

Constructing gender through body customization

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Customizing the Body Journal When I reflect on my dressing style, I get to introspect with the manner in which I project myself to others and also how people perceive me as a person. My opinion about myself is that I like to present myself as a casual and outgoing person, and I do not indulge too much into makeup. My selection of clothes is not always dependent on choice of brand since I like to pick up anything that suits my mood and personality. However, my love for clothes is evident from the fact that I shop very often and try to experiment with different styles. Today, mostly everyone is eager to make their distinct style statements. The same goes for me as I try to combine different styles of clothing along with different accessories. The way we dress portrays our self-identity and thus when we choose a dressing style we have control over the way we want to present our personality. Moreover, my dressing style has impact on my emotions. For instance, I prefer to wear light color clothes as they keep me calm while tight-fitting clothes make me uncomfortable and impatient.

1. It is a fact that the way a person dresses and adorns their body reflects the personal beliefs of that person. In society, the personality of a person is manifested in their dressing sense and it helps other people to characterize them by interpreting their behavior and attitude, and this becomes significant in the context of social gatherings. It has become a practice to stereotype people according to their dress like those who are well-dressed are considered as happy, optimistic, outgoing, and financially affluent (Sanders, 2009, p. 1).

When I reflect on my personal beliefs I realize that they get reflected in the way I dress. My casual attitude consists of leggings and cool t-shirts along

with natural makeup that indicates my belief that everyone looks best with physical features with which they were born. Therefore I refrain from coloring my hair or having tattoos on my body. I also do not generally apply heavy makeup on my eyes with bright colors of eyeshadow as I believe that takes away the natural look of my facial features. A stranger will most probably consider me as a laid-back person with a casual sense of fashion.

2. The core beliefs and values of my family lay in their broad minded perspective of modern day fashion. The elder members of my family are aware of changing trends in fashion and they do not usually provide unsolicited advice to the younger generation. However, the young people of my family do not indulge in vulgar dressing styles and try to maintain family culture in the way they dress. One thing that I find positive regarding my family is that they carry an open mind and tend to accept the trends in modern times like tattooing and body piercing. My family members do not generally make assumptions about a person's behavior by their sense of dressing as they consider that everyone should dress in the manner that makes them happy. Moreover, I share my family's views about natural style which is evident by the fact that my mother is against hair coloring or body piercing. However, she has never imposed her views on me and allows me to express my beliefs through my dressing style.

3. The core beliefs and values of my peers and colleagues are somewhat different from my family. I have seen many people in my community overindulging in the current trend of body piercing and tattooing in different parts of their body. Many of my peers tend to wear revealing clothes just to show off the tattoos that they so religiously wear mostly on their shoulders

and nape. However, one thing that I like about my community is that even though they have different approach towards dress they emphasize on acceptance. Therefore, I do not feel out of place in the company with my peers. My conservative dressing style is not considered as a point against socializing with me.

4. Orlan is known for doing surgeries in different parts of her body to alter her natural physical features. She even insists on remaining conscious during her operations to orchestrate the actions. She also remains exposed to risks of paralysis or death which she remains ready to embrace due to her goal to make her physical appearance more attractive (Sanders, 2009). Orlan's practice of manipulating with her body has a negative impact on the society as people tend to consider her psychologically and socially retarded. She also fuels those critics who argue that distorting natural body can have physical and psychological repercussions. Although the common view is that she is endorsing female submission by manipulating with her body, she insists that she is protesting against society's tendency to discourage aggressiveness in women. She desires to become someone who represents everything that a man desires in a woman even at the cost of risky operations. However, this gives rise to the question whether masochism is a valid reason for esthetic intention. Orlan emphasizes much on media interpretation as she focuses on public feedback of her body image. Given the fact that most common people have little knowledge of art, it can be said that Orlan's body manipulations are anything but art.

Reference

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