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religionandbodyadornment.wordpress.com

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1. 2015

1.1 September

About (2015-09-28 00:55)

About My Blog

Hello! Thank You for visiting my blog. Join me as I research and discuss the way different religions view the use of different "adornments" such as makeup, face paint, jewelry, types of clothing, perfume and much more.

About Me

My name is Elaine Penksa, and I am an undergraduate student at Florida State University. I started this blog for my World Religions class! I have always been interested in fashion and culture, so learning about how different religious groups view different types of beautification and adornment really interests me.

1.2 October

Post 1: Adornment in Judaism (2015-10-13 01:54)

Many cultures, and in particular religions, feel differently about various forms of body adornment. Some discourage any form of personal adornment, while for other religions adornment is a part of practicing faith. This week, I will start an analysis of how different religions view body adornment with discussing how this plays into Judaism. Because many religions such as Judaism are known for believing in modesty, it is commonly thought that they do not approve of the use of cosmetics, jewelry, and other common forms of "adornment". This is not necessarily the case. There is often a lot of debate or difference in opinion on these topics. For example, the use of women's cosmetics is not frowned upon by all aspects Judaism. Some would say that the use of cosmetics was encouraged by some scriptures. Also, makeup was and is a part of common culture, so it was not always thought of as being outlandish. Other Rabbis or members of the Jewish community felt different, though, and equated the use of cosmetics with vanity and prostitute-like behavior. Jewelry, another common form of adornment, shared similar controversy. Some Jews who held more strict views discouraged wearing jewelry. However, the wearing of Jewelry is mentioned in the Bible without negative connotations. Genesis 24:47 mentions Abraham placing nose rings and bracelets on his wife. Judaism does look down upon other forms of adornment, specifically tattooing. Negative feelings

toward tattooing exist in Judaism for a few reasons. One reason is because Leviticus 19:28 specifically says not to make any marks on the body. Another suggested reason is that ancient Hebrews wanted to set themselves apart from neighboring tribes that practiced tattooing. It is also said that tattooing was thought to be unsanitary. Leviticus also forbids the shaving or cutting of beards. Some believe that this is an alteration of the body. Overall, for Judaism and many other religions, feelings about adornments change with the culture of the times and the interpretation of the scriptures.

Here is the information for the sources I used to research this weeks topic.

"Adorning the Body." My Jewish Learning. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Oct. 2015. <<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article-/adorning-the-body/>>.

DeMello, Margo. "Judaism." Encyclopedia of Body Adornment. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007. 172. Print.

"History" N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.unc.edu/courses/engl29/may1_00/ts/history.html>

Post 2: Adornment in Islam (2015-10-20 01:19)

This week I will discuss how various forms of adornment are viewed in the religious tradition of Islam. The Quran directly demands modesty and as a result Muslims have more defined rules on what types of adornment are prohibited or allowed than many other religions do. For example, the Quran dictates that women should avoid wearing jewelry and should dress modestly. Like with most religious customs, the rules on these things become less strict with modern times, however the general rule for Muslim women on jewelry is that they may wear it, but should only wear around or expose these adornments to appropriate parties. These people typically include closely related males and other women. Many other forms of adornment follow similar rules in Islam. Items such as perfume may be worn, but it is often thought that they should not be used around men other than the husband because it may be perceived as an attempt to catch the attention of other men (so it shouldn't be worn in public). The use of makeup by Muslim women, specifically those who wear the hijab but also use cosmetics, is frequently a point of confusion amongst non-muslims. For some women, the decision to wear makeup is made because it is generally culturally appropriate in the region they live. Also, for many people today, makeup is not a way to make one's self stand out, but rather associated more with hygiene. Makeup can be used to lessen the appearance of blemishes, make one appear more awake, etc. but does not have to be used to look glamorous or gaudy. For reasons like this, makeup is not always seen as an inappropriate adornment. The general consensus within the religion though seems to be that makeup can be worn as long as it is not done with the intent of attracting "lustful attention." To conclude this weeks post I would like to share that through researching Islamic views of adornment, I have determined that there will be a general theme among the rest of the religions I research too. That is, that it is very hard to generalize a religion's view on this topic. While strict and devoted mem-

bers of the religion might have more conservative feelings about adornments and will try to closely follow their religious texts on the matter, many people will take laxer views, as what is appropriate changes with time. So, it is important to remember that when referring to the "rules" or "beliefs" of any religion that not everyone who identifies with that religion will share that understanding of the rules or follow them with the same conviction. People understand and practice their faith in unique ways!

Here are links for some great resources I used when researching this topic:

<http://www.al-islam.org/hijab-muslim-womens-dress-islamic-or-cultural-l-sayyid-muhammad-rizvi/common-questions-about-hijab-and>

<http://www.islamweb.net/emainpage/index.php?page=showfatwa &Option=Fatwald &Id=87999>



Young Muslim woman (via fashin365.com)

Post 3: Adornment in Amish Culture (2015-10-30 01:43)

A note: At the end of last week's post, we discussed how it is difficult to say that members of a religion have specific beliefs about adornment. Time, geographical location, degree of devotion and many other factors affect how a member of a religion interprets and follows the rules of adornment within it. Another major factor that influences this is also the fact that there are often many different sects within a religion that have differing viewpoints on topics such as adornment. To say, for example, that Christians feel a specific way about a topic may be misleading because there are so many individual religions within Christianity. For

this reason, this week I chose to narrow down the religion I discuss to be able to more fully and accurately examine it in this post. I think this will make things a little easier and clearer!

This week, we will be discussing a religion whose views on adornment in particular have been put up for criticism frequently on American television. In recent years, there have been multiple TV shows about members of the Amish community where viewers get to see the way Amish youth experience modern American culture and how others respond to their traditional dress and lifestyle. The styles of dress, rules about hair, etc. are aspects of Amish practice that seem to be mocked or ridiculed in entertainment media, so I think this is another important religion to examine. Amish culture is known for simplicity and modesty. Many Amish traditions of adornment come from the model of modesty. Amish clothing is characterized by being long, plain and un-revealing. A common Amish view is that revealing clothing promotes sinful thoughts and acts. The Amish often refer to biblical scripture to support their choice for modest dress. For example, Peter 3:3-4 says “let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” Another reason that practicing Amish opt for plain dress is that it is practical for their community. Amish communities do not usually possess modern advancements, so a lot of work is outdoors, so fancy or “attractive” clothing is not necessary. Another practical and admirable reason Amish choose to wear simplistic dress is that it promotes a sense of unity. Community is central to the Amish faith, so dressing plainly supports this. While many of us interpret this as removing an individual’s uniqueness, for the Amish this style of dress promotes equality and removes the feeling of competition over physical appearance, and feelings of jealousy. The Amish avoid anything that supports individualism, competition or self-exaltation, so for this reason Amish women do not wear makeup. Jewelry is also forbidden. A common point of interest within Amish adornment is the rules on hair. For men, beards are required after marriage, but rules regarding their upkeep vary between communities. Some trim the beards, most leave them natural and never cut them. Amish women are not permitted to cut their hair. Both gender’s rules on hair stem from the bible (similar to the Jewish rules on beard cutting in post 1!). Amish women also tend to wear their hair covered with a bonnet, again for the sake of modesty.

Here are some very informative sources I used to research this post

<http://amishamerica.com/why-do-the-amish-wear-plain-clothing/>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/amish_1.shtml

<http://www.religionfacts.com/amish>

<http://amishamerica.com/hairy/>



Amish Families (via EnkiVillage)

1.3 November

Post 4: Adornment in Jainism (2015-11-17 20:35)

This week's post will be analyzing how adornment is viewed in Jainism. When reading about this religion in class, I found it to be really interesting and unique, so I'm excited to write about it a little. One thing to note is that Jainism is a particularly strict religion in that it has a lot of intricate rules. Because these rules can be impractical for living day to day modern life, especially for the younger generation, many modern Jains do not follow them in their entirety, but do what they can and try to embody the spirit of the religious tradition. Information on how Jains view the use of things like beauty products and cosmetics is a little more difficult to find, but understanding the principle beliefs of the religion lends to understanding and analyzing how these beliefs affect how or if members of this religion might use of things many of us use in our daily lives. Jains believe in achieving moksha, or liberation from the cycle of life and death, by living a life of non-harm and detachment from the material world. Non-harm consists of avoiding anything that has potential to harm anything that lives. Higher members of Jainism would not even prepare their own food and relied on the leftovers of Jain householders to feed them leftovers, as even boiling water and eating certain foods has the potential to harm animals or small insects, etc. All this being said, it is probably safe to assume that Jainism would advise members to avoid the use of cosmetics. For one thing, makeup doesn't

serve a necessary purpose, and therefore is a worldly or material thing that should be avoided. Also, many cosmetic items could fall under the category of harming living things. For example, a surprising amount of cosmetic products are tested on animals. In addition to this, cosmetics are often made of living matter, and harm to ecosystems or living things can very well be a consequence of their production. I find this religious tradition and its stance on non-harm very interesting when applied to personal adornments because it really makes me stop and think about the true cost of all the material things we value in our lives. We can apply Jainism's idea of non-materiality to how members might view things like jewelry and clothing as well. The idea of non-materiality actually caused a split in Jainism. The two resulting groups were the sky-clad and the white-clad. Members of the sky-clad believed mendicants shouldn't wear clothing at all. Lay Jains do wear clothing, though, as not doing so would result in difficulty living day to day life, especially with the existence of public nudity laws in most areas. Some say that non-materiality should mean not having emotional attachments to material things rather than refusing to use them at all. Generally speaking, though, many Jains would try to eliminate items and adornments from their lives such as jewelry and ornate clothing if they were not crucial to daily life.

Here are the sources I used when researching this topic:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/living/layjaincode.shtml>

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2013/08/30/august-30-2013-indias-jains/19924/>

<http://www.jainpedia.org/themes/practices/monks-and-nuns/monastic-clothing.html>

A Concise Introduction to World Religions 3rd Edition- Oxyoby, Amore, Hussain and Segal.



Jain Women (via dnaindia.com)

Post 5: Adornment in Maori Culture (2015-11-30 21:41)

This week, the religious tradition I chose to address was that of the Maori. One of the reasons I chose to research this lesser-known culture is that up until this point the posts focused largely on what forms of adornment were frowned upon, seen as indulgent or unnecessary, etc. by different religions. However, it is important to note that in many religious cultures, forms of adornment are a crucial part of religious practice and social structure. The Maori are associated with Indigenous religious traditions, and they are the indigenous inhabitants of "Aotearoa", New Zealand. They believe in a God and that all living things have a spiritual

essence. The Maori, like many “indigenous” cultures, have a very rich artistic culture. This being the case, many types of adornment such as fanciful dress, jewelry, and tattoos were a part of everyday life. Most Maori garments were hand woven, and traditional weaving was an important skill that was passed down generations. Creating different clothing with distinct patterns and textures was common and an important skill. Certain materials and furs were made into cloaks and were reserved as status symbols for those of high prestige. Similarly, different hairstyles were worn as a symbol of status. Head adornments and jewelry were common to this culture as well. Traditionally, decorative combs were worn only as male status symbols, but later became a common form of female dress. Headdresses were also worn and were often made of various feathers. Other forms of head adornment include wreaths, which were worn in times of mourning. Jewelry was also worn for spiritual reasons, and were often carved and scented with various oils. The most famous tradition of adornment for the Maori, though, is probably their practice of tattooing. Maori tattoos are called moko, and are used to signify characteristics about an individual and their relationship to the community, or sometimes for beautification purposes. Moko could symbolize rank, tribal history, ancestry, or strength in battles. While facial tattoos are generally seen as deviant or shocking in modern western culture, they were a common practice in Maori culture. Maori facial tattoos were received by both men and women, but traditionally women could only tattoo the lips and chin. The use of moko could be related to the Maori’s strong belief in the importance of mana, which is power or prestige often on a spiritual level. Overall, I think Maori adornment traditions are important to analyze because they are an example of situations where personal adornment is not seen as immodest or self-indulgent, but rather a way to praise or represent the important deities in a religion and also a way to create social hierarchies and order.

Here are some interesting sources I used to further research this topic:

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/maori-clothing-and-adornment-kakahu-maori>

<http://www.maori.com/>

<http://history-nz.org/maori6.html>

A Concise Introduction to World Religions: 3rd Edition – Oxtoby, Amore, Hussain, Segal.



(via <http://www.tamakimaorivillage.co.nz/>)

gads

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L^AT_EX 2_ε & GNU/Linux.
<http://www.blogbooker.com>

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