

TAPESCRIPT: Globalisation and the beauty industry lecture (read on 23,24/2/17):

The growth of the world beauty market was closely linked to the waves of globalization which began in the nineteenth century. From the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of firms, primarily based in the Western countries which had experienced their own industrial revolutions and established operations in foreign countries. Before Western firms began exporting their products, there was no global standard of what it meant to be beautiful. Societies had always varied considerably, both over time and between geographies, in how they sought to enhance their attractiveness through the use of cosmetic aids, hairstyles, and clothing, and in their broader views of aesthetics. Indeed, in some societies it was the male body, rather than the female, which was held to represent the ideal beauty. As Western culture and influence expanded during the nineteenth century, Europeans and Americans became increasingly curious about the rest of the world, writing in scientific journals about the apparent differences in beauty ideals. In 1871, Charles Darwin confidently asserted in his book *The Descent of Man* that, “[i]t is certainly not true that there is in the mind of man any universal standard of beauty with respect to the human body”. The international growth of the beauty industry soon challenged Darwin’s view, and led to a worldwide homogenization of beauty ideals. Beauty ideals, assumptions and routines prevalent in the West spread as global benchmarks. One of the peculiarities of the emergent global economy was that individual countries, or cities, assumed an ever-greater importance as an indication of quality and prestige. In the case of beauty, France, and in particular Paris, became the symbolic capital, joined much later by New York. Beauty also came to mean white. Although before the nineteenth century, Western people, with their long-established hostility to bathing were probably the dirtiest societies on earth, by the end of that century Western soap brands confidently associated cleanliness with “whiteness.” Crude racial stereotypes were used to advertise soap and other toiletries, which were presented as components of the Western contribution to “civilizing” colonized peoples. The British and U.S. mass marketers of soap regularly claimed that using their soap would whiten the skin of people of color, thereby “civilizing” them.

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POSSIBLE SUMMARY of Globalisation and the beauty industry lecture (read on 23,24/2/17):

In this lecture, Prof Keene discusses the role between globalization and the beauty industry, stating that the connection emerged in the 19th century as beauty companies from industrialised western nations began establishing themselves abroad.

Keene goes on to mention that prior to this period, there had been no universal standard of beauty, and a great variety – from hairstyles to cosmetics – could be found around the globe. Nor was female beauty necessarily the prominent ideal, as some societies preferred to worship the male body. In fact, in *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin writes that a universal standard of beauty does not exist.

However, the growth of the industry soon changed this perspective, and an emulation of western beauty led to the homogenization of aesthetic ideals worldwide. At the same time, certain Western cities developed as fashion capitals, in particular Paris and later New York.

Keene concludes by stating that while the West had been the dirtiest society for many centuries, during the 19th century being white came to be synonymous with ‘cleanliness’. Indeed, soap advertisers went so far as to claim that their products would help ‘civilise’ colonial populations. (189 words)