

The Evolving World of Cosmetics & its Political & Social Impacts

by

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Introduction:

The cosmetic industry is a billion dollar industry built on the ability to visually appeal the human eye, “Human beings have always desired beauty and fought against ageing. The earliest African homo sapiens existed from 195,000 B.P. to 160,000 B.P. (approximately 193,000 B.C. to 158,000 B.C.), and even these early humans engaged in beauty practices, as indicated by findings of beads and pierced shells for body decoration.” (Hope, p1). Every year the world of makeup evolves into new trends and techniques that are quickly advancing to legitimate artistry; so much so that there are now specialized schools, certificates, and apprenticeships required to achieve top credibility within the industry. The cosmetic world is no longer a collection of six basic shades of reds, classic nudes, and the ability to draw a cat eye so sharp it could cut a man. The world of makeup has truly dug its roots and grown within the last couple of decades as a legitimate career; a career that requires many years of practice, dedications, and often times competitive challenges.

Many could argue that the simple fact of a red lip or the credibility of a paper built off the history and current of events of makeup to be relevant, but I would beg to differ. In the current state and climate of our country I find that the idea of the cosmetic industry wraps up very well within the ideologies and issues revolving many feminist, LGBT, racial, ethnic, and even religious issues. When U.S. Representative, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, fought against congress' radical issues and raised awareness for women's rights, her bold red lip made headlines – a color powerful and bold enough to be worn by a woman powerful and bold enough who fights for those without a voice. Although that is a small accessory to Ms. Ocasio-Cortez's overall image, the idea is that there is a deeper importance behind the world of makeup. Makeup is no longer created for the benefit of a woman, but is widely worn and played with men and boys all over the world. It is a tool used to represent ones inner self, a form of expression that has formed as a legitimate skill.

The media is a huge contributor of what is currently trending and what is in style and that very heavily relates to the style of makeup as well. “Researchers have attempted to explore the experience of ageing bodies and the use of beauty and anti-ageing practices among older women. However, an insufficient number of such studies have focused on women from diverse ethnic groups, particularly older women. Furthermore, even though some researchers have debated whether beauty practices are a form of oppression, these debates usually obfuscate the unique experiences of older women. These deficiencies result in a scarcity of discussions on anti-ageing practices and health management among” (Hope p1), all women and whoever involved themselves within the beauty community.

For a long time makeup was advertised to only women, colors were muted hushed down tones, and there were no more than a handful of cosmetic companies. Throughout the years makeup has transformed and branched out in many ways. It has found itself living in the dressing rooms of drag clubs, on the counter of a young boy’s nightstand, on the drawn out eyebrows of a cancer patient. The world of makeup has evolved in ways where it has actually found a way to speak and make a statement by connecting and identifying with the identity of the person who chooses to wear and style their own image. You are given the ability to make a statement and represent who you are and how you want to be seen as.

The main obvious purpose of makeup is clearly seen to enhance the beauty of a woman, “to create the illusion of perfection”, but the cosmetic world has been taken over by its fans and artists and been turned into something much more meaningful. This open minded mindset has been demanded by the clientele of this industry and brands like Milk Cosmetics, Fenty Beauty, Kat Von D, and many more have expanded in their own unique and alternate ways of compassion. Many companies and products are now consciously made, ecological factors are now being considered, and Products are now being made with the climate involved and the versatility of vegan and clean options. These points spread out to much more social issues that relate to our current world and its climate, as well as social issues we

face. Fenty Beauty by singer and celebrity Rihanna has recently made very big headlines connecting to the versatility, color range, and diverse advertising her new makeup line has shown. This type of imagery and message has been taken so tremendously from the makeup world and its overall market that it's sending a message our imagery of makeup and its overall values have shifted. There is a demand for diversity, and absolute must for acceptance for all, and no gender, class, religion, race, or ethnicity can halt the universal connection makeup has created. The Cosmetic world has really expanded and proven that makeup really is a one size fits all product. Makeup has evolved in the last decade or so by becoming more of an art form that evokes consciousness within our political and social current climate.

History:

The first traces of makeup can be taken back to almost 7,000 years ago. Natural mineral from the earth were initially taken and used to mix and turned into color pigments. Color pigments that were made from natural red ochre; tracing back to cavemen in Africa. These pigments were then taken and used body art, which happened to be one of the first traces back to wearing any type of makeup. Often times these body marking made from these natural mineral were to represent a specific tribe and when getting ready for battle.

To date back as to when color was initially applied as makeup onto our faces would have to be in ancient Egypt, ancient Rome, and Greece. Many of the initial ingredients into making any cosmetics were originally made from beeswax, castor oil, olive oil, and rosewater. The most common ingredient between these ancient civilizations was kohl. Kohl was used to create a thick black line around the each eye that the Egyptians famously often used. There are even documents of anti-aging remedies that the Egyptians concocted, which also contained gum of frankincense and fresh moringa. The use of natural

resources as facial makeup eventually spread through the middle east and branched into a form of healing abilities called, “The Medicine of Beauty”, where cosmetics were seen a form of medicine. Even perfumes, incense, and other scented tools were used to form sticks that could roll when pressed in specialized molds, some which were also considered some of the earliest kinds of lipstick and solid deodorants.

Even in ancient Japan, Geisha's wore powdered white faces and ruby red lips as a part of their careers, culture, and social meaning behind their theatrically painted porcelain faces. Geisha's lipsticks were made of crushed safflower petals, bintsuke wax was used to for brows and hair, and rice powder for their fair colored base.

Closer to the early 1900's the use of makeup seemed to lighten up and be less of a concern for women. Many women often times didn't even really wear makeup and was not as advertised as it is today. During this time period makeup was often seen as that related to sin. Many prostitutes and criminals were related to the, “provocative”, wearing of cosmetic products. Cosmetics were so unpopular during this time that it was impossible to be able to buy any at department stores or malls, cosmetics were only sold at theatrical stores.

Once cinema began to develop within Hollywood, with stars like Charlie Chaplin playing in silent films around the late 1910's. Makeup was often used to extenuate facial feature due to film showing only in black and white at the time. With cinema slowly growing into a thriving and enjoyable industry the use of makeup began to gain more attention. It was initially male actors in these silent films that wore a majority of the makeup. Often times being powdered with white faces and having their lips, eyes, and eyebrow painted with black eyeliner for an exaggerated visual affect. This allowed actors to show a much more animated expression in black and white film and pull further attention from their viewers.

With the very early stages of the film industry growing, makeup played a crucial role in

attracting an audience. Throughout the history of films progression and its abilities, the habit of wearing makeup to exaggerate or compliment a feature began to be taken over by female actors. With color becoming an option in the developments of cinema and television, color became an important factor. Even before color started to become an option many female and male actors had to wear specific colors to accentuate their facial features. Women often wore certain red lip colors with specific orange to blue undertones in order to convey the right shading through film. Once color became a more permanent adaptation in movie making color became an important factor for not just male silent actors but now the sirens and beauties of each storyline.

Throughout history itself makeup has not considered to be a necessity. It was either considered to be a product worn by those of the provocative and law breakers of the night. With constant struggles throughout history such as WWI, the depression, and other social constructs – makeup was only able to just barely scratch the surface. Even throughout the 1960's and 1970's, makeup was considered a trademark of the, “man”, trying to feminize women, which had women boycott any use of cosmetics.

“Although both women and men are subject to ageing, women are more vulnerable in contemporary ageist and sexist societies to pressure in coping with their signs of ageing. Women’s conceptions of beauty and ageing have interfaced in a multitude of ways, as exemplified in today’s diverse discourses of ageing including healthy, active, successful, and anti-ageing. Such discourses encourage women to age in certain ways and inculcate in them the values of having healthy, functional, and thin bodies, along with a youthful and attractive appearance. Many women are compelled to put great effort into preventing physiological changes as a result of the natural process of ageing in order to “age well” and to achieve beauty standards at the same time.” (Hope p3). Makeup is now being taken back by the hands of the hardworking, honest woman, makeup is no longer the idea of an, “attractive appearance of being beautiful while remaining in anti-aging state” (Chung p17). Beauty is a powerful weapon that we are taking back and giving ourselves the joy and space to allow our definition of beauty

to be our own and no one else's.

The YouTube / Instagram Beauty Blogger:

Makeup has truly never had a moment in history where it has flourished as much as it does today, “however, it is not such cases as the above which need cause one the greatest concern, but rather, the almost unbelievably large number of people who are captivated by these colors and designs that can frame the face so beautifully. It is a skill that must be crafted and learned over practice and time.” (Corson p373). Many of the issues connected to our history's past has allowed us to break any barriers and be free in choosing how we look and what wear. Much of makeup's rebranding and growth has come from the ability for us to instantly share and learn from each other virtually. The internet and all social media platforms have really allowed the progression and technique of makeup and it's artistry to evolve and spread throughout a virtual artistic community. “These vloggers developed the power of makeup videos and related social media texts in order to critique makeup” (White p235), they have paved the way towards a more conscious beauty buyer and their honesty has demanded only the best products to be put out.

The ability to be able to film with your iPhone, to post anywhere, and share content, comments, and critique with fellow makeup lovers, artists, and professionals has allowed a bigger platform for the cosmetic world, “this website affords to freely and easily upload footage, watch other people's content, comment on it and connect through a channel.”(Riboni 118). Advertisements are more visually appealing, brands are more conscious of their ingredients, and overall the consumer has a bigger say than ever; because of our ability to access information so quickly. The 21st century has truly modernized the way we have historically seen and used makeup.

The beauty blogger, YouTube expert, and overall tech savvy makeup artists, is the new face and

ultimate celebrity of the current makeup world. Many artists are taking their own talents and abilities into their own hands and virtually teaching and spreading their knowledge throughout social media. This has quickly created the rise of the famous or celebrity YouTuber or over beauty blogger. These artist and independent artists who are taking the makeup world into their hands. This has created such an affect that the makeup world is now nothing without the attendance or a good review of one of these beauty bloggers. Many cosmetic companies are now catering to the consumers' needs and the conscious nature of our current generation. Companies are now sending packages to famous bloggers such as, Jeffree Star, Patrick Starr, BretMan Rock, and so much more; in order to get the final seal of approval for their products or certain cosmetic lines that they are trying to put out.

These blogger not only have taken back the reigns in the beauty world but they are now creating, collaborating, and designing their own products; ones that are very high in demand. The consumer's voice is finally being heard, and our ability to share honest reviews and information has created and up rise and deep change within the community and creation of makeup. Many brands are now becoming more ecofriendly and environmentally aware due to the demands of their consumers and bloggers. Many products that once had certain animal fats, led, and other harmful substances, have now been eliminated into cleaner formulas and vegan made products. The current generation of our time is not only highly aware due to their tech savvy ways, but they are conscious of their ingredients and products that they are using. This has allowed all new formulas and safe procedures to move forward within the creation and business of makeup.

With the cosmetic world demanding better ingredients in their products and being more conscious about what they not only put on their skin but what is inside of it, has created an uproar of clean, consciousness products. This has also dipped into social and political aspects pertaining towards the LGBT community, racial issues connecting to skin tones, and the ability for all genders, ages, and anyone or anything else that chooses to extenuate their look with cosmetics. The cosmetic world has

quickly found a new uprising in their market and new beauty consumer is finally stepping up. It is no longer for the housewife who needs that perfect red, or the young girl playing with her first lip-gloss; it is also for the man who wants to wear blue eyeshadow, or glittery lashes. There are no limits as to where you can take and how you can wear makeup. The world of makeup has opened up and expanded into territories that dare to break barriers and welcome all.

The new celebrity of the 21st century is the modern day YouTuber or beauty blogger, “these modern muses are able to help the everyday woman and man develop and form into who they want to be, the magic is in the skill, and these skills are being taught freely.” (Kupfer p94). Many famous and well-known brands are not only catering to the needs of the client but towards the demand of the modern day blogger. The beauty blogger, whether it be in YouTube, Instagram, or any other social media platform, has taken the reigns and has found a powerful voice within this world of personal creation. Much to many people's surprise the modern day beauty blogger has also found its way wrapped up in political debates, attending A-list celebrity events, and brutally bashing and being honest about every product they try and publicly talk about. These bloggers are not to be messed, they are quick, self-taught, talented, and honest without any remorse of their verbal affects. The honest beauty blogger has now stepped into the building and has been able to be the voice of the voices and demand more conscious products that deliver and remain true to their claims. This is where the growth and inner momentum of the beauty industry has been built off of for the last decade or so. The client, the blogger, and the overall makeup lover has taken the world into his or her hands and demanded that it cater to their need... no the other way around.

This type of demand, this type of brutal honest, has brought a lot of attention towards the makeup community and has shed light in individualism and personality of all these blogger, essentially pushing them up to fame. The fame brought from the blunt honesty and precise self-taught talent these artist has proven and shown has allowed the independent artist to work with brands and build their own

brand. Many beauty celebrities such as, Jeffree Starr, Kat Von D, Patrick Starr, RuPaul, and so many more, have built their success from their outlandish voices and opinions and their collaborations with top cosmetic companies. Many artists originally had started as personalities who were able to build empires.

Perhaps the most controversial artists may be the fabulous, unapologetic, and bold, Jeffree Star. Jeffree Star began as an androgynous, makeup obsessed, online personality who eventually created his own beauty brand and became a multimillionaire in the beauty industry overnight. This is a small example of the type of fame and building platform these artists have created and have continued to demand within this business. Mr. Star himself is a good reminder and example of the drastic developments and changes that are forming within this community and the expansions that have been made through these influences.

There is a huge positive in the artists taking back control within a world that they have a right to dominate. This type of fame, money, and attention, comes with a public image and voice, much of which is fighting to create equality between all sexes, types, and preferences. Although the world of makeup is already diverse to begin with, it has allowed a voice for the unique, different, and outcasts, to come forward and be proud, loud, and free with living with who they are. The support the cosmetic world has given for the LGBT community, the artist community, and all those in between, have allowed this industry to be taken seriously and build within a fun and lucrative career path. This helps many artists be taken seriously instead of, “being constantly sexualized for being a pretty woman who loves makeup” (Smith p31), we can now be considered and looked at as professionals and serious artists.

The Developments & Generational Demands of Conscious & Clean Products:

Although the rise of the beauty – YouTube blogger has made a lot of positive progress for the

unique fans and artists who support this industry, there has been a lot of controversy as well which has also brought more light and fame to this industry. Famed tattoo artist, social media influencer, reality TV star, and overall artist, Kat Von D, has created a controversial name for herself with her extreme Vegan views and, “clean”, lifestyle. Although her views all come from a good place, she revamped her entire makeup line to a vegan line with Sephora, which is rightfully named after herself, Kat Von D cosmetics. Her Vegan views are not new to current events and the overall climate of this generation's views on ecofriendly and clean products. Although Kat Von D's personal views on vaccinations and other healthcare options have been up for debate, she allowed a paved road for the opening of cleaner products. The overall need, want, and “health that is now being investigated and demanded by the consumer is now in process within the type of ways their products are being produced and with what”, (Ezlika p72), there is no more room for anything less.

When makeup was initially manufactured and modernized in the beginning stages of this industry, around the late 1930's, many of the products contained harmful animal ingredients as well as lead and other wrongful ingredients. Throughout the years makeup has developed into a more conscious industry. A lot of this has to do with our current generation of artists. This generation and younger generations are becoming more aware of animal cruelty, harmful ingredients, and overall healthier lifestyles. This demand does not only come from fellow artists and brand owner, Kat Von D, but she has certainly become a face and voice for cleaner and more consciousness products. A lot of this has become a widespread of awareness and the growing demand for healthier and obviously more skin friendly ingredients. This also comes into the world of animal awareness and the abuse and harm many of these poor animals go through just to test out some of our favorite products.

Many famous companies such as Too Faced, Kat Von D, Jeffree Star, Shrinkle, Fenty, Kylie Cosmetics, and so on have jumped on this bandwagon to a, “cleaner, healthier, and more consciously living direction”, of manufacturing. “We are analyzing the cosmetic industry based on its process and,”

(Bogdan p4), the demand for a drastic change in the ingredients in all of our beauty products have completely changed the world of makeup. It has proven that more recent generations and younger artists are more aware and eager to live healthier and better lifestyles. This includes topical products too such as blush, liner, and so on! Many have even states the social and political affects that it has shown throughout this drastic revamping of the cosmetic world. Companies and their CEO's are listening to the demands of this current generation because they are aware of the type of power we now have. Social media platforms, consumer markets, and overall the choice of buying from independent companies instead of larger corporations have shown the power the client has taken back.

The demand for these healthier products shows the shifting of the generations and the demands that they require, “the earth is dying and we realize that, we want to continue doing what we love but our generation is waking up and taking care of what needs to be done.”(Yeon, P20) Although this is connected to the cosmetic world, this shows the type of change the younger generation is trying to make. By having products with cleaner ingredients and more ecofriendly packaging, the positives greatly out weight the bad. This massive shift and change in the developments of packaging and product development could incorporate and create a huge help with helping our ecosystem and overall environment. It may seem odd or random for most to think that the cosmetic world could ever positively impact our world on a global level but, “to completely shift our packaging, products, and ingredients, the environmental progresses throughout the United States”, and beyond could help clean our earth.

“Every women in the United States has purchased at least one beauty product in her lifetime” (Riboni p126) ... although we know that one product is not enough for any woman to be happy, the progress in changing the manufacturing of cosmetics into a more ecofriendly way is way more substantial than many may initially realize. Something as simple as a perfect red lipstick, or a shiny pink gloss, or even the packaging that comes with your hair ties, incorporate to the growing issues that

we have faced with our earth and its climate. By completely revamping the way the cosmetic world and the makeup world has been packaging and creating their products, the world could greatly benefit from its ecofriendly change and overall help not just our climate but the progress with our compassion towards animal testing. It is an overall positive approach and change that has widespread the cosmetic industry and its all thanks to the artists, blogger, YouTubers, and everyone in between who have fought to change our world, industry, and environment for the better.

Racial Inclusivity:

Probably one of the most common issues that has risen since the creation of makeup was the inclusivity it possessed. “I consider how “the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism and how these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism. Because of their intersectional identity as both women and of color within discourses that are shaped to respond to one or the other, women of color are marginalized within both Many companies have come out boasting about their, “wide variety”, of skin colors and matching tones to all ethnicities and races, but the truth is that there has truly never been a company that catered to darker skin tones.(Hope p111). Iman, a well renowned international model, was the first women of color and overall cosmetic creator who catered to primarily women with darker skin tones. With social and political progress growing throughout the 21st century it seems impossible and straight up wrong that a company has still yet to match Iman's attempt to match women of darker skin tones. Makeup is one size fits all, but the color inclusivity it created, developed a racial barrier that women and men of darker skin tones had to face. This created a struggle for women and men who needed or chose to wear makeup in their daily lives.

Rihanna is an artist, celebrity, fashion designer, and now cosmetic creator. She recently created

her own makeup brand rightfully named after her last name, Fenty Beauty. Although Iman herself has taken the crown as the first true creator of a cosmetic company that caters to women of color, Rihanna has been able to develop her brand as a culturally diverse company. Not only are her foundation and concealer products one of the most wide colored range in the industry, her advertisements a full of diversity. Fenty Beauty has been able to beautiful advertise their products through the eyes of an everyday person. Rihanna's brand has only hired unique looking models who come from all versions of ethnicities and skin tones. Fenty Beauty has even been praised to advertise with not only black and white models but models who wear Burkas, or have other religious wear are shown in their ads.

“The way Fenty Beauty has been able to advertise with such ease and passion, shows that diversity is as fluid and natural as breathing”(White p2), there is no reason a woman wearing a Burka or a women with a Vitiligo skin condition to not wear the makeup of her choice. That’s what makeup is... a choice. There should be a choice and a collection full of skin tones that fit all. Fenty's advertisements using a collection of models with all different types of background and ethnicities has brought light into the true missing piece in makeup. It pushed barrier, opened up doors, and shed light on a topic that should have not even been an issue since the creation of makeup in ancient Egypt. Not only did this change for the positive but it created a political and social widespread throughout the makeup community. It has been very well known for the struggles for darker women and men to reach or match the perfect foundation. Many would have to even purchase two color and mix and match in order to find their true match, often times spending two times more than the fairer customer. Since Fenty's launch, other major companies have recently come out with darker shades adding more range to their products.

Conclusion:

When the makeup or cosmetic world is mentioned in any discussion it's easy to understand that the concept of such an image obsessed industry to not have any major effect on our society. But it is easy to see that what has been seen as a vain and surface like industry is much deeper than it has originally been given credit to. The cosmetic world is no longer about cosmetics, it's deeper than the products that are created for the surface of our face. The right lipstick shade, the perfect scent, the sharp cut of a wicked cat eye, is the character, creation, and personal design of that individual who chooses to wear or not to wear these products on their faces. The development it takes to just create the once perfect shade is now developed with vegan, cleaner, and more consciousness products. The packaging holding these loved products are more ecofriendly, and the shades are now endless, instead of the same basic seven shades to choose from.

The cosmetic world has expanded into a world full of color. It shapes the faces of our mothers, brothers, sisters, and everything in between. It builds confidence within our peers and doesn't shame you into thinking you may need to be a few sizes smaller. It have created a world of empowerment, the comfort of a young boy being confident enough to wear makeup, while the confidence of another girl who chooses to wear a bare face. There are a so many small windows that open up into bigger and deeper worlds. "Makeup represents a therapeutic modality that may help reduce the psychological stress," (Braz J. P2) it provides freedom and confidence for those who may not be able to see their own inner beauty. It provides a comfort and security that proves that each individual is beautiful in his or her own way by bringing out their best assets.

This art form is beautiful because of the very hidden and deep history it comes from. Many do not realize the type of rich history that comes with the idea of coloring ones face. Although makeup is a world based of off vanity and outer beauty the real beauty is what is behind it all and the ingredients used to create this world.

The cosmetic industry has flourished the past decade or so. It has build its entire clientele

through the freedom of being yourself and enjoying what you can do with makeup. There is no size, gender, or specific requirement that consists of having your makeup done. Many find it therapeutic to get ready in the beginning of the day and find great inner confidence with just the right shade of lipstick or the perfect wing liner. Makeup means whatever it you really want it to make it out to be. It is so small and harmless but can stand for something so much bigger when all are now demanding quality products.

The demand for makeup is very different today. The consumer has taken back the demand for better quality products, more acceptance within the community of beauty and art, and overall the choice of what should really be focused on. There is so much to say about this specific topic because of the numerous social and political topics it somehow finds itself touching.

For years makeup was associated with the perfect woman, clean and pristine with her cooking and cleaning, and now that world has been taken back. It has been taken back by the boy in high school who was teased for wearing lip gloss, by the androgynous girl who loved you pencil to fill in her eyebrows and paint her nails black, to the preppy man who somehow has concealer hidden in his car, the list goes on and on. It shows that makeup is not what it used to be, it inspires and represents a whole new individual who is independent and free with being who he or she is. Makeup always had this type of means, this type of impact, and specifically in this political climate we are taking back this industry and allowing it to be what it is. The cosmetic world may have once been build off of insecurity but it now has grown due to the individuality it has provided for us. The confidence, love, art, and overall personality that comes out when you are feeling well put together is the overall feeling that makeup give any other person. It may seem like such a vain product or industry but in fact it allows a person to be who he or she truly see themselves and built confidence to be happy with their appearance.

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