Analytical Essay on Trends in Makeup in 1940s

1940s

Makeup of the 1940s was very basic and plain yet classy. Makeup was influenced by a variety of factors, the most important being World War 2. Wartime restrictions gradually impacted everyday life and cosmetics were no exception. The shortages of alcohol meant less perfume. Fats and oils were also in short supply and even soap was rationed. Ingredients such as petroleum and alcohol were key in some items of makeup and therefore, many women began making home remedies as substitutes. Beetroot juice was used to stain the lips and burnt cork with petroleum jelly was used to shape the eyebrows and darken the eyelashes. Females, at the time, even worked in factories whilst men were at war. Makeup was the only way to accentuate their look and was seen as keeping femininity whilst carrying out men's work.

Face and Complexion

Foundations weren't available in many shades and most had a pinkish tone to them. Foundations were much thicker and creamier than today. Cream bases were the norm, in one shade darker than your natural skin colour. Loose powder was then applied all over the face, in a slightly lighter shade. Foundation and powder were applied to the neck and chest areas to colour match.

Rouge

Rouge was added to the cheeks for a natural healthy flush using the Tri-dot system. One dot was placed directly below the pupil of the eye, the second near the cheek bone and the third dot was applied no lower than the tip of the nose. A sponge was used in circular dabbing motions to blend in the dots. Rouges weren't available in many shades and were used sparingly. Moist rouge was similar to a cream blush that could be blended into the foundation to add a natural rosy look. Compressed powders were also still available and could be applied lightly with a brush to achieve the desired look.

Eyebrows

The 1940s forgot about the pencil thin eyebrows and started to embrace a more arched brow. Only stray hairs would be plucked to emphasise the arch of the brow. Some women would often add pencil through their brows to add even more definition to the arch. Alternatively, to create the ultimate natural look, some women would only add a little bit of petroleum jelly to their brows to flatten the hairs into the shape they desired.

Eyes

Products were used sparingly on the eyes in the 40s. During the day, eye makeup was meant to look natural. Therefore, only a thin coat of mascara was applied on the lashes. Mascara came in liquid, paste or cake with a small application brush. Adding a drop of water made the mascara

become thicker and it was then ready to apply to both the top and bottom lashes. Women liked their lashes to look long and thick to accentuate the eye. Towards the evening, women wore coloured eyeshadow to match their eye colour. Neutral Blue/grey and brown eyeshadows were used. Sometimes, eye shadows were matched with a woman's dress and only one shade of colour could be worn. Eyeliner became more popular in the 1950s, however, some women drew a thin line on the top of their lash lines, ending the line with a blunt finish – instead of winging it out like in the 50s.

Lips

Lipstick became the main attraction in this period. It was thought to keep the spirits up and boost the morale of the public. Red was the most commonly used colour at the time, and this represented how women were defying the difficult times that were happening around them. This gave the soldiers hope and gave them something to be fighting for and lifted their spirits. Britain were not as lucky as the USA, as lipstick was in short supply and very precious in Britain whereas women in America protested to stop the board from rationing their lipstick.

Lip Liners were introduced in 1948 and became an essential piece of makeup. Lip liner was used to overline the lips to create a more plump looking pout. This was done evenly on both top and bottom lip and was named the 'Hunters Bow lip', originating from Max Factor and was made fashionable by Joan Crawford, an actress.

After each application of the lipstick, lips were blotted with a tissue to remove the excess.

Nails

Nails were always kept neat, short and often kept an oval shape. Women kept their nails short and rounded during the wartime as they had to work. Many shades of red nail polish were available in the 40s. However, colours such as pink, coral, yellow and navy were also available. One of the top trends at the time was to leave the cuticle and the tip of the nail unpolished, whilst painting the rest of the nail in a colour. Another trend was to match nails with a lipstick colour. This was considered fashionable.

Hairstyles

Women wore their hair shoulder length, cut straight with no fringe or bangs. Layering on the ends of the hair gave the hair more volume and helped to achieve curls. Hairstyles had to include volume and curls in the 40s, as this was a popular style. Victory rolls and updos were especially popular as they were easy to style. To create the victory roll, women would tie a piece of their old stockings around their head like a headband and roll their hair over it. Hats and scarves could be added to the hairstyle for decoration and to cover from dirt.

At the start of the 40s, women favoured tighter ring curls around the face. By 1942, this style had gone out of fashion. In 1923, many now wore their hair at shoulder length, pin curling their hair and leaving it overnight. Half the hair was then gathered on the top of the head with the rest of the hair curled under, towards the neck. The bouffant style was popular. By 1945, hair was no longer kept at the top of the head. The hair was now smooth on top with curls falling from the ears down. By 1948, hair was shoulder or chin length and volume started to become less

significant. Young women and silver screen stars preferred long hair. Veronica Lake, Hedy Lamar, Gene Tierney, Lauren Bacall, and Rita Hayworth were all stars who had long hair.

Rationing

Rationing continued until the mid-1950s, however, this lasted longer for different types of materials and products. Women became impatient, longing for their beloved products to return into regular circulation.