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Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation (Contemp. Issues)

Throughout history, the concept of modernity has evolved, influencing a variety of societies and cultures. Industrialization, urbanization, and technological advancement were associated with modernity in the early 20th century (Giddens, 1990). Historically, the beauty industry has used the concept of modernity as a means of promoting beauty products and standards as a reflection of social norms and cultural values. The concept of modernity is still relevant today, but its meaning has expanded beyond its physical and technological aspects. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how the beauty industry used modernity in the early 20th century. Additionally, examples of how the beauty culture/industry communicates modernity will be presented to illustrate what it means to be modern today (Kilbourne, 1999).

During the early 20th century, society, the economy, and technology underwent significant changes. The modern era is characterized by the transition from agrarian societies to industrial societies, the rise of cities, and the development of new technologies. There was an association between modernity and progress, rationality, efficiency, and individualism. A more promising future was also envisioned, in which science and technology would be able to provide solutions to social problems and improve the quality of life of people (Giddens, 1990).

Art and culture were also influenced by the concept of modernity, in which modernism emerged as a rejection of traditional conventions and forms. Artists and writers of the modernist movement aimed to break free from the past and explore new forms of expression that reflected the modern world. A central characteristic of modernism is its tendency to experiment, to abstract, and to be individualistic, as well as to challenge the idea that reality is fixed and stable (Huysen, 1986).

Culture and social norms have always been closely intertwined with the beauty industry. Modernity was used by the beauty industry as a means of promoting beauty standards that reflect the ideals of the modern age in the early 20th century. An emphasis was placed on maintaining cleanliness and hygiene, as well as maintaining a natural appearance. Women were encouraged to use beauty products that enhanced their natural beauty to preserve their natural beauty and maintain hair and skin health (Peiss, 1998).

The beauty industry also promoted the use of modern technology. Hair styling has been revolutionized by the introduction of the hair dryer and electric curling iron, for example. It was now possible for women to achieve the latest hairstyles without spending hours in beauty salons (Lebsack, 2022).

A modern aesthetic was also reflected in the advertisements for beauty products. To convey a sense of modernity and progress, bold geometric shapes and simple lines were used. It was believed that women would look and feel more modern and up-to-date by using modern beauty products (Peiss, 1998).

Compared to the early 20th century, modernity has a different meaning and significance today. Modernity continues to emphasize technological advancement and individualism, but it has also expanded to encompass issues of diversity, sustainability, and

global interdependence. Nowadays, modernity means accepting cultural diversity, promoting social justice, and respecting the environment (Snyder, 2023)

Being modern in the beauty industry today means promoting inclusivity and diversity. People with different skin tones, body types, and physical characteristics have been criticized for the industry's promotion of a narrow, unrealistic beauty standard. Modern approaches to beauty are characterized by a celebration of diversity and the promotion of products that cater to a broader range of consumers (Kilbourne, 1999).

Modernity is also concerned with sustainability. Plastic waste and animal testing have been criticized as contributing to the environmental impact of the beauty industry. A modern approach to beauty involves using eco-friendly products and practicing sustainable practices in order to minimize the industry's environmental impact (Kilbourne, 2015).

There are many channels through which the beauty industry communicates modernity today, including advertising, social media, and influencer marketing. Listed below are a few examples:

1. **Inclusivity and diversity.** In recent years, many beauty brands have incorporated inclusivity and diversity into their advertising campaigns, featuring models with diverse skin tones, body types, and physical characteristics. Fenty Beauty, launched by Rihanna, is well known for its wide range of foundation shades that cater to different skin tones (Muller, 2017).
2. **Sustainability.** It has become increasingly popular to use eco-friendly and sustainable beauty products. The use of natural and organic ingredients is promoted by many brands as well as their commitment to minimizing their environmental impact. A

notable example of this is the handmade, vegan, and environmentally friendly products offered by Lush Cosmetics (Sicardi, 2020).

3. Technology. In modern beauty culture, technology has become a significant component. There are many brands that utilize advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, to enhance the customer experience and personalize beauty routines. The Sephora store, for example, uses augmented reality to allow customers to virtually try on makeup products before purchasing them (Larson, 2021).
4. Self-expression. There is a strong emphasis on individuality and self-expression in modern beauty culture. Several brands promote their products as tools for expressing one's creativity and self-expression. NYX Cosmetics, for instance, provides customers with a broad range of vibrant and bold makeup products that allow them to express themselves in a variety of ways (Cision, 2022).

In conclusion, modernity has evolved throughout history as a result of different cultural and social norms. Industrialization, urbanization, and technological advancement were associated with modernity in the early 20th century. Modernity was used by the beauty industry to promote beauty standards that reflected modern ideals. The concept of modernity has evolved to include issues such as diversity, sustainability, and global interconnectivity. By promoting inclusivity, sustainability, technology, and self-expression, the beauty industry today communicates modernity through various channels, including advertising, social media, and influencer marketing.

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