

NIGERIA'S EARLY CULTURAL HISTORY AS SEEN THROUGH OBJECTS OF ADORNMENT AND APPAREL¹

Dani Lyndersay

Formerly of the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, now in Trinidad

Social anthropologists and psychologists have ascribed many motives and desires to Man in explanation of the origins of the great diversity of styles of body ornamentation. Since the beginning of time, Man has covered parts of his body for a variety of reasons. Except in pre-puberty, complete nudity is rare, not only in West Africa but also in the rest of the world. However, the reasons why Man felt the need to cover the body after puberty, be it with animal skins, matted fabric or bark cloth, woven cloth, beads, leaves, or paints and dyes, will forever constitute a source of controversy.



Fig. 1a: Edo

This controversy has been fed by some misconceptions that may not be obvious. The first probably originated from the Adam and Eve story in the Bible's Book of Genesis—that Mankind's *sole* purpose for covering nakedness was shame or modesty. The second universal misconception is that the original forms of dress were purely functional and only meant to protect the body against insects or the elements, cold and damp weather, the sun's rays, or high winds.

Both motives for dress—modesty and protection of the skin—undoubtedly are based on experience, and examples abound over the world where these justifications are primary. Yet, to consider that they are or were the *sole* reasons for adorning, beautifying, embellishing the human form is questionable. The first archaeological evidence of man within the boundaries of present-day Nigeria exists from the Stone Age.² It is not impossible to suppose that man inhabited this area from much earlier times than

¹Based on a lecture delivered to the Ibadan Branch of the Nigerian Field Society, 12 December 2007. This is preliminary to a book she is preparing on the subject.

² Thurstan Shaw, *Nigeria, Its Archaeology and Early History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), p. 29.

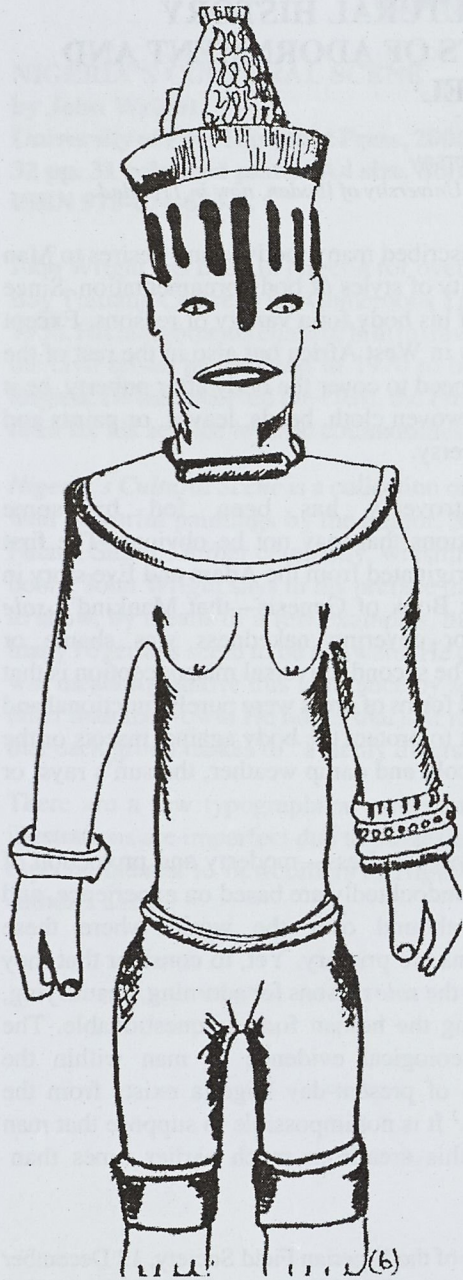


Fig. 1b: Urhobo

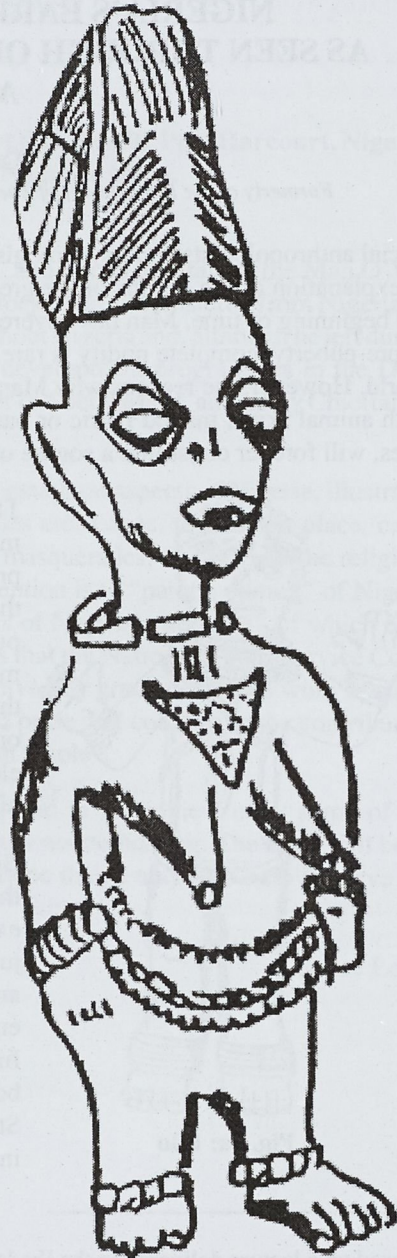


Fig. 1c: Yoruba

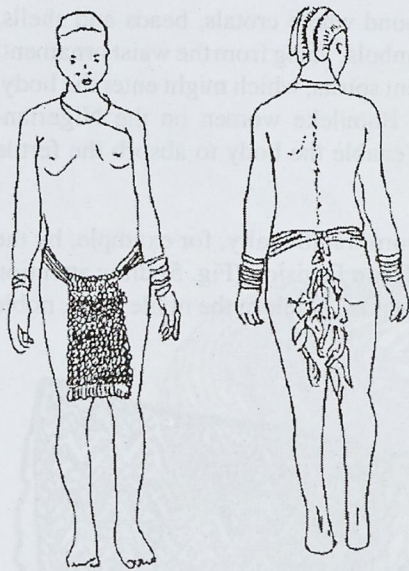


Fig. 2

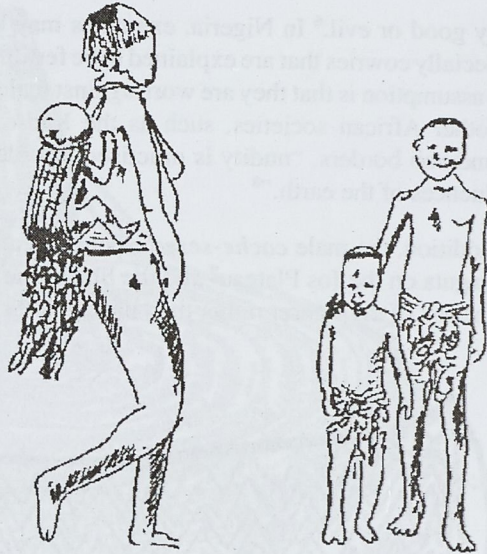


Fig. 3

present archaeological finds attest, and that he had similar motives for his choice of bodily adornment, as had other cultures from this period around the world. An example of such a similarity may be found in what is considered to be the earliest form of "dress": the waist string or rear apron. Versions of the female waist string, for example, are often depicted on early sculptural forms from a number of Nigerian ethnic groups. (Fig. 1a, b & c) Throughout history, it has increased in width or size, or been used to hold up a kind of small apron. Often this is decorated with beads or a bunch of leaves, (Fig. 2) as was seen as recently as 1986 during the Murgi Festival of the Angas or Kerang peoples on the Jos Plateau³ and in the Adamawa mountains amongst the Koma peoples.⁴ (Fig. 3) The manner in which it is decorated, for example, the female Bata people's beaded apron, (Fig. 4a) clearly reveals one of its purposes, that of an eye-catcher. Though the American Art Historian Roy Sieber notes the Jaba (Hyam) "waist or buttocks ornament [is] meant to insure her modesty when she bends over to work in the fields."⁵ (Fig. 4b) The Wom woman's tail of raffia appears to have the latter motive also. (Fig. 4c)

Many societies wear versions of the "waist string" as a reaction to the ubiquitous spirits, be

³Personal observations, March 2, 1986, Pankshin, Plateau State.

⁴Cf. Godwin Agbroko, "The Unknown Nigerians," *The African Guardian*. (May 8 1986), p. 11-19.

⁵Roy Sieber, *African Textiles and Decorative Arts*. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972), p. 53.

they good or evil.⁶ In Nigeria, examples may be found where crotals, beads and shells, especially cowries that are explained to be fertility symbols,⁷ hang from the waist ornament: the assumption is that they are worn against malevolent spirits, which might enter the body. In other African societies, such as the Kadre and Bamileke women on the Nigerian-Cameroon borders, "nudity is practised in order to enable the body to absorb the fertile influences of the earth."⁸

In addition, the male *cache-sexe* or penis sheaths worn traditionally, for example, by the Naraguta on the Jos Plateau⁹ and the Sha of the Pankshin Division (Fig. 5) draw attention to the sex of the wearer rather than hiding it: "it is intended to adorn the noble parts, noble

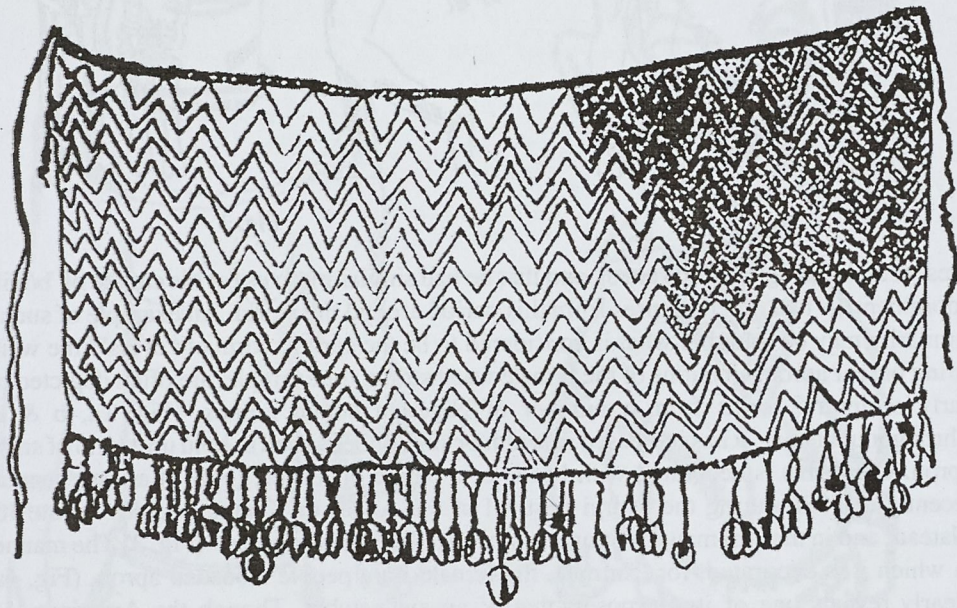


Fig. 4a

⁶Boris de Rachewiltz, *Black Eros: Sexual Customs of Africa from Pre-history to the Present Day*. (London: George & Unwin, 1964), p. 152.

⁷Cf. P.G. Harris, "Cowrys," *Man* XLIII, 120 (1943), 143; M.D.W. Jeffreys, "Cowry and Vulva Again," *Man* XLIII, 121 (1943), correspondence to Editor; Jeffreys reported: "recently a man came before me for a trial on a murder charge. In the open witness-box stood a witness; a pagan woman, naked, except for a cord round her waist from which hung a small black string fringe covering the pudenda, but in the middle of this black string gleamed a single cowry shell..."

⁸Georges Balandier and Jacques Macquet, *Dictionary of Black African Civilization* (New York: Leon Amiel, 1974), p. 90.

⁹See archival photographs kept in the Jos National Museum, taken in 1904 by local tin miners.

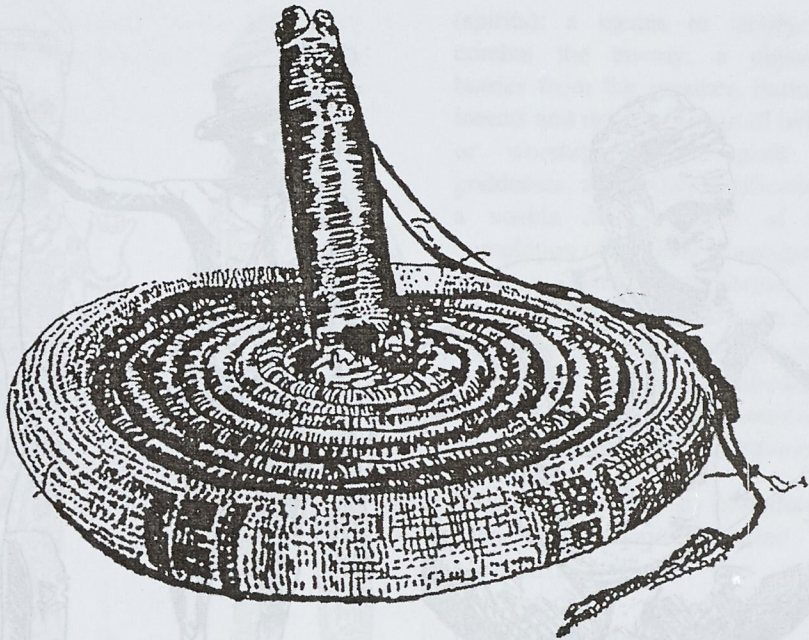


Fig. 4b

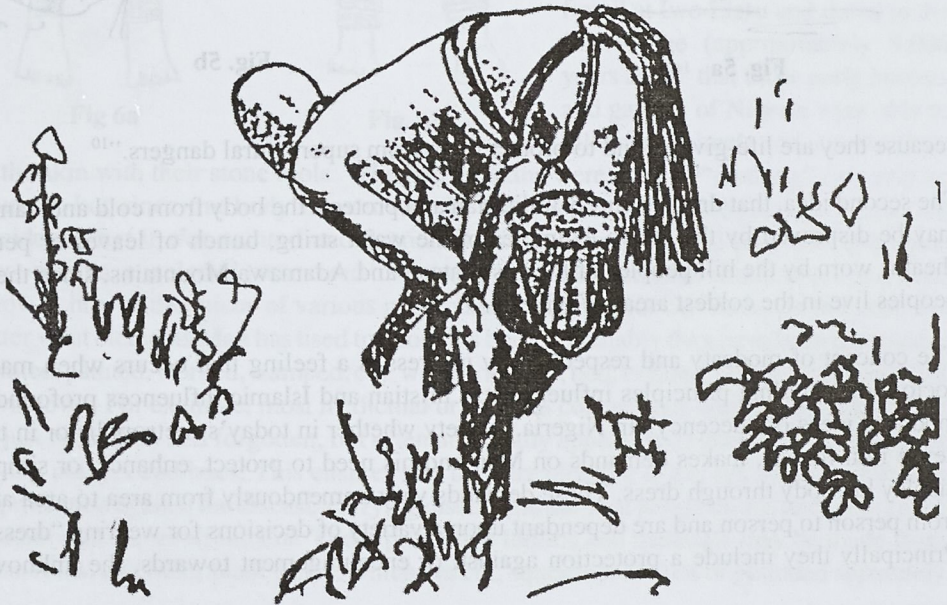


Fig. 4c



Fig. 5a

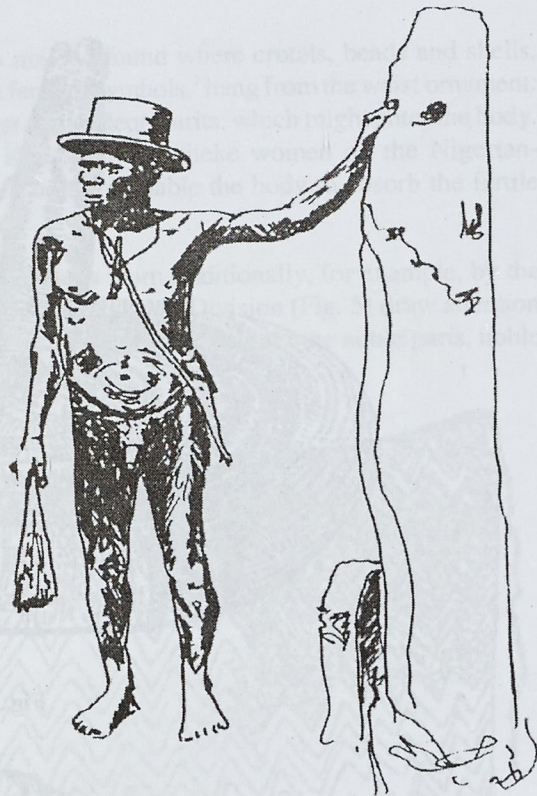


Fig. 5b

because they are life-giving, and to protect them from supernatural dangers.”¹⁰

The second idea, that dress is purely utilitarian and protects the body from cold and damp, may be disproved by the above examples of the waist string, bunch of leaves or penis sheaths worn by the hill peoples of the Jos Plateau and Adamawa Mountains, since these peoples live in the coldest areas of Nigeria.

The concept of modesty and respectability in dress is a feeling that occurs when many socio-moral guiding principles influence it. Christian and Islamic influences profoundly modified ideas of “decency” in Nigeria. Society whether in today’s metropolis or in the dense rain forests, makes demands on Man and his need to protect, enhance, or simply display his body through dress. These demands vary tremendously from area to area and from person to person and are dependant upon a variety of decisions for wearing “dress.” Principally they include a protection against, or encouragement towards, the unknown

¹⁰Balandier et al, p. 90-91.



Fig 6a

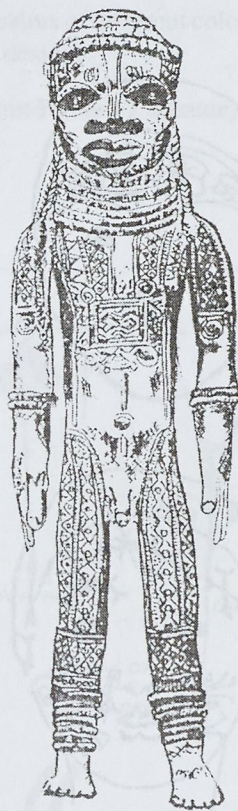


Fig. 6b

(spirits); a means to terrify or combat the enemy; a physical barrier from the weather, harmful insects and disease; a sign of belief or worship of the gods or goddesses; an ethnic identification; a visible demonstration of the completion of puberty or age-grade rites; a symbol of status; an aesthetic desire to satisfy the ego; an attraction to the opposite sex; a sexual or gender identification; and/or a sign of possession, implying ownership or allegiance.

Whatever motives may be deduced, Man has always satisfied an elemental need: the need aesthetically to adorn his possessions—his body or his material objects. It may be assumed from the artefacts and skeleton found at Iwo Eleru and dated to the Stone Age (approximately 9,000 years ago)¹¹ that those early hunters and gathers of Nigeria were able to kill small animals and cut and clean

off the skin with their stone tools. Whether the skins were used as “clothing” can only be assumed, but since the body is naturally the first object to be embellished, it may be considered that it was painted and decorated with locally produced pigments and dyes. These may have included ground red limestone, white calcined snail shells, black charcoal, yellow ochre, or the juices of various plants that cause reactions or stains on the skin. No matter what elements Man has used to adorn his body, invariably they have been artistically anointed, painted, worked, stamped, cut, woven, matted, tied, braided, embroidered, stitched or whatever. For example, most medicinal or magical concoctions applied to the body are not just rubbed on and forgotten, but often artistically applied with geometrical designs or varying colours and hues. This ensures that they are pleasing to the eye while performing the protection against the disease-carrying insects and harmful jungle thorns and other sharp vegetation of the environment. These protective lotions and materials may be made from herbs, roots, and other plant fibres, which are cut, squeezed, soaked or pounded separately

¹¹H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* 3rd Ed. (1920; New York: R. Postgate, 1961) p. I 104.

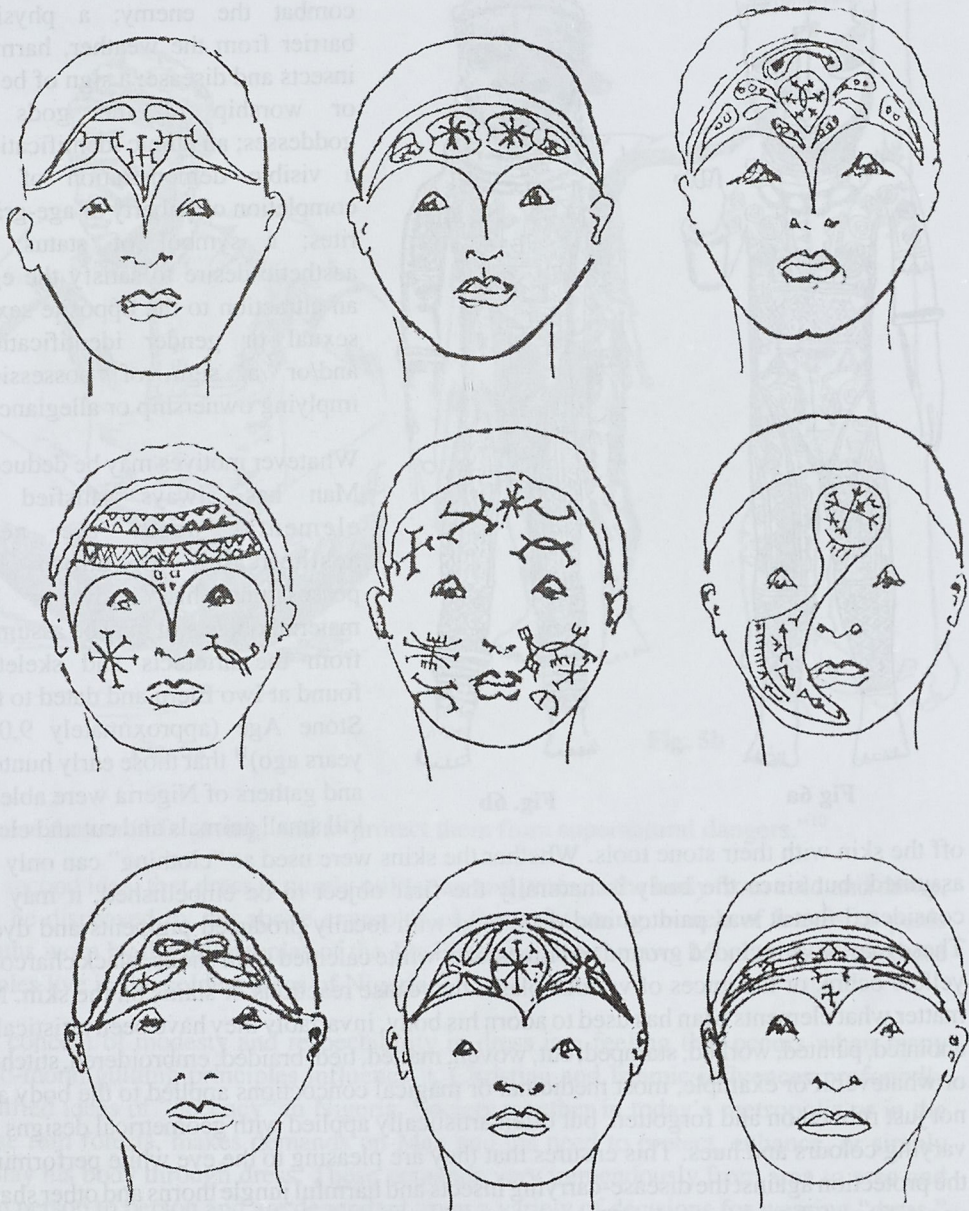


Fig. 7b

or together to produce dyes or paints of different colours, which are then applied to the body often in aesthetically pleasing designs.

An early example, from an extant 16th or 17th century Benin bronze plaque, depicts a young

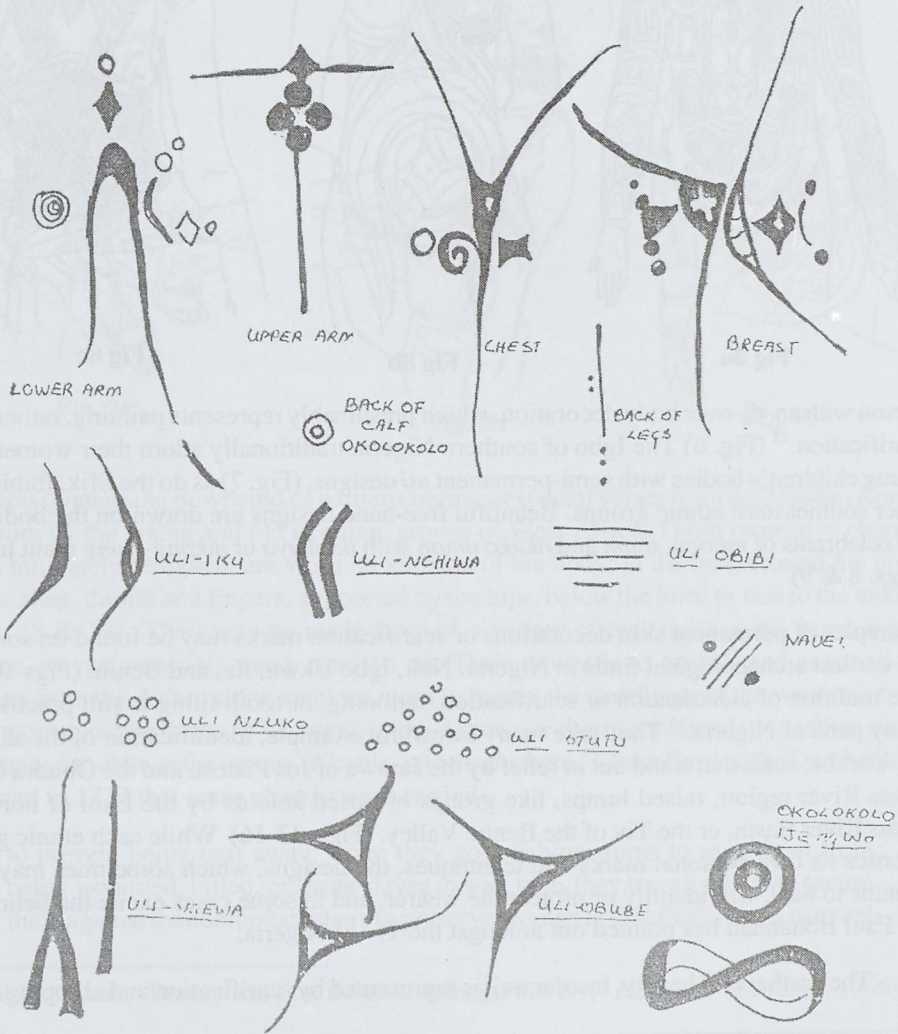


Fig 7b

lrj

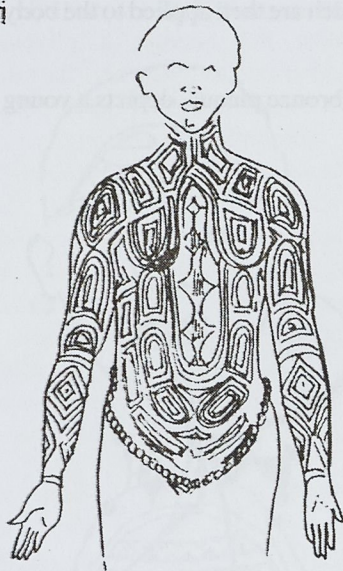


Fig 8a

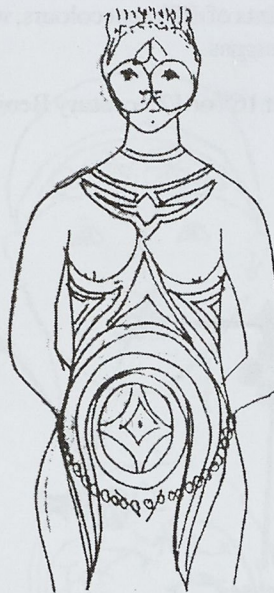


Fig 8b



Fig 8c

person with an all-over body decoration, which presumably represents painting, rather than scarification.¹² (Fig. 6) The Igbo of southern Nigeria traditionally adorn their women and young children's bodies with semi-permanent *uli* designs, (Fig. 7) as do the Efik, Ibibio and other southeastern ethnic groups. Beautiful free-hand designs are drawn on the bodies of the celebrants of *mbopo*, *inam* and *nkuko uman* with *udokaya* or *mkong-ison* plant juices. (Figs. 8 & 9)

Examples of permanent skin decorations or scarification marks may be found on some of the earliest archaeological finds in Nigeria: Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Ife, and Benin. (Figs 10-12) The tradition of cicatrization or scarification, tattooing, or tooth filing is still practised in many parts of Nigeria.¹³ They take many forms: for example, identification of the skin by the Yoruba; scars that stand out in relief by the Jarawa of Jos Plateau and the Obubra of the Cross River region; raised lumps, like groups of raised keloids by the Ekoi of northern Cross River Basin, or the Tiv of the Benue Valley. (Figs. 13-16) While each ethnic group chooses its own personal marks and techniques, the designs, which sometimes may take months to heal, will identify or protect the wearer, and in some cases excite the beholder. As Paul Bohannan has pointed out amongst the Tiv of Nigeria:

The aesthetic of beauty, insofar as it is represented by scarification and chipping

¹²William Fagg, "On a Benin Bronze Plaque Representing a Girl," *Man* 58, 154 (1958), 105.

¹³Personal observation, Oron, Akwa Ibom State, August 1986.

of the teeth, is involved with pain....The effort to 'glow' must be obvious; the effort to be dressed up must involve expense and trouble; scarification, one of the finest of decorations, is paid for in pain. The pain is the proof positive that decoration is an unselfish act, and that it is done to give pleasure to others as well as oneself.¹⁴ (Fig. 17)



Fig. 9a



Fig. 9b



Fig. 9c

Amulets (containing powdered or written charms, or special verses from the Muslim Koran) are worn by the young and old in ethnic groups of West Africa. These protective charms, often intricately designed, are worn on all parts of the body; in the hair, around the neck, on the arms, thumb and fingers, supported by the hips, below the knee or tied to the ankles. (Figs. 18 & 19) They may be made from a variety of materials: stone, bone, ivory, leather, woven materials, reeds, and so on. Their power is to protect and enhance the wearer; from the Azben stone amulets, worn to ensure the steadiness of the warrior's hand for a more accurate throw of his spear, to the Argungun charm contained in a leather pouch guaranteed to change the owner, in battle, into an elephant.¹⁵ John Bardot, the Dutch trader, reported in 1732 that some charms were carried

to prevent being cast away, when they go a-fishing; some to save them from being wounded, killed, or made slaves in war, or as they travel; others to secure them against thunderbolts; others to preserve women in childbed; others to excel

¹⁴Paul Bohannon, "Beauty and Scarification amongst the Tiv," *Man* 129-130 (Sept. 1956), p. 121.

¹⁵*Guide to Kanta Museum, Gidan Kayan Al'adun Kanta* (Sokoto: North-western State History Bureau, 1974), 5.

in swimming, to get many wives, or much wealth, to have good fishery, and to all other purposes which relate to their welfare. In short, they have...much confidence in them...and therefore will boldly expose themselves to any danger.¹⁶

At the beginning of the 20th century, Herbert C. Hall described gallant northern warriors:

The warfare of the Emirs...was extremely theatrical, full of bombast and alarums. The greater the warrior the more clothes he had to carry, as this was supposed to impress the enemy.¹⁷

With reference to the type of gowns the warriors may have worn, the British Museum has in its collection a gown inscribed with Koranic texts and leather amulets sewn into the sleeves. (Fig. 20) Picton and Mack, in their authoritative book *African Textiles*, summarize the techniques of this tradition:

A speciality of the Hausa seems to have been the production of charm gowns for the protection of the wearer against evils that might befall him...To render the gown an effective prophylactic instrument three elements seemed to be necessary. First charms were attached to the garment itself, these being Koranic texts written out on paper and encased in a leather pouch. Secondly, the garment was soaked in water, which had previously been used to wash Koranic writing boards. The final stage was the inscription of Koranic characters on the cloth itself, a greater number on the back than the front because the back was considered the more vulnerable area.¹⁸

Extensions of the hunted animal or slain enemy are also worn on the hunter's person as a protection against evil forces or a sign of his prowess. They may be composed of the teeth, hair, or bones of the slain. The addition of these power symbols to the hunter's or warriors dress "lends a surreal quality to essentially normal garments."¹⁹ For example, nineteenth century Yoruba war tunics (Fig. 21) were often laden down with jaw bones of men killed in battle, battle-worn implements, pieces of clothing, beads, charms, and other objects such as keys, chains and mirrors.

¹⁶John Bardot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea; and of Ethiopia Interia, Vulgarly Angola*, Vol. V of *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, eds. Awnsham and John Churchill (London: A & T Churchill, 1732), p. 237.

¹⁷Herbert C. Hall, *Barrack and Bush in Northern Nigeria* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923), p. 146.

¹⁸John Picton and John Mack, *African Textiles: Looms, Weaving and Design* (London: British Museums Publications, 1979), p. 163.

¹⁹Sieber, p. 40.



Fig. 10a



Fig. 10b



Fig. 10c

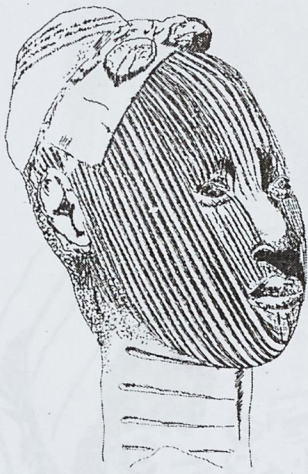


Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

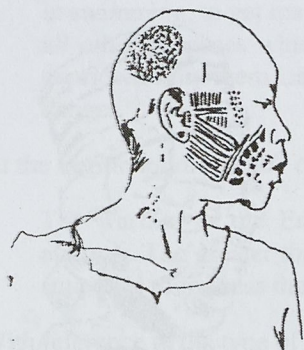


Fig. 14a

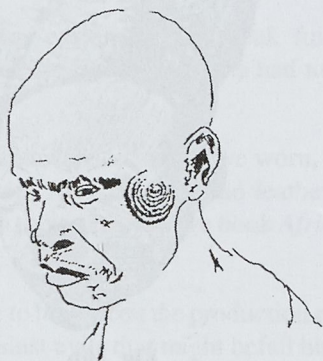


Fig. 14b

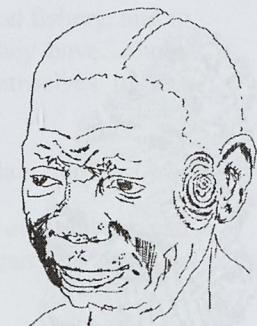


Fig. 14c



Fig. 15a



Fig. 15b

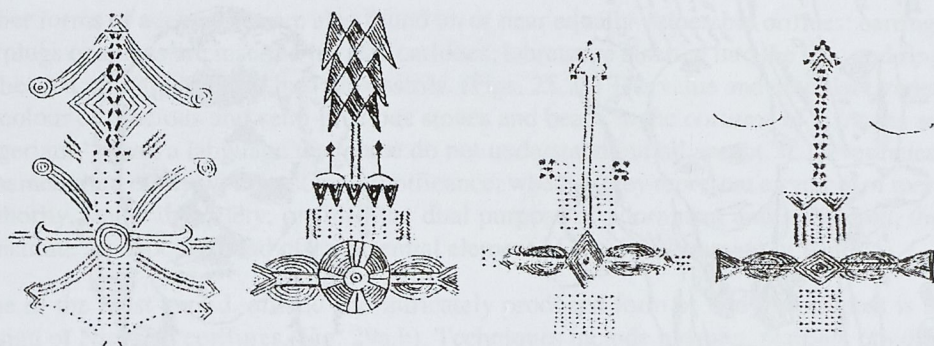


Fig. 16

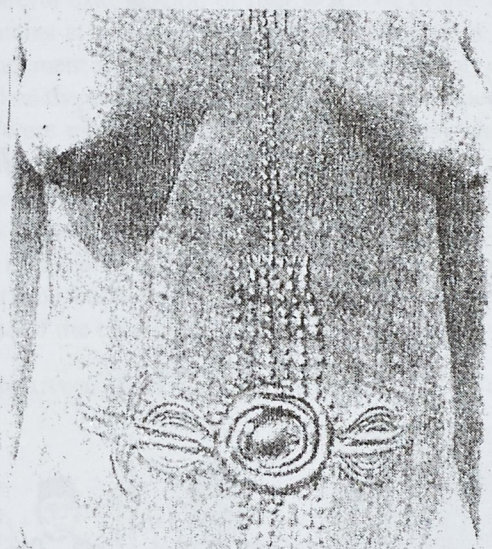


Fig. 17

Some ancient Yoruba beaded crowns were crested at the top with a tuft of an animal's hair²⁰ or the rare long white egret feathers; a young Igbo man would wear a wild boar's tooth around his neck, presumably for self-protection, whereas an Okrika chief wears a necklace made of lion's teeth as a sign of his prowess and authority. The Idoma hunter of the Benue Valley is allowed to wear a small red parrot's feather in his cap only after his first notable kill. (Fig. 22-23) These exhibitions are typical of one of the major reasons for bodily decorations: the need to enhance the personality by sartorial display. This may also be seen today in military

dress: the profusion of belts, sashes, shoulder straps, heavy gold and silver-fringed epaulets, bars and stars, and various other insignia and awarded decorations. The purpose of sartorial display is usually seen through ornamental and decorative manifestations of dress, as they indicate, ultimately, power, prestige and often, simply wealth.

The rare, the precious and the unique are also symbols of power, which identify, visually, the wealthy and prestigious members of society. The display of a person's valuables and jewelry on the body is usually seen around the neck, ears, wrists, waist or hips and ankles, as these are considered the vulnerable parts of the body.

²⁰Eve de Negri, *Nigerian Body Adornment* (Lagos: Academy Press, 1976), p. 47.



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

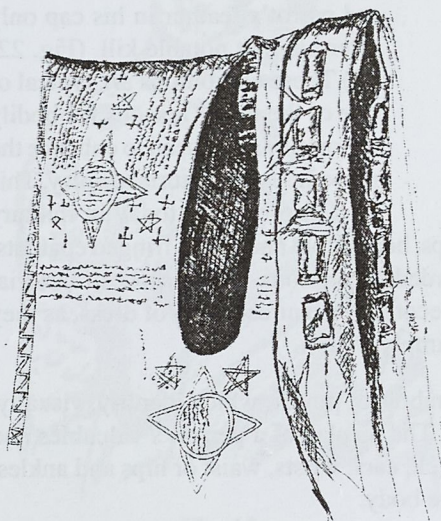


Fig. 20



Fig. 21

Other forms of accessories are also found on or near equally vulnerable orifices: earrings, earplugs or spikes are inserted into the earlobes; labrets are inserted into the lips; and rings or headed pins are inserted into the nostrils. (Figs. 25,28) The value and abundant variety of colour of precious and semi-precious stones and beads in the costume of Africans and Nigerians "speak a language that some do not understand but all accept."²¹ Nevertheless, ornaments are rarely without social significance; whether they represent a symbol of merit, authority, status in society, or fulfil the dual purpose of adornment and protection, they constitute an important and often essential element of bodily adornment in Nigeria.

One of the most varied, artistic and intricately produced form of body adornment is the design of Nigerian coiffures (Fig. 29a,b). Techniques include pleating, plaiting, braiding, tying, shaving, and elaborate constructions of clay, oils, wax, reeds, grass, combs and cloth. On careful examination of reproductions of the well-known rock paintings found in the mountains at Air Massif, these last examples of bodily adornment—facial scarification, enhancement and elaborate hairstyles—are amply demonstrated. The paintings (Fig. 26-27) found on the walls of caves in the Sahara and dated to the Herder Period 4000B.C. to 1500 B.C. were executed by inhabitants who may well have been ancestors of some of the peoples of present-day Nigeria. They lived during the times when the present Sahara Desert was less arid. The finely-drawn rock paintings show people at work among their cattle herds, women mounted on oxen, as well as some occupied in building huts. Not only do these archaeological finds confirm that facial scarification and/or tattooing was practised at that time, but the paintings reveal a most interesting documented aspect of the variety and finesse of the clothing of that period:

The men wore white, close-fitting slips, bonnets, decorated skull caps, white shorts reaching



Fig. 22



Fig. 23

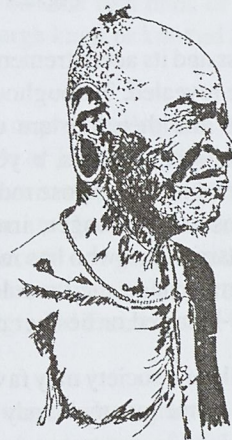


Fig. 24

²¹ Denise Paulme, "Jewelry," *Dictionary of Black Civilizations*, p. 198.

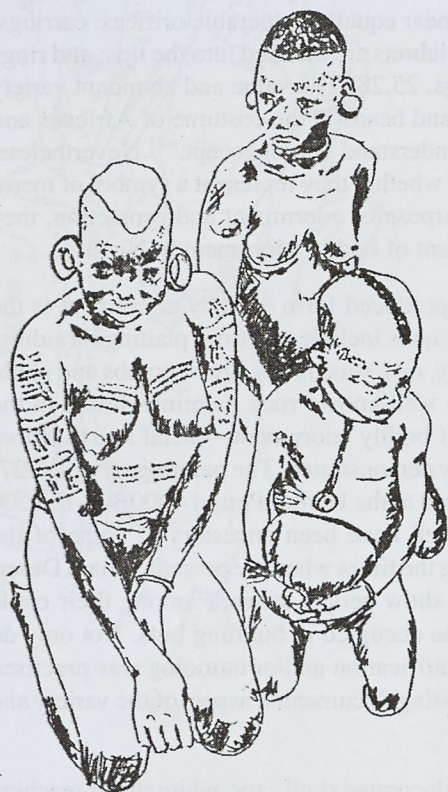


Fig. 25

to the knee, long white cloths flung over the left shoulder and falling freely to the thighs, short wrappers, long ochre, brown or white coats hanging loosely over the back, and sometimes a long, wide, white coat. The women had splendid hairdresses, sometimes in the form of crests. They were clad in pleated and striped dresses, decorated with patterns in vertical bands, in flounced skirts, fashioned robes, capes and mantelets.

The astonishingly modern hair arrangements are reflective of the variety of those found in Nigeria. While hairstyles not only change from region to region, they obviously also change from chronological age to age. They may indicate the age of a young boy, the marital status of a woman, the rank of a priest or priestess, or the position of nobility. Because a new hairstyle can sometimes only be created after the head has been shaved and new hair grows in, "hairstyles are really a deformation based on fashion."²² Yet like scarification and the use of body cosmetics, this form of body ornamentation is related to the motive based on the need to be seen and recognized.

Dress and its accoutrements, while concealing, also create the irresistible urge to reveal and have revealed. Throughout history, certain parts of the body have been regarded as erotic areas and therefore are camouflaged, concealed or accentuated. For example, in most traditional societies, a young girl exposes her breasts until marriageable age and then societal norms impose modesty: yet after children have been born to the women their upper torsos are no longer, irresistibly, covered. Among the Nomadic Fulani only a young unmarried girl who has reached puberty wears the short sleeved mid-riff blouse, *toggoyel*; after marriage she is no longer permitted the coquetry of wearing that style and is either bare-breasted or ties her cloth wrapper under the armpits.

While one society may favour women with large breasts, another may prefer large buttocks. The former example may be seen by the tradition in a number of West African societies to

²²R. Brody-Johansen, *Body and Clothes: an Illustrated History of Costume* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 12.



Fig. 26

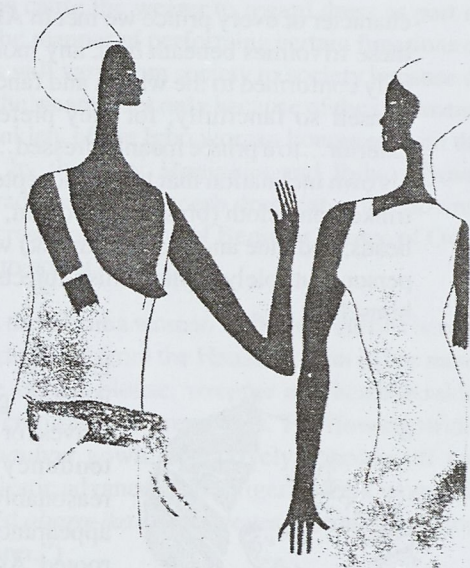


Fig. 27

fatten young brides, as well as the Efik woman's choice of dress, the *onyonyo*, which accentuates her upper torso with large flounced sleeves and bodice. The latter example was also clearly seen in the Yoruba woman's habit to wear a profusion of stringed and flattened palm kernel beads, *lágídígba* (*jigida*) under her wrappers, to enlarge the hips or to increase their erotic movement while walking or dancing. With certain southeastern Nigerian men, it may not be an unconscious desire to promote their virility, when the two ends of the wrapper at the waist are twisted into each other and rolled into a large knob or knotted ball on the belly or groin area.

All methods of improving or altering the body, whether spiritually or physically, have their traditional origins and techniques. A clan may accept a new mode of body beautification because of its originality or uniqueness. The methods may be borrowed from afar and incorporated, or new materials found and invented locally. These are then experimented with and, sometimes in a new form, accepted. However, acceptance is not guaranteed. A society may forbid the use of certain styles or disallow the exposure of particular parts of the body for religious, moral or aesthetic reasons. Ultimately, as Sigmund Freud stated: "At the root of every taboo, there must be a desire."

The control and style of dress is usually in the hands of the upper classes. It may be due to the high expense of items that a style becomes the prerogative of one strata of society. Richard Lander, the explorer, reported in 1824 that:

A womanish fondness of dress and admiration...were strikingly visible in the

character of every prince we met in Africa; nor did the monarch of Yariba think these frivolities beneath him, any more than his royal neighbours....Monsolah only conformed to the whims and fancies of his people, he said, when he attired himself so fancifully; for they preferred a ruler with a smart and gorgeous exterior...to a prince meanly dressed....It was not, therefore, in compliance with his own inclination that he had accepted, with so great apparent satisfaction, the trinkets and cloth (brass watch-chain, gold-headed cane, necklace of large coral beads, and blue and scarlet damask) we had given him for the adornment of his person, but solely to please his subjects, to whose taste he always accommodated himself.²³



Fig. 29

Even in the most obscure, isolated groups, while each strives for its own identity, the tendency to develop a reasonably uniform general appearance is also deep-rooted. As René König posits, members of a group recognize one another by their costume, their whole manner of deportment, posture and gestures, quite apart from their common language, traditions, ideas and values, articles of faith, and institutions.²⁴ This includes all possible techniques which directly affect the physique: hairstyles; scarification; teeth filing; perforation of the ear lobes, nostrils, lips; growing



Fig. 30

or removing particular fingernails or toenails; extending or confining the size of chosen parts of the body; the use of dyes and paints for the teeth, nails, skin; and finally the habitual postures adopted for relaxation or work, so often dependant on the clothes, furniture and implements used by a particular society. These latter movements are not innate; they are inculcated at a very early age by the community and determine what an individual considers or knows to be correct or appropriate at a particular time or period of his life.

²³Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa* 2 Vols. 1830 (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1967), Vol 1, p.111-12.

²⁴René König, *The Restless Image* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 92.

Customs, Fashions and individual inclinations cause the wearer to regard dress as part of one's self, yet consciously or unconsciously the manner of performing certain functions or establishing and maintaining certain attitudes will vary from society to society because of the dress. Some styles limit the movement of the wearer, not only because of the ornaments worn (such as the large ivory bracelets and anklets of the Igbo woman honoured with the *Ozo* or *Iyum* title, the brass leggings worn by the Ekoi *Moninkim* and Ibibio *Nyama* celebrants of the New Yam Festival; or the traditional coral-mesh dress (atop the flowing *buluku*), the beaded neck-band (*udigba*) and crown of the Oba of Benin or Olowo of Owo, but also because of the cloth or textiles used to adorn the body.

The silhouette produced and manner in which the Yoruba woman walks and carries herself in her *aṣo iró*, *bùbá*, *gèlé* and *ìborùn*, is quite different from the Hausa woman in her *mata*, *zane* and *mayafi*. The items are basically the same—blouse, wrapper and head/shoulder cloth—but they are tied and carried or worn in culturally different ways. The flowing strides of the Senegalese woman, dressed in her *boubou* gown, seductively slipping off one shoulder, contrasts tremendously with the majestic advance of the Nigerian Efik woman in her *onyonyon* gown with its flared and gathered *oboro-iko edem* sleeves (literal translation: "It replies to what anyone says about the wearer.")

The Itsekiri man, draped in metres of George (*jojo*) cloth around his waist and trailing on the ground behind him, with his smock-like front-pleated formal dress-shirt adorning the upper torso, contrasts strikingly in style and manner of carriage with the Yoruba man in his *agbádá*, complete with *sòkòtò*, *dànsíkí* and *abetí-ajá* cap, the former of which he adroitly adjusts onto his shoulders when the "sleeves" slip down covering his arms. The establishment, or re-establishment, of dignity demonstrated by the Yoruba man adjusting his *agbádá*, first on the right shoulder, then on his left shoulder and a final drawing up of his *sòkòtò* trouser waistline, in the sequence of movements called, at one time, "one thousand, five hundred and fifty pounds," is unparalleled in other ethnic groups which do not have the same type of dress. (Fig. 31)

Basically, flowing garments are responsible for the slow movements and dignified posture of those ethnic groups that promote them; whereas the opposite may be true of a people who choose to be unencumbered by extensive materials, due to their nature and/or habitats and occupations, such as the Nomadic Fulani. (Fig. 32)

It need not be refuted that ostentation and demonstration are often essential features of dress. Socrates admonished his wife for not wanting to carry his outer gown: "You go out to be seen not to see."

Fashion does not and cannot exist in seclusion, it wants the world for its stage.

It needs to see and be seen: it has an indisputable trait of exhibitionism.²⁵

Nevertheless, as clothes become Man's "second skin" and, therefore, affect his manner of deportment, so they ultimately influence his way of speaking and thinking.

More than any other art form, dress is multi-dimensional as it speaks through its symbols of shape, texture, colour, sound, and even smell. It is the aggregate interaction of all the arts—music (through its textures and accoutrements which swish, flutter, tinkle, or clink), dance (through all its rhythmic attributions), gesture and movement (through the language it speaks to the viewer), craftsmanship (through its design, invention, production, creativity, colour, texture, and multiplicity of materials), and finally its connection with literature (oral, poetic, folkloric, dramatic). Its influence on society and the laws which are (still) promulgated under the umbrellas of morality, prudence, economics, or solely the ego of our leaders throughout history, has placed, I believe, human bodily adornment at the centre of cultural change.



Fig. 31



Fig. 32

²⁵Konig, p. 96.

OBITUARIES & CORRECTIONS

We announce with regret the deaths of the following members:

LIFE MEMBER:

Eunice Redmayne Tattersall OBE; SRN; STD (London); RNT, 1919-2005

Eunice Tattersall was born in London, the eldest of three sisters. She was educated at St. Mary's, Wantage and St. Margaret's, Bushey and subsequently resolved to become a medical missionary, studying Theology and Pharmacy at Gilmore House. At the outbreak of the war in 1939, Eunice trained as a nurse at St Thomas' Hospital. These were days when matron ruled with a rod of iron. Nevertheless she failed to intimidate the resolute Eunice who, when accosted carrying mattresses on her head during a bombing raid, replied to the imperious call, 'Nurse, whatever are you doing with your Nightingale Cap?' : 'Matron, I am using whatever I can in an emergency'.

After training as a nurse tutor at St George's Hospital, she taught before travelling out to Nigeria where she held the posts of principal of the schools of nursing at University College Hospital Ibadan, Lagos University Teaching Hospital and Ahmadu Bello University Hospital Zaria. As part of her duties, she organised the TEDRO entrance examinations for nurses and travelled widely through Nigeria on this task. Always courteous and extremely thorough, one can be sure that her girls would work to the very highest standards, particularly in spoken English. Eunice was of the 'old school' and could not be rushed; her Volkswagen beetle was a familiar and easily recognised sight as she made her slow and stately progress along the Kaduna - Zaria road. Universally respected and always kind, she will be remembered with gratitude for the help she gave to those with personal problems.

A lifelong and devoted Anglican, Eunice faithfully attended church and sang alto with the Zaria singers. She played the violin and managed to persuade six strong men to get a grand piano up the six flights of stairs to her third floor flat in Zaria. Her book 'Nursing Management in Practice' (published by Edward Arnold in 1984) was aimed at nurses in Nigeria and the developing world to "help them think about and to work out for themselves ways of dealing competently with any situation in which they find themselves." (Quoted from the preface).

She retired from Nigeria to her house in north Oxford and was subsequently awarded the OBE for her services to nursing. From 1985 -1994 she was the Distribution Secretary for the Nigerian Field and attended Society meetings regularly until failing eyesight made travel difficult. Always very hospitable, she enjoyed welcoming family and friends, making music, and her lovely garden. Her younger sister Daphne lived with her until her death a few years ago. Eunice continued in the house alone, bearing her failing eyesight stoically. She eventually went into a nursing home, just two or three weeks before she died in November