

Facials: the Aesthetics of Cosmetics and Makeup.

Michael Carter

The serious artist, according to academic tenets, creates beauty by liberating the perfect form that nature sought to express in resistant matter.

Ernst Kris

Given that the overwhelming use of cosmetics and makeup in the twentieth century has been by women both as indicators of their femininity and as a way to increase their attractiveness, it is hardly surprising that contemporary explanations have tended to appear within the horizon of this recent history.¹ Whilst acknowledging the inevitability of the shadow cast by the near past, in this essay I want to draw attention to the existence of a much older, and much broader, cosmetic dimension at work in the West. It is a dimension whose influence, particularly in its formal propensities, can be detected inside of the more recent use of these materials and practices as aids to feminine beauty. In fact, I want to suggest that it is impossible fully to comprehend contemporary cosmetic use without taking into account these more archaic ways and the almost magical aesthetic upon which they rest.

One way in which this older regime can be brought to light is to remind ourselves of the various ways in which 'facial adjustments' have been used in the past as well as some of the more peripheral contexts in which they are employed today. Despite the enormous shifts that have taken place during the twentieth century in the principles governing the appearances of men and women, and despite the considerable degree of convergence in their public and private clothing, there is as yet no sign that men are about to adopt the cosmetic practices of women.² But this sexual division of cosmetic labour has not always been so clear-cut. Whilst it would be disingenuous to claim that, historically, men and women have used cosmetics with equal frequency, there is no doubt that their use by men has not been as rare as might be supposed. The most celebrated male use of makeup was at the French court in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Engagements at court required men to appear with their faces both powdered and

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rouged. But male use of cosmetics was not simply confined to moments of aristocratic ceremonial. A certain discrete deployment of rouge and powder were perfectly legitimate even for professional middle class men.³ There have been occasions when male and female cosmetic practices converged and there have been periods when the use of makeup, even by women, was been frowned upon to the point that its use almost vanished amongst the respectable classes.⁴ Other cosmetic practices have been confined to men. For instance, until well into the nineteenth century it was customary for British military officers to go into battle wearing rouge and face powder. This was to hide any signs of fear on the part of these officers from the common foot soldiers. There are reports that during the Crimean War, the Light Brigade charged into the Russian artillery fire heavily made-up.

Nor is it only the living who find themselves being cosmetically prepared. Undertakers quite regularly apply Mortuary Cosmetics to the faces and hands of the deceased in order to simulate the colour imparted to living bodies by the circulation of the blood.⁵ And what is one to make of the story told of Madame de Pompadour who, in 1764, lay dying. A priest entered the sick room to administer the last rites. With these completed she reached for her makeup, applied some rouge to her face, turned over and died. One wonders for whose benefit were those final touches being made?

Western cosmetic practices have even been extended into the animal world. Aficionados of dog and cat shows (and agricultural shows) will be familiar with the lengths which are gone to in order to ensure the animals appear at their best. Nor is it coincidental that the word 'grooming' can be applied with equal legitimacy to both humans and animals. War and peace, life and death, male and female, young and old, human and animals. When one surveys the patterns of cosmetic usage there appears to be hardly any social group, or dimension of life that, at one time or another, has not, or does not, intersect with and use the materials and techniques of what I have called 'facial adjustments'. Such adjustments, from this broader perspective, have been concerned with many more things than improving female countenances.

Until quite recently the most common model adopted by scholars towards this topic was that of the historical survey. Here the reader would be presented with an account of the changing techniques, materials and attitudes which together constituted cosmetic practice at any particular historical moment. Each historical instance would then

be woven into a story in which the grand procession of past facial styles could be seen to unfold 'across the ages'. In surveys of this kind, intellectual coherency is normally achieved by grounding the story on some variant of a universalising anthropology. So Corson's account of the history of makeup begins thus:

Throughout recorded history man has painted his face.⁶

Every word in that sentence cries out for a more thoughtful elaboration and none more so than 'painted'. The theoretical mesh needs to be adjusted so that something smaller than the universal, yet larger than the singular cosmetic event, is capable of being formulated. Somewhere between these two positions it should be possible to commence a description of the particularities of distinctive cosmetic traditions without immediately dissolving it into a universal propensity to 'paint the face' or 'decorate the body'. Every stage in the operation of facial adjustment—from the preparation of the materials, the position they are ascribed in the cultural scheme of things (sacred or profane), the techniques of application, the very notion of what constitutes a face, not to mention the aesthetic and formal aims being striven for—all these elements have to be grasped from within. No amount of substitution of 'painted' with synonyms such as 'decorated' or 'ornamented' can overcome the problem set in motion by assuming that certain practises can be constituted as comparable entities.⁷

This problem can be seen very clearly in the excellent study of self-decoration in the Mount Hagen region of New Guinea undertaken by Marilyn Strathern.⁸ This is one of the few studies in which the differences between Western and non-Western practices are both discussed and recognised and where the temptation to universalise is resisted. Strathern makes clear that all gestures (cosmetic or otherwise) resonate with, and are constitutive of, quasi-philosophical notions about the world, the self and the formal organization of appearances. Near the start of this essay Strathern observes that, 'Cosmetics in our own culture beautify the body.'⁹ But if we ask such questions as, 'In what does this consist?' or 'What does beautify mean here and what is the assumed connection between this process and cosmetics?' then the notion that a term like 'cosmetics' (or painted, or decorated) is available for general use is brought up with a start. Such words are already too deeply implicated in the ways of the West. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to remain within the practices of the West, and see what it is that makes this a distinctive cosmetic tradition.

In her essay, "I must put my face on": Making Up the Body and

Marking Out the Feminine', Jennifer Craik suggests a complex mix of imperatives at work even within contemporary female cosmetic practices.¹⁰ In the space of a single page the following rationales are presented.

Make-up not only confirms sexual attractiveness ...

The process is not simply one of enhancement but entails the construction of an ideal ...

The range of faces is designed to cover the kinds of occasions and intended impressions that the wearer literally have to 'face' ...¹¹

In each instance quite different aspects of cosmetics use are revealed. Sexual attractiveness, confirmation of sexual identity, the pursuit of a facial ideal and the demands of social etiquette. What I want to explore in the remainder of this essay are those latter two dimensions: of facial ideality and social etiquette. It is here, I will argue, that the distinctiveness of the Western tradition can be found. More precisely, it lies within that quite particular set of relationships that exist between the manipulation of the material of the world, conceptions of beauty, ideality and social formality.

Cosmetics

English has two equally ranked synonyms to denote these 'facial adjustments': 'cosmetics' and 'makeup'. Each word has a different etymology and has arrived in the present by a different route. Of the two, it is cosmetics which is the older by far. *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* indicates that its major contemporary meaning(s), namely 'The art of adorning or beautifying body' and 'A preparation for use in beautifying the face, skin, or hair' enter the language in the seventeenth century.¹² The pathway taken by the word prior to its appearance in English is vital in that it reveals a core dimension to cosmetic practice that has become obscured in recent times. The word derives from the French 'cosmetique' which in turn has its origin in classical Greek. So the sequence goes—cosmetic < *cosmetique* < *kosemtikos* < *kosmein* (to arrange, order, adorn) < *kosmos*. Angus Fletcher has explored the ways in which the semantic overlays explicit in ancient Greek were revived at the onset of the Renaissance.¹³ *Kosmos* had the meaning familiar to English, that is the universe, or the whole. *Kosmein* referred to a symbol denoting a particular rank within an hierarchy. This eventually came to refer to the badge, or insignia of office, proper to the individual occupying that position. In other words

the place which the wearer occupied within the overall scheme of things. Fletcher has suggested that one of the key meanings implied in the word was to indicate both the place and the manner in which the order embodied in the whole, that is the macrocosm, intersected with, was made manifest in the local and specific, the microcosm. The idea of the 'cosmetic' circled around the way in which the two orders achieved a 'fit'. Fletcher captures exactly the way in which this articulation implied a certain kind of outer appropriateness:

... used adverbially and adjectivally the word *kosmos* and its derivatives implied propriety and decorum (*kosmotes*) in dress and manner, since to be adorned according to one's true rank in society would be to conform to propriety.¹⁴

Thus, cosmetics in this sense is not simply to do with the face. Rather it was, and is, a term that could encompass the appearance of the whole person—their clothing, their comportment and deportment and the sounds that come out of their mouths. If one adheres to the order implied in the *kosmotes* then one ensures that one appears in a composed and appropriate manner. In doing this one also ensures that the proper order of things is confirmed. It was literally and metaphorically a 'fitting in' of the person. The individual achieved this benign condition by exhibiting on their person the principles of the divine order governing the cosmos.

However, if we return once more to the emergence of the word into English we find that its purely descriptive use—as in Bacon's definition of it as the 'art of decoration (of the body) which is called cosmetic'—is almost straight away accompanied by a very familiar refrain; fear of duplicity and deceit.¹⁵ The reader has only to look at the poems by Swift, *The Progress of Beauty* (1719) and *A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed* (c.1731), to see how, what to us might appear as a minor anxiety, progressed into a terrible nightmare.¹⁶ Again Fletcher has been able to pinpoint the Achilles heel of *kosmotes*. If the proper order of things is capable of being embodied in (and is in fact dependent upon) a display of externalities (dress, manners, speech, insignia, etc.) then they can be faked. He observes:

Notice that there is nothing neutral about the process: to adorn, in the rhetorical sense of *kosmein*, means to elevate a lower rank to a higher one. Dress and costume can become instruments of social climbing, by this process, and in the social sphere if one spots a social climber, an Osric, or a Pamela, one can be sure the ascent is aided by a use of *kosmoi*, whether of speech, manner, or dress.¹⁷

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It is important that this concern about the ability of cosmetics to deceive society and/or a besotted admirer be distinguished from Romantic criticisms of cosmetics as 'artificial' and 'unnatural'. (ideas that will be explored shortly.) The early critics of cosmetics would not have dismissed their use out of hand. Rather they would have insisted that they be used 'honestly' and 'properly'; that is as essential elements of civilised behaviour.

When seen within this older sense of order and arrangement, cosmeticization does not just mean a superficial attendance to 'surface appearances', or the deployment of a set of processes which attend to the outside whilst leaving the inner condition unchanged. Rather it is a profound concern with surface appearances undertaken so as to ensure local compliance with the wider, universal order. Turning this around, one might say that the process of cosmetics achieved proper order by suppressing, or at least controlling, disorder. As we shall see in a moment this elimination of 'disorder' on the person, but more particularly on their face, remains at the heart of western practices.

Makeup

The word 'makeup' arrives in the English language much later. It appears in the middle of the nineteenth century and was initially a technical term referring specifically to the materials and techniques used by actors to prepare for a theatrical performance. *The New Shorter Oxford* defines it so:

An appearance of face, dress, etc, adopted for a theatrical performance or other public appearance.¹⁸

The widespread elimination of cosmetic use by men, and the steep decline in its use by women during the Victorian period meant that when it did re-emerge as a mass female phenomena in the nineteen twenties and thirties its significance was permeated by the ethos of stage and film. However, the emergence of this new, exclusively female use of makeup was not a simple displacement of the *universe of cosmetics* by the *order of makeup*. Between the eighteenth century and the twentieth lies Romanticism and in particular its notions of expressive individuality and the pursuit of personal authenticity.

The declining use of cosmetics by both sexes during the latter half of the nineteenth century provides one of the clearest indications of the part played by Romantic ideas both in undermining aristocratic standards of public behaviour, as well as ushering in a new quotidian order. It

was the 'natural' face, or at least the face devoid of the signs of artifice that was the preferred mode. One consequence of this was that male and female (facial) appearances became startlingly different. Male facial hair was allowed to run around unchecked whilst visits to hairdressers appear to have been very infrequent. For women, being 'natural' meant dispensing with makeup apart, that is, for a discreet application of rice powder and rouge. It is this constellation that the modern word 'makeup' intrudes, not the world of cosmetical order.

Makeup, in the modern sense, then, is part of a very different intellectual milieu to that of cosmetics. If the latter was concerned with the exhibition of proper form and the suppression of its opposite, impropriety, then make up is part of a complex knot consisting of such oppositions as artificial/natural, authentic/false, the honest/the fabricated. Here, concern is above all else about the expression of personal authenticity through one's appearance. As such it rests upon a sharp distinction being made between the outer shell and its surfaces and an inner identity (or soul) which struggles to create a true and authentic external form for itself. Initially, the 'made-up face' was a soul obscured. It was a face that, in its violation of Romanticism's most basic tenet (namely that the individual should not bow to the dictates of external form) came to be regarded as at worst dishonest, at best misguided or pathetic. It is the 'un-made face', or at least the face that looks as if it is 'un-made', that seems to best embody the person's inner truth—'Makeup designed to bring out the real you'. That has been the holy grail of the modern cosmetics industry.

Beauty and its Techniques

The embodiment of order (formality), the expression of inner being and an increase in sexual attractiveness are the three axes along which the western practice of facial adjustment has been elaborated. For the remainder of this essay I want to argue for the persistent presence of the first of these dimensions—the embodiment of order or, the strictly cosmetic type of facial adjustment. However much the meaning of 'making-up' has altered over the centuries it seems to have carried within it a set of physical operations and formal principles through which an ideal is made to appear on the face. I can illustrate this more vividly by way of illustrations 1 and 2. In both these illustrations we can observe in detail the techniques used in transforming the faces of the models from 'before' into 'after'. To state the obvious ... what is happening on both faces is a re-formation aimed at installing on each

individual face a set of 'organisational principles'. This should not be read as simply an imposition of the currently fashionable female face, although, of course, on another level this is precisely what is taking place. What I mean here is that below the changes in facial styles one may detect a remarkable consistency with regard to the formal (aesthetic) aims being sought. Symmetry, proportion, a certain homogeneity of colouring and a sharper delineation of shapes, are persistent formal imperatives. More revealingly we could ask what constitutes that which has to be eliminated, or covered, or disguised in order that each of these faces is able to move closer to the desired ideal? What are the exact material techniques employed to achieve these aims?

To suggest an answer to these questions I offer the following observation made by Baudelaire on how makeup works. He says:

Any enumeration would have to include countless details; but, to limit ourselves to what in our day is commonly called make-up, who can fail to see that the use of rice powder, so fatuously anathematised by innocent philosophers, has as its purpose and result to hide all the blemishes that nature has so outrageously scattered over the complexion, and to create an abstract unity of texture and colour in the skin, which unity, like the one produced by tights, immediately approximates the human being to a statue, in other words to a divine or superior being?¹⁹

This wonderful observation does suggest a way in which we can draw together the abstractions present in the original idea of the cosmetic and the apparent trivial details of applying makeup to the face. The secret revealed by Baudelaire's indiscretion is that this constitution of cosmetical order is a dual process. It achieves propriety and decorum at the same time as it banishes disorder. (Or as the poet puts it by the 'elimination of blemishes'.) Significantly, in both the general meaning of cosmetics and in Baudelaire's observations of their micro-detail there is a sense that once their correct application has been achieved, the face (and the person) undergo a significant elevation, existentially, morally and aesthetically. This installation of propriety and decorum over the whole person was congenial because it both embodied and exhibited the wider order of the universe. With Baudelaire's 'elimination of blemishes' the individual is transformed, becoming approximate to the corporeal perfection of 'a divine or superior being'. In both cases a quasi-divine order arises out of the simple manipulation of physical materials.

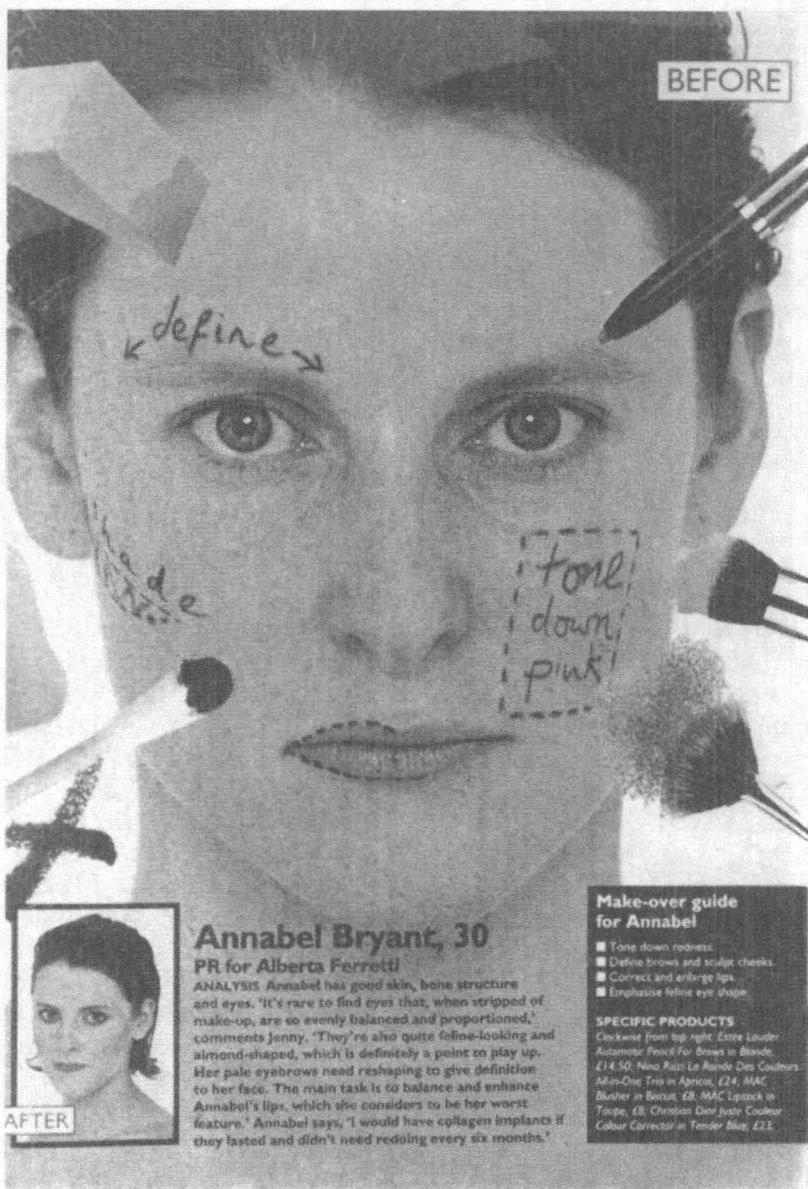
To grasp, not only how the elimination of 'blemishes' is achieved through cosmetics, but why it is then able to produce a look of (and a sense of) increased beauty in the 'ordered' individual, we need to

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integrate these 'facial adjustments' with the totality of operations governing the rest of our appearance e. g. clothes, hair, nails, etc. The intensity with which we carry out these 'grooming' operations varies, of course, with the social situations in which we are required to appear. We are constantly matching our appearance to those variations in formality which make up our daily lives and we take care to 'fit in' with these changing circumstances. A not particularly original generalisation might say that as the degree of formality rises the more we are likely to respond by intensifying our adherence to forms, norms and rules. Put another way, we might say that a rising level of formality increasingly requires the elimination of the incidental, the particular or the exceptional. Everything that is, that marks us out as singular rather than universal. To localise this somewhat, is it not the case that both the care and intensity in the application of cosmetics to the female face increases the greater the degree of formality demanded by the social situation in which the person has to appear? Likewise, for the male to appear in public unshaven and with their hair unkempt, whilst *de rigueur* for young male stars in the entertainment industry will not do for us little people. Aesthetics and sociology are hard to separate here. Wherever one turns, one encounters a complex interweaving of ideality, beauty, social formality and physical order.

Form and Formality

Social, that is collective, formality is accompanied (as the word suggests) by a general movement of the social body from a condition of relative 'unformedness' to one in which a more intense display of form is evident. I am aware that I am in danger of stating the obvious here, but how this shift is evinced externally takes us to the heart of the cosmetic order. It is not sufficient that formality remains simply a subjective condition. External formal manifestation is essential in order that a comparative may appear through which both spectators and participants are able to gauge the extent to which the state of 'formedness' has been achieved. In the West (and I suspect in many other cultures) this move from the everyday into the 'ceremonial' has, as its external analogue, an increasing urge to organise the material dimension of the situation into an order in which geometrical regularity, overall symmetry, homogeneity of substance and uniformity of action predominate. It aims at lowering the general level of animation and eliminating (or severely restricting) the occurrence of the incidental and the spontaneous. Movements become highly choreographed. Facial



BEFORE

define

tone down
pink!



AFTER

Annabel Bryant, 30 PR for Alberta Ferretti

ANALYSIS Annabel has good skin, bone structure and eyes. 'It's rare to find eyes that, when stripped of make-up, are so evenly balanced and proportioned,' comments Jenny. 'They're also quite feline-looking and almond-shaped, which is definitely a point to play up. Her pale eyebrows need reshaping to give definition to her face. The main task is to balance and enhance Annabel's lips, which she considers to be her worst feature.' Annabel says, 'I would have collagen implants if they lasted and didn't need redoing every six months.'

Make-over guide for Annabel

- Tone down redness.
- Define brows and sculpt cheeks.
- Correct and enlarge lips.
- Emphasise feline eye shape.

SPECIFIC PRODUCTS

Clockwise from top right: Estée Lauder Autumnez Précis For Brows in Beige; Z14-50; Nina Ricci Le Rêveur Des Couleurs All-in-One Trio in Apricot; Z14; MAC Blusher in Blush; BB; MAC Lipstick in Tropic; BB; Christian Dior Juste Couleur Colour Corrector in Tender Blue; Z13.

Illustration 2:

expression is restricted to a very narrow lexicon. Appropriateness of garments may be signalled by a higher standard of cleanliness (absence of stains, spots and those general marks of living which plague the formal) and by their visual precision.²⁰

As Baudelaire suggested one of the immediate material and spiritual accomplishments of makeup is the elimination of the 'blemish' so as to create 'an 'abstract unity of texture and colour in the skin'. We have already seen that the idea of a 'blemish' is a broad one and can refer to anything which acts as a hindrance to this 'abstract unity'. The application of makeup produces an even, uniform look to the skin which implies a more perfect condition than a face crowded with incident and surface variations. This superficial uniformity, what might be called the creation of a 'ceremonial face', is emblematic of a higher order than that exhibited by a face that remains enmeshed in the particularities of the everyday. As Baudelaire insisted, the cosmeticized face more nearly embodies the ideal than does the unmade-up one. At first sight this might seem obvious. However, what is useful in the present context is Baudelaire's willingness to place the divine and the ideal alongside of a set of simple material operations such as the application of rice powder to the face of a woman. The one is an analogue of the other (and I am being deliberately ambivalent about specifying an order of primacy here). Cosmetics consist of a remarkably limited number of strategies to move the face towards this condition of ideality. There is the already discussed imparting of uniformity to the texture of the skin. But as well as this we might cite the regular delineation of edges (eye-brows, eye-lids, and lips). The imposition of a certain homogeneity of colouring and the attempt to create a symmetry between the left and right hand sides of the face. If for the moment we simply consider the nature of these physical materials and mechanical operations, then the ideal which is being striven for is one in which a certain kind of irregularity must be absent (and vice versa). It is a condition where, as far as appearance is concerned, a certain level of individuality is erased. Or to put it more accurately, we might say that the face is allowed to exhibit certain levels of irregularity, individuality and particularity according to the relative degrees of formality which any situation demands.

Georges Bataille has argued that under idealistic aesthetic regimes of this kind everything that is particular of an object, or person, comes to be seen as deviation, or anomaly.²¹ As always with Bataille what he has in mind here are not simply intellectual abstractions but the very materiality of the forms taken by ourselves and the things of the world.

One place where we are able to exert a degree of control over what we might call the 'incidence of blemishing' is in the artefacts we make, the immediate environment in which we live and most poignantly of all, the way we look, move and speak. Clothing, in the West, has as one of its general functions the alchemical transformation of our particular bodies into something closer to an ideal. (And here I mean texture, pattern, and substantiality, not just profile.) In this sense clothes and all the attendant techniques by which we prepare our appearance are weapons we use to prevent ourselves being mired in the utterly incidental. Applying cosmetics to the face may be seen as a localised version of the broader aspiration for the universal. Cosmetics reduce the level of facial individuality in favour of a formal intensity. In doing this the face starts to exhibit a greater degree of similarity to other faces than the non-cosmeticized state permits. In this sense cosmetics replicate on the face what the demands of formality are engendering over the whole person; a hope that, however momentarily, we might touch the divine.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show that cosmetics and makeup can be profitably viewed within that set of techniques which are drawn upon to form the whole appearance of a person. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I have tried to show how ideal order (or negligent informality) is utterly embroiled in a set of direct and immediate material operations. The straightening out of a line, the delineation of edges, the suppression of a slight change in skin colour, or the erasure a pimple become the material analogues for installing the socially appropriate and the visually attractive. In this sense we can locate cosmetics and makeup within a vast continent of operations wherein in our daily lives we manipulate the stuff of the world to create a material embodiment of some our deepest desires, longings, and anxieties. Not least of these concerns is a kind of proto-aesthetic sensibility of the kind we have seen at work on the face.

The phrase 'tidying up' is wonderfully rich in these strands of quotidian aesthetics. Is there anything to be learned from the operations of tidying up, say a room, that might shed light on 'fixing a face'? Room tidying consists of a number of related operations. There is the element of cleaning—that is the removal of dirt—analysed so brilliantly by Mary Douglas.²² There is the element of restoring order in which like is placed with like. Finally, each of

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these operations has an aesthetic dimension, or rather there is an aesthetic strand in the notion of tidying up. A room in order to be tidy has also to *look* tidy. But in what does looking tidy consist of? I would argue that exactly the same formal characteristics we saw operating in cosmetics are present in tidying. A certain geometrical regularity. A certain sharpness of line. Perhaps the covering of disorder with a colourful blanket. Certainly the removal of 'blemishes' by cleaning. In both instances a similar ambiguity is present. In making up a face, or tidying up a room, are we clearing away something that is obscuring its ideal condition, or are we transforming a fundamentally chaotic entity into formal perfection?

(My thanks to Jennifer Milam)

Notes

- 1 The most recent and comprehensive account of makeup in the twentieth century is by Kate de Castelbajac, *The Face of the Century: 100 Years of Makeup and Style*, London, 1995.
 - 2 This raises the question as to whether facial shaving by men can be regarded as a 'cosmetic' practice. I think it can since the term 'cosmetic' can refer to a set of formal principles in which *removal-from* is as much an integral operation as is *application-to*. It is that element of *application-to* which has largely disappeared from male practice.
 - 3 Richard Corson, *Fashions in Makeup: From Ancient Rome to Modern Times*, London, 1972, p.237: 'In the eighteenth century the American colonists of the upper classes were following British and French practice and still importing their cosmetics from Europe. Every gentlemen had his dressing box equipped with shaving necessities, soap, powder puffs, brushes, oil and scent bottles, curling irons, scissors, rouge, if he used it, and often writing materials'.
 - 4 Castelbajac, p.12: 'Except for a dash of flowery cologne and a discreet cloud of powder, no lady was suspected of making herself up'. There is some evidence that an older cosmetic regime persisted amongst the upper classes until at least the First World War. Cecil Beaton describes his Aunt Jessie getting ready to pay a visit to court so:

Aunt Jessie would cover her face, neck, arms and back with a thick paint which by some was called 'enamel' but which my family referred to as white wash. Her eyelids were painted mauve, her cheeks a bright carnation pink, while her lips were cerise.
- Cecil Beaton, *The Face of Fashion*, London, 1954, pp.24-25.
- 5 My thanks to Mr John Harris Jnr. for the information regarding the use of cosmetics and the dead.

- 6 Corson, p. 1.
- 7 Jennifer Craik's otherwise excellent survey of the contemporary makeup industry and the mass use of cosmetics fails to find a satisfactory way around this particular hurdle:

In other words, body decoration is a technique for producing a social body that is perfected for the practical habituses of particular cultures. Codes of body decoration vary according to circumstances, and the sense of 'self' actualised through body decoration will depend upon the body-habitus relations specific to that social group. There is no fundamental distinction between western and non-western forms of body decoration, although western techniques have an historically specific rationale relating to the emergence of European 'civil' society.

Jennifer Craik, *The Face of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion*, London, 1994, pp.155-156.

- 8 Marilyn Strathern, 'The Self in Self-Decoration', *Oceania* 49.4 (June 1979): 241-257.
- 9 Strathern, p. 241.
- 10 Jennifer Craik, "'I Must Put My Face On": Making Up the Body and Marking Out the Feminine', in *Cultural Studies* 3.1 (1989): 1-24.
- 11 Craik, "'I Must Put My Face On"...', p. 12.
- 12 *The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford, 1993, p.520.
- 13 Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: the Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, Ithaca, 1964. See esp. chap. 2, 'The Cosmic Image', pp.70-146.
- 14 Fletcher, p. 112.
- 15 *The Oxford English Dictionary*.
- 16 Swift is disturbed both by the deceit created by the application of makeup and the horrors revealed by its removal.

Thus, after four important hours
Celia's the wonder of her sex;
Say, which among the heavenly powers
Could cause such marvellous effects.

The Progress of Beauty

Returning at the midnight hour;
Four Storeys climbing to her bower;
Then, seated on a three-legged chair,
Takes off her artificial hair:
Now, picking out a crystal eye,
She wipes it clean, and lays it by'.

A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed

- 17 Fletcher, pp.118-119.
- 18 *New Oxford Shorter Dictionary*, p.1673.

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- 19 Charles Baudelaire, *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, trans. P. E. Charvet, London, 1972, p.427.
- 20 Strathern, p.242: 'The more the cosmetic style incorporates conventional canons of taste, the more of an object is created. Enhancement of aspects of the person-facial beauty, sexual attributes—is felt to detract from the whole. The woman becomes nothing but the beautification. Hence people come to adorn themselves in an unconventional way in order to express what they claim style hides-their personality'.
- 21 'The composite image (of the human face) would thus give a kind of reality to the necessary beautiful Platonic idea. At the same time, beauty would be at the mercy of a definition as classical as that of the common measure. But each individual form escapes this common measure and is, to a certain degree, a monster'. Georges Bataille, 'The Deviations of Nature', in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, Minneapolis, 1985.
- 22 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Harmondsworth, 1966.