

Making Up Masculinity

A History of Cosmetic Use and Gender Identity

竹下薫（経済学部3年）

指導教員：ロジャー・バティ

The purpose of this paper is to explain male attitudes toward makeup wearing in Modern Japan by examining how men in the past have adorned themselves. In the twentieth century, cosmetics have been looked upon as an embellishment for women. Makeup has become a woman's domain. Looking into history, however, we discover that it has not always been so. History has told us that the attraction toward beautifying the self is not confined to one gender. From the earliest times, both men and women are recorded as having enjoyed the wearing of cosmetics. In the world of animals, it is the male whose appearance or size matters. Are humans so much different? With the increasing popularity of male cosmetics today, the question is of increasing significance. Few scholars, as far as I know, have placed importance on the history of makeup worn around the world in debating the question of modern male cosmetics. However, as this paper shows, understanding the motivations and effects of male cosmetic use in the past can shed light on its use in the future.

The paper is organized into two distinct parts. The first focuses on the West. In the Introduction, the effects of refining one's appearances and motivations for wearing makeup are briefly discussed. Part One then traces the history of diverse makeup styles: from the ancient world, on to the aristocrats in the 18th century and into the 1920s. Part Two extends the analysis to Japan, and a historical survey of makeup use in Japan. From the aristocrats in the Heian era to the Bushi warriors from the Sengoku fight scenes, men have explored the world of makeup.

By way of conclusion, the report compares the social structures and gender roles along with

the makeup vogues of Modern Japan with those of people in history. Collating modern Japan with the historical times, we can conclude that it is neither unnatural nor strange for men to wear makeup. While the motivation for cosmetic use is expanding, a day may come when cosmetics are widely favored by all genders.