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Jewels of Tomorrow

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In the past the jewel was a stone precious in a beautiful case, which both embraced the treasure and manifested it. The precious stone reflected light from the outside world to manifest its inner quality.

The new technologies bring us to a nano-world where objects can be the size of the microscopically small. So a precious stone could have in its centre a light source smaller than a filament which transforms the nature of a jewel. Instead of reflecting light from the outside world, it can emanate light from its interior to manifest its inner worth in a new way. The jewel in its case becomes an unexpected beacon of light. One can even imagine new cuts in the gem such that it reflects both interior and exterior light.

Like its predecessors the jewel of tomorrow hangs on a chain. But the chain is more than a necklace. It can be equipped with special sensors, which record the pulsing of the arteries in the neck. As the bearer of the jewel becomes excited in the presence of the beloved, the sensors increase the intensity of the light. So the jewel becomes an outer manifestation of the heart's engagement, a light response to admirer's arrival, the lover's glance. More than one senses can be engaged. Theoretically the lights can change colour in response to sounds or harmonies, changing to favourite colours in the presence of favourite music and conversely. Or they could change in response to scents, or even special scenes.

In the Renaissance, emblems (*impreses*) were one of the signs of wit at court. A visual sign became an outer display of one's inner spirit. With nano-technology some jewels of tomorrow can have little screens which produce a repertoire of images which become symbolic forms of an SMS of the inner spirit, visible to all, comprehensible only to those who know the inner meanings of our being. So technology becomes a means to make outwardly manifest the secret but only to those who know the secret languages of our soul's images. Like the precious box which contains them, which shows them while often keeping them hidden, so too will the jewels of tomorrow show off to the outside what is inside ever anew, responding to sensations and sensors beyond, but always holding inside something of its inner worth whereby it is a joy forever even in the absence of others.

There might also be passive jewels which record all the most precious moments: the most beautiful images as with a microscopic camera; the most beautiful sounds as with a microscopic recorder; the most beautiful scents using an electronic nose; the most beautiful feelings in the tactile sense and the most beautiful tastes. And there could be interactive jewels whereby these recorded favourites of the senses become the starting points for new interplays with the recorded favourites of another. In the past persons played music together. In future they may share harmonies in new ways. The jewel which was once merely an optical delight can become a multi-sensory record of and impulse towards the precious. A thing of beauty is a joy forever and its joys are forever in new ways. Maastricht 28 February 2002