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Critical Argument Paper #2

Modern in the Early 20th Century (1900s)

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Modernity, defined as a concept that keeps evolving, due to cultural and social contexts, and an interrelationship through the beauty industry. During the early 20th century, as the increasingly developing beauty industry. It began to embody urbanization, technological progress, and new lifestyles, it started to reflect and shape the notion of modernity, which is what being modern during this period. This interrelationship of aesthetics and consumerism not only offers a reflection of societal values and ideals but acts as a powerful tool in molding and influencing modernity.

The discrepancy between the early 1900s, known as Belle Époque, with its elegance and self-confidence, and the current digital age, where diversity, individuality, and sustainability are implemented, proves how modernity evolved over time (Richman-Abdou, 2020, p.1, par 3). Abdou investigates the development of modernity through the beauty industry by looking at the industrial progress and social norms. In the early 20th century and the influence they have had in comparison with what we have today, where diversity, individuality, and environmental sustainability are celebrated.

The spirit of modernity in the early 20th century are linked to industrialization, urbanization, and higher research driven by scientific and technological progress. This period, characterized brilliantly by Belle Époque, has resulted in a significant change in the culture and the society as a whole, which shows the inner urge to progress and innovate (Richman-Abdou, 2020, p.2, par 4). The cosmetic industry has been key during this period. It not only advertised beauty products as essentials for modern women but also as symbols of sophistication and social status.

During this era, advertising innovations and mass production techniques played a defining role in the beauty industry becoming a predominant communicator of modernity's ideals. The selection of the first commercial eyelash mascara by Maybelline in 1915 brought along the phenomenon of a new attributed beauty that matched the urban, modern woman's image. This era revealed that beauty standards were not about looks but also about the symptoms of transitioning from the old to the new, which ultimately confirmed the beauty industry's position as an industry that shapes and reflects the modern understandings of modernity.

In the 20th century, early on, the beauty industry promoted mass advertising and produced standardized modern beauty concepts to communicate beauty. With the spread of magazines coupled with emerging media platforms, multi-dimensional views of beauty were created, surpassing single-dimensional views and reflecting the pivotal role played by the industry in shaping cultural ideals of beauty (Frith, 2014, p.1, par 6). A similar development occurred in this period. With the rise of beauty icons and the advent of cinema, which increased the widespread adoption of new beauty standards and deeply embedded them into the social fabric. One interesting example of a trend and how the beauty industry capitalized on it is the popularity of the first commercial mascara by Maybelline, which introduced the idea of the city woman being modern and attractive.

One interesting example of a trend and how the beauty industry capitalized on it is the popularity of the first commercial mascara by Maybelline, which introduced the idea of the city woman being modern and attractive (Frith, 2014, p.1, par 4). Despite this, its product not only

altered the way women viewed makeup but also highlighted a growing correlation between beauty, modernity, and consumerism, evident in the way brands have carefully tailored societal standards of beauty through their advertising and product innovation.

As the modern world is rapidly developing and progressing, the beauty industry has come a long way from an emphasis on industrial progress and societal norms to today's major concerns being inclusivity, digital innovation, and sustainability. This change has occurred due to social media, which has given a platform for the beauty industry, promoted diversity, and shown most everyone beauty is subjective and free. Henriques and Patnaik's study describes social media's role in promoting unrealistic beauty trends and developing brand loyalty through consumer retention in the luxury beauty industry (Henriques & Patnaik, 2020, p.1 par 7). Brands such as Fenty Beauty and Lush have recently proved this approach correct by offering numerous shades in their range and focusing on the environment with the no-waste soaps respectively (Wilson, 2020,p.1, par 5). These changes represent a wider focus in the business world for a more responsible and customer-oriented approach. As a result, defined by brand affiliation with the trending societal values and communication via digital platforms.

The beauty industry has been employing augmented reality technologies in recent years to reinvent the meaning of modernity in beauty culture, allowing consumers to customize their own experiences with these modern technologies integrated into the consumer's interactions. One of the cases is the MakeApp, which is a mobile application that uses AR to provide customers with the opportunity to try on virtual makeup, which is in line with the demand for contactless shopping experiences that has arisen after the pandemic (Diloy et al., 2023, p.2, par.8). The app

disrupts beauty sampling, which has been based on the physical aspect until now, and assists brands and clients in building a broader relationship cemented by technology that has been deemed an opportunity area for long-term consumer engagement.

Another campaign is the YouCam Makeup app, which uses AR to improve the online shopping experience and drive greater purchase intentions and brand awareness. This platform converts the experience of trying on makeup digitally, giving consumers a realistic and engaging glimpse into the world of beauty, which in turn, motivates them to explore and increases the likelihood that they will buy the product (Wang, Ko, & Wang, 2021, p.3, par 4). These programs showed the personalization and technological integration in the beauty industry, which is a standard part of modern philosophy centered on inclusivity, innovation, and a client-oriented approach to the consumers.

Examining modernity through the prism of cosmetics shows the development from the beginning of the 20th century to the present time. Originally, modernity came from industrial-age ideals, however in today's world, it is understood as openness, digital innovation, and environmentalism. This switch mirrors the transformation of social values and denotes the impact of the beauty industry on modern communication. However, as society evolves, so will the definitions of modernity that are shaped by beauty narratives and practices.

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