



Extended essay cover

Candidates must complete this page and then give this cover and their final version of the extended essay to their supervisor.

Candidate session number

Candidate name

School name

Examination session (May or November)

MAY

Year

2015

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: WORLD RELIGION

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: Uncovering Head Coverings: What Role Do Head Coverings Play for Women in the Three Abrahamic Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism?

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____

Date: January 12, 2015

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Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

When _____ decided to write on this topic, an intense debate was underway in Quebec over the rights of certain groups to "display religious symbols", including the wearing of hijab. This debate stimulated her interest in understanding the significance of head covering for women practicing the Muslim faith, which she then broadened into this essay. In addition to utilizing the nearby general university libraries, she visited the library of the Atlantic School of Theology a number of times. While I am her school librarian and not her supervisor (who is now retired), I am also the EE Coordinator and can attest to her meeting of deadlines and her overall commitment to the process. World Religion is not taught at our school.

This student completed the viva voce process; this essay uses Chicago Turabian citation.

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I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

As per the section entitled "Responsibilities of the Supervisor" in the EE guide, the recommended number of hours spent with candidates is between 3 and 5 hours. Schools will be contacted when the number of hours is left blank, or where 0 hours are stated and there lacks an explanation. Schools will also be contacted in the event that number of hours spent is significantly excessive compared to the recommendation.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: Feb 24, 2015

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number		
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Achievement level

Criteria	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3
A research question	2	2		2	
B introduction	2	2		2	
C investigation	3	4		4	
D knowledge and understanding	3	4		4	
E reasoned argument	2	4		4	
F analysis and evaluation	2	4		4	
G use of subject language	3	4		4	
H conclusion	2	2		2	
I formal presentation	3	4		4	
J abstract	0	2		2	
K holistic judgment	3	4		4	
Total out of 36	25				

Name of examiner 1: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

Name of examiner 2: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

Name of examiner 3: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: _____

IB Assessment Centre use only: B: _____

IB Assessment Centre use only: A: _____

Uncovering Head Coverings: What Role Do Head Coverings Play for Women in the
Three Abrahamic Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism?

Extended Essay in World Religions

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Abstract

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The practice of women of the three Abrahamic faiths covering their heads is a controversial topic in the media. In order to formulate and assess one's own opinion on this practice, one must first be educated on the significance of the practice to the women of these religions. Although it is more apparent to the world that Muslim women wear head coverings, so do women of the other two Abrahamic faiths. Jewish women cover their hair with less obvious coverings. Women of the Christian faith cover their heads to a lesser extent than Muslim and Jewish women with the exception of certain Christian sects and communities.

The question that will be investigated is "what role do head coverings play for women in the three Abrahamic faiths: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity?" This question will be examined by evaluating why and how head coverings uphold traditions, show piety, and promote modesty.

Through the analysis of this question, it will be concluded that head coverings are essential for devoted women of the three Abrahamic faiths.

Method?

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Introduction

The practice of head covering is a cryptic case of what many uninformed people see as female oppression caused by religious obedience. Although that may be true in certain situations, head coverings mean so much more to multitudes of faithful women. Women in many religious groups and communities choose to cover their heads because that is what they see as an outward sign of their religious observance. **Thus, the question being investigated is “what role do head coverings play for women in the three Abrahamic faiths: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity?”**

In order to answer this question, definitions of the terms tradition, piety, and modesty are necessary; these are the lenses through which the question will be examined and answered. Tradition is defined as: “the sum of all the processes whereby insights and skills that have been acquired and institutions that have been established are handed down from generation to generation; and then the sum of all that has been thus handed down. Tradition ensures the continuance of what has been once begun, and through the wisdom and experience of one’s ancestors gives one a perspective in which to classify and evaluate new experiences.”¹ Next, “piety, or godliness, is another name for personal religion, consists of a firm belief, and in right conceptions of the being, perfections, and providence of God: with suitable affections to him, resemblance of his moral perfection, and a constant obedience to his will.”² Lastly, modesty is: “sometimes used to denote humility, and sometimes to express chastity . . . modesty, therefore, consists in purity of

¹ *Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), s.v. “tradition.”

² *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 10 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), s.v. “piety.”

sentiment and manners, inclining us to fear doing anything which will justly incur censure.”³

It is important to understand why the practice of head covering is an essential part of life for many women of the three Abrahamic faiths. It is necessary to recognise this and to be educated on the subject so that one may comprehend that it is a breach of human rights when this practice is being questioned and particularly when it is decreed illegal by the state for women of certain faiths to cover their heads.

Head coverings are a significant factor in daily life for devoted Muslim, Jewish, and Christian women because they uphold traditions, show piety, and promote modesty.

Islam

In Islam, head covering is a very common practice, and it is clear whether a woman is covering her head or not. There are many different forms of coverings, which have different names and vary by geographical region and the level of devotion to Islam. The hijab, which is the form of covering being examined, is the modest form of dress including a veil that Muslim women wear, which involves covering her body except for her hands and face.

Uphold Traditions

Islamic head coverings show that the wearer takes pride in upholding traditions. Veiling can be traced back to pre-Islamic times in the Mediterranean and Mesopotamian areas. At that time, women wore hair coverings as a cultural tradition for the purpose of modesty. Islam later adopted this concept of women covering their heads because so many women already did so. Controversially interpreted verses from the Qur’an “calls

³ *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, s.v. “modesty.”

for women to cover their adornments” and “asks women to throw their head covering over their bosoms.”⁴ It is uncertain when or why veiling was adopted into the Islamic faith as a mandatory part of women’s attire. Veiling was simply a common element of society that was noted by Qur’anic commentators. The commentator’s recordings could have then been interpreted to mean that because so many women were covering themselves, it was a compulsory component of being a Muslim woman.

Unlike the pre-Islamic era, women were independent and were considered equal to men during the Prophet’s time; “it is not only in the Qur’an but in the words and deeds of its transmitter – the most ‘beautiful role model’ for Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad – that woman is treated with affection and respect.”⁵ Then, during the ninth to thirteenth centuries in urban Islamic society, female slavery became widespread and women were regarded differently by society.⁶ This affected the writings of Islamic commentators because they subconsciously included gender prejudices, which were part of their societies, in their writings, and as a result, interpreted the parts of the Qur’an mentioning women differently.⁷ This is significant because it can help to explain why the veil was

⁴ Farha Temikar, “*Hijab* and the Abrahamic Traditions: A Comparative Analysis of the Muslim Veil,” *Sociology Compass* 3, no. 5 (2009): 755, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00237.x/pdf> (accessed November 1, 2013).

⁵ Soraya Hajjaji-Jarrah, “Women’s Modesty in Qur’anic Commentaries: The Founding Discourse,” in *The Muslim Veil in North America: Issues and Debates*, ed. Sajida Sultana Alvi, Homa Hoodfar, and Sheila McDonough (Toronto: Women’s Press, 2003), 156.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁷ *Ibid.*

introduced; veiling may have been seen as a way of oppressing women so that men could have more power regardless of what the Qur'an actually decrees about women.

“Today both Muslims and non-Muslims are of the belief that the term *hijāb* refers to the style of clothing prescribed by the Qur'an for all adult Muslim women.”⁸ This is not the meaning of the hijab as expressed in the Qur'an; “everywhere else in the Qur'an, the term *hijāb* . . . retains the connotations of either a physical or metaphorical barrier without any reference to women or their clothing.”⁹ The Qur'an uses the term within the context of creating a barrier between God and the people and between Muslim people and nonbelievers. Therefore, the current meaning of the hijab is actually different from during Muhammad's time; it seems that based on the Qur'an, the hijab is not related to clothing as was thought during the Prophet's age.¹⁰ This draws the conclusion that the way the hijab is currently referred to, as the near to total concealment of a women's body, especially her head, is most likely not derived from religious tradition but simply from what was accepted as normal fashion in ancient Islam.

Show Piety

Showing piety is another reason why Muslim women veil. Out of the seven times that the term hijab is used in the Qur'an, it is only used once in the context of women and their modesty.¹¹ The Qur'an says that if you should ask the Prophet's wives for something, that you should first veil yourself from them because of their extraordinary

⁸ Hajjaji-Jarrah, 183-184.

⁹ Ibid., 184.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

status, which forces them to obey certain formalities.¹² Although it cannot be proven undoubtedly correct that early Muslim women wore the hijab as a sign of piety, there are commentaries on the Qur'an from shortly after Muhammad's life that appear to support the idea that coverings were for religious reasons or at least worn specifically by Muslim women and not by non-Muslims. In the Qur'an, it is expressed that female believers should bring their cloaks in closer so that they can be distinguished from nonbelievers and therefore not be attacked by the Hypocrites.¹³ The Hypocrites would harass Muslim women and then say that they did so because they thought that they were slaves not devoted believers. The hijab is a noticeable way of expressing a woman's Muslim identity and maintaining the values of modest dress.

Promote Modesty

Islamic veils and head coverings are a significant part of devoted women's lives because they promote modesty. It is quite controversial even amongst Muslim women who do veil what the true meaning and reasoning is for covering themselves.¹⁴ Some think that Muslim females should not have to wear the hijab if it is for the purpose of hiding their bodies from men because men should be able to control their passion and contain themselves. The veil shields women from unwanted attention from men. Only with all family members or only females can a Muslim woman be seen without her hijab; in the presence of anyone else, she is only allowed to show her hands and face. The hijab

¹² Hajjaji-Jarrah, 184.

¹³ Ibid, 191-192.

¹⁴ Ternikar, 755.

is not worn until the female has reached puberty because that is when she becomes a woman.

Interviews conducted with women during the 1980s resurgence discuss veiling as a way of confirming a woman's identity and values. In Ahmed's *A Quiet Revolution*, she recounts interviews conducted with various Muslim women asking them about their experiences and reasons for starting to wear the hijab again when for so long veiling had not been popular with North American Muslim women. Many women said that they wore the hijab to show that they valued modesty especially when living in the Western world.¹⁵ Others said that people showed respect for them and did not harass them when they were wearing the hijab. The interviewers did not find a connection between an increase in religious observance and the increase in wearing the hijab at this time.¹⁶ The reason for this sudden increase was because more women wanted to affirm their Muslim identities to show that they were being a good mother and a good wife because that is what being Muslim meant to them.

After 9/11, Western Muslim women's wearing of the hijab varied. Some women stopped wearing it as many North Americans saw the hijab as a symbol of what happened; whereas, others still wear it with pride because they are committed to their religion and want to outwardly show modesty through their form of dress.¹⁷ In a 2007 study, it was "found that many young American Muslim women choose to wear the hijab

¹⁵ Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 119-122.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ternikar, 757.

during their college years, and emphasize modesty as the reason why.”¹⁸ Although the reason for needing modesty in dress is debatable, Muslim women still see it as a fundamental part of their religious observance.

The original reasons for Islam adopting veiling may never be known, but Muslim women still see value in covering their heads for modesty because it shows that they are in fact Muslim and take pride in their religion.

Judaism

For Jewish women, head coverings are an influential part of how they see themselves and how they show their values and religious beliefs. Jewish women can cover their heads with anything from a small headband to a wig with another covering over it. For many women, the amount of hair being covered does not matter, rather, what the head covering shows about them and their religious devotion is what is important.

Uphold Traditions

Head coverings maintain and uphold traditions for Jewish women. Hair is considered to be an adornment to enhance a woman’s appearance. In the Talmud, women’s hair is described as being not just beautiful, but also as erotic.¹⁹ “The attraction of a women’s hair is poetically expressed in the Biblical Song of Songs: ‘Your hair is like

¹⁸ Ternikar, 757-758.

¹⁹ Leila Leah Bronner, “From Veil to Wig: Jewish Women’s Hair Covering,” *Judaism* 42, no. 4 (Fall 1993): 466, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=0a05f78a-f343-4a31-9a04-4a12551fff93%40sessionmgr4005&vid=2&hid=4201> (accessed November 1, 2013).

a flock of goats from Gilead' (6:5)".²⁰ This is the principle reasoning behind why women must cover their hair.

In the laws of the captive woman is the only place in the Torah that expresses a woman's hair being cut.²¹ The woman's head was shaved at the beginning of her captivity; this was potentially to make her look less attractive with the hopes that she would be freed. This shaving of the woman's head was over time translated into a form of modesty.²²

Hair covering in post-Biblical Judaism signifies a transition from youth into womanhood, but is not worn at the beginning of puberty and menstruation, rather, once the woman has been married. It does not likely symbolize a transition like this in the bible.

Some modern Orthodox women do not believe in head coverings to show modesty, yet they still cover because they feel that it is tradition, or in some cases, something inside them makes them feel the desire to wear a type of head covering.²³

Show Piety

²⁰ Bronner, 466.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Valeria Seigelshifer and Tova Hartman, "From *Tichels* to Hair Bands: Modern Orthodox Women and the Practice of Head Covering," *Women's Studies International Forum* 34, no. 5 (June 2011): 355-356, http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0277539511000835/1-s2.0-S0277539511000835-main.pdf?_tid=1aa53bb8-56d9-11e3-8042-00000aacb35f&acdnat=1385497800_aba1a62828beebaa763771679e67cad9 (accessed November 26, 2013).

Jewish women can show piety through the act of covering their hair. It is still debated whether or not head coverings were a matter of custom that then became Rabbinic law or if it is Pentateuchal law. Covering a woman's hair is an obligatory law, Halakha, in Orthodox Judaism, such as for Hasidic Jews.²⁴ In Orthodox communities, especially in Israel, it is widely seen that hair covering is an obligatory law, but it is argued how much must be covered to truly show devotion.²⁵ Some sects practice that all hair must be absolutely covered; whereas, many women allow a hand's width of hair to be shown. This has "come to represent an implicit measure of the woman's adherence to religious law."²⁶ It may be argued that in order to show true piety, a woman must cover all of her hair, but the purpose of the head covering is mainly to honour God by showing the woman's modesty and that she is only sexually available to one man; therefore, if the majority of her hair is being covered then she is essentially fulfilling the purpose of the head covering.

Promote Modesty

Modesty through dress is also an important part of life for many Jewish women. To cover one's head after marriage is a commandment in "the Talmud [which] states: 'Cover your head in order that the fear of heaven may be upon you' (Shabbat, 156b)."²⁷ Hair covering is part of "Tzniut, which refers to a set of guiding principles that dictate the

²⁴ Seigelshifer and Hartman, 351.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 357.

appropriate way to dress and behave.”²⁸ They also show that a woman is married and that she is not sexually available to another man. The amount of hair being covered varies and depends on the community that the woman is living in, but many women argue that it does not matter how much of their hair is covered, all that matters is that they wear some type of covering to signify that they are Orthodox and married. Hair coverings also cover a part of a woman that is considered very erotic; some feel that hair is part of a woman’s genitalia.²⁹ Coverings are protection from the dangers of men and promiscuity; they also shield the men from being seduced by women and violating the laws of conduct, which is especially important during prayer.

In traditional Orthodox Judaism, women are not supposed to be seen in public often. Young unmarried women are allowed outside their homes without head coverings, but are then protected from other men by their fathers.³⁰ The practice of Jewish women covering their hair is not as widespread as it was before the 1950s when the wig died out, but it is more difficult to tell if a woman is indeed covering her hair if she is wearing a wig.

Hair covering is supposed to show modesty to avoid sexual attention from males and show the inner qualities of a woman, but this places more sexual emphasis on the

²⁸ Seigelshifer and Hartman, 351.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Mark Finney, “Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 in Its Social Context,” *Journal for the New Testament* 33, no. 1 (2010): 42, <http://jnt.sagepub.com/content/33/1/31.full.pdf+html> (accessed November 26, 2013).

hair.³¹ Because women's hair must be hidden, it becomes sexualized and more attractive to men. Jewish women are allowed to cover their hair with wigs and only reveal their hair to their husband. Although many rabbis have argued that this defeats the purpose of covering as the wig looks like normal hair, this is exactly the reason why so many women prefer the wig. Many women appreciate this law because they can show modesty and at the same time, appear to have attractive hair.

Christianity

Although it is not as common as it was in the past, head coverings are still worn by certain Christian women. These women believe in the reasons for coverings that were so important before the 1950s when they started to become less widespread. Anabaptists and many Catholic nuns still see value in covering their heads. Orthodox and Traditionalist Catholics, and some very conservative Protestant churches, also tend to cover, but only when praying; they are no longer an integral part of life even for traditional women.

Uphold Traditions

When Christian women wear head coverings, it demonstrates that they value upholding traditions. Changing fashions and modesty norms likely caused the end of everyday veiling. It is also less popular because of the controversy over different interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11. Because of the controversy that these verses hold, it is probable that women just started thinking that head coverings were not that important

³¹ Melanie Landau, "Re-Covering Women as Religious Subject: Reflections on Jewish Women and Hair-Covering," *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 22 (2008), <http://www.questiaschool.com/read/1G1-198354452/re-covering-woman-as-religious-subject-reflections> (accessed November 20, 2013).

or necessary because Paul was not clear in what exactly he meant in those verses. But, many women, particularly in Europe, still see the value of covering their heads.

Amish women use dress to show modesty, dedication to God, and that they value following traditions. They must cover their heads, beginning at age four, as dictated by the Ordnung, “which prescribe the religious norms and social structure of their daily lives.”³² The Ordnung varies between different communities and levels of orthodoxy. Old Order Amish communities are considered more orthodox than other Amish communities. Old Order women must wear a black bonnet and a white prayer cap when in public. Along with modest clothing, “the bonnet [is worn] to follow the biblical notion of ‘shamefacedness’.”³³ Headscarves were an addition to the Amish clothing evolution in the past century, which were introduced so that women could more comfortably continue their work while still showing devotion.³⁴ Although it is true that head coverings and modesty in Amish dress are derived from the Bible, for many Amish women, it is more because this is a traditional part of their lifestyle that provokes them to dress this way rather than because of the Bible verses; “Amish clothing has remained relatively unchanged for nearly a century.”³⁵ Amish women have kept their heads

³² Ternikar, 760.

³³ Jennifer Heath, ed., *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 93.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

covered throughout time because of 1 Corinthians 11, where women are instructed to always be praying and to cover their heads especially when in prayer.³⁶

Show Piety

Head coverings can also show piety for Christian women. They are a cover between God and women and must always be worn while in prayer as decreed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 are the verses of the New Testament that address women's head coverings. The true meaning of these controversially interpreted verses has been greatly debated, but most notably by Tertullian of Carthage. In his work *On the Veiling of Virgins*, Tertullian discusses this matter at length. He argues that virgin women should cover their heads and their "flesh" to desexualize themselves.³⁷ Tertullian recounts that virgin women unveiled themselves when entering church because of their misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; they believed that "their unveiling as an indicator that through sexual continence, their flesh . . . no longer signals shame or invites others to sin."³⁸ He believed virgins did this because they thought that Paul was not addressing virgins when advising women to cover their heads; in his opinion this was a misinterpretation even though it was common for female virgins to not cover their head in Carthage.³⁹ These verses in 1 Corinthians 11 are quite controversially interpreted and

³⁶ Heath, 95.

³⁷ Carly Daniel-Hughes, "Wear the Armor of Your Shame!': Debating Veiling and the Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage," *Studies in Religion* 39, no. 2 (2010): 186, <http://sir.sagepub.com/content/39/2/179.full.pdf+html> (accessed December 11, 2013).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

Paul's true meaning is still uncertain, but Tertullian is considered to be the father of Latin Christianity and the founder of western theology, so even though his interpretation may not be the true meaning, it was what was most widely accepted during his time and is still accepted by many today. Tertullian also comments on how Genesis 2 "insisted that men's uncovered heads and women's covered heads reflect the hierarchal order of creation, where women fall below men."⁴⁰ This is also supported by 1 Corinthians 11:8-10: "for man is not from woman, but woman from man; and man was not created on account of the woman, but woman on account of the man. Because of this the woman ought to have authority on her head, because of the angels."⁴¹

Nuns used to literally take the veil when they made their vows. Prior to the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, wearing the habit and veil was part of what defined a Roman Catholic nun. They represent a life devoted to God and show the modesty that Paul decreed necessary for religious women. Since the "Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life" was written, wearing the habit was no longer mandatory, but it urged women to still dress conservatively and for "woman who take the veil [to] do so as an intentional act of devotion and commitment to Christ."⁴² Many nuns were outraged and overwhelmed that this decree was made as it went against Pauline theology and what had been the practice for Roman Catholic nuns since medieval times. Others felt liberated

⁴⁰ Daniel-Hughes, 186.

⁴¹ Susan Calef, "Kaphalē, Coverings, and Cosmology: The Impenetrable 'Logic' of Corinthians 11:2-16," In "Women, Gender, and Religion," ed. Ronald A. Simpkin. *Journal of Religion & Society* 5 (2009): 21, <http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2009/2009-26.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2013).

⁴² Heath, 85.

to still wear modest clothing and not what was considered the traditional nuns' attire.⁴³ Nuns were even known to move and change orders so that they could belong to a stricter convent that adhered to the traditional dress codes because they believed that it is part of a nun's way of life to wear the traditional veil and habit.⁴⁴ By the 1970s, certain nuns began to stop even wearing the veil.⁴⁵ In the years following Vatican II, many nuns stopping veiling because they did not want that to be their identity, rather, they wanted to be recognized for their commitment to the church even though they still recognized veiling as an important part of their traditions. In the United States, "currently, there are an increasing number of women joining orders in full habit" also "conservative orders where old traditions are emphasized are the only ones seeing real growth in membership and a decline in the average age of members."⁴⁶ So, although it may not be immediately apparent to the public, head coverings are still considered principal to life for a great number of devote Roman Catholic women because of Paul's decrees.

Promote Modesty

Head coverings are seen to promote modesty in the Christian faith as well. From the early third century C.E., Tertullian of Carthage was a prolific Christian writer. Daniel-Hughes writes, "*On the Veiling of Virgins* . . . presents unveiling as a dangerous

⁴³ Heath, 78.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 85.

lapse in Christian women's modesty."⁴⁷ Since Tertullian's time, the matter of head coverings has been debated and is still controversial. Tertullian believed that all women must cover their heads, particularly virgins, because the head represented the genitalia; "we have Tertullian who imagines that the veil is like a military encasement, an 'armor of shame,' protecting against the intrusion of lust transmitted through the gaze. The veil is uniquely suited to this task, he insists."⁴⁸ Tertullian wrote of Christian women's modest dress throughout his works; to him "like a women's ostentatious adornment, the virgins' unveiling appears as a display of vainglory and honor that is undeserved."⁴⁹ The veil was clearly seen very differently by distinct people, and *On the Veiling of Virgins* is regarded as a work that truly shows Tertullian's misogyny, but it also demonstrates that the church saw the veil as a way of promoting modesty because they believed that an uncovered head lured men into sin by its sexual connotations.

Some sects of Christianity also consider hair to be a covering. In Amish communities, women are not permitted to cut their hair because it is seen as another symbol of modesty; women's hair must also be longer than men's.

Modesty, as expressed through women's attire in the church, is most apparent in the Mormon, Amish, and Mennonite sects, but does also still play a role in the dress of Roman Catholic nuns.

Conclusion

⁴⁷ Daniel-Hughes, 180.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 181.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 186.

Head coverings are an important element of daily life for devoted Muslim, Jewish, and Christian women because they uphold traditions, show piety, and promote modesty. In the Muslim faith, the main purpose of wearing the hijab is for a woman to conceal herself from males in order to show modesty. It is not as obvious if a Jewish woman is covering her hair, but many worshippers still do cover their hair. Within conservative and orthodox Christian communities, women also cover their heads, but in most cases, only in church or when praying at home with the exception of nuns and Anabaptist groups, who do so for many reasons other than those expressed in this argument. Head coverings in the three Abrahamic faiths play very similar roles with slight differences in what the most influential aspects are, but to the women who do cover their head, all the reasons are quite important.

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This is a well written, well organized essay but it is largely descriptive. It does not go deeper than a basic comparative account of stated reasons for the practice discussed.