

Hi Dr. Shane,

The word "cosmetics" has an interesting etymology, which brings out something interesting about your comments re the exploitation and hence encouragement of vanity in women. Kosmos in ancient Greek meant balance, order, form or fashion, so it was used in two interestingly different ways - 'the cosmos' (balanced whole, world order), and 'cosmetics' - the way of balancing the face, figure or hair, arranged in the most harmonious fashion. The use of razors, tweezers, creams, lotions, dyes and paints is as ancient as science, philosophy or art. In Egypt this goes back another couple of thousands of years, but shades off into the question of the evolution of clothing itself, and what it meant for the evolution of consciousness and civilization itself.

This is psychologically deep - the ability to manipulate others' perceptions of you is a core ability of our mind, and the mask was crucial to the invention of theater, another interesting thing that happened in ancient Greece. So opposing cosmetics is as futile as trying to stop the wind with a feather. But I agree entirely with your sentiment, that the cosmetics industry makes money out of bringing out the worst in people and encouraging it, and so as such is an industry of cultural damage, and on the whole the world would be a better place without it, and certainly without the nauseating hypocrisy of these cultural vandals engineering a clear conscience for themselves via charity like medieval catholics purchasing indulgences.

Cosmetics need to be available if society wants to call itself free, yet girls need to be shielded from the voracious appetites of those who would turn them into mindless consumers; vain, selfish, greedy, stupid. This is parallel to the protection boys require from different manipulations from the same sources tending towards the same aim. But our aim should in all cases be autonomy: adults able to think for themselves and not be unthinking slaves of masters who do not even appear in the consciousnesses of the slaves. This is the big project: how to drag humanity up out of its inhumanity to itself, and get it to see its own potential? And this is perhaps where the creative use of cosmetics returns not as a means of exploitation, but instead to be interpreted under the rubric of autonomy. Not simply in the sense that a free society can hardly ban cosmetics without becoming a fascist state; but also more deeply, in the sense that the question of cosmetics opens upon the question of the mask, and of the role of role-playing in the core of our very concept of freedom. The freedom not to reveal yourself - a.k.a. privacy - can be taken too far, of course, but eliminate privacy altogether, and we eliminate freedom. This balance of revealing and concealing sways within all of us.

If you ever happened to feel like a look at a bit of philosophy, and you opened Friedrich Nietzsche's book *\*Human All Too Human\** (Dewy 128 NIET) to page 363, you would see aphorism number 215 called "Fashion and Modernity." When I read that aphorism, I wonder about the responsibilities of leaders of fashion. When I was in China, I was struck by how much the Chinese emulate western fashions in clothing. People imitate the powerful, and power works in mysterious ways - i.e., the way we call fashion. Imagine if we here in Victoria could begin a world-wide geothermal fashion, for instance.

The use and abuse of fashion for a healthy life - this is the kind of cultural question only able to be raised in a place like RRR, and has a lot to do with art in general and music in particular, and in a sense is the *raison d'etre* of RRR. Healthy fashion.

The last minute thing about apes was gold. This is the whole nub of Nietzsche's theory of evolution as distinct from Darwin's. Previous evolutionary forms are nested like onion-layers in the here and now, in your very body. The ape put "man" on as a new layer like we put on an overcoat. And likewise our inner ape has its inner squirrel, which has its inner mouse, has its inner fish, has its inner jellyfish... The whole evolutionary history of the species recapitulated in every individual, nested like Russian dolls. The aphorism about this is in *\*The Gay Science\** (Bailleau 193 NIET) aphorism 54 (page 116 of Kaufmann's translation). The question then becomes, what next layer can man put on? This is the famous question of the so-called *Übermensch* (super- over- or post- man), a mere thought experiment in Nietzsche's mytho-poetic *\*Thus Spake Zarathustra\** later ripped out of context by uncomprehending Nazis and falsified as Eugenics and social Darwinism. But ignoring these abuses, there is some food for thought in the reflection that man is the ape's cosmetic, and the question of evolution is inherently in some sense a question of *appearances*.

cheers, DaveR.

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