

Trick-or-Treat: The History of Hallowe'en

by Rebecca Shorten

I love Hallowe'en.

It is one of the few holidays when we're not expected to send a card or give a present (although free candy is always nice). It is fun to see the people we see everyday dress up in weird costumes they invented themselves. But where did this crazy tradition come from?

Well, it all started a couple thousand years ago with the Celtic festival of Samhain (Sow-in). Samhain is the Celtic New Year and was celebrated on November 1, and also signified the end of summer when harvests came in from the fields and food was stored for the long, dreary winter months. This day was also associated with death because this was the time of year when the veil between the living and the dead becomes thinner and the spirits return to the earth to wander and cause havoc with the living on October 31. Some traditions of the Samhain celebration include a burning sacrifice of crops and animals to the Celtic gods. They also dressed in animal skins and heads as masks so they would not be recognized by the returning spirits.

When the Romans conquered Celtic territory, many Celtic traditions were absorbed and adapted by them. The Romans seemed to have collected religions like some people collect stamps. The Romans themselves also had their own festival late in October called Feralia to remember the passing of the dead. Their tradition included honouring the Roman goddess Pomona, goddess of fruit and trees. Her symbol is the apple and it is believed this is where the past time of bobbing for apples came from.

With the spread of Christianity came changes that suited the church. Rather than making people give up their old traditions for the newer ones of Christianity, the church changed things so it better suited the religion, but also gave converts something familiar to live with. In the 800's this happened when Pope Boniface IV created All Saints Day on November 1; this day is also known as All-hallows or All-hallowmas. The night before, October 31, was called All-hallows Eve which later became Hallowe'en. In 1000 AD, the church created All Soul's Day, celebrated on November 2 in order to honour the dead. All three of these days together is called Hallowmas and is still celebrated as a three day festival in Mexico, and other parts of the world.

Hallowe'en started to be celebrated in North America in the late 1800's, and since then every culture has added something new to our traditions, and revived some old ones, including jack 'o' lanterns (they used to use turnips, but pumpkins proved easier to carve), fireworks, and costume parties.

Here are some cool pumpkin facts: the largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 1,140 lbs, and the largest pumpkin pie weighed 350 lbs and was 5 ft in diameter.



Y Tu Mamá También

Reviewed by Brad Deighan

What would you do if you knew your life were at it's end? Would you curl up inside yourself and die with tears in your eyes, the corners of your lips as heavy as your heart... might be? Or would you embrace death and feast on the body that is, squeeze every last succulent drop of excitement out of the pores of fucking life?

There's quite a bit of sex in this film; good, hard, unprotected sex. None of that crap, that loving, lust filled Hollywood trash. It's just sex, plain and simple sex. They don't beef it up with ecstatic moans and intricate cinematography, with the camera gliding down towards the navel as hot breath tickles the tiny, almost invisible hairs of the female body. It's sex; two people enjoying fast and hot carnal eroticism, it's not glorified, it's realistic, and I want some of it.

Two very open and care-free male friends enjoy care-free fun chasing women and having sex. And then they meet her. And they want her. Both of them. They invite her to the beach and they all begin to really enjoy hanging out together - then she confuses them, disrupts their order, their lives, them's brains.

Along the way the two males get hot with one-another; one discovers secrets about certain-certain bedroom antics between one's best friend and one's girlfriend - a phenomena that flows both ways - and anger erupts like ejaculation during a sado-masochist sex scene. In overcoming these threats to their friendship, these two males strengthen their bonds together and the three of them all share a round of victory drinks, laughing about the insanity of the situation and drinking to their forbidden sex stories, taken aback, and relieved at beating the scene instead of letting it

beat their friendship. But their real test is yet to come, and that night... come it does, and come come come as she mixes them up and into something she'd half-jokingly suggested to them in a lecture after their disputes over their... girl-friends.

When someone forgets about the past and the future and immerses themselves fully in the present, doing that which they really desire and enjoying themselves, balances can be disrupted and (others) lives can be forever changed. However, in this film, this change occurs because of the inability to accept and enjoy, due to social and cultural norms which, if disrupted, become taboo. The real question this film brings up might go something like this; if something disrupts your balance, are you going to accept it and get over it, perhaps integrating it into your balance, or are you going to let the threat overcome your balance and give it up in search of a new beginning? What do you really want? Do you have the balls - or the clitoris - to break socially constructed norms concerning...?

An interesting film - full, usually, of he-came-too-quickly rocket sex, and full of meaning (not usually the sex). Not to mention that while you watch the wild sex and find intellectually stimulating life experience in the meaning of the film, you get to check out not only tit, ass, and cock, but low-income Mexico - a little bit of foreign culture. Now that's a good film. And one might wonder, has Foucault got something here, is gender simply an essential-to-the-self social construction and nothing more? As a friend pointed out, existentialism surely hasn't gotten as far as the postmodern thinkers when it comes to sex and gender. Or much else, actually. On a side note, postmodernism - actually - blows the top off existentialism - but where does critical theory come in? Hmm...