

Tyshae Greene
April 30, 2023
Dr. Sutton
BUF 4700

The Price of Beauty

The Toxic Beauty documentary was both interesting and eye opening as it relates to what I have been learning in this class of Contemporary Issues in the Fashion industry for the past few months. I learned how beauty has historically been associated with Eurocentric beauty standards. Lightskin, long hair that was straight or wavy, and thin noses were all considered signs of attractiveness and were often advertised (“Black is profitable”, n.d.). Because of these beauty standards, this have an impact on one’s self confidence and self-esteem. I learned that people use beauty products to look and feel good, hide their insecurities and maintain their youth. Also, in the class readings, I learned that society has shaped people minds in to believing, if they developed wrinkles, blemishes, or other physical flaws, they are not attractive (Jones, n.d). Being attractive was a top thing since it affects one’s emotions, mental health, how one view their selves, and how others perceive us. Many individuals spend a lot of time getting dressed and spend a lot of money on cosmetic products because it is well known that when you look good, you feel good.

Additionally, people began to undergo certain procedures and use certain products to be presented with better opportunities because it is known that if you had a particular appearance, you would be presented with better and more opportunities (Khanna, n.d).

Consumers who alter themselves and use certain products don't realize the danger and transformation they are subjecting themselves too. This is partly because big label companies do not fully disclose or entail what is in their products as I learned from the Toxic Beauty documentary which is very sad. I am aware of the high standards and desire for the best appearance among American eyes because American eyes are very judgmental. We really need to start paying closer attention to what we put on our skin and the services that we receive because it can have a negative impact on one's health. There is more to it than merely applying cosmetics and looking good as seen in the film. We need to be more mindful of our health because it can have an impact on both one's physical and mental well-being. Without good health, you cannot have anything else.

Most of us learned as young children the importance of looking our best. We watched our mothers apply products and get certain procedures done that we admired, and we start to imitate them by playing in their products. The documentary makes note of how destructive these beauty products are to a child's development, health and how it can affect us in our adult life. Our parents did not know any better and we are too young to know any better of these dangerous chemicals in these products because one simply wanted to look good. This demonstrates that when certain health conditions emerge and cause confusion, they may be related to things that a person has been using for a long time. We use goods like lotion, creams, soaps etc in order to be clean and smell good which is perfectly fine because that is how these companies advertise, to be clean, smell nice and to sell confidence. What people are unaware of is the presence of dangerous chemicals like talc, parabens and phlthates in the cosmetics

they use on a daily basis. These chemicals have a history of being linked to cancer. This has prompted me to examine product labels and find out what is in them so that I can take better health precautions. According to the documentary, the beauty industry thought a small amount of chemical would not be harmful, but people's daily usage of these products means they are marinating and re exposing their selves to these chemicals which can be detrimental to their health. What is worse is that some of these firms are aware of the dangerous chemicals used in their products but to choose to conceal them in order to keep making money off of consumers insecurities and the image of perfection. For example, fragrances fail to disclose the ingredients in their products, which is unacceptable because consumers have a right to know what they are applying and putting into their bodies. The fact that even natural goods and chemicals are not healthy for you caught my attention in this documentary as well. For instance, lavender, which is popular in cosmetic products for a variety of reasons is an endocrine disruptor and it can be very dangerous to one's health. By ignoring human health, these companies are demonstrating their lack of morale and concern for humanity. As a result, we always need to think about both ourselves and those who may affected, thus it's important to be informed about such topics in order to raise awareness.

MyMy Mgyen, a girl from the documentary, made a statement that really drew my attention, that we should not tell people to stop buying products instead bring up the issue with the government. She made a point that we should demand the government to stop producing toxic products or better regulate these chemicals put into products because the government supposed to safeguard its citizens. According to the documentary, products are

just released into the market without any sort of regulatory oversight, and if any incidents occur, that's when regulations come into effect. This is very disturbing because it is like these people are test subjects. According to the film, in products like shampoo, lipsticks, skin creams, among others, thousands of different chemicals that have not undergone adequate safety testing are being sold and used by consumers. The government needs to exercise better control over the release of these hazardous chemicals into the market because people's health is suffering.

Society needs to change and stop putting pressure on individuals to have this perfect look. Additionally, people need to be more mindful of the things they put on their bodies because they want to change and look better because doing so can have an adverse effect on one's health. We need to look after ourselves and one another. Individuals need to have more confidence in themselves because nobody is perfect. Nobody or nothing should jeopardize your mental, physical and financial wellbeing.

References

Jones, G. (n.d). "Beauty Imagined".

Khanna, N. (n.d). "Whiter".

Walker, S. (n.d). "Black is Profitable".

YouTube. (2023, April 16). *Toxic beauty | full length documentary*. YouTube. Retrieved May 1, 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2QU9jgulJk>