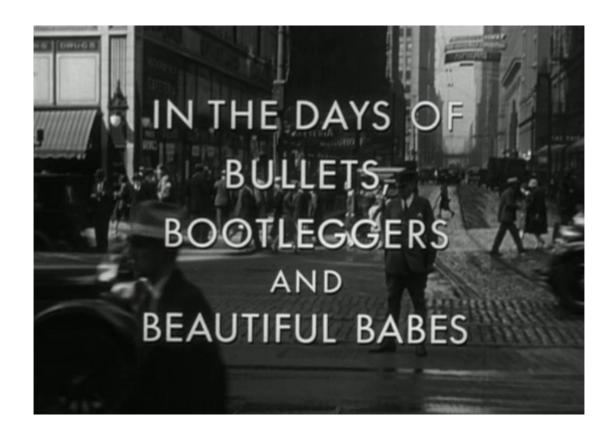
Course: Bachelor Thesis - 'The Roaring Twenties'

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Hollywood and the Consumption Culture in the Roaring Twenties

A thesis on the evolution of American consumer culture in the early 20th century on the example of a synergistic business cooperation between the media, the film and the cosmetics industry



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Introduction

The roaring twenties, often dubbed the 'wild years' of American cultural, social and economic history, introduced a plethora of far-reaching changes to nearly all aspects of everyday life of which many are still palpable today. As one of the results of World War I, America gained dominance in world finance and the explosion of prosperity on all social strata kick started the era's unprecedented dynamism, to which the emergence of several new cultural movements testaments. A growing interest of wall street brokers and investors in Hollywood sprouted the industries breakthrough and cartels of major and minor studios like MGM, First National and Paramount (also called the 'big three') and the 'little five' (under which Warner Brothers and Fox), who utilized new business strategies like block-booking and vertical integration initiated large-scale diffusion of cinemas¹ and so called 'movie palaces' all over the country and 'going to the movies' became the number one leisure activity of young men and especially women who, thanks to newly founded suffrage movements and the attainment of the right to vote, found themselves able to escape implications of morality and domesticity and were eager to participate in daily life and seize all what it had to offer to the fullest. 'Film Culture' had become a common term in defining the growing significance which not only referred to seeing movies itself, in which the average American often indulged several times a week due to affordability of tickets and a seemingly never ending supply of new movies (some theaters changed their program as often as two to three times a week)2, but also to reading and talking about them, the directors, the studios and the stars and starlets and absorbing oneself into the 'brave new world' of the movie screens. Despite the prohibitional act as a consequence of the 18th amendment of the constitution of the United States from 1919, heavy drinking and smoking, especially on social gatherings and parties, became an omnipresent image, which was mirrored in a lot of movies of the time and reflected on a new consciousness of the youth towards implications of fatherly protection, social principles of decency and gendered ordering, which first and foremostly sought to liberate the 'new woman' from these Victorian ideals of patriarchy. Actively promoted through so called 'Flapper movies' these young women described as 'free butterflies, meeting temptations and dangers without having learned to resist them'3 indulged heavily into yet another cultural movement which extended the promises for individual selfexpression and experimentation with ones own identity, which the newly acquired going-out-mentality fostered. The so called 'Beauty Culture', as professor of American history and author of 'Hope in a Jar' Kathy Peiss proposes, has been an often neglected aspect of historical research, as cosmetics to most seem to be merely a trivial and superficial consumer good, not worthy of dedicating scholarly effort to it4.

In a very short time, a matter of less than 40 years though, make-up has changed from a mere collection of recipes, passed on from mother to daughter and exclusively used for hygiene and medicinal treatment, to a door-to-door selling concept which was lead, executed and utilized by women in order to assert a new, confident female image on the working market to a male-lead, fully-fledged mass-consumer good, for which in 1927 the first all-covering media advertisement campaign ever was launched by Max Factor.

The above named social, economic and cultural developments, the 'Film Culture', the 'Beauty Culture' and the women liberation movements, constitute merely three aspects of the complex network of phenomena, which all together comprise what is called the 'Consumption Culture' in the America of the early 20st century. Far too large of a subject to be completely illuminated in the content of one text, this thesis shall attempt to show, that looking at the way in which the cosmetics industry rose from a technically non-existent factor in social and cultural life, much as film, to something of a central importance to everyday life, will give at least partial insight into the manifold interrelations which underlie the formation of this modern consumer culture. Being utilized in films already in the end of the 19h century for practical purposes, make-up was quickly immersed into the everyday 'beautification' routine of thousands of American women who similarly, on a daily base, admired starlets such as Mary Pickford and Greta Garbo in the movies and in dedicated movie magazines such as *Photoplay*. Just as cosmetics, films and Hollywood itself both carried new connotations, brought forth by the above named social dynamics, into daily life and allowed the individual to play with new ideas of identity, which were no longer perceived as fixed

¹ Bordwell & Thompson. Film History: An Introduction (Mc-Graw Hill, 2009), 129-130.

² Ibidem, 128.

³ Dyhouse. *Girl Trouble: Panic and Progress in the History of Young Women* (Zed Books, 2013), 74.

⁴ Peiss. Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture (Holt & Company, 1988), Preface.

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by birth status or wealth, but it was proposed that anybody could rise to stardom under the right circumstances and slogans like 'see yourself in the movies' (Universal) and 'Uncover your true self' (Factor)⁵ assume a certain interrelation in the way film studios and make-up manufacturers were trying to seduce the masses. With the help of these implications surrounding beauty, stardom and the maxim of 'becoming someone', both these industries, so far the hypothesis this thesis wants to prove, systematically collaborated in 'fuel(ing) the growth of consumer culture'⁶ and movie magazines acted in this as a meta medium which brought together the efforts of the two industries, to channel them and communicate them to the consumer. Even though the inquiry undertaken can by no means be called exhaustive and certainly requires more and nuanced research to expand it, it is anticipated that, based on this hypothesis, this research will be able to prove what Peiss calls 'synergies' as 'increasingly dense ties among cosmetics manufacturers, advertisers, retailers, periodicals and the mass media'⁷ and will be able to explain how the film industry, the cosmetics industry and the media related to each other as part of the formation of early American consumer culture.

In order to tackle this task in a comprehensive manner, five questions will be asked which also serve as the focal points of attention in which the chapters of this research will be structured in:

Main Question (MQ): How is the role of the cosmetics and make-up industry in the formation of an emerging American consumer culture reflected in issues of the popular movie magazine *Photoplay* in the period between 1920 and 1930?

Sub Question 1 (SQ1): How and why have make-up and cosmetics evolved to a major industry in the early 20th century?

Sub Question 2 (SQ2): What characterized 1920's film culture and which role has it played in Americans everyday life?

Sub Question 3 (SQ3): Which business strategies did both of these industries utilize in order to accelerate consumerism?

Sub Question 4 (SQ4): How were these strategies practically translated into promotional efforts in Photoplay?

The first chapter will deal with the emergence of 'Beauty Culture', as defined by Kathy Peiss, to clarify the term itself and why cosmetics and make-up must in fact be seen as important, integral aspects of our cultural past and present and as such well worthy to be investigated (SQ1). Chapter two will ask what exactly characterized 1920's 'Film Culture' and which role it actually played in the everyday life of the American citizen (SQ2). Conclusively then the findings of chapter one and two will be combined and it will be attempted to clarify, after having mapped out which role both industries played separately in the cultural and economical landscape of post-war America, which business strategies both utilized in order to accelerate consumerism and if there were any similarities or even synergies in their workings (SQ3). The final chapter will deal with an in-depth analysis of advertisements in 10 issues of the popular movie magazine *Photoplay*, ranging from 1920 to 1930, to provide palpable, empirical evidence to the question of how both of the industries translated their strategies into actual promotional efforts (SQ4).

The Rise of Beauty Culture and the End of Innocence

Make-up and cosmetics, in one form or another, have always been a vital part of human cultural heritage and socio-cultural traditions. 'Before the 1920's', as Rebekah Mabe, researcher from the woman's studies department of Appalachian State University observes, 'when make-up became a popular tool, make-up had different uses and was not specifically gendered toward women'. She notes that, for instance in native African and American cultures, make-up was associated with 'wearing a mask' that should have 'more useful purposes than beautification'. It was factually utilized by men, women and even for animals in equal measures and was worn for spiritual or instrumental goals, for instance to express certain emotions, such as

⁵ Fuller. At the Picture Show: Small-town audiences and the Creation of Movie Fan Culture (University of Virginia, 2001), 115.

⁶ Ibidem, 109

⁷ Peiss. Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture, 122.

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grief or pleasure. Despite the clearly feminist attitude Mabe assumes in her essay against implications of the 'ideal feminine face' and make-up as a symbol of a still intact patriarchal imperative in contemporary society, that expects women to cover up a 'well worn body' in order to meet 'unrealistic physical appearances to get respect and power', her notion of a 'popular tool'8 gives inducement for a more unbiased understanding of beautification. When delving deeper into the rabbit hole, starting in the Victorian Era, one will find that cosmetics played a more nuanced role in history and that in fact, make-up was not always understood as a tool to assert male dominance, rather to the contrary and that its popularity started to rise under very different circumstances.

After reading and analyzing 'Hope in a Jar', it is possible to trace roughly three periods in the development of a so called 'Beauty Culture', which explain how make-up became a popular tool, what it was used for and how beautification became a cultural act. The first period, which will here be called the 'pre-cultural situation', can roughly be situated between the middle and late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The term 'pre-cultural' has been chosen, because make-up did not yet hold any specific and specialized cultural or social connotations, except for (in cases of excessive use) being associated with vice and prostitution and as such has been actively shunned from having any significance in everyday life9. Defined by Peiss as 'a type of commerce [and] a system of meaning that helped women navigate in the changing conditions of modern social experience¹¹⁰, one can not speak of the existence of a 'Beauty Culture' in that time, because make-up and cosmetics were neither distributed commercially, nor did they provide any added value for enhancing social experiences. Factually, there was no difference made between tools utilized for personal hygiene, medicinal treatment or cosmetics for beautification and the term 'beautification' must be similarly treated with caution in this context, as most women did not wear any visible facial make-up at all¹¹ (except for those who wanted to match a certain female type hinted on above). Knowledge was 'spread by word of mouth, like household hints and cooking recipes, within families and between neighbors'12 and it is believed that many American women kept and compiled their own recipe books and passed them on from generation to generation and by 'blending housewifery, therapeutics and aesthetics, cosmetic preparation was a branch of useful knowledge women were expected to master'13.

It is easy to see, how the sort of popularity of cosmetic treatments in this era differed greatly from the kind of popularity that Mabe hints on in her text. Beautifying was not a stand-alone purpose in that time, but factually combined and inseparable with bodily care and above all a female domain, from which men profited, but which they did and could not exploit and in that, cosmetics asserted a certain power and confidence for women, even though only in the individual, domestic contexts of a small community.

This changed rapidly in the second period, which Peiss herself dubbed the 'emergent beauty culture' and which is situatable between 1900 and 1920. Naturally, the transition was fluent, but around 1910, a growing commerce with herbs, oils and chemicals became a custom and enabled women in the cities as well as in the countryside to work with more exotic substances and either make their own cosmetics and sell them or purchase ready-made products from pharmacists or hairdressers 14. This development slowly introduced a paradigmatic change of female identity, from the Victorian moral tradition of natural beauty and self-control, to a more open view in which active physical enhancement with the help of make-up became an aspect of self-assurance and independence and the previous social stigma of the 'made-up woman' as a prostitute, slowly rose to an omnipresent social standard. Many men in fact despised this new female image and critical voices from physicians and advice writers doomed the constant use of make-up, as it may 'damage the epidermis and internal organs and lead to death' 15. This exaggeration shows very well where the proportions lay: Make-up was still a female domain, but now entered the public sphere and as such became an active discourse, as make-up became, despite the criticism, more and more of a popular

⁸ Mabe. Essay on the Meaning of Make-Up (Appalachian State University. 2001). [Note that this Footnote counts for all quotes from the entire paragraph). 9 Peiss, Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture, 24-27.

¹⁰ Ibidem, 6.

¹¹ Ibidem, 25. 12 Ibidem, 12.

¹³ Ibidem, 13.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 18.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 21.

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demanded commodity and soon the first female entrepreneurs began to produce make-up for the masses.

These entrepreneurs developed early marketing strategies, promoting themselves as specialized 'beauty experts' who offered sisterly help and working opportunities, while promoting new maxims such as 'beauty is a duty', to sell their products and underline beautification as a motor for social and economic success for women¹⁶. In the beginning thus, 'Beauty Culture' was induced by a female-led industry, which was, on the one hand, perceived as a positive contribution to everyday life and the assurance of gender equality, while on the other hand being seen as undoubted signs of female degradation and the coming of a generation which is 'more interested in dress than motherhood' 17. Make-up here then, became similarly a tool as well as a symptom of a new image of womanhood in the public domain and was factually made popular and slowly indispensable for women by women.

The third period marks the moment in which beauty culture and consumer culture begin to merge into each other, which Peiss herself calls the 'formative period', and is in that the period most interesting for the content of this thesis. Knowing now, that the discourse around beautification was in fact a very lively and organic one and everything but single-sided, the next step, to look at the role the media took over in that discourse, seems legitimate.

In the 1910's, media coverage was marginal and distribution was mostly based on door-to-door selling concepts and mailing services, to keep advice as personal as possible, while trying to spread brands and products as good as possible all over the country. Around 1920, an interesting shift in the reception of cosmetics took place, as the industry was slowly taken over by male entrepreneurs, which recognized the economic potential of this new trend. They began to anonymize the business, by pumping money into the market and introducing large-scale production, national distribution and active advertising and soon the first major brands like Max Factor or Maybelline (which are still well known today) took over the initiative and superseded the, since 1900, ever growing number of small brands and individual sellers¹⁸. Media-based marketing became the key concept of this young industrial branch. As already hinted on in the introduction, the so called 'Flapper', young women of this era, indulged heavily into the spirit of the twenties and as such became one of the primary target groups for the marketing of so called 'impulsive goods', products which, other than cars or fridges, were made to be used up and have to be re-purchased on a regular base, thus also make-up: 'Perhaps more than any other character [in film], the flapper was defined through her use of consumer goods, particularly clothing and cosmetics. Throughout the 1920's, this characteristic was exploited through such familiar and straightforward strategies as product tie-ups and product placement'19. Other than their mothers and their grandmothers then, the flapper girl acquired her knowledge not from oral tradition, recipe books or personal advice but, as Sara Ross observes in her essay on the Hollywood Flapper, from the media and her 'indiscriminate consumption' of images and articles that are put before her. Highlighting their somewhat naive trust in 'fashionable knowledge'20, it seems not surprising that the role of the woman in the representation of products and the industry has also changed significantly. As the use of make-up became more excessive and perceived as a chance to actively influence and alter ones outward appearance, naturally the things that women became focused on were aspects of verisimilitude and quick, visible results, rather than subtle advice and lengthy explanations and as such, the former 'beauty experts' of the emergent beauty culture became replaced by the models and starlets of the consumer culture (stars were literally called 'model consumers in private life, whom readers could emulate⁽²¹⁾ and being 'made-up' became standard in public venues and gatherings, rather than an exclusive gallant for highclass or business women.

Beautification changed from being an inexcusable vice to a social virtue and imitating the things that are seen in the media and being up-to-date to the latest trends (which are now dictated by the industry)²² became almost an imperative and may eventually fledge into the situation that Mabe criticizes in her essay. In this 'formative period' then, lies the base for the still

¹⁷ Ibidem, 28. 18 Ibidem, 156-158.

¹⁹ Desser, et. al. 'The Hollywood Flapper and the Culture of Media Consumption' (University of Minnesota, 2000), 60.

²⁰ Ibidem, 64.

²² Peiss. Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture, 129.

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ongoing discourse about the social, economic and moral flux consumer society is still entangled in today and which showcases the general complexity of network relations between industry, media and consumers, which cannot be reduced to simple top-down or bottom-up relations, but lives by the constant negotiation between these agents.

Beauty culture thus, first practically non-existent, rose quickly to a very own branch with its own social and commercial significance, before it was absorbed by consumer culture and its original implications were reformed into a generally adaptable format that promised maximum commercial success. In this process of reformation, the media played a crucial role and film especially.

'Let's become a Movie-Star', Fan Culture on the Advance

As it has already been said in the introduction, film is now understood as one of the most popular, if not -the- most popular medium of the 1920's and furthermore the only medium that provided consumption of entertainment and information through moving pictures and as such can also easily be labeled the most accessible medium of the time. To no surprise then, as soon as film technology evolved from the simple photographed images of the 19th century, an industry similarly evolved around it and with it a vivid cultural movement of devotees, who not only went to see the movies on a regular base, but even sought to be 'in' the movies or at least get as close to it as possible.

Here, as well as with make-up, a certain gendered division of interest is observable: While male movie fans were mostly interested in the technological properties of the medium and the editorial background of the stories, a demand for transparency which the industry answered with the selling of DIY hobbyist 'moving picture kits' and scenario writing contests in movie magazines, female moviegoers sought to participate more directly in the worlds created on the movie screens and the 'star spectacle' behind the scenes. Mimicing the medium here thus, had a twofold meaning, but fan magazines quickly began to lean more towards female fan-interests and 'towards the fast-growing, lucrative category of woman's magazines, which were incidentally attracting far more consumer product advertising than fan or hobbyist journals'²³, with a focus on 'articles about the stars clothing on-screen and off; details of players' romances and private lives; recipes from their kitchens; and breathless descriptions of what cars they drove and what pets they owned'²⁴. One reason for that tendency was, that there were on an average more female moviegoers than males who went to see the movies, due to the fact that the already named increased prosperity of the social middle-class gave housewives and young girls the chance to engage into leisure activity, while their fathers and husbands were working, secondly because young women were more susceptible for impulsive consumption of 'small, disposable products', an image that, as mentioned in chapter two, was also actively fostered by the movies themselves and thirdly, because, in time, the movie industry became more and more professionalized and there was less room for amateur authors and 'tinkerers'²⁵.

Already before the coming of feature-length films, the introduction of photographic technology infused a heightened self-awareness into people²⁶, who were well used to having pictures of themselves and their beloved ones in the form of portraits, but not to the neutrality of the image that a machine produces. A certain dislocation of the self-image of especially women, who already began to use make-up more frequently in the late 19th century, thus already took place at that point and this shift from the maxim of 'natural beauty' to a made up appearance became proportionally intensified the further technology evolved. In the early years of film, make-up in the movies was utilized for practical purposes, to highlight and intensify expressions on actors faces, since early film stocks often had either too high or too low contrast, so facial features eventually became hard to recognize. Far from trying to beautify, eyebrows were purposefully drawn exaggeratedly large, nose wrinkles were darkened and enlarged or heavy, dark eyeshadow was applied to insinuate a sinister look. With the coming of panchromatic film stock in 1906, which was far more sensitive to a wider spectrum of colors than the old orthochromatic

²³ Ibidem, 135

²⁴ Ibidem, 136.

²⁵ Fuller. At the Picture Show, 153.

²⁶ Peiss. Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture, 33.

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technology and as such provided a more 'realistic reproduction of a scene as it appears to the human eye'²⁷, this mask-like, practical use of make-up became unnecessary and soon, also thanks to the introduction of the Hollywood star system, highlighting an actors handsomeness became a priority. Interestingly, this development in a way mirrors the evolution of the use of make-up that Mabe describes in her text perfectly, even though on a far smaller and more specified scale, but nevertheless does it show how the formation of culture works as a network on several planes, with each aspect and occurrence being somehow causally related to an other.

This new focus on beauty in films then, together with the establishment of fan magazines and the expansion of the cosmetics industry, accelerated the idea that one could actively improve, alter and play with their social identity, that already began to surface in the wake of the emergent beauty culture some years earlier. Rising up to the status of major industrial branches at the exact same time, it seems not surprising that the film and the make-up industry at some point began to actively promote and accelerate each other in significance. Just as make-up, films and Hollywood both carried connotations which allowed the individual to play with ones role in society which, as previously mentioned, due to new social mobility on all levels was not anymore perceived as fixed and the idea that anybody could rise to stardom under the right circumstances was planted into the heads of especially young flapper girls. Make-up and the movies then, both became leading, crucial factors in the process of 'becoming someone' and climbing to the highest steps of the social ladder. A form of systematic collaboration then, can be traced as both industries utilized 'the pervasiveness of the medium, which generated needs and desires of the consumer, coupled with product endorsement of movie stars'28 to 'fuel the growth of consumer culture' in the way they appropriated the same icons for their business strategies: Beauty, perceived as a prerequisite for stardom, stardom being understood as something generally worth striving for and stars (through the media and the movies), consequentially showed the ordinary woman how, with the help of cosmetics and other goods, they can become beautiful and as such, get the chance to become stars themselves. A win-win for both industries and movie magazines consequentially formed the third, binding factor in that collaboration. Movies cued ideals and wishes in the consumer and accelerated the active (re)creation of the individuals identity, which then could be satisfied through the advertisements and products in the magazines, which -again- in turn, cued new interest in movies through synopses and insider information about starts and new productions. A certain circular motion seems to have established from the movies, to the magazines, to the products and back to the movies.

The cosmetics industry then, fitted exceptionally well into this new, mediatized network, as make-up played a role in the creation of social identity as great as no other product of the time as it a) dealt with the immediate appearance of the individual and as such played into a literal form of identity transformation and b) counted to the most typical impulsive goods of the time and promised quick fixes, as opposed to physical exercise or surgery. On that base, it was a simple task for businessmen to introduce new and better products on a regular base, which were naturally deemed as crucial to stay on top of the ladder and soon women needed not only one, but 5 or 7 different creams to maintain a 'perfect complexion' and even whole make-up kits to correspondingly high prices were sold²⁹. According to Michael Pettit in his book 'The Science of Deception', this was also made possible due to the abstraction of the market, that began to establish in the 1920's and that was hinted on earlier in the text. Thanks to the efforts of large-scale entrepreneurship, business became liberated from confines of time and space and products could be sold and purchased whenever, wherever. That also meant, that the personal evaluation of goods became increasingly harder for consumers and the media in fact took over the duty to inform the masses about aspects of quality and liability³⁰. This factually increased the shear between truthful information and commercial deception, which presumably was smaller back in the time when products were sold door-to-door or exclusively at small, local shops.

²⁷ Bordwell & Thompson. Film History: An Introduction, 134.

²⁸ Fuller. *At the Picture Show*, 157.

²⁹ Peiss. Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture, 194.

³⁰ Pettit. The Science of Deception (Chicago University Press, 2013), 11-15.

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Conclusively it seems, that on expense of the part of the social discourse that originally spawned the make-up industry and made it big, namely promises for female self-discovery and self-sufficiency, in the mid to late 1920's, the image of the modern woman became more and more dictated by the media and specific images of perfection and popular slogans like 'uncover your true self' as utilized in an advertisement campaign by Max Factor in 1926, no longer connoted self-discovery, but third-party-mimicry!

Photoplay's Union of the Market

The next logical step in this inquiry, would be to ask how these promotional efforts actually looked like, how the two industries practically worked with each other and how this synergy evolved throughout the era. For answering this question, 10 issues of one of the most popular movie magazines of the time, *Photoplay*, which was founded in 1911 and had a top circulation of over 200.000 copies in it's peak-year 1918, between 1920 and 1930 will be analyzed in two consequential steps. One issue from 1920 (January), three issues from 1921 (February, August and December), 3 issues from 1929 (January, August and December) and 3 issues from 1930 (January, August and December); four years all in all, because it appeared to be interesting to trace possible changes throughout the decade in the way cosmetics and films were promoted, especially concerning the difference between the early 1920's, when the industry boomed and the late 1920's, with 1929 as the year of the great depression and 1930 one year after the great stock crash, which has factually eliminated many businesses of the time. For acquiring the issues, I have consulted the digital online-archive on mediahistoryproject.org (see bibliography).

In phase one, a more or less superficial scanning of advertisements and articles and the way they are incorporated in the overall structure of the magazines will be executed. Furthermore, the composition of cosmetics advertisements in relation to other products will be taken into consideration and the frequency in which they appear throughout the issues and the years. Phase two then, will zoom into a selection of advertisements and articles, which have been chosen based on the results of phase one, in order to analyze them for aspects of address, iconography and they way in which they relate to the social discourse around womanhood. To provide a theoretical grounding for this analysis, theories from film and television studies will be utilized and appropriated for the printed medium: On the one hand, the theory about denotative and connotative meanings in television narratives by Professor Jonathan Bignell will be utilized to clarify how a viewer or in that case reader, devises meaning from symbols and icons and how these signs relate to each other in the formation of binary or assembled meanings³¹. Especially in relation to the findings of chapter 2, it is to assume that there is a certain discrepancy in the distribution of denotative and connotative meanings in the way advertisements are composed. On the other hand, Sergei Eisenstein's writings on the filmic image as hieroglyphs will serve as an idea of how there might be a certain mise-en-scène or even montage observable³² in the way advertisements are constructed and related and how conflicts between images and ideas create a more nuanced meaning which, factually, might end up in the kind of deception that Pettit alludes to in his text.

In accordance with the findings of chapters one and two, it is expected that there were on an average less advertisements in the early 1920's, but with a higher degree of verisimilitude, advice giving and a simpler, to-the-point layout as in the later years. In 1929 and 1930 on the other hand, a strong increase in frequency and density of advertisements is expected, with a higher number of images, instead of written advice. In addition to that, it is also expected that the focus on awareness and bodily care has decreased and that aspects of beautification grew more important, that advertisement became more aggressively hinting on flaws, instead of offering positive advice and that in that a realization of deception has similarly decreased as opposed to the early years, in which still a reminiscence of the honest selling concepts of female entrepreneurs were palpable and the industry was attempting to hold up the 'fabricated illusion of a woman-owned business'³³.

³¹ Bignell. An Introduction to Television Studies (Routledge, 2008), 90-92.

³² Eisenstein, Sergej. Buiten het Filmbeeld (1929), 31-35.

³³ Peiss. Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture, 117.

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Phase One

To begin, a straight-forward alignment of all the issues observed will be featured, to give an overview over the number of cosmetic ads printed in each year. In the January issue from 1920, 14 cosmetic and make-up ads are featured, in February 1921 21 ads, in August a mere 9 ads and in December 13. In 1929, 12 ads appeared in the January issue, 23 ads in the August and 22 ads in the December issue and finally in 1930, 7 ads in the January issue, 20 in the August one and 11 in the December issue.

In 1920 it is striking, that ads are categorized in blocks in specified advertisement-sections and not ordered in categories of products, but more or less put together seemingly at random. There are no clearly visible tie-ins of ads into the overall structure of the magazine, but they are actually kept apart from the rest of the content, meaning articles, receptions, synopses and previews of movies. Advertising as such, does not seem to be any focusing factor and for large parts of the magazine, there are no ads at all, for instance from page 80 to 116, but then again these blocks appear on every page for almost 10 consecutive pages (page 116-125). In 1921, there appear more and larger ads in general and they are now partially colored and as such draw more attention, but they are still set-up in blocks. While in 1920, advertisements were mostly representing small firms or even independent individuals who were trying to sell their products, in 1921 more and more specified brands (Maybelline, Woodburys, Pompeian) take up more space with sometimes 2 or 3 ads in the same issue and leave less space to the small sellers. Furthermore seem the larger ads of those companies to be coupled together and these ads are beginning to specifically address the consumer, as for instance many cosmetic ads are directed towards husbands, to propose make-up as a fitting Christmas present. Also do black and white close-up images of starlets appear more frequently directly next to cosmetic ads.

In 1929, the overall quantity of ads seems to decrease slightly, even though not necessarily the quantity of cosmetic ads, and ads become more of an integral part of the magazines overall impression. They are not longer coupled in blocks, but stand on their own and are generally bigger, colored and often suited with largely printed tag-lines and catch-phrases. Furthermore, a whole array of new products has been introduced in the past year, such as eyeshadow and lipstick and as such one can speak of a decrease in the number of companies who advertise, but in a significant increase of products to be advertised. In this time, also the previously mentioned selling of make-up kits seems to have started.

In 1930, brands seem to have finally started to be actively tied to films and stars. Max Factor specifically is advertised as the number one make-up artist of Hollywood, a male make-up artist, which proposes a strong change in the connotation of the make-up industry with female expertise from the early 1920's. Apart from that, ads seem to attain fixed spots in the magazines and are often printed in vibrant colors on full pages and in that take up space that 10 years earlier was reserved for actual content. In fact, at least 10 of the 20 ads in the August issue of 1930 were full-page advertisements.

Concerning the frequency of advertisements in the 10 examined issues, results are incongruent with the hypothesis. While on an average there is neither a clear increase not a clear decrease in the number of ads observed, the assumption that there were less advertisements in the early 1920's that in the later years of the period, proves to have been false. Neither the frequency, nor the density has increased, but advertisements are rather more intelligently spread throughout the layout of the magazine and not anymore coupled in large chunks, where they can be easily skipped by the reader. Interestingly also, cosmetic ads were in the early 1920's often coupled with advertisements for DIY camera kits or advertisements for script-writing courses, while these kinds of ads seem to have completely vanished in the later years, which proves the assumption, that magazines indeed turned towards female readers in their advertising efforts and that the professionalization of Hollywood (which is also visible in the increase of star-images and the turn from black and white to colored images), indeed pushed male interests from the fandom. The overall layout, on the other hand, indeed became more complex and advertisements became far more of an organic part of the magazine than in 1920 and 1921, where they have seemed to have played an almost marginal role in comparison.

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Phase Two

Considering aspects of address, it is first of all striking that the majority of advertisements already in 1920 works with rhetorical questions like 'Haven't you always adored Viola Dana's lovely eyelashes?'34 in an advertisement of the Maybell Laboratories and the creation of direct binaries in sentences such as 'now' versus 'then', vs 'the future', 'perfect' versus 'unpardonable', 'beautiful' versus 'flawed', et cetera. Furthermore, the industry works with a very suggestive imagery in their choice of words and metaphors and expressions like 'rose-petal cheeks' or 'moon-like eyes'35 create an almost filmic representation and is direct to evoking scenarios in the mind of the customer. The connection to films and stars themselves though, is not very strong yet and lots of ads rather refer to aspects of 'what nature intended' and how to keep ones complexion 'like when you were a baby'36 (Illu. 1). Many advertisements still have the appearance of 'expert advice' and are made to sound neutral and even scientific, though always on a level of common sense, such as the explanation that the 'free flowing of the blood that comes from exhilaration' ruins the 'perfect smoothness and freshness' of ones face which Resinol Soap, naturally, can forecome, or the advice on manicure by Cutext, that 'one should never cut the cuticle, for 'the nail root is only 1/12 of an inch below it and when the cuticle is cut, it is next to impossible to avoid exposing the root at the corners' and that will eventually give a 'coarse, ragged appearance to the nail'38 (Illu. 2). The focus as such, seems to be more on protection, comfort and health and there is in fact rarely speech of improving ones attractiveness.

In 1921, advertisements begin to associate products more frequently with stars. And ads are often arranged next to pictures of celebrities, which again creates a certain metaphorical binary between the 'me' and the 'them', which the use of cosmetics eventually can transform into a 'we'. There are generally more products advertised which are focused on beautification, so less soaps, nail tinctures or cold creams and more lipstick, mascara and kajal. Furthermore, the use of tag-lines and catch-phrases with a different size and font than the rest of the texts becomes popular among advertisers and factually, these italic-written or fat-printed lines are reminiscent of the film title screens in movies and these aspects serve as so called 'flashing arrows' to quide the readers attention to specific elements, like for instance the binaries mentioned earlier (Illu. 7/8). It appears that filmic codes, which were previously learned by the audience, are consciously re-utilized and appropriated in printed ads. What also testaments to that assumption, is the subliminal connotative connection that is created between pictures and advertisements. Even though there is not yet any direct affiliation of film stars to products (due to the fact that many did not want to be associated with the industry), a certain type of the Kuleshov-Effect³⁹ seems to be at work when the advertisement of for instance mascara appears next to the image of a starlet wearing heavy eye make-up. Even though there is no evident connection between the product and the picture and no one knows if this specific product was used in the image, the reader makes an immediate, subconscious connection between the two images, just like it happens when two film scenes appear right after each other. It is to assume thus, that these types of layout-choices are far from coincidental but that a certain miseen-scène in the magazine becomes more and more important. Apart from that, many advertisements and articles begin to talk to specific target groups and divide the female readership into categories like 'the young girls' or 'women of society'40 (Peiss even differentiates between 4 categories: Housewives, society women, clubbing women and working women)⁴¹ and as such advice different products to different types of women, depending on factors like age, skin type, or even the size and shape of the eyes. This specialization, in fact, aims to bind women to specific products and brands, for they are made out as being the best available for 'my' type and this artificial categorization becomes assimilated into the social sphere.

Finally, advertisements in 1921 become more imperative and even aggressive in the way they talk to the customer. There is no more speech of improvement and having a choice of how to treat ones skin, but phrases like 'Why you must have beautiful hair to be attractive' or 'your skin needs two different creams at different times'42 (both my italics) hints on a tendency that

³⁴ Media History Digital Library. Photoplay, January 1920, Vol. 17, Issue No. 2, 100.

³⁵ Ibidem, July 1929, Vol. 36, Issue No. 2, 12. 36 Ibidem, January 1920, Vol. 17, Issue No. 2, 18.

³⁷ Ibidem, January 1920, Vol. 17, Issue No. 2, 93. 38 Ibidem, January 1920, Vol. 17, Issue No. 2, 89.

³⁹ Bordwell, D. & Thompson, K. Film Art: An Introduction (Mc-Graw Hill, 2010), 231-232.

⁴⁰ Media History Digital Library. *Photoplay*, August 1929, Vol. 36, Issue No. 3, 73. 41 Peiss. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture*, 136.

⁴² Media History Digital Library. Photoplay, December 1921, Vol. 21, Isasue No. 1, 79.

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leans towards insinuating that beauty not anymore comes from the inside, but is applied superficially.

In the years between 1921 and 1930, a complete assimilation into the aggressive imagery of the consumer culture seems to have taken place. As previously mentioned, in 1927, Max Factor became one of the leading stars of Hollywood as well as the cosmetics industry and he began to 'share' his personal 'Hollywood make-up secrets'43 (Illu. 6) with the public through magazines like Photoplay. More than just adverts, now advertising is completely tied into actual articles which talk about the life of stars and starlets, of which the film making itself is naturally a great part. 'A new Make-up secret known to the screen stars, may now be yours'44 and similar phrases again cue identification and comparison, but more effectively and directly than through the subliminal messages of the earlier years and even headlines like 'Would you like to be more beautiful than you really are?¹⁴⁵ (In the same advertisement by Factor), or 'without smooth skin, a girl can't be lovely' hint on the fact, that beautification finally and fully took over the priority in the way cosmetics are to be utilized. Peer pressure is furthermore intensified through the use of doubtful statistics, like '442 out of 451 actresses use ...' or '9 out of 10 are devoted to ...'46 (Illu. 3) and here, clear aspects of customer deception are palpable, for these 'facts' are impossible to question and provide much less information than the beauty advice of the early 1920's, in fact they do not provide any useful information at all. Interestingly though, there are also more and more articles surfacing which deal with exactly this deception and attempt to debunk it on a certain level. In one article in the August issue of 1929, Titled 'The Passing of the Extra Girl', for instance, it is mentioned that the coming of the sound era ended the focus on mere beauty as the sole qualification for becoming a movie star and that skills like singing, dancing and a proper speech are similarly determining factors: 'Once beauty spelled film success, now it's accomplishment¹⁴⁷ (Illu. 4). In another article with the title 'Diet - The Menace of Hollywood', specialists even warn about possible harmful side-effects and health risks that come with excessive loss of weight or the attempt to achieve 'unrealistic film looks'48 (Illu. 5).

Apart from that though, in 1930 Max Factor manages to fortify his role as Hollywood's beauty wizard and becomes literally compared to an artist who can do 'minor miracles': 'Her allure and personality, previously hidden by her grotesque application of cosmetic, now shown forth by the magic of make-up by Max Factor' and the famous slogan of his campaign 'Hope in a Jar', 'could cynically capture the deepest disappointments of consumer culture, or give voice to the utopian promise that cosmetic alchemy might transform deficiency into triumph'49.

Conclusion

Conclusively, many aspects of the hypothesis seem to have been verified, but yet some surprising differences surfaced as well. It seems indeed, that the tone that advertisers were speaking changed to an increasingly direct address, sounding less like an offer than a demand to the customer to adhere to the advice they are giving. In that, a certain imposition of 'submission of the mind to beliefs imposed on it by authority'50 is palpable, with the authorities in this case being the newly rising profession of the make-up artist, with Max Factor at the peak of the procession. With an increasing focus on the private lives of stars and starlets, the medium film begins to bridge the gap between the private and the public space and films enter the domestic world through magazines and so, consequentially, do the products they are more and more associated with. Filmic codes and conventions become part of the accustomed perspective, also due to the frequency with which films were seen and these customs were consciously utilized by the media and the industry to strengthen and condense the ties of the network that has built up around the culture of consumption. Interestingly, no signs of regression are observable in the 1929's and 1930's issues of Photoplay, as anticipated, but that seems to be explainable by the way in which the previously mentioned ties have been established throughout the years: Instead of a rich and varied field of rivaling individual sellers and producers, major

⁴³ Ibidem, Vol. 37, December 1929, Issue No 1, 91.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, Vol. 37, December 1929, Issue No 1, 90.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, Vol. 36, August 1929, Issue No. 3, 17. 46 Ibidem, Vol. 37, December 1929, Issue No. 1, 72.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, Vol. 36, August 1929, Issue No. 3, 31. 48 Ibidem, Vol. 35, January 1929, Issue No. 2, 31.

⁴⁹ Peiss. Hope in a Jar: The Making of Americas Beauty Culture, 200.

⁵⁰ Pettit. The Science of Deception, 13.

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industries begin to stick together and attempt to survive by forming cartels and even signs on a beginning oligopolization of brands like Factor, Maybelline or Woodburys seem to be surfacing, which all attempt to achieve a fixed place in the lucrative dream factory of Hollywood. This, factually, is also a very strong sign of how consumer culture has evolved since the early years of the roaring twenties from an open network of lose ties with lots of space for experimentation and chances to ascend to an almost closed circuit of obligations and maxims of profit and superiority. On the other hand though, the assumption, that the awareness of deception has decreased simultaneously with advertisement strategies maturing has proven to be false.

Instead of having a straight graph of simple advertisement bound to a strong sense for what must be true and what must be a lie and consequentially a relatively low awareness for business strategies as these become more complex and intelligently positioned, it seems more that the development has the form of a parabola, with little awareness in the early years of corporate advertisement and more 'naive belief' and high awareness of deception together with increasingly deceptive advertising. This permits the assumption, that the discourse itself in fact matured together with the industries and the media and that it did not become dictated and suppressed by new implications of the lifestyle that the consumer culture imposed, but that it similarly became an integral aspect of this very culture and has evolved with it and through it.

Finally, it is to say that it has not been expected, that undeniable proof for the assumption that there was indeed an artificially created network between the film and the cosmetics industry that induced a mutual acceleration of their significance in consumer culture through the appropriation of aspects of the popular discourse around implications of womanhood in the 1920's could be found, but it is hoped that at least satisfactory evidence, which hints on the possible validity of the hypothesis of this thesis could be provided and that this gives sufficient reason for consequential studies with richer sources and even more results, as the wild years of the roaring twenties are surely a rich and interesting formative period of human history, from which a lot of lessons also for today's increasingly complex everyday life, can be learned.

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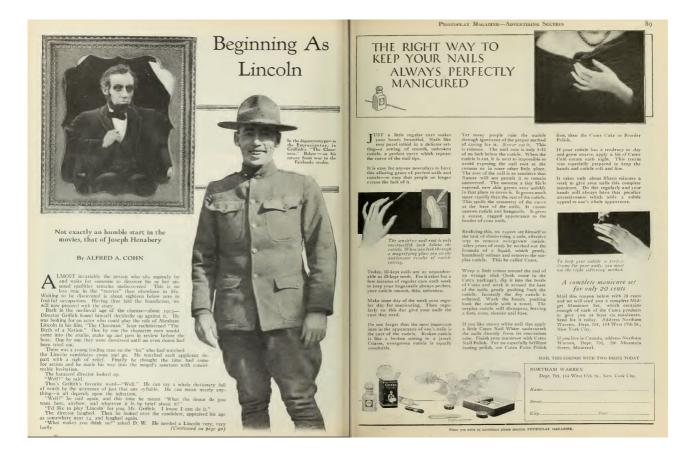
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Appendix



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Illustration 4

The Passing of the Extra







Requirements of the 1929 Extra

1929 Extra

1. A pretty face
2. A pretty figure
3. Ability to dance
4. A voice
5. Youth
6. Personality
7. Excellent health



Hollywood, and the 1929 extra must have more than beauty

Gir

ByKatherine Albert



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