

Eugene Weekly - Why are these feather extensions made from rooster "hackle" so inhumane?

Lin Silvan/EVEN - Any time we inflict pain or suffering on another for our own self-serving purposes, we are most definitely on the wrong track. And for hair adornments, no less!

EW - Do you think many women or men, I guess, realize the process that goes into making these extensions?

Do you think that once people realize what goes into making these feather extensions that they will stop using them, or do you think people just don't care?

LS - Most people don't question things as much or as often as they should. Perhaps it's because we don't actually want to know what goes on behind the scenes or maybe, tragically, we have finally become so numb and indifferent to other living beings that even if we knew, we wouldn't care. Some people, even when presented with proof to the contrary, might think it simply doesn't matter. But kindness and compassion always matter!

Even though I'm in my sixties, I'm still a bit of a pollyanna, and I'd like to continue to believe that people are basically good. What I do know for sure, however, is that people are greatly misinformed on a wide variety of topics but will, when given the correct information, try to make better choices. [*"When you know better, you do better."* - Maya Angelou]

EW - Is it okay for fly tying fisherman to use these feathers but not people using them for their hair or jewelry?

LS - It's not ok to use/abuse/kill *any* other life for *any* reason when we have the choice to do otherwise. Life isn't perfect, people aren't perfect. But in any given situation we can always make the most compassionate choice possible.

EW - Why should people care about these roosters -- they are only bred for this purpose. One owner of a major feather producing farm, Whiting Farms-- said "they aren't good for much more than their feathers" --- is this true? What would you say to Whiting?

LS - None of us can judge what "purpose" others have. Animals have their own purpose! And when money enters the equation, then what Whiting is actually saying is that the roosters aren't good for much more than their feathers to *him!* How arrogant of Man to presume to make determinations on what others are good for? One could just as easily ask what is Whiting good for.

EW - Are there any humane ways to wear feathers?

LS - Animals are not here for us to eat or wear or use. If one must spend time preening, braid your hair with beads or ribbons, and let the birds keep their feathers.

EW - What advice would you give to a person considering wearing these feathers or a salon owner using these feathers?

LS - I think it's important to ask if you think you look cool, or cruel. How refreshing it would be to make decisions---food, fashion and otherwise---that were not at the expense of someone else. Mankind never seems to run out of atrocious ways to inflict pain and death on other creatures for his appetite, his vanity, or his profit.

EW - Is there anything else you would like to add?

LS - The important thing to remember is that we CAN choose. It takes the same amount of energy to choose compassion as it does to choose cruelty. It's up to us. The choice is ours.

[Submitted to Kendall Fields, Eugene Weekly, 7/7/11]