

The relationship between the hairstyles and the culture as is surveyed through the Middle Ages.

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Preface

I plan to make an inquiry into the hairstyles adorned by the peoples of the Middle Ages to see how a social atmosphere affected the trend of the hairstyles of the times, with expectation in mind that it could serve as the foundation for us to analogize the trend of the modern fashion out of such of the Middle Ages.

Main Subject

1. Christianity of the Middle Ages

The early Christian church underwent a growing sense of non-biblical animosity against female. Apart from this, the number of the laws that the popes of the 12th century promulgated exceeded the sum total of the laws that their precedent popes had ever proclaimed altogether. They claimed that the enormously powerful Catholic Church rule the whole world. All the emperors and kings had to bow their heads to the papacy since they were none but sinners viewed from the papal standpoint. In this light, the popes were able to continue their direct and indirect interferences in the politics of the sovereigns.

2. Women's place in the Middle Ages

With belief in the word of St. Paul that the husband is the head of the wife, the Christians of the Middle Ages instructed the congregation in this proposition, compelling them to comply with the code of chastity and frugality as a norm.

Church made every attempt to exclude beauty from the apparel of women as if they were firmly based on a theoretical reasoning, reflecting their interpretation of the Genesis. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were both naked and not ashamed. Eve was also naked but unashamed in the Garden of Eden without wearing even a veil. But when Adam and Eve fell, the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked. And then God drove them out of the Garden. They put on animal hide garments and fled. Ever since, garments symbolized the end of the innate divinity possessed by human, and instead his entrance into the animal world.

Tertullianus who developed a theory about a lock of human hair thought that a lock of a

woman was a barometer of good behavior and bad behavior of hers. He thought a look of a woman can tell as to whether there is God or not in the inner personality of her.

Thus the Middle Ages society devalued women, viewing them as if they had been the prime movers of evil. Under such circumstance, the embellishment of their dress had to be subject to the strict censorship of the church, because the church considered the outward decoration or adoration as a radical deviation from the intrinsic human attribution.

3. The beauty viewed through the Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages

Gothic architecture implied a transition stage of the trend of architecture from the Middle Ages characteristic of the predominance of the church into a period of relatively liberal and secularist Renaissance. It was the Gothic architecture that was able to contrast in dialectical method the Middle Ages society predominantly under the influence of religious faith, cool-headed reason, and the closed monastery lifestyle with the freewheeling life of expanding urban society of the new period.

The Notre Dame de Paris, a typical French architecture was built in the early Gothic period. The ceiling of the inner nave, which is constituted mainly in rib vault, is so high as to reach 32m to the pinnacle of the arch. Over the western stereo-bate is located the central entrance which has a large wheel window and twin towers are set up one on its either side. At the point of their intersection is set up a small but tall fleche instead of a tower.

Unlike the Romanesque architecture, which is construed as being tied up to, the ground, the Gothic architecture has a form of soaring up toward the heaven. In other words, the Romanesque architecture sprawls in horizontal development, whereas the Gothic architecture soars up in vertical development. Gothic architect felt free in his attempt to make a creative designing in accordance with his talent and imagination.

4. Hairstyles of the Middle Ages

Throughout the entire Middle Ages, women had to cover their head when they go out of doors. This coercion was rooted deep in the intention of the Middle Ages people to live up to the instruction given by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, saying "And every woman who rays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head — it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head."

They began to use veils of covering head in various ways in the times of the knights. Not only they did turn the veils about their head like a turban, but did also put the veils round the most part of lower half of their faces. In accordance with the method of wearing of the veil, they classified the method as either 'Hulle,' or 'Riese,' or 'Gebende.' Most of the women used to cover their heads with thin veils of fine silk or linen. The length of veil was various. Some were as long as to trail on the ground. Particularly, it was prerequisite for women to wear veil in the church. They could never enter the church without wearing veil.

By 1440, hair decoration was more emphasized. In line with the trend of seeing a woman

with broad forehead as a beauty, they attempted to shave their brows and comb up their hair high above and then put on crowns decorated with precious stones. Their faces were like sculptures of ivory or plaster. Their hair ornaments were beautiful in harmony with broad foreheads and delicate necklines.

These hair ornaments were rather expressive of chastity, which became replaced by extraordinary hair decorations by around the end of the 14th century. It was hennin. Hennin had originally been a hair ornament in a shape of cone type envelope with a sharp top. Hennin was made of expensive cloth and its top was always decorated with soft feeling transparent veils of various lengths. Sometimes, a long veil of 300-360cm would drag to or trail on the ground, The popularity of hennin was never diminished at the times. People in the northern France continued to use it in many kinds of folk apparel until recent time.

Conclusion

During the Gothic era, there was a period when all the emperors and kings of Europe were ruled by the papacy supported by the ever-growing power of the church. Under such a religious atmosphere, the publics and kings and nobles alike were compelled to seek for a method of expressing their sense of beauty. In other word, they had to lead a frugal and ascetic life under the religious restrictions. However, they had economically sufficient room to express their needs for beauty. This is a good example that although women were coerced to cover up their hairs with veil or hat as a token to repent to their original sin, they had rather made good use of them to express their limitless desires for beauty.

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