me into the chain of generations. When I was looking for my own place in the world and becoming independent, it started to mediate stability and adulthood in addition of its beauty. Metaphorically it had the safety of home in it.
(NARRATIVES)

In a similar vein, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) discuss how some products work as mediators of past experience. They underline the fact that for an object to become a mediator, it must be meaningful to someone. Stuffed animals bring back memories of childhood, but there are teddy bears that are meaningful and teddy bears that get thrown away.

In this study, I found many similarities between these observations and the women’s ways of thinking about their jewelry. Some pieces of jewelry are barely worth more than their market value. They are typically worn to fit some particular outfit. Also, if there are no meaningful memories connected to a piece of jewelry, it could easily be forgotten in the jewelry case. Some of these pieces, however, are given to younger family members. When kept over time, even these pieces, originally without meaning grow in importance and become valued as mediators between people and different times. When pieces of jewelry enter the domain of meaningfulness, it becomes increasingly difficult for women to relinquish them. They are kept because they connect women to their family history.

In this chapter I have discussed not only jewelry’s role in keeping memories alive, but also the role of memories in a woman’s use of certain jewelry. Jewelry that has memories connected to it often works as a tool to manage the memories. It is often viewed for remembering as well as worn to keep the memories fresh. Many of the memories linked to jewelry contain stories from the family history. As indicated in this book, it is important to perpetuate the family history and pieces of jewelry do that very well. The stories connected to jewelry are hardly ever written down, but when present with the actual physical form, they get passed down orally. Women also reminisce about these stories when they wear the jewelry.

The image features a collection of antique jewelry. At the top left, a portion of a silver chain is visible, featuring a decorative clasp with intricate scrollwork and a central circular element. Below this, a heart-shaped pendant is shown, featuring a white enamel surface with a delicate floral design in shades of pink and green. To the right, a set of antique keys is visible, including a large ring and several keys with distinct bitting. The entire scene is set against a plain, light-colored background.

11.
CONCLUSION

This chapter will work as a reflection of the study presented in this book. Here I will reiterate the main findings, briefly summarizing them. In this book, I have discussed the topics that came up again and again in the interviews and the stories collected by the Kalevala Women's Association. The outcomes of this study are based on my interpretations of the data and explained in light of the literature referred to in this book. The significance of this study lies in the understanding of the meanings that grow from the personal and subjective experiences with jewelry that is associated with one's kin. As shown in this book, pieces of jewelry often work to trigger memories and as tools in social interactions.

The outcomes of this study not only contribute to jewelry studies, but also bring new knowledge and insight to design research and for jewellers and jewelry designers. Also, ordinary women may be interested in why women possess and wear jewelry.

The main contribution of this study is to the ongoing discussion within jewelry studies. It builds upon the recent academic dissertations and publications about jewelry. Jewelry research as an academic field is novel and is still defining itself within the fields of art history and design research. As shown in this book, this study can be situated in the field of design research because of its theme and methodology and, at the same time, within jewelry studies because of the topic examined.

This work also makes a relevant contribution to the ongoing research into meaningful products. It continues the discussion in the area of design research which is based on meanings, especially those grown from personal experience. It especially sheds new light on the importance of social experiences, where family and kinship are essential parts of personal experiences. This study shows that the meanings of products become collective when the possessors can relate them to other people. According to this study, the collective meanings of products seem to be very strong.

However, even if the main contribution of this study lies within academic jewelry studies and design research, my sincere hope is that others will also find it beneficial. This study can give new ideas to the jewelry manufacturing field which is quite large and diverse. Its broad range includes design, crafts and fine arts, mass production and marketing. However, insights presented in this book could be of interest to the entire field. Producers could benefit from a deeper understanding of why the end users have their

products. The marketing and the distribution side of the field will gain detailed information of how their customers actually interact with jewelry. I also hope that this study will inspire jewelry designers, jewellers, and goldsmiths who are dealing with issues presented in this book in their everyday face-to-face customer service.

The emphasis of this study lies in my interpretation of the empirical data. Since the stories of the women play the most important role in this research, their voices are heard clearly throughout the book. The depth and breadth of the data have led the interpretation while leaving space for a strict theoretical analysis. More rigorous theoretical analysis is needed within this discussion in design research. One way of conducting further research building on this study would be to emphasize the theoretical analysis studying the same data, or utilizing a similar approach in a different product category.

Pieces of jewelry are small items that we have but do not necessarily need as we do other wearables for physical protection. However, it seems that many women could not live without jewelry. Jewelry may often protect us in a different way than clothing does. While clothes keep us warm and protect us from the sun and rain, according to my data, jewelry may protect us from diseases, bad luck, and misfortune, and also keep us connected to our kin. Being part of the kin, making us more than just individuals, pieces of jewelry belonging to the kin protect us from the outside world when needed. They are on display and communicate something to the viewer, but as this thesis has shown, they do many other things as well. My particular focus has been on how jewelry, like few other products, carries family and kinship ties from one generation to another and in that way empowers people.

It was this observation that led me away from studying pieces of jewelry as such, and to focus on the connections people create to and via their jewelry. Studying jewelry as physical pieces proved not to be a good approach for studying these connections. Instead, the guiding hypothesis was social: these connections often extend from one generation to another, either within the family or kin.

11.1 Jewelry in Social Practice

The interpretation of the relationship between jewelry and social context is basically Durkheimian. Unlike many other classics in sociology, like Simmel and Goffman, Durkheim did not situate jewelry and other social signs within communication only, but in deeper social relations. Of course, people around us have a strong impact on what we do in many ways. For example, traditions, rituals, and habits often dictate the way people look. Sometimes, as Simmel and Goffman would have argued, what a woman wears can be explained by her willingness to show that she is a part of some social group or fad. For them, jewelry is a part of identity.

However, this is a partial truth that neglects other forms of social bonds that jewelry creates and maintains. Women wear pieces that connect them to their family, and they put the final touches on outfits with jewelry and show that they are individuals. Jewelry, however, does more than just express being part of social groups. Jewelry also connects

women to the bloodline of the family, usually the maternal side. Jewelry links women to their family and kin and both to the past and the future.

Thus, during my study, I learned that a piece of jewelry can stay in a family for hundreds of years. Ideally, long held jewelry is made of durable, high-quality materials, and their technical solutions are made to last. However, a more important reason for why pieces of jewelry can stay in families for centuries is to be found in their emotional attachments. These emotional attachments are strong because they are linked to the most important milestones in life, and to the most significant human relationships. For example, jewelry is part of many rites of passage that a woman faces in her life. Often, I talked about death with women. When someone from the maternal line dies, her jewelry is often given to her children, who may pass it on to their children. This transition can be and is often planned decades ahead. In fact, the future of a piece of jewelry is every bit as meaningful as its history; at least it was discussed equally often. Women create ties across generations through their jewelry: a piece is important for a mother because she knows her grandmother bought it as a family heirloom, and she has plans to give it to her daughter. Ultimately, it is emotional connections of this kind that turn jewelry into carriers of power. It goes without saying that these connections also keep a piece of jewelry in the family for a long time, regardless of its market value. In principle, this loop can continue forever.

In this book I have shown that women wear and possess jewelry for many reasons. The main reasons, however, are social; jewelry connects women to people they care for. There is so much more to jewelry than just physical appearance or market value. It is the link to people who are loved and respected or who are otherwise important to women which makes jewelry valuable. Sometimes jewelry is treasured because it links women to family events and occasions that women find important.

Similarly, the reasons to wear and possess jewelry are related to social practices. Jewelry has many kinds of roles in some of the most important rituals in women's lives. These rites of passages include bat mitzvahs, confirmations and weddings, for example. However, pieces of jewelry also play an important role in more mundane social practices; they are often worn to gain powers for everyday life situations. As we have seen in this book, power jewelry is worn in many situations, like when facing a fear of flying, or when a woman wants to feel stronger and more "put together" for everyday life situations.

11.2 Family Memories and Powers Embedded in Jewelry

As this book has shown, pieces of jewelry can influence a woman's life from her childhood to old age. When I talked with women about their jewelry, I learned that for many of them, a jewelry case worked almost as a three dimensional diary. Many important things in life stay in their minds because jewelry makes them tangible. When a woman browses through her jewelry case, particular events, occasions, people, and periods of life pop up in her mind. Trips through jewelry cases are sentimental journeys. I was constantly amazed to see how many memories and emotions these small items evoked.

Since pieces of jewelry are often worn directly on the skin, they become extensions of the possessor's body. The relationship between the body and jewelry goes both ways: they change the body, but at the same time, the body changes them. This bodily connection has important implications for the emotional attachments to jewelry. Any piece that is worn acquires, through wearing, additional meaning. Typically attachments work backwards in time: touching jewelry brings back earlier experiences related to it. Touching is not only wearing, it can be deliberate. Caressing jewelry evokes women's emotional attachments. Women know they can summon up family memories by taking their jewelry out and touching it; this knowledge is a source of strength for them.

As this discussion implies, not only physical touch, but also the awareness of jewelry can trigger memories. As memories are always at least there in the background, women have to find ways to deal with them, especially if they are intense or painful. Some women hid their jewelry in their jewelry cases when they did not want to face the memories. However, even these pieces of jewelry that reconnect women to painful experiences are sometimes taken out.

Collective memories of the family were stored in jewelry in a physical form. Sometimes stories related to jewelry traveled to the next generation in alterations, pieces of jewelry were taken to a goldsmith who, for example, added a gem or an engraving that was meant to preserve some piece of history for generations to come. This way, collective family memories were physically stored in jewelry, and it was expected that each new generation made additions to them, physical or mental. These collective memories connect women to more encompassing units like their family and kin. This connection gives them power to deal with the world, just like totems gave power to aboriginals (Durkheim, 1980).

It is the possessor's decision, however, whether or not to express her personal memories. Sometimes, the memories were so painful that women did not want to conjure them up. Every now and then, women told me there were some things that were not to be talked about. They also told me about jewelry they did not want to show me, or even see at all. These were exceptions, though. Overwhelmingly, jewelry evoked memories that women wanted to reminisce about. Most of these memories were warm and affectionate flashbacks of their histories connecting them to loved ones. Some of these memories were bittersweet or sad, but still worth reminiscing about. In the next and final quote of this book, Ingrid discusses a piece she would not wear or take out too often, but still keeps because of the memories.

I know what's in there and I don't go in there. But, for some reason if I happen to go in and then I see it then it'll bring back the memory. So, that's kind of why I keep it. But it's not something if I just don't have it anymore, it's not gonna be a great loss for me. It's just nice to see it when you haven't seen it for a while. You know, like listening to a song that you like that you never... you don't listen to it every day or every month even, but when you happen to hear it, if you haven't heard it for few years then it just sounds

really great and it brings back a great memory. So, that's kind of how I feel about certain pieces of jewelry that I have.

(INGRID 54 YRS)

After conducting this study I have become convinced that jewelry is a crucial part of women's possessions. Women need jewelry; they are necessities of life. Throughout the study, I was surprised at how similar the women's attachments to their jewelry were. Women from two countries, from very different socioeconomic backgrounds and with very different looking jewelry, view their jewelry in very similar ways.

Appearance, price or fashionability may influence the purchasing decision, but has very little to do with the chain of events that turns a given piece into a cherished item that then becomes a family heirloom. As discussed in this study, for many ordinary women, jewelry cases are much more than boxes filled with valuable items. They are treasure boxes, cornucopias of personal and family history. These treasure boxes are filled not only with gold and precious stones, but also with private and public memories and secrets. They contain so much power and so many connections to past and future generations that they, ultimately, may be a woman's most valuable possessions. So, is jewelry only an adornment? No. What could be further from the truth?

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A woman has several diamond rings but her most treasured piece of jewelry is a silver bracelet with five hearts on it. Why? The piece was her mother's, composed of gifts from her father, a heart after each child. It is links like this that make jewelry more valuable than just the sum of its parts.

This study contributes not only to design research but also to the small and novel field of jewelry studies. It brings a new approach to seeing personal experiences and memories, important when jewelry is part of women's social existence. This study provides a deeper understanding of the social reasons why jewelry is possessed and worn.

Women's jewelry often connects past and future generations. Such jewelry not only exists in the present day, but also connects generations. Jewelry also often works as a mediator of memories of possessors' milestones in life, relationships and family ties. It plays important roles in the rituals that make up the rites of passages throughout a woman's life.

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ISBN 978-952-60-4708-9
 ISBN 978-952-60-4709-6 (pdf)
 ISSN-L 1799-4934
 ISSN 1799-4934
 ISSN 1799-4942 (pdf)

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