

Origins of Beauty

Emily Garcia

New York City College of Technology

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### Origins of Beauty

When it comes to looking at the beauty industry, we tend to look at advancements that were made to the beauty industry today. Beauty products or cosmetics have been used throughout centuries passed down through civilizations. According to Cosmetics Info, cosmetics were used in the ancient world 10,000 BCE. Early origins of beauty products derived from local knowledge of the scents and healing properties of plants, flowers, and herbs (Jones 2015). The use of these products come from age-old religions and cultural beliefs (Jones 2015). Each culture had their own cosmetic practices. Egyptians for example were into their hygiene and their health (Cosmetics Info 2023). They would wear makeup such as black eyeliner because they believed it protected them from the sun and illnesses, such as eye infections. Both men and women would use “scented oils and ointments to clean and soften their skin and mask body odor” (Cosmetics Info 2023). To make these scented oils, which we consider as perfumes today, they would use plants or flowers such as lavender, rosemary, rose, and oils such as olive oil or almond oil (Cosmetics Info 2023).

Cultures such as the Chinese or Japanese would use cosmetics to distinguish their hierarchy or social class. According to Cosmetics Info 2023, “The Chinese stain their fingernails with gum arabic, gelatin, beeswax, and egg. The colors are used as a representation of social class: Chou dynasty royals wear gold and silver, with subsequent royals wearing black or red. Lower classes are forbidden to wear bright colors on their nails.” The Chinese had developed their own version of nail polish, and this helped them distinguish a person’s rank. In every culture there seemed to be a social class with a different use of natural beauty products to differentiate amongst themselves. More widely recognized as a fashion style was the use of rice powder, these cultures would use to make their faces white.

Throughout the history of cosmetics, we see the development of hair dye, the use of henna, mud baths, nail polish, lipstick, face masks, fragrances, and even natural products such as stones being used for treatments or massages such as a jade to perform Gua Sha. Henna is known to be used in India as “a hair dye and in mehndi, an art form in which complex designs are painted on the hands and feet using a paste made from the henna plant, especially before a Hindu wedding” (Cosmetics Info 2023). Henna was also used in other cultures such as the Chinese, Japanese, and some North African cultures, and it is still widely used today. The least talked about cosmetic advancement are mud baths, which were believed to relieve pain in muscles or joints and relieve stress. All in all, cosmetic advancements aided in differentiating social classes, healing, protection against illnesses, religious beliefs and derived from natural sources.

### **Scientific Influence**

The beauty industry has been greatly influenced by science especially chemistry, but also the field of medicine throughout the passage of time. Without scientific advances and innovations, the beauty industry wouldn't be as large and influential as it has become today. People tend to argue that without technology, we would not have things such as Botox, laser hair removal, and three-dimensional experiences that was needed when the world underwent the 2019 Covid epidemic. At the time, people were unable or afraid to leave their homes and there was a lock down. Now, we have technological advancements, where we can use our smart devices and see how a product such as a lipstick will look on us. There is also 3D printing and plastic surgery, amongst other technological advancements. If people were not curious and practiced philosophical thinking, there would be no scientific discoveries leading to the growth of the beauty industry.

Some of the scientific advances that allowed new product development in the industry are television and manufacturing perfumes and cosmetics. Television allowed the use of advertisements for the cosmetic industry, which began in 1950 according to Cosmetics Info. The invention of television allowed companies to depict commercials such as deodorant, toothpaste, and just about anything in the cosmetic, medical, toiletry, and fragrance industries (Cosmetics Info 2023). With such advancements, amendments were being passed by Congress on any discoveries that were causing illnesses, or products that were said to have been natural and were false, needed labels (Cosmetics Info 2023). Perfume and cosmetics have come a long way from being used from a sole natural product. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, like the 1980s we moved onto foundation and eye shadow. Make up was being tested on animals and the “FDA report in 1989 found that more than five percent of cosmetics samples collected from department store counters were contaminated with mold, fungi, and pathogenic organisms” Cosmetics Info 2023). Many trials and errors were made to get to where we are today in the beauty industry.

A few of the *cutting-edge* developments in the beauty industry today are surrounded around skincare and health. According to StartUs Insights, the top ten cosmetic trends are green cosmetics, immersive beauty, personalized care, anti-aging and rejuvenation, smart skin analysis, cruelty-free cosmetics, blockchain beauty, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, and cosmetics nanotechnology. Customers are becoming more concerned with sustainability when it comes how products are being made and how they will affect the environment once they are disposed of. Customers are also interested in natural clean products that do not derive from animals. Anti-aging serums have always been a part of the industry but it’s becoming a trend to take care of your skin at a young age to slow the ageing process down. Advancements in technology have

allowed the minimization of waste, improvement in the “beauty product manufacturing processes” (StartUs Insights 2023) and have allowed more consumer personalization.

We can say that the beauty industry has advanced throughout time through the influence of science. If it weren't for civilizations experimenting with natural sources according to their beliefs, we would not have advanced this far. However, we can thank scientific advances and innovations on all the individuals who dared to create. The beauty industry would not be as large and influential as it is today without our predecessors and the influence of science.

## References

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