War Paint

Ethics and Beauty

By

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Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder

Sue Grafton

Everybody's beautiful in their own way

Ray Stevens

To Harry and Andy, our *Statler* and *Waldorf.*

To Trisha, my Book Group at AAUW, to Trisha my sister writer and muse, to my Writing Group, to my family, my Mom and Dad, Jim and Clara Tsagaris and Dino, my dear husband. To my good friend Diane Roche, an expert in the field of cosmetics, who was a great sounding board and who always encourages my projects, and to Lisa, Bangles, and Tuxedo. To my friend Karen Holleran who has never doubted me. To the memories of Rosemary Rovick, esq., Prof. David Baldus, and Dr. Roald Tweet. To Prof. H. Jefferson Powell, to Mrs. Virginia Pirch, Greg Binder, Heide Larson, and all my friends who have supported my writing.

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Preface
Mad, mad make up

The human urge to make one's self more attractive and youthful dates to the Stone Age. Better hair, skin, clothes and make up have been important to human beings for millennia; the need for these things has created an industry that has grown up hand in hand with the development of cosmetics and make up. Where there is profit, there is often corruption, and unethical practices arise. Laws soon emerge to enforce ethics, and some have outlawed make up and cosmetics as immoral and harmful to society. Other laws deal with mistreatment of animals used for testing cosmetics, or with the safety of the ingredients used. This book will discuss the historical and development of cosmetics in the context of what is acceptable and unacceptable in defining what is beautiful.

Think of sitcoms and Lucille Ball films where cosmetics and beauty treatments go wrong. In *The Munsters*, Lily tries to operate a beauty salon, but has to quit when her permanent treatments make her customers go bald. Samantha suffers from a bad chemical peel in *Sex and the City*, and a skin cream causes terrible rashes in *Love, Sydney*.

Style and use of cosmetics contribute to the idea of beauty. Real style is individual; it does not involve slavish adherence to the latest fashion.

Iris Apfel, at 102, was a real fashionista and fashion muse (died at 102 and a half, March 2024). She and her husband Carl sold various fabrics to designers, and became famous for making pants out of all kinds of unusual materials and patterns. She has become a fashion icon, layered with necklaces and jewellery and outfits of her own concoction. There is even a Barbie doll portraying her. Apfel loved bracelets, and might wear six or seven on each hand. If she liked it, it could be a $3.00 bracelet or a $300.00 bracelet. What pleased her was what counted.

Conventional beauty as encouraged by make up and fashion ads, makes others, even other women, jump to conclusions. The author had an experience at her in laws after she had become engaged. She was introduced to an older woman who was a mistress to a married man. She said to the author, "women like us, dear, are not beautiful, but men find us interesting." She had quite a lot to drink by the time I met her. I don't know what was more upsetting, the fact she thought I wasn't beautiful, or the fact that she thought I was someone's mistress.

The author also observed an incident in a dress store, where a young woman was looking at material to make a wedding dress. "You're so plain," said the owner to the bride to be, "that we need something to brighten you up, but not overwhelm you." The bride to be was attractive, but not blonde, buxom, and blue eyed. The shop owner made a lot of assumptions, none of them complimentary.

In *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf writes of the many women who told her stories of "the agonizingly personal struggles they had undergone . . . to claim a self out of what they had instantly recognized as the beauty myth" (1). Universally to all these women, the "ideal was someone tall, thin, white, and blond, a face without sores, symmetry, or flaws, someone wholly 'perfect' "(1). Heavy women wanted to be thin, women who were not blonde wanted to be.

In my own experience, I nearly became anorexic by ninth grade, because, though I was probably average weight for my age, I was called names and held up to ridicule for not being reed thin. I starved myself, and only ate once a day at dinner. Even then I counted calories faithfully. I exercised, ran, took up gymnastics again and made the team. One day, I started to faint during 8am gym class; it was the soft ball throw that got me. The teacher, Mrs. N. was not thin herself, quite the opposite. Yet, she too "shamed "teenaged girls for not being what she defined as physically fit. I guess she thought I had the flu, because I remember her shouting at me, "no, no, get away! I don't want to get it." Next thing I remember, I was sitting on the floor of the girls restroom, next to my friend who was sent to the restroom with me. I heard her calling my name, begging me to stay with her. Somehow, I made it to the nurse's office. Next thing I remember,

my mother was standing in front of me, hand on hip, her gold charm bracelet jingling. She was a high school Spanish teacher and administrator, and had to leave class that day to come and deal with me. "Do you realize I had to leave class?" she asked, not in a kind and gentle way. My mother was a beautiful woman, but not really thin or petite. She played tennis, swam, and coached softball, a winning team at that, but she was not the thin ideal of conventional beauty. I do have to point out that the reason I wanted a Barbie was because the Bubble Cut version looked like my Mom, same hairdo, and same pink suit.

My mother was talking about me with the principal, Mr. Blick, whom she'd known forever. They had a big discussion about silly little girls like me who skipped meals to lose weight, wore too much make up, etc. Guess they forgot I was in the room. Yet, I had determined a year before to lose as much weight as possible. I thought I would make more friends, be popular, attract the admiration of the cute boys in class, some of whom liked calling me "Mamma Cass." It didn't work.

Personally, I always thought my mother, her sister, and my grandmother were beautiful women, with long hair, nice clothes and jewelry, and nice complexions.

They got stuck in Europe during World War II, and nearly starved, but they came home, bounced back, and enjoyed life after that. My grandmother was actually married in Paris and had a French trousseau. Appearance was important to them, and they used cosmetics and hair products, but remained unfazed by promotional campaigns that encouraged them to feel bad about themselves so they would buy more make up.

By the late eighties, some beauty product campaigns changed. Dove came up with products advertised for every body, and women of every age, shape and size appeared in their ads. Plus sized models came forward, and a book called *Life is not a Dress Size* appeared. In the style of Wolf and her readers who were "deconstructing their own beauty myth" (1) women soon redefined what beauty was, and stressed health and well being as well as personal choice over standard beauty ideals. In fact,

Wolf's thesis in *The Beauty Myth* is that she supports "a woman's right to choose what she wants to look like . . . rather than obeying what market forces and a multibillion-dollar advertising industry dictate" (2).

Recently, Eli Lilly Co. issued a public service statement about using its products for cosmetic weight loss. Lilly stressed their products were directed to certain health conditions, and were not to be used for weight loss. *Shame* and *Big Night* are two films Lilly has created to address medical obesity and the idea of using weigh loss drugs for cosmetic purposes. Lilly often states it uses science to create healing medicine. The films and public service announcements are part of their Get Better Campaign. (Lilly.com). The announcement is important; it establishes a clear link between beauty and health.

Introduction

Since the dawn of history, beauty has been the subject of discussion. It is clear it has been important to every civilization, and also clear that its definition varies, and that beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder. Furthermore, the struggle to define beauty has addressed a moral concept, e.g., is beauty morally good. Xenophon, noted Greek philosopher, writes "And do you think that one thing is good and another beautiful? Are you not aware with regard to the same things all things are at once beautiful and good?" (Quoted in Eco 48). Xenophon continues in *Memorabilia* that "If therefore, a thing is suited to its purpose, it is beautiful and good, and should the contrary be the case, then it is bad and ugly" (quoted in Eco 48). Certainly one can make an interesting observation that things natural, or expertly cosmetically enhanced are good and beautiful, but make up badly applied and cosmetic surgery gone wrong can be unethical if badly done on purpose, and also ugly because they did not improve an appearance, but made it worse.

Beauty is also associated with light; first, because light, especially sunlight, cleanses and reveals truth. Vitamin D is associated with sunlight, and is contained in many vitamins and cosmetics. Light is associated with deity, including the idea that "God is light" (Eco 102). Eco correctly names various cultures whose deities are associated with light including Baal (Semitic), Ahura Mazda (Persian), and Ra (Egyptian). In fact, Akhenaton, husband of that timeless beauty, Nefertiti, focused his religion on the God, Ra, which was considered a heresy (102).

Another Greek writer, Plotinus, believes that beauty is both symmetry and colour (quoted in Eco 102). He refers to colours of God, and states that "the simple beauty of colour is given by a form that dominates the darkness of matter by the presence of an incorporeal light (102).

As Umberto Eco, Naomi Wolf, and others have pointed out, beauty changes with each era. It truly lies in the eye of the beholder. For example, heavy set, "Rubenesque" women were once favoured because it showed they were rich enough to be well fed and healthy. "Buxom" as a term to

describe these women became popular. Thin, willowy beauty became the standard much later, until the cliché "you can never be to rich or too thin" became popular. Somewhere down the timeline of history, blonde and blue eyed women were the stereotype for beauty. Portraits of The Virgin Mary portrayed her in this western, blonde manner, though in real life, she probably was neither blonde nor blue eyed. Also, think fairy tale heroines like Goldilocks. Dark hair and eyes became associated with beauty as well, so that Anne Boleyn noted for her long, dark hair, Snow White, and Shakespeare's Dark Lady all had their following. Morgan le Fey of Arthurian legend was dark and beautiful, but she was also aligned with evil forces, so her dark hair and looks made her more than a little scary.

Eco covers all the various historic definitions of beauty in every epoch, with his excellent book, *The History of Beauty.* He explores beauty in all forms including aesthetics in ancient Greece, Apollonian and Dionysian forms of beauty, beauty as proportion and harmony, light and colour in the Middle Ages, and the beauty of monsters

While Eco defines many types of beauty, beauty to Wolf, is a "currency system like the gold standard" which is determined by "politics, and in the modern age in the West; it is the last, best belief system that keeps male dominance in tact" (12). When, as Susan Faludi alleges in *Backlash*, that when much of the fashion and beauty industry are dominated by males, then certain standards of Western beauty remain intact. Wolf goes on to define the beauty myth In her chapter," The Beauty Myth". From the book of the same title, Wolf gives a historical survey tracing ideas of beauty and natural selection for mating from the Prehistoric matriarchal Goddess religions through modern times (13).

By the time Wolf was writing in 1991, and revising, in 2002, she noted that Beauty had become a "currency."

Heather Widdows in her book *Perfect Me, Beauty as an Ethical Ideal*, the writer states that we need to acknowledge beauty's ethical ideal so that we can address how harmful it may be. Per Widdows, all women are expected to make themselves beautiful and not let themselves go. Ideals

of society are informed by external factors, e.g., what men think. Victorian women were exhorted not to let themselves become ugly girls who let themselves go and ignored contemporary standards of beauty, according to Susan Dutton Power in her series of articles "The Ugly Girl Papers."

Before 1938, make up was not regulated as drugs were. A 1976 law from overseas, Europe Council Dir 761768/EEC 7/22/76 –Free Circulation and Safety Cosmetics addressed safety issues in the manufacture and use of cosmetics. Nor has everyone used make up since 1976. In France as of a study done June 3, 2023, only 26% of women wore make up. (outdoor learning.com). One of those women, though fictional, may reflect the trends of the times. Cecil Bois portrays Candice Renoir, a blonde police commander who wears bright colours, is called "Barbie" by her staff, and favours "maquillage" or make up. Pink is her signature colour, and she wears it in every episode. She is a combination of a single mother, glamourous lover, independent thinker, fashion icon, crack shot, and brilliant detective. In other words, today's woman.

Chapter 1
A history of cosmetics

Prehistoric make up could have been a form of camouflage, protecting its wearers from danger. It also could have served as a type of sun block, meant to protect the skin. Lotions and ointments made from all types of natural fat and other ingredients are among the earliest forms of cosmetics. Use of cosmetics dates at least to the Stone Age. About 100,000 to 125, 000 years ago, South African dwellers left us quantities of red ochre, which is a pigment that derives its reddish hue from haematite, a mineral (Eldridge 13). They have ties with people in the New World, which suggest North and South America were populated long before Columbus and the Conquistadors made their voyages. So called Red Ochre people have left traces all over the world in many cultures. Face paint was probably made of lead mineral. In Slovenia, remnants have been found of paint also containing animal fat, bees wax, and plant material. We know Stone Age people used pigment from the fantastic cave paintings at Altamira and Lascaux. Another substance used was cerussite, a bright, white pulverized mineral. Stone Age tools were used to create vessels to contain these potions and lotions. Stone Age tools dated from 4350-4200 B.C. These were created 1000 years before Ancient Egypt and 200 years before Babylon. Red Ochre people painted themselves with red ochre, and carried amulets concocted with it. These ancient people had ties to the old Celts. The Picts and Celts decorated their faces with woad, a kind of natural dye, before they went into battle. They also stiffened their hair with lime. There are narratives describing the Celtic queen Boadicea adorned in this way before she led her troops to battle. Jewellery, including fibulae brooches, bracelets and torcs, sort of twisted metal necklaces worn around the neck, were also part of Pict and Celtic adornment. The torc was particularly significant; it signified that its wearer was a free person. A gold torc is part of the elaborate Snettingham Horde.

Just as jewellery and masks would later identify tribal affiliation, so face paint was used to instill what Lisa Eldridge calls “tribal allegiance” (13).

Venus of Willendorf, via public domain

The Venus of Willendorf, found in Austria, is one of many Venus figures that vary in size and material. The limestone figures range anywhere from 25,000 to 40,000 years old. Their hair is done in a sort of net that involves beadwork. Recently, archaeologists have determined that these may have been grandmother figures. Because of their small size, some experts speculate that they were not mere idols, but given to children. Max Von Boehn and others include them in their books on doll history.

The limestone that made the early figures may not have been found in Austria, but could have been exported from Italy (Livescience.com). The Venus figures are voluptuous, with exaggerated breasts and bellies, indicating that such a physique promoted fertility and was desired, and thus, beautiful. These figures today are still worshipped by many religions, and are called The Goddess figures.

Apparently, Stone Age cultures that worshipped the Goddess personified by the Venus figures worshiped a female deity who took many young but expendable lovers. Later societies condoned May/December relationships where a much older man took a younger bride, but not so in the matriarchal Mediterranean religions from 25,000 BC to 700 B.C (Wolf 13). The male's role in these couplings was to service the "divine womb" (13). In a way, the matriarchal goddess and her younger male partner confirm what Naomi Wolf's (beauty myth). She alleges that according to the

beauty myth as defined in western patriarchal societies; a woman's beauty must be tied to her fertility (Wolf 12).

Prehistoric make up, however, did not just come in red ochre hues. Eldridge notes that "make up in antiquity was ablaze with colour – an explosion of pigment, paints, powders and pastes" (14) which were as bright as any modern palette. Ancient cosmetics were carefully prepared from recipes that included chalk, manganese dioxide, carbon, lapis lazuli, copper ore,, red and yellow ochre, and various plant dyes (14). Red, green, black, yellow, blue and white were the basic palette derived from these ingredients, which were then mixed to create all sorts of colours. One needs only to remember the primary colours learned in school, perhaps in kindergarten finger painting, red, blue, and yellow. If a student studied high school art, she might remember creating and studying the colour wheel, and its many variations to create colours like violet, pink, orange, purple, aqua, and more.

Red has been the preferred colour of rouge and other face paint for millennia. Red has been associated with passion, anger, mourning, weddings, the Chinese and Japanese Kabuki theatre, revolution, Communism, blood, and the far Left (Eldridge 19). Red lips and cheeks are associated with sexual signalling and "come hither looks." In the study of ancient languages, the word for red comes before words for black and white (meaning of colours). In fact, rouge and lipstick can be used interchangeably. Rouge if the French word for red). (Vamps and Vampires have blood red lips, and often very pale skin). Slight rouging of the cheeks creates a "blush" which is both alluring and innocent. Robert Browning talks of the "blush" down his late Duchess' throat.

The first lipsticks were likely sticks of red ochre, with other pigments used from safflowers, alkanet root, crushed mulberries, strawberries red beet juice, even cochineal and kermes insects (Eldridge 20). Red dye is usually made from crushed insects, and has been made this way for centuries (mean of colours). Many of these substances are also foods, as will be covered in our chapter on edible make up.

According to Eco, red surcoats "expressed courage and nobility, despite the fact that red was also the colour of executioners and harlots" (123). Red hair was also significant; in Arthurian legend, red haired knights were bad, cruel, even sneaky, though Isidore of Seville thought blonde and red hair were the finest colours (123). In fact Isidore reasons that the word venustas which means physical beauty, comes from venis, which means blood (113) . Sanus, means sanguine, which Isidore identifies as one with a healthy, ruddy pink complexion (113).

In other parts the world, Egyptians, Celts, Scythians, Cretans, Greeks, Romans and other Eurasian cultures painted themselves. Ancient Assyrian, Egyptian, Lotian and Babylonian texts describe cosmetics, lotions, and medicines, as well as bottles made to contain them.. Maori, pre-Columbian Americans, northern Native Americans, all wore face making or used tattoos as personal adornment or as means of communication. The Bible contains passages addressing beauty, cosmetics, and personal adornment as well as admonishments against their use. 1 Peter 3:3-4.[1]

Make up was carefully made and universally used in Egypt as early as 10,000 B.C. (Eldridge 20). Ancient Egyptians wore powder made with galena lead and malachite (Lovetoknow.com). 2000 years after the Sumerians came up with lipstick in 3500 B.C., Ancient Egyptians were using lipstick in black and purple. Interestingly enough, these colours are popular today, and Bratz dolls by MGM toys often wear them. Carmine dye was used to create lipstick colours. In fact, it is still used today (evolutionoflipstick). Carmine dye comes from cochineal insects that our ground up. It is used in many products, including ruby red grapefruit juice (Zhang, WSJ.com). So lipstick mad were Egyptians that they used dangerous ingredients like lead (evolutionoflipstick). Ancient Greeks and Romans made blush out of mashed berries (bibalex.org).

[1] Some religions today forbid women from wearing jewelry and makeup because of the biblical admonishments against them cf. Bible Missionary Institute.

Porcelain doll with painted make up similar to an Egyptian woman. Author's collection

Queen Nefertiti of Egypt, wife of Akhenaton, considered by many to be the most beautiful woman in the world. C. 1340 B.C. by artist Thutmose. Her long neck, almond shaped eyes, and arched brows contribute to her gorgeous face

Nefertiti, wife of Akhenaton, is still considered by many to be among the most beautiful and iconic women of all time (Taronas). Her limestone bust, painted realistically, still exists. It was done by royal sculptor, Thutmose in 1340 B.C. but was lost until 1912. It now resides in the Neues Museum in Berlin (smb museum-Neues Museum), though Egypt has been asking for it back for some time, just as Greece has been asking for

the return of The Elgin marbles. It may have been in part, hidden deliberately; her husband fell out of favour as Pharaoh. There is some evidence that the layers of coloured stucco were painted over wrinkles in the original limestone bust, as if her artistic likeness was given a makeover (Eldridge 81). Think of Photo Shop, and touch ups to photos of celebrities, or Holbein's infamous portrait of Anne of Cleves that hid her flaws and nearly got him killed by Henry VIII. Nefertiti's daughter Ankhesenamen also used kohl, and was the wife of King Tut (DeLong).

Ancient Greeks disfavoured lipstick; it was reserved for prostitutes and a badge of their trade. If they didn't paint their lips, they faced punishment for trying to pose as a lady (evolutionoflipstick). Yet, the Greeks felt certain ambivalence towards lipstick and became more tolerant towards it after a while. Mulberries, carmine dye, wine residue, crocodile excrement and other ingredients made up lipstick during this time (evolutionof-lipstick).

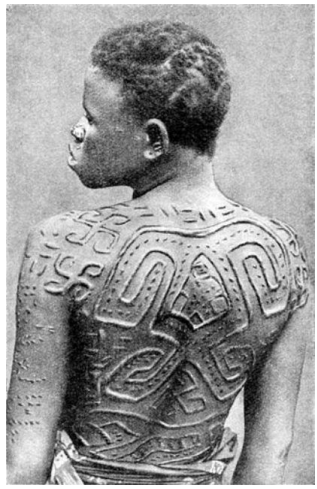
Sleeping Girl by Yannoulis Halepas. 1877. Tomb of Sofia Afentaki, who died from tuberculosis at 18. Statue commissioned by her father. First Cemetery of Athens. Legend has it the artist nearly went mad because of a flaw he made in her robes. The Greeks threw ink over her to protect her from the Nazis. Via Public Domain

Female Maori doll, New Zealand. Note traditional tattoos on her chin. C. 1930s or earlier. Collection the author

African people carved elaborate patterns into their skins and wore masks to denote various statuses. Carving these designs into the skin is called scarification (African Heritage). Some of these masks were painted white. Others served as passports when the wearer travelled from one tribe to another (Crosswaite). Beads, feathers, and jewellery, often made of bone, was also important for communication and adornment (See Diop).

In some tribes who practiced cannibalism in New Guinea, a widow might wear her late husband's mummified foot around her neck with several strands of bead necklaces as a memorial (Meet the Korowai). J.W. Burn writes in "New Guinea" that somewhere necklaces of human vertebrae as memorial jewellery (752-57). See, also Hallam and Hockey *in Death, Memory, and Material Culture* on using material objects as memorials to the dead).

African Woman with facial paint. Via Public Domain



African scarification tattoos. Via public domain

Himba women in Namibia use a mixture of ochre and animal fat which they daub all over their bodies, giving them a reddish/gold glow (Eldridge 20).

In Benin, known for art created in bronze and ivory, women during the 14th and 15th centuries led lives as limited and restricted as any European woman lived (Campbell 224). Yet, the queen mother or lyoba held high status and power, and was also considered the most beautiful woman in the kingdom. In *The Power of Art*, Caroline Campbell describes the attire of the lyoba. Bronze portrait busts of a lyoba showing her wearing coral, which other women cannot wear, and a horned crown. The coral bead are wrapped around her ears(225). The forehead of the bust has two lines that indicate ritual scarification (225). There are also river fish decorating the bust, which Campbell notes show the lyoba's control over the watery areas that involve transporting commerce and trade (225). All in all, the portrait is of a "mature, beautiful woman with a high forehead, large expressive eyes and a straight nose" (225).

In Japan, rice powder has been used for centuries, by ordinary women, Geishas, and theatre performers. The white powder repeats itself on dolls from Japan, "gofun" made of crushed oyster paste covers the wooden heads of traditional dolls, imitating the look of rice powder (Eldridge 50).

Contemporary Geisha wearing rice powder make up. Via Public Domain

Traditional Print featuring Geisha. Via Public Domain

Cosmetics display at Mitsuwa Market Place. Photo by the author

Kiss Me Make Up display with other Japanese brands displayed in grocery store at Mitsuwa Market Place, Arlington Heights, IL. The anime mascot resembles a Frozen character. Photo by the author

Japanese women have worn beni, or red lipstick made from safflowers, since the Edo period. There is a universal cultural aspect to pale white complexions accentuated by rouge and very red lipstick. Queen Elizabeth and her court favoured it, and Europeans' favoured it, in a style called Venetian ceruse, aka Spirits of Saturn (Eldridge 50). Many Goth/Emu looks favour deathly white face powder and very red lips.

The old Celts knew of cosmetics, but also donned war paint when they fought, something both men and women wore. They also stiffened their hair with lime, which made them terrifying to their enemies. The Picts and Scythians did something similar. Boadicea and her daughters stiffened their hair and painted their faces to go into battle, too. Strabo and Dio Cassius describe her as she rallied her troops. She was a terrifying figure, allegedly six feet tall. The Celts and warriors like William Wallace, Brave Heart, used woad to dye their faces. The Celts loved to torment the superstitious Romans with pranks, including one where they dyed water red to make it look like blood flowed. They may have used Eucalyptus, which can turn water blood red. Centuries later, allegations would be levied at Erzebet Bathory that she bathed in blood, but was probably something like Eucalyptus, and as a healer, she would be familiar with plants and dyes.

Queen Boudicca of the Iceni, aka Boadicea, via Public Domain. In this 19th century portrayal, she is rallying her troops as described by Ancient Roman historians

Henna, face make up, and other cosmetics have been important to Indian women for years. Make up in Bollywood is still important and elaborate. Bollywood make up is a mixture of Indian and South Asian cultural elements. As in ancient Egypt, kohl is important, and make up colours include jewel tones and reds. Carefully styled eyebrows and long lashes are typical. Mehendi and Bindi decorations for the hands and feet are common. Jewellery and make up usually complement each other (Eldridge 82).

Study Questions

1. About how far back can we date the use of make up?

2. Does the use of make up in the Stone Age differ from how make up is used today? How?

3. Who is the Venus of Willendorf? How is she important to the use of cosmetics and to women's pre-history?

4. What type of make up was favoured in ancient Japan? Why?

5. Who was Queen Nefertiti? Why is she important to a history of cosmetics and beauty?

Chapter 2
Gender bending make up in the ancient world

RuPaul has said that "Everybody is a drag queen . . . You're born naked and the rest is drag" (quoted in *People* 56). RuPaul, male cross dresser and fashion critic has been a household word in Drag communities for some time. Mattel Creations has just issued a RuPaul Monster High doll.

RuPaul Dragon Queen Doll, Monster High via Public Domain.
Integrity Toys has its own version of RuPaul as a doll. Doll collection the author

In 1969, my parents took me to Athens and other European cities. At night, we would meet my grandparents and go to open air cafes, where my grandfather would slip the neighbourhood cats a few treats. The main entertainment consisted of musical comedy where men dressed as women sang and made jokes. One popular television personality, Georgi, brought the house down with his impersonation of Anna Karenina contemplating throwing herself in front of a train. Such drag comedy where men dressed as women to perform has its origins in Ancient Greek drama where, as in

Shakespeare's plays and in the Kabuki Theatre of Japan, men performed as women. This type of cross-dressing to play a role was acceptable even in societies that frowned on men wearing women's clothes otherwise.

At times, men who dressed as women would be persecuted, as often happened to the main character of Guy de Maupassant's "Mademoiselle Fifi." The twist to that story is that because his village considered the main character to be a simpleton, they tolerated his female dress. If he dressed like a man, the villagers became alarmed. By the end of the story, when Mademoiselle tries to assert himself as a man, he is chased, beaten and nearly killed.

At other times, women who dressed as men were attacked. In part, Joan of Arc was executed for wearing men's armour, and refusing to put on women's clothing. Her refusal was taken as blasphemy, a crime against the Church. Elizabeth Bathory, the alleged vampire countess, is said to have dressed as a man to patrol her estates and the borders between her country and the Ottoman Empire.

Both men and women wore make up where it was available and fashionable in the Ancient world. Stone Age people wore red ochre and other types of face markings as well as jewellery to indicate many things, including status and tribal/totem animal allegiance. Ancient Egyptians wore kohl around their eyes as eyeliner and painted their lips as early as 4000 B.C. In fact, wearing eyeliner was a symbol of prosperity (Byrdie.com). The Celts, Scythians, and others wore blue tattoos with dye from the woad plant.

In Ancient Egypt, both men and women wore wigs. Garments of flowing linen appeared similar. Both also wore elaborate jewelry. Hatshepsut, the woman pharaoh, wore a false beard to emphasize her power as ruler was equal to any man's (Diamond). Some Sources talk about gender fluidity and binary individuals in Ancient Egypt (Diamond)Their language contained words that could be either masculine or feminine nouns (Diamond). Some Biblical scholars allege the first human was androgynous (Williams).

Ancient Roman men wore whitening powder and red tint to paint their face and lips. They also sometimes painted their heads to hide bald spots (Byrdie.com). There is nothing new under the son; there are products today where a man, or woman, can spray on hair dye to hide bald spots. There was a Geico commercial a few years ago making fun of this practice. There were androgynous figures in Ancient Rome, but also in Mesopotamia, India, and elsewhere throughout the Ancient World.

Both genders wore make up in Ancient China (Koon). Both sometimes wore similar hairstyles.

Androgyny was prevalent in many ancient cultures; men and women who are androgynous share certain traits. The original androgyne was a person born with the physical sexual traits of both sexes, often called a Hermaphrodite. The latter term comes from the name of a child born to Hermes and Aphrodite (Knott, artforum.com). An entire body of literature addresses questions of gender fluidity and androgyny in Ancient China; these include Ming dynasty literature classics like *The Plum in the Golden Vase, The Peony Pavilion, Qing Dynasty's The Peach Blossom and The Dream of the Red Chamber* (Zhou).,

Androgyny and gender blending was prevalent in ancient entertainment as well. Clowns date back to at least 2400 B.C. Technically, clowns are not one gender or the other (Facundes and Perzanowski).

Entertainers and deities were gender fluid often and could be androgynous. Inanna/Ishtar was one of the most important deities in Ancient Mesopotamia. Ishtar had both male and female traits, and was served in the temple by attendants who were androgynous (Pryke).

Other immortals had androgynous traits; Athena/Minerva was woman warrior while Artemis/Diana was a huntress. The Amazons were women warriors, while all sorts of female immortal demons from gorgons to harpies were capable of killing and fighting like men. Atlanta was an athlete, typical of many female athletes in the Greco-Roman world.

Androgynous persons wore similar or the same clothes, and similar or the same make up. Androgynous persons or androgynes are not always

treated favourably in the ancient world Hermaphroditic children were often considered harbingers of bad luck and thus were killed. Many ancient writers wrote about makeup use by both men and women. Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, and others wrote negative comments on the use of make up. As others would write throughout history, make up use was seen to lead to deception (tales of times forgotten.com).

Yet, wearing make up in general was not seen as having to do with androgyny. Men and women both across the Ancient World wore white face powder. Both often favoured red tint on their cheeks and lips. Both often used wigs. The rules of dress and cosmetics were as complicated as they are today. After the Ancient World social mores concerning make up and dress would become even more convoluted, as Christian writers and other philosophers and writers, including Boethius and Chaucer, added their two cents.

Study Questions

1. Define androgyny? Why was it prevalent in the Ancient World?

2. Why did Ancient Roman Men wear make up?

3. Why did men and women wear wigs all over the Ancient Word?

4. Name one Ancient Greek philosopher who disapproved of wearing make up?

5. Why did some believe in the Ancient World that make up use led to deception?

Chapter 3
Medieval concepts of beauty

Beauty books and medicine seem to be tied together from time immemorial. Early texts on beauty and make up were often also medical texts, just as early cook books contained medical advice and recipes for curative potions. The *Trotula* is a medieval text that consists of three books dealing with medicine for women. There is a section called "On Women's Cosmetics, " which is meant to show the reader how preserve beauty, but also how to enhance it with make up (Eldridge 22).

Colour

During the Middle Ages, colour was an important element of beauty. The discovery of dyes revolutionized how clothing was made and worn. Certain colours became associated with status, similarly to how gangs today claim and wear certain colours. Or, consider that Barbie pink has been trademarked; the magazine *Miller's Fashion Doll Quarterly* had to defend itself against a lawsuit by Barbie's company, Mattel when it used pink on its cover and used images of the doll (Clark).

Some colours were restricted to certain Medieval classes; purple and gold were the colour associated with wealth (Eco 106). Purple is also the colour of royalty and mourning. (Le Roman de la rose, vol. 1 13th century).

Yet, not everyone approved of colours or face painting, not even rouge St. Cyprian and other Christian writers considered make up deception that created a false face (Eldridge 30).

Fashion Dolls during the Middle Ages

Fashion Dolls and fashion plates predate live models. Fashion dolls, some life-sized, were popular fashion ambassadors during The Middle Ages. Queens and princesses routinely sent them as gifts to each other; each doll sent demonstrated the latest fashions. Remember there was no modern printing to create fashion magazines; if there were, even the royal and

well born could not always read and write, e.g., Charlemagne, and the ever controversial Attila the Hun. Of course, these dolls portrayed the typical weight favoured by Medieval communities.

Medieval English doll, c. 1530, found in the wall of an ancient dwelling. Via Public Domain

Body Dissatisfaction and Weight Issues during The Middle Ages and After

Thinness was not that favourable for men or women during the Middle Ages. In fact, corpulence was seen as a sign of health and posterity. This view changes throughout the world during different time periods. For example, There are camps in Africa where young girls are fattened up before marriage. Widdows writes that "Likewise, thinness is notoriously hard to account for using an evolutionary model and is at least as well accounted for by social construction" (79).

Fat, or thin, women have had body issues for centuries. Body image dissatisfaction is global. Eating disorders common in Japan, Singapore Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, and India. " Evidence that thinner figures are regarded as ideal is available from China, Korea, India, South Africa and Pakistan" (Widdows 79). As a result, the preference for thinness, especially in women, is more widespread (79). Topics like thinness, fashion, and beauty are homogenous across the globe (80). Likewise, skincare has become a key beauty topic across the globe. In fact, 35% the cosmetics market is taken up by skincare products (Widdows 81). Much of the skincare market focuses on anti-ageing products, with claims that promise the firm and youthful looking skin (81). Among