

# Gender Inclusivity in the Makeup Industry:

## Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity

"Makeup is a form of expression just like music or art. It doesn't have a gender" (Matlin, 2020).



### Why is it being challenged?

The social stigma against men wearing makeup is simply due to traditional views about masculinity and how defines a "real man". Despite makeup not being tied to a gender, it has been labeled as feminine. So men were made to believe that makeup is emasculating. Nowadays people find this viewpoint outdated, as makeup is simply a form of art, and are actively going against this idea.



### Where is it challenged?

Although the U.S. is slowly becoming more and more gender inclusive when it comes to makeup, South Korea is famously known for having men that wear makeup. Kpop idols, specifically, have faced discrimination by Westerners for wearing makeup and "looking like girls". Despite the fact that skin maintenance and makeup is normal for both men and women in South Korea, views have shifted in the U.S. and now male idols wearing makeup receives more praise than judgment from Westerners.



### How is it challenged?

Makeup companies have become more inclusive in recent years by shifting their target audience from women to everyone. Men wearing makeup, whether it's full drag or covering up a blemish, is welcomed in the media. Social media has been a forum of overall acceptance for men wearing makeup and reinforces the idea that makeup is not exclusively for women.



### Who challenges it?

In the U.S. there are many male public figures and makeup companies that strive to become more gender inclusive. One widely known celebrity is Harry Styles, whose overall aesthetic challenges masculinity as a whole. He also has a cosmetics brand that is openly marketed for anyone and everyone. Haus Laboratories is a beauty brand by Lady Gaga, famous for challenging social norms, and her brand reflects this same inclusive mindset.

# Gender Inclusivity in the Makeup Industry: Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity

## Ancient Era/BCE:

In ancient Egypt, physical beauty was highly respected in their society, in fact, it was a sign of godliness. To further enhance one's beauty, people would often turn to makeup. Pharaohs, who were usually male, were and still are well known for having heavy eyeliner. Men wearing makeup was considered the social norm during this time period, and it actually empowered a man's masculinity.



## 20th Century:

Men began to use makeup again during this time period, but mostly as a form of rebellion. The term "guy liner" became very popular, in which men would wear heavy, smudged out eyeliner. But this style of makeup was mainly for punk or rock stars. Men wearing makeup still wasn't socially acceptable, so this was men intentionally going against the social norm as a form of self expression.



## 18th Century:

There was a major turn regarding the public's opinion on both men and women wearing makeup during this time period. This was around the Enlightenment and the Victorian Era, and makeup became perceived as vulgar and feminine. This new perception turned men away from makeup for the sake of maintaining their manhood and from there, the stigma against men wearing makeup became a common ideology.



## 21st Century:

Today's generation is much more accepting and inclusive about makeup. Makeup has always been an art form that is not tied to any specific gender, but this is becoming common knowledge now. Until it's a widely known truth, there are a lot of instances of makeup brands being more welcoming to everyone. Beauty brands like Fenty Beauty intentionally sell their products to both men and women.



# Annotated Bibliography

- Aragon, C., Barker, K., Click, K., & Wallner, W. (2022, March 21). There's a market for men's cosmetics—and a generation gap. *IPSOS*. Retrieved from <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/knowledge/customer-experience/there-is-a-market-for-mens-cosmetics-and-a-generation-gap> A study was done by IPSOS that compared heterosexual men's views on using cosmetics and found a significant generational difference. Younger men (age 18-34) were more likely to use makeup than men 51 years or older. The source was used in a positive light to statistically show how men are becoming more open to the idea of using makeup.
- Groundwater, C. (2021, June 25). Not just a TikTok fad: Men have been wearing makeup since the dawn of civilization. *GQ*. Retrieved from <https://www.gq.com/story/the-long-history-of-men-and-makeup> This source is based around David Li and a book he wrote about men maintaining their beauty since the BCE era. Past cultures in Egypt, Korea, and Europe are brought up since the men during this time period used makeup and valued their beauty without their masculinity being threatened by standards that developed later in the 18th century.
- Hall, M., Gough, B., & Seymour-Smith, S. (2012). "I'm metro, not gay!": A discursive analysis of men's accounts of makeup use on YouTube. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 20(3), 209+. [https://go-gale-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=wash\\_main&id=GALE%7CA308435667&v=21&it=r](https://go-gale-com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=wash_main&id=GALE%7CA308435667&v=21&it=r) Hall and Seymour-Smith examine the concept of "metrosexual" and use beauty content creators on YouTube as a forum to further discuss makeup. Men who wear makeup and the way their manhood is questioned becomes a main point of discussion and challenges the stereotype that men who wear makeup are somehow inferior or not "real men"
- Jones, V. (2018, March 16). Makeup is changing the meaning of masculinity. *CNN*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/14/health/makeup-skincare-male-masculinity-int> Jones's article talks about how men have become more interested in using makeup to do natural looks. Makeup is criticized by men for being "girly", but the idea of using it in a practical way that simply enhances the skin is more accepted amongst men. This source does address the evolving mentality, but still admits that putting a gendered label on makeup is the bigger problem.
- Matlin, J. (2020, October 16). The next wave of genderless beauty brands are here. *Harper's Bazaar*. Retrieved from <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/beauty/makeup/a34050232/gender-neutral-beauty-brands/> Matlin's article highlights beauty brands that have become more inclusive to women and men by creating products that are catered to everyone. This source acknowledges that makeup doesn't have a gender, but these products are catered to women so heavily that there is social shame when men want to try it too.

# Annotated Bibliography (cont.)

- Norman, J. (2021, July 22). Men and makeup. *Humanist Beauty*. Retrieved from <https://www.humanistbeauty.com/men-and-makeup/> Norman's article features information regarding men's makeup and how it evolved over time. Makeup was very common for men up until the Victorian era during the 18th century. Things have improved nowadays, with more and more men finding makeup and skincare as a form of self-care that anyone can do.
- O'Grady, M. (2021, May 10). Makeup is for everyone. *The New York Times Style Magazine* Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/10/t-magazine/men-makeup-gender-norms.html> O'Grady has an in-depth reflection about makeup and the effect it has on people who use it. She does mention how today's generation has been one of the most accepting in regards to men wearing makeup. But essentially she points out that makeup does not and should not be in accordance with any specific gender.
- Rorech, M. (2022, June 06). 10 Gender-inclusive beauty brands to support. *Reviewed*. Retrieved from <https://www.reviewed.com/beauty/features/10-gender-inclusive-beauty-brands-support> Rorech's article is essentially a list of beauty brands that do not limit their target audience exclusively to women. Rorech comments in the beginning that makeup shouldn't be associated with a specific gender anyway. This source shows various makeup companies that are working to create products and an overall brand that is inclusive and for everyone.
- Shackelford, A. (2021, September 09). A discussion of toxic masculinity in makeup. *Talisman*. Retrieved from <https://wktalisman.com/a-discussion-of-toxic-masculinity-in-makeup/> Shackelford starts off strong with a statement that I firmly believe in, "Makeup is an art form". This article is extremely vital to the topic I chose because it addresses the social stigma that is against men wearing makeup since it is associated with women, femininity, and the fear of being emasculated.
- Tran, L. (2022, July 16). Makeup and gender in the western world. *The Chatty Gal*. Retrieved from [https://sites.utexas.edu/thechattygal/makeup-and-gender-in-the-western-world/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=makeup-and-gender-in-the-western-world](https://sites.utexas.edu/thechattygal/makeup-and-gender-in-the-western-world/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=makeup-and-gender-in-the-western-world) Tran discusses how makeup has had an on-and-off relationship in terms of how socially acceptable it is for men to use. Today, some companies try to promote beauty products while still maintaining manhood with stereotypical marketing tactics. This source praises gender-inclusive marketing that doesn't enforce any gender labels and is targeted towards everyone.