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Critical Argument Paper #2

### Modernity In The Early 20th Century

The Early 20th century was a time period of new opportunities especially for women. Expanding the right to vote for women became a major goal during this time. The progressive era to new era (1900-1929), was an era of businesses expanding and progressive reform in the United States. In the 1920s, a term “Flappers” would be used to describe young women who became known for their energetic freedom while embracing a lifestyle that would be viewed as outrageous, immoral, or downright dangerous. They were known for wearing short dresses, calf-revealing lengths and lower necklines which were seen as immoral at the time. Women also wore high heel shoes, and instead of wearing corsets, they began to wear bras and lingerie. Cosmetics such as rouge, lipstick, mascara also became popular. They are now considered the first generation of independent American women who have pushed barriers to economic, political and sexual freedom for women (History.com Editors, 2022). August 1920 would be the year women were able to gain more independence with the help of the 19th amendment, which allowed women to have the right to vote. Around that time, a woman named Margaret Sanger had provided contraception to women which had also given more rights to women for birth control.

Since the flapper era, cosmetics have been used more frequently, eventually turning the use of it into an obligation rather than it being frowned upon. Earlier in the 20th century, wearing makeup meant that you had either worked on the stage and/or worked as a prostitute. If someone

was to wear makeup, it was crucial that it would look so natural that it would appear to others as if no makeup had been used. Having a pale look became popular during this time, and people would have applied lemon juice to the skin as if using it as a toner, which would make one's skin appear paler. Another reason this might have become popular is because it was believed that if you had tan skin, it implied that you were of lower class (Kavanaggh, 2023).

To be modern in the early 20th century was to demonstrate to others that one has decided to become more independent, unique, and free by not just by what clothing they wear, but also by applying cosmetics, having a say in society, voting and working. To be part of a modern society during this time for a woman could have been challenging for many. To be a modern woman was to let go of what society had been saying what was acceptable for women to look like and the things they were able to do. Many did not feel like living this type of life where you can show more skin on your body than usual was acceptable. To others who have been waiting for a chance to feel more free, independent and in charge of their body and life, movements like the flapper era was just what they needed.

According to (Campus Staff, 2021), the 1900s is when modern cosmetology matured and flourished world wide. By the 1920s, it was a trend among women that usually lived in cities to wear more conspicuous makeup.

This was an effect of the influences of Hollywood, fashion of theater stars and flappers. (Smithsonian, 2023). One could wear makeup and still also be identified as a respectable woman, even if they had decided to start wearing dramatic mascara, eyeliner, dusky eyeshadow, and lipstick. Maksymilian Fakyorowicz, better known as Max Factor, provided theatrical makeup to the nascent film industry. He founded the Max Factor & Company in 1909 which had helped lay the foundation for modern-day makeup and cosmetics. In 1914, Maybelline was founded in

Chicago by a young entrepreneur T.L Williams. In the first half of the 20th century, important parts of legislation and regulation concerning cosmetic products were established. There had been protections for consumers against unlawful and harmful cosmetics set up by the 1938 Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act which would allow the government to enforce law to prevent harmful materials to be used in cosmetics (Campus Staff, 2021).

To be modern today is almost as similar to what it meant to be modern in the early 20th century. Today, it is highly encouraged to feel like one should be using their own voice. To discuss things that matter to you and what you care about without the fear of being judged is very common. People are also encouraged to become more independent where they can live on their own, and start to pursue the dreams they have without anyone to hold them back. It is also encouraged to fill your mind with knowledge, and to educate yourself on things that you normally wouldn't. In recent times, it has also meant to walk freely and more comfortably in one's body without having the fear or someone criticizing their body image, and for one to also have an enormous amount of self-love.

The current beauty culture/industry has tried to communicate what it means to be modern by companies becoming more inclusive with their products. For example, for a long time it was very difficult for one to find a foundation that would perfectly match the shade of their skin. The famous entertainer Rihanna broke that barrier on September 8, 2017 when she launched Fenty Beauty. In her original foundation launch, she had included 40 shades, but it has since expanded up to 50. Technology runs almost everything in today's modern world, and it is also being seen in the beauty industry. With the help of technology, new and effective formulas have been included in beauty products, and it could even assist in making new products to market faster (Kestenbaum, 2023). Men have also been encouraged in recent times that it is acceptable to

pamper themselves and to focus on hygiene. According to a Morning Consult survey conducted by health advocacy group EWG, men's use of personal care products has almost doubled since a survey conducted in 2004. Men are now using eleven personal care products daily, versus six in 2004 (Kestenbaum, 2023).

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