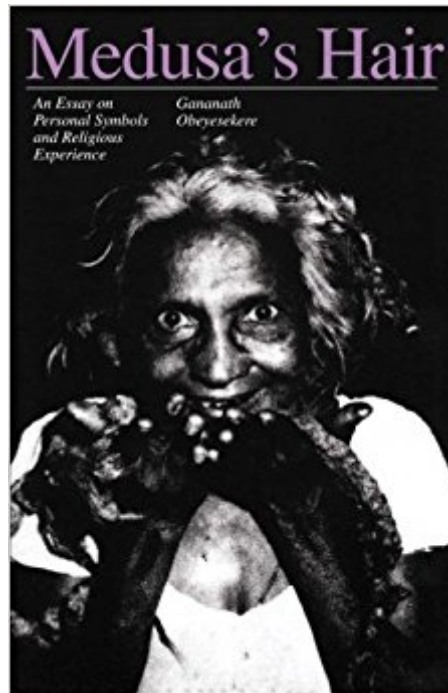




Ebook Directory
the best source of ebook

The book was found

Medusa's Hair: An Essay On Personal Symbols And Religious Experience



Synopsis

The great pilgrimage center of southeastern Sri Lanka, Kataragama, has become in recent years the spiritual home of a new class of Hindu-Buddhist religious devotees. These ecstatic priests and priestesses invariably display long locks of matted hair, and they express their devotion to the gods through fire walking, tongue-piercing, hanging on hooks, and trance-induced prophesying. The increasing popularity of these ecstasies poses a challenge not only to orthodox Sinhala Buddhism (the official religion of Sri Lanka) but also, as Gananath Obeyesekere shows, to the traditional anthropological and psychoanalytic theories of symbolism. Focusing initially on one symbol, matted hair, Obeyesekere demonstrates that the conventional distinction between personal and cultural symbols is inadequate and naive. His detailed case studies of ecstasies show that there is always a reciprocity between the personal-psychological dimension of the symbol and its public, culturally sanctioned role. *Medusa's Hair* thus makes an important theoretical contribution both to the anthropology of individual experience and to the psychoanalytic understanding of culture. In its analyses of the symbolism of guilt, the adaptational and integrative significance of belief in spirits, and a host of related issues concerning possession states and religiosity, this book marks a provocative advance in psychological anthropology.

Book Information

Paperback: 232 pages

Publisher: University Of Chicago Press; New edition edition (September 15, 1984)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0226616010

ISBN-13: 978-0226616018

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 13 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #303,997 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in [Books > History > World > Religious > Hinduism](#) #76 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Hinduism > Rituals & Practice](#) #318 in [Books > History > Asia > India](#)

Customer Reviews

What is most rewarding with this book, is the cultural/cognitive analysis done by the author.

Obeyesekere explains how the women with matted hair (in an Indian province) obtain their particular status in a society brimming with mythological images and tales very much pervading daily life. Very

Freudian in his approach when recording the life stories of the women (allowances has to be made for this) and subsequently how these trajectories have formed the women, the author demonstrates how the women are able to explain what has happened to them by sharing the society's knowledge of the religious myths. By drawing on these myths, and their images, the women can manipulate and appropriate these images when accounting for how they got their matted hair, and consequently the sacred character of their being. So long as their account is identifiable and compatible with commonly held knowledge of the religious myths and tales, they are plausible and deemed valid by the community. Should a tale prove unidentifiable with the body of myths and characteristics of spirits, one may very well be described as plain ol' crazy. I feel that the fundamental argument of the book is how intimate knowledge of the mythological content of the culture, and the successful manipulation of this, leads to an elevation of social status, whereas in western societies, the long since (by and large) eradication of these beliefs (in lack of a better word) will most certainly lead a person with similar symptoms destined for a diagnosis of mental illness or -unstability. This is the strongest argument in the book, one that is firmly supported by the analysis, notwithstanding the reservations one might have towards traditional psychoanalysis. It's not a light read, but getting into the cultural analysis might be a sweet reward.

Having read *Medusa's Hair* as part of my University coursework, I was very impressed. Most of the books we are asked to read are fairly dull but this book really captivated me. Obeyesekere's personal opinions on the subject of matted hair in Sri Lankan women attending the festival at Kataragama was fascinating. He has a great way of putting across his own opinion and whilst he makes a great bridge between Weber's and Freud's philosophical standpoints, he very effectively shows his position across to the reader. This may seem like a difficult book to comprehend but once read will be greatly admired.

An interesting read, but not for the casual reader. This text is a pretty advanced look at the religious beliefs and practices held in a number of Eastern countries. The writer becomes fascinated with the practice of matted hair exhibited in a number of female priestesses. He likens this matting to Medusa's hair and begins to wonder at some of the Freudian psychosexual rationalizations that could be put into play to explain the phenomena. Obeyesekere explores his theory through a number of case studies and eventually comes to what will undoubtedly be a very startling conclusion for the Western eye. I believe this book would be best suited for small discussion due to its advanced academic nature.

Speedy delivery, but I did not enjoy this book very much. It's very hard to get through.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience Hair Loss: Hair Loss Solutions for Beginners - Hair Loss Basic Guide - Hair Loss Cure (Hair Loss Protocol - Hair Loss Black Book - Hair Loss for Dummies 1) Hair Loss Prevention: #1 Hair Loss Prevention And Reversal Techniques, Methods, Treatments And Remedies (Hair Loss, Hair Loss Cure, Hair Loss In Women, ... Protocol, Hair Loss Black book, Baldness) 100 Tips For Hair Loss: How to Deal With Hair Loss and Assist Your Hair Growth (hair loss, hair growth, alopecia, grow hair, baldness, balding) Hair Loss Cure & Treatment: Prevention & Effective Natural Regrowth Methods (Hair Loss Prevention, Hair Loss Treatment, Hair Loss Cure, Hair Loss For Men, Hair Regrowth, Self Help) Hair Loss: 5 Easy Steps To Stop and Prevent Hair Loss (hair loss, hair care, bald, beauty care, personal hygiene, natural health remedies, personal health care) Hair Loss: How it Happens and How to Fix It (Hair Loss, beauty and fashion, hair, loss, aging parents, hair growth, healthy hair) The Men's Hair Book: A Male's Guide To Hair Care, Hair Styles, Hair Grooming, Hair Products and Rocking It All Without The Baloney Hair Loss Cure: Everything You Need to Know About Hair Loss, Hair Loss Prevention, Hair Re-growth and Hair Loss Treatments (Hairloss treatment) Hair Loss Explained - Natural Solutions for Hair Loss and Premature Balding: (Natural Hair Care, Hair Loss, Scalp Treatments, Balding, Cure, Going Bald, Remedies) Hair Loss Solutions for Men: How to Cheat Hair Loss for Life (Hair Loss Solutions: How to Cheat Hair Loss for Life Book 1) Hair Styling Guide: Hair Care For African American And Bi-Racial Children: Quickly style, grow and maintain healthier more beautiful African American and Bi-racial hair in record time. How To Stop Hair Loss Naturally: Learn various ways to stop your hair loss and regrow your hair without the use of expensive and harmful drugs Hair Loss: The Ultimate Resource of Tried and Tested Solutions for Hair Loss and the Maintenance of Healthy Hair Grow African American Hair Long - 7 Days To Faster Growing Hair: Grow Hair Fast Methods and Natural Treatments for Balding Why Am I Losing My Hair? Diabetes & Hair Loss: Diabetes and Hair Loss The HairCell Program - Unique No-cost Hair Loss Treatment: How to Keep Your Hair Healthy and Naturally Manage Hair loss Back On Track - Fighting Hair Loss At Home, How To Prevent And Cure Hair Loss Using Home Remedies, Grow Your Hair Thicker Naturally! Hair Loss: Hair Loss Treatment, Hair Restoration, and More! Classic Hairstyles for Men - An Illustrated Guide To Men's Hair Style, Hair Care & Hair Products

[Contact Us](#)

[DMCA](#)

[Privacy](#)

[FAQ & Help](#)