Name of Student

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Day Month Year

Isis nursing Horus and the Virgin Mary nursing the Christ child

This is a comparative religious imagery paper of Isis nursing Horus and the Virgin Mary nursing the child Christ. Both women in the pictures hold holy importance in two different religions. Isis was Egyptian goddess of rebirth, death, and magic, worshipped in Roman religion. Whereas Mary was the mother of Jesus Christ according to Christianity. I will compare and contrast the two images that I have chosen. I will analyze the similarities and differences between each work, considering materials, meaning, purpose, and significance of both works.

In the first picture, Isis is nursing her son Horus. She is sitting on a throne that is the official chair that is the symbol of divinities and has always associated with royal power since ancient times. It seems like she is wearing a crown which has a solar disk between two horns of a cow, and a wig. She is wearing a crown on the top of her wig which is the symbol that she is a mother-goddess (Capel, Anne, Markoe, Bryan). Whereas in another image Mary is nursing baby Jesus. There is a golden wired crown on the head of Mary and Jesus both. This crown is not like any other crown, it is atop on both of mother and son’s head but it gives the appearance like in reality they had no crown and never wore one. It looks more like Mary never had a crown but still, she was crownless queen. The image also shows that Mary and Jesus never needed a worldly crown but they always had nobility, blessings, and divinity which they wore like a crown. Moreover, a symbol of the crown that mother and son both are wearing also shows that Jesus inherited all the nobility, innocence and holiness from his mother.

Isis is naked in the picture while nursing her son Horus and she is barely wearing anything. On the other hand, Mary is all covered from head to toe, except for her one breast that is out to nurse baby Jesus. In Roman religion, Isis is a goddess, so she is not following to live according to the ways of humans. Her nudity is her freedom and her power, she is beyond what humans are (Capel, Anne, Markoe, Bryan). Whereas, in Christianity, covering up of the body is noble for a woman and is the symbol of ultimate respect that is why Mary is covered from head to toe and not even her single strand of hair is out (Kirk, Martha).

Baby Horus in the image has no innocence of an infant on his face as he is smiling with proud which shows that he is above everyone as a god and he knows that too. He looks much mature and serious, unlike any other baby. His body is strong and masculine and even his size is bigger than a normal baby. His strength and masculinity as a baby show that he is born a god and is nursed by a mother-goddess herself. On the other hand, baby Jesus in the next picture has all the innocence in this world and it seems like he has inherited this innocence from her mother. Unlike baby Horus, baby Jesus has the body of a healthy and normal infant. He has soft and humble expressions on his face. His expressions portray that although he has a body of an infant, he understands everything. This directs to the noble, kind, and wise nature of Jesus Christ.

In both pictures, mothers are nursing their godchildren. Both pictures reflect that even though they are on the highest level of respective religions, their duty as a normal mother is same as other human mothers. Moreover, both of these pictures also show that male god-children are dependent on their female mothers to grow up and take charge of everything.

Work Cited

Capel, Anne K., Glenn Markoe, and Betsy M. Bryan. *Mistress of the house, mistress of heaven: women in ancient Egypt*. Hudson Hills, 1996.

Kirk, Martha Ann. *Women of Bible lands: A pilgrimage to compassion and wisdom*. Liturgical Press, 2004.