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“Clever ministrations”: regenerative beauty at the fin de siècle

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ABSTRACT This paper is the first to consider the role of late-nineteenth century British beauty culturists in establishing the respectability of anti-aging goods and services. It surveys self-published beauty texts, periodical press coverage, and advertisements to ask how female beauty providers positioned their businesses so as to enhance the reputation of their wares. These texts reveal that, by foregrounding the respectability, modernity, and novelty of regenerative techniques, British beauty culturists challenged existing narratives of commercial beautification, shifting feminine regeneration from the realm of vanity to necessity, from a question of moral character to commercial endeavor. However, these discursive strategies, not to mention the use of technology for the purpose of female bodily enhancement, were not welcomed by all. The paper subsequently turns to police court coverage and medical journals that criticized beauty “quacks” for reportedly duping unsuspecting female customers. The pursuit of duplicitous “beauty doctors” by unsatisfied customers and medical publications comes to the fore in a concluding profile of Anna Ruppert, a popular London-based beauty culturist who found herself charged under Ireland’s Pharmaceutical Act in 1893 for selling arsenical compounds. And yet, despite public scrutiny, the British press, consumers, and commercial providers increasingly embraced a more overt beauty culture that would prevail through the interwar period. This paper argues that this was due, in part, to discursive shifts advanced by fin de siècle beauty culturists, who paid the price for these interventions, existing as a liminal group straddling respectability and quackery.

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Introduction

From the late 1880s, British beauty culturists—many of them women—actively courted “ladies of a certain age” by mobilizing novel technologies to attract the discerning female client. Regenerative innovations like “face skinning” or peels, elaborate muscle wraps, and massage via electrical current promised to restore the bloom of youth to the fading countenance. Commercial beautification was nothing new, as female consumers had turned to “artificial” beauty aids throughout the Victorian period. With the promotion of their new anti-aging techniques, however, fin de siècle beauty culturists made public those pursuits that had been happening in private for many years. Framing their initiatives as “modern innovations,” beauty culturists precipitated a move into public discourse, laying bare the possibilities of beautification. It was to great effect; by the early twentieth century, consumers, readers, and advertisers alike less often associated anti-aging innovations with quackery. Beauty providers—with their careful promotion of new technologies of the self—engendered a tide shift, transforming traditional paradigms of aging, beautification, and self-care. Consumer desires and new rhetorics touting the possibilities of twentieth-century anti-aging services proved greater than the threat of “quackery,” an outdated—and unpopular—means of conceptualizing beautifying practitioners and their techniques. By shifting focus from moral to physiological theories of aging, beauty culturists fostered a narrative move away from Victorian censure of “artificial” and deleterious beautification towards overt embracing of regenerative techniques.

Regenerative innovations were not the only technologies exploited by beauty culturists, and the transformation of public discourses on women’s appearance hinged on the widespread availability of new textual forms in the fin de siècle.¹ Self-published texts and carefully-orchestrated periodical press coverage foregrounded beauty culturists’ novel commercial spaces and innovative systems, in addition to theories about regeneration to combat the ravages of time. By courting the press, beauty culturists revised established narratives about the dangers of superficial beautification, instead adopting a tone of radical transparency that laid bare the world of anti-aging technology. In advancing these transparent counternarratives, beauty culturists aligned with other commercial health providers of the fin de siècle who contended that commodities could fulfill people’s hopes and desires for health and even reverse the effects of time.²

And yet, beauty providers could not fully destabilize prevailing discourses that situated anti-aging services on the bounds of gendered and commercial respectability, a fact made clear in police court revelations and medical journals. Beauty culturists struggled to distance themselves from enduring censure of deleterious paints and powders, not to mention market saturation by controversial patent medicines.³ Moreover, periodic trials featuring “beauty doctors” suggested that perhaps this new breed of specialist was not as forthcoming as they claimed to be; in other words, their radical transparency was merely a rhetorical ploy to lull consumers into paying exorbitant sums for potentially life-threatening services. Periodic coverage in the mainstream and medical presses adversely linked new beauty specialists to their mid-century predecessors, characterizing them as “beauty quacks” or “Rachels” replete with destructive nostrums and inadequate training. This occurred despite a number of late nineteenth-century developments bolstering commercial attention to combatting age: a burgeoning health culture engendered by anxieties over social and bodily degeneration, middling and elite consumers’ active engagement with an expanded commodity culture, and even the reclassification of traditional products like soap as anti-aging aids.⁴ While beauty specialists benefited from these shifts and confidently advanced new modes of commercial

rejuvenation, the contradictory tone of press coverage—from the lauding of modern anti-aging technologies to the publication of revelatory beauty trials—suggests a slow and fractured process of public acceptance of “superficial” feminine beauty.⁵

This paper mines commercial anti-aging discourses, foregrounding British beauty experts’ articulation and writing of regenerative technologies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In doing so, it contributes to a growing body of scholarship exploring histories of bodily regeneration in the modern west, from water cures to electrotherapy to hormonal treatments.⁶ To date, many of these studies have charted the efforts of enterprising men in developing new medico-scientific or “fringe” anti-aging techniques. This article expands the cast of characters populating the anti-aging commercial scene, foregrounding the role of female beauty entrepreneurs in revising rhetorics of regeneration. It argues that, in an increasingly competitive commercial scene, female beauty culturists relied on self-published texts and periodical press coverage to legitimize their services in the lucrative metropolitan market. A survey of self-authored beauty books, newspaper articles, and advertisements appearing between 1885 and 1909 reveals the rhetorical strategies of this cohort of female beauty culturists who mobilized beautifying and anti-aging messages to promote their cosmetic services.⁷ However, print discourses around fin de siècle commercial regeneration were not always celebratory. Neither were beauty culturists always forthcoming about their ambitions and identities, masking them via the deliberate cultivation of refined commercial personas (Clark, 2013, p 882). This article subsequently surveys police trial coverage and medical press critiques from the same period to highlight gendered tensions that regulated and periodically limited anti-aging enterprise into the twentieth century.

While illuminating, some critics have identified limitations of periodical print sources in understanding lived experiences, highlighting potential disjunctures between discourse and practice. Although print sources may not “produc[e] experience as an effect,” writes Margaret Beetham (1996, p 5), they do function as “place[s] where meanings are contested and made.” Self-produced beauty books and print discourses operated as sites of negotiation, where ideas about femininity and self-fashioning were contested and created by a community of engaged interlocutors. Ultimately, new discourses circulating in fin de siècle print insisted on the legitimacy of anti-aging services, thus challenging gendered conventions governing feminine beautification and consumption. In promoting regenerative techniques, beauty culturists redefined ideas about the aging female body and the commercial possibilities available to combat the effects of time—albeit not without periodic resistance and rupture.⁸

“Beauty culture” at the fin de siècle

Fin de siècle discourses on new regenerative beauty departed dramatically from mid-century conceptions of the aging female body. Through most of the Victorian period, moral arguments prevailed, attributing the origins of wrinkles and sagging skin to individual character and habit. Advice for the aging reader subsequently exhorted women to look within themselves and adjust their disposition and lifestyle before resorting to external solutions like tonics and paint (Marwick, 1987, p 225–226). But by the late nineteenth century, beauty and medical texts increasingly promoted the idea that wrinkles—“those twin signs of years and sorrow” (Producing Beauty by Electricity 1902)—derived from a confluence of hereditary, environmental, and physiological factors. Commentators (About Wrinkles 1893) warned against a wide range of detrimental influences, including but not limited to

nervous exhaustion, stress, overly warm rooms, impure air, poor diets, leanness, or inherited properties. Ultimately, no single causation reigned through the fin de siècle, although certain physiological arguments seemed to gain traction. For example, an 1885 study by Italian physiologist Paolo Mantegazza (1892), popularized in publications like the *Pall Mall Gazette*, argued that wrinkles derived from “repeated action of certain muscular contractions” compounded by poor diets (68).⁹ By 1896, a *Daily Mail* column (To Disperse Wrinkles) insisted that “loss of flesh will make the skin loose, and with this diminution of the fat, which fills up the cracks and lines, the skin will naturally lose its smooth appearance and fall into wrinkles.”

Propelling interest in the aging body through the late nineteenth century was an expanding commercial culture that advanced innovative health treatments.¹⁰ Anxieties over national and social degeneration, combined with consumer desires compelled by a new hedonism, drove clients to the mixed medical marketplace to solve their bodily afflictions, from obesity to neuralgia to indigestion.¹¹ The elaboration of a commodified health culture extended to “manufactured goods [that] became a means of age resistance,” including patent medicines, exercise regimes, electrotherapeutics, and soap (Heath, 2009, p 16 and p 180). Complementing these anti-aging strategies was a range of options offered by a new generation of female beauty expert populating Britain’s urban centers at the turn of the century, a cohort not yet fully explored in histories of aging and the health marketplace. This new class of urban beauty provider offered a unique set of services to affluent female clients seeking out discreet yet effective bodily services that departed from the increasingly standardized, depersonalized wares of perfumers, druggists, and hairdressers. As I have argued elsewhere, female “beauty culturists” including Jeanette Pomeroy, Eleanor Adair, and Anna Ruppert exploited an “island of opportunity” (Clark, 2013, p 879) and established lucrative enterprises by foregrounding their feminine expertise, tailored specifically for women by women.¹²

Much as Thomas Barratt did for Pears soap through the 1870s, female beauty culturists made discursive moves to “convert... age remedies from humbug to credible beauty products through a rhetorical redefinition” (Heath, 2009, p 179). However, the wares on offer were far more controversial than soap. Self-published beauty books, complemented by carefully choreographed coverage in the periodical press, were subsequently central to inducting novitiate clients into the world of regenerative beauty. Beauty culturists positioned themselves as experienced guides bestowing hope onto clients and readers alike. “The modern beautifier steps in,” declared an 1898 *Daily Mail* column (Making New Faces), “and contradicts her female clients, bidding them not despair... [for] receding chins, hollow cheeks, dull eyes, double chins, indeed facial defects of all sorts need exist no longer.”

Beauty culturists could not have “stepped in” at a more opportune time, according to some columnists, who argued that the stakes of attaining youth were especially high for the new generation of woman. The fin de siècle saw women’s enhanced public role, evidenced by their autonomous movement through urban space, growing political responsibilities, and expanded economic pursuits.¹³ As one fictional “business woman” noted, twentieth-century social advances were transformative in more ways than one, and the enterprising woman now required a “bright and attractive appearance.” The columnist insisted that “[w]rinkles and blemishes on [a working woman’s] complexion may have quite a deleterious effect upon her position from a business point of view, while in many instances the appearance of gray hair has been known to disqualify a woman from obtaining a coveted post” (Hunt After Beauty 1904b). Following this logic, the pursuit of youth was not a vanity but a necessity, given the new

social and economic responsibilities for middling and elite British women. Theirs was not the “foolish and detrimental crusade” of previous generations, argued another column (Hunt After Beauty 1903a), but the “slough of despond [to] emerge...in a fair and happy country, permeated by beauty specialists, whose whole lives are devoted to [ladies’] embellishment.” Aligning themselves with broader political and social reforms for elite and middling women, columnists and beauty providers alike situated commercial services within the context of advances for the sex, promoting anti-aging as an imperative rather than a frivolity.

Despite such confident messages, a focus on external rather than internal remedies for wrinkles and fine lines remained problematic for the new cadre of beauty culturists. Unlike the broader health culture sweeping fin-de-siècle Britain, beauty culturists’ anti-aging techniques were not necessarily pertinent to the maintenance of health.¹⁴ They depended on seemingly shallow strategies that smacked of superficiality more than a desire to attain holistic wellbeing. In this way, fin de siècle beauty culturists stood at the crossroads of new attention to the healthy body and enduring concerns over the exploitation of shallow consumers entranced by empty promises.

And so, while innovative regenerative technologies appeared in the fin de siècle market, longstanding messages about the moral, individualized origins of inner beauty persisted well into the twentieth century (Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2010, pp 4–5). Beauty culturists navigated these contested rhetorics of female appearance, maintaining that overt signs of aging—wrinkles, crows’ feet, sagging skin—were external conditions to be remedied with their innovative treatments. Although challenged, these regenerative techniques of the fin de siècle would help usher in new cultural attitudes about the pursuit of youth, as the desire to counter age trumped critiques of “artificial” beautification that had regulated female appearance through most of the nineteenth century.

Registers of regeneration

Fin de siècle beauty culturists advanced a number of innovative new techniques to combat the effects of aging amongst middling and elite female clients. This included traditional strategies like tonics and astringents, alongside new techniques in facial massage and dynamic electrical processes.¹⁵ The novelty of such techniques, not to mention longstanding distrust of “superficial” beauty remedies, meant that commercial beauty providers had to undertake considerable discursive work to forge their legitimacy. They did so via a multilateral, multimedia offensive, employing advertising technologies proliferating in the latter half of the nineteenth century that transformed commodities into “systems of spectacular representation” (Richards, 1990, p 5).¹⁶ Beauty culturists mobilized both visual and discursive tools, tailoring articles, advertisements, and hybrid “advertorials” in Britain’s periodical press to introduce the latest in regenerative techniques. This included the exhaustive detailing of tonics, facial massage, and electricity, which served to demystify anti-aging processes for the public, including potential clients. In this way, beauty culturists fostered rhetorics of revelation, in which they drew back the curtains on commercial beauty treatment to encourage readers’ movement from the textual register—from the written word—into urban commercial milieux.¹⁷ Of course, this transition would not have been possible for most readers given the time, money, and travel demanded by these remedies; for them, beauty services would have remained an imaginative experience. At the same time, these stories advanced new ideas about aging, suggesting to a population of readers that youth—like beauty, health, and fitness—was increasingly attainable through the consumption of novel commercial services.

One specialist in particular dominated the ladies' periodical press through the early 1890s: American-born beauty culturist Anna Ruppert. From her arrival in London in 1891, Ruppert produced interviews, advertisements, and texts to promote herself as much as her services in "preserving beauty." Public lectures on topics like "A Womanly Woman; How to Become One, How to Preserve the Gentle Appearance of a Pretty Woman" complemented services offered out of her shop at 89 Regent Street (Advertisement 1891). These popular presentations served a distinct commercial purpose, as audience members followed her to "well-appointed" rooms for their own bottle of Ruppert's "Skin Tonic" (Mrs. Anna Ruppert's Lecture 1891 and No title 1892). Ruppert supplemented her lectures and advertorials with a correspondence column in *Hearth and Home* through 1893 (1893a, 1893b, 1893c, 1893d) where she proffered advice on a range of topics from greying hair to wrinkles to flabby skin.¹⁸ Given her ubiquity, Ruppert has garnered some attention from scholars.¹⁹ However, she was not the only beauty culturist who appeared across multiple textual registers at the end of the nineteenth century. Health lecturer and editor Ada S. Ballin promoted her theories on aging—along with her commercial services—via her periodical, *Womanhood*, which functioned as a platform for her beauty business from 1898 until her untimely death in May 1906 (Sebba 2004).²⁰ Although she did not manage her own advice column or periodical, Jeanette Pomeroy proved a prolific advertiser and was especially adept at the "advertorial" (A Good Complexion 1896), newspaper pieces that initially read as objective reporting but were carefully designed to promote the subject's business—and only her business.

Perhaps the most valuable form of self-promotion, produced by Ruppert, Pomeroy, and others, was the self-authored beauty book, a platform from which culturists could insist "[b]eauty can be made as well almost, as born" (Ruppert 1890, preface). These texts followed conventional forms of didactic beauty guides in legitimating the pursuit of beauty as a worthy task of self-improvement and feminine duty (Marwick, 1987, pp 220–26). There was, however, a twist; the anti-aging tonics, unguents, and prescribed services were available exclusively from the author, whose advertisements typically closed out the manual. For example, Ruppert's 1890 publication, *Dermatology: a book of beauty*, advanced a traditional theory of aging that connected wrinkles to the inner self, compounded by general patterns of diet, exercise, and overall wellbeing. "Wrinkles that cannot be effaced must naturally be borne," she advised, "but by perseverance [one] can do much to add to [one's] beauty and preservation of the same" (1890, p 31). This perseverance included the purchase of Ruppert's "Skin Tonic," as backmatter advertises loudly proclaimed.²¹ Ruppert was not the only specialist self-publishing her advice—and advertisements—for female readers. Mrs. Pomeroy mailed copies of *Beauty Rules* to correspondents through the late 1890s, while Miss Sanders of Maddox Street touted her *Practical Face Treatment and Natural Beauty* from 1903 onwards.²² Not only did specialists advance their unique theories of beauty and rejuvenation, but they also elaborated specific narratives about women's right to self-improvement; in these texts, authors took seriously the effects of age.²³ It was a "very real, by no means imaginary grievance," wrote Sanders, when "any woman in any station of life" experienced "the loss of good looks."²⁴ In the textual arena of commercial beauty books, the pursuit of youth was a critical venture, and authors established themselves as guides for female readers—and consumers—through this important life stage.²⁵

For specialists, this journey towards restoring youth ideally culminated in a visit to their shops, a transition that required significant discursive work on the part of culturist-authors. To precipitate this move from the page to the commercial

environment, beauty guides often included descriptions of the spaces where anti-aging treatments transpired so as to cultivate trust between author and reader.²⁶ Beauty guides and columns transported inquisitive readers to the shop floor, where columnists conducted textual tours of reception areas and treatment rooms. This functioned to remove any element of surprise for potential clients, but also counter lingering mid-century narratives of shady "backroom beauty" dealings (Clark, 2012, chapter 2).²⁷ By contrast, the new generation of anti-aging specialist offered the latest in chic décor and customer comforts (Clark 2013, p 886). Noting that "[c]uriosity is inherent in the heart of the daughter of Eve," one 1898 *Woman at Home* column led readers to Madame Cross' "pretty salon" at 70 Newman Street (The Quest of Beauty, p 336). Meanwhile, Ruppert's 1893 text *Natural Beauty* (1893e) concluded with a press extract detailing "One of the Sights of London: Anna Ruppert's Palatial Reception Rooms. A Glimpse of Fairyland. Electric Lights, Palms, and Tapestry." The journalist whisked readers on a written tour, replete with "revelation[s] of loveliness" as they moved through the foyer, "Corset Rooms," and even the mail department. "I do not fail to note in passing to and fro," wrote the columnist, "that the various rooms are thronged with visitors," before concluding that they "could vouch for it that Mrs. Ruppert is a very clever lady, and her establishment is one of the greatest successes of the modern day" (np).²⁸ References to modernity (Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2010, p 8–9) frequently figured in laudatory descriptions of commercial space, sites of feminine homosociability fostered in the name of bodily transformation.

If discourses of spatial revelation and feminine community vouched for specialists' legitimacy, descriptions of anti-aging systems were key to affirming treatment efficacy. Having introduced readers to the theories and spaces of anti-aging treatment, the next "rhetorical enterprise" (Jones 2016, p 59) was to extensively detail the products and services on offer. Couched in the language of "preservation of beauty," self-produced texts and newspaper coverage explained specialists' strategies, ranging from traditional approaches like tonics and unguents to more dramatic interventions engendered by turn-of-the-century advances in technological and, more specifically, electrical innovation. Ultimately, these details and descriptions served distinct discursive purposes, forging a culture of openness about the pursuit of youth, all while promoting the purchase of commercial goods and services to the benefit of beauty culturists.

Some of the most common anti-aging regimens showcased in beauty books and press coverage were those based on beauty lotions and tonics, a considerable range of which were available to fin de siècle consumers. In keeping with an older tradition of beautifying products, the key to such promotions was elaborate names, descriptions, and promises. Female readers and consumers could, for example, purchase the aforementioned Madame Cross' "Wrinkline" for fine lines, not to mention "enlarged pores, blackheads, etc." (The Quest of Beauty, 1888–1889, p 336). In texts (Advertisements, 1900, p 394), via mail order, and at her Old Bond Street shop, Jeannette Pomeroy hawked both "Skin Food" and "Liquid Powder," for preventing or hiding wrinkles respectively. Meanwhile, Delia Watson of Conduit Street promoted a unique means to diffuse her simple benzoin and water tonic. She deployed a small showerhead that, for one effusive *Daily Mirror* columnist (Hunt After Beauty, 1904a, p 11), invoked "the excellent effects produced by such showery lands as Ireland, and as our own England and Scotland, to whose showery influences our countrywomen owe the softness and brilliance of their skin."²⁹ If unique gadgets failed to attract the discerning consumer, there were always striking visuals featured in print forms. Adverts like those of Madame Dean for her "Duchess Wrinkle Eradicator" featured an alarming depiction of

“Mrs. Wrinkles,” designed to inspire—or terrify—readers into action (Advertisements 1901a, p 8; Advertisements 1901b, p 5) (Fig. 1). While specialists were adamant about the effects of their nostrums, press coverage and their self-produced copy was less forthcoming about the ingredients that went into them, which could include anything from lanoline and essential oils to glycerine and spermaceti (Toilet Hints 1901, p 7; Care of the Complexion 1901, p 7).

If tonics and washes represented traditional means to stem the advance of age, then the new generation of beauty culturist marked their exceptionality by promoting novel techniques. For example, facial massage emerged after widespread adoption of the general technique as part of a broader health movement encouraging the promotion of bodily vitality (Ueyama, 2010, chapter 5). A focus on the face reportedly remedied crow’s feet, double chins, and deep nasolabial folds, “charm[ing]...away the ravages of grief, over-work, or age” (Hunt After Beauty, 1904a, p 11). By the 1890s, facial masseuses materialized across the metropolis and beyond, from the aforementioned Miss Sanders of Mayfair to Miss Gibson of Dundee (Reading for Ladies, 1890, np). As with other anti-aging innovations, techniques required careful explanation for the uninitiated reader, and authors employed forthcoming descriptions of massage systems and their effects. Experts used self-produced texts (Sanders, 1902) and newspaper accounts (Ladies’ Column, 1897, p 6 and Ladies’ Column, 1902a, 1902b, 1902c, 1902d, p 6) to detail their unique approach to movements for each section of the face, from cheeks (“circular friction with tips of fingers”) to chin (“the thumb underneath the chin tip to tip, [with] long strokes towards the ear”).³⁰ Characterized by a striking inconsistency across methods, specialists and columnists (Hunt After Beauty 1903b, p 11; Ladies’ Column 1897, p 6) at least agreed that “[e]xtensively tender touch” was imperative, “owing to the fact that...rough handling induces wrinkles,” while massage “oftener than twice or thrice a week” was “not advisable.”³¹ Ultimately, these modest variations on facial massage functioned to distinguish beauty providers from other competitors populating the textual and spatial world of the anti-aging market. To what extent these small deviations mattered to consumers, however, remains unclear.

In order to distinguish themselves, some beauty experts and authors went to relatively extreme measures to offer unique regenerative techniques that emphasized novelty as much as efficacy. Again, these techniques and systems were elaborated in the pages of women’s periodicals and texts, as transparent self-promotion became just as important as the novelties themselves. Delia Watson, for example, described administrations with “tiny toy hammers made of ivory” in the 1903 “Hunt for Beauty” series (11), insisting that they “ton[ed] the cheeks and muscles...” to greater effect than manual massage. In the same feature, she also demonstrated her *pièce de résistance*, a “facial plumper” to revivify the sagging countenance. The contraption consisted of “a little wineglass with an india-rubber ball at the end on which it ought to stand.” Watson reportedly “rest[ed] the glass part upon the cheek and squeeze[d] the india-rubber ball just sufficiently strenuously to pick up the flesh,” which “exercise[d] and vitalise[d] the muscles below. After twenty minutes of these administrations, the “faded countenance blooms like a rose, bagging cheeks look round and comely, and that distressing affliction, the double chin, shows signs of departure.”³²

Double chins were undoubtedly a concern for the aging client, and another innovation developed specifically to counter this trend—bandage treatments—garnered considerable coverage at the fin de siècle. The definitive proponent of this technique, Eleanor Adair, was a fixture on London’s West End beauty scene, and her national advertising campaigns denoted her flair for self-promotion well into the twentieth century. Adair’s “Ganesh”

FACIAL WRINKLES ERADICATED FREE REMEDY FREE JEWELLERY

To induce thousands of ladies to test my remedies for harmlessly and speedily eradicating lines and wrinkles, I will send free trial treatments for a limited time to every lady who asks for them, and I will also send a Solid Gold-plated Dress Tie Pin with each treatment—all by return post, sealed in plain cover, and absolutely free. It must be evident to every sensible person that my remedies are exceedingly reliable, harmless, and efficacious, and lead to future sales of remedies—otherwise I would not make this offer. I am not generous in giving away the handsome and costly Dress Tie Pins. I do it as an advertisement to attract quick attention, and have learned by experience that this method of advertising is much less expensive than to follow the old style of advertising costing £10,000 a year.

MRS. WRINKLES

Baroness — is 44, and got rid of her wrinkles after using my treatments only four months. She is now one of the famous beauties in Berlin. Her friends say she looks 15 years younger. Send for free photographic picture, and see for yourself; also ask for Madame Dean's, for they are marvels. Thousands of cases equally astonishing. Ugly wrinkles make such a difference in one's appearance! Costly dresses and hats only accentuate ugly faces. A woman's face is her fortune. Every woman who dreads wrinkles, the sure sign of age. A lady once told me she would willingly give £1,000 to get rid of her wrinkles, and she got rid of them at a cost of a few shillings' worth of Duchess Wrinkle Eradicator. I myself am forty-one years of age, and yet most ladies who call to see me say I do not look a day older than twenty-five, for my face is free from wrinkles and other blemishes, although at twenty-one I was badly wrinkled and had plenty of other blemishes. I will send you the same remedies that worked such wonders for me. I use my Duchess Wrinkle Eradicator every day of my life to prevent new lines from coming. It is as harmless as water to the most delicate skin, and I guarantee it. It will eradicate ordinary lines in thirty days, and heavy wrinkles in a few weeks. It is absurd for any lady under sixty having wrinkles. One of the secrets of everlasting youth is within your reach. Wrinkles are caused by weak, inactive nerve-tissues of the skin, and it is necessary to tighten the skin with a powerful astringent. My remedy is the most powerful non-injurious astringent known to medical science, and smooths out lines and wrinkles in a hurry, and yet it is harmless. You can easily apply the lotion at home. No one will ever know that you are using anything on your face, but they will be amazed when they see the lines disappear. Thousands of society ladies are using it with grand results. A large number of letters received daily, praising the remedy, and thanking me in the most grateful terms. All remedies are sent under plain cover. Every letter received is regarded as strictly private and confidential. Please call and see me. No charge for consultation. We are Scientific Specialists for the Skin, Scalp, and Hair, and treat every ailment. Our Reception Rooms, Offices, and Laboratory occupy a large portion of the Argyll House.

Write at once for free trial treatment for wrinkles, also 32-page Beauty Book and Dress Tie Pin, all free. A post-card is sufficient. Address Madame Dean, Limited (Dept. W. 103), Argyll House, George and Maddox Streets, Hanover Square, London, W.

Fig. 1 Advertisement for Madame Dean’s “Duchess Wrinkle Eradicator,” 1901, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 20 November, p 5. This figure is not covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Reproduced with permission of British Library Board and Gale Cengage; copyright © British Library Board (Shelfmark no. 79-24595) and © Gale Cengage, all rights reserved

MARCH 4, 1922]

THE S

Restore Youthful Beauty

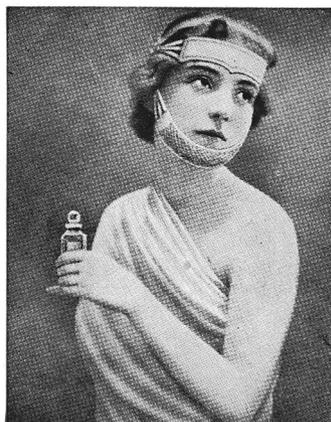
The wonderful **Ganesh Eastern Treatments and Preparations** have won world-wide fame for their safe, sure, and hygienic methods of restoring the Natural Beauty of Youth. So many women throughout the world owe their rejuvenated appearance to Ganesh Beauty Culture.

Ganesh Eastern Oil builds up the very foundation of beauty by supplying the exhausted skin tissue with new life and bracing up the relaxed muscles. Absolutely removes lines, wrinkles, hollows, etc. 5/6, 10/6, 21/6, and 30/6. (9d. postage.)

Ganesh Diable Skin Tonic strengthens and tones the skin, enabling it to withstand hot rooms, cold winds, and all climatic changes. Invaluable for loose and flabby skins. Excellent wash-tonic for the eyes and eyelids. 6/6, 9/6, 12/6, and 24/- sizes. (9d. postage.)

A Client writes:—
I must tell you that I find your Eastern Oil the best preparation for the skin I have ever tried.

Consultations
by appointment.



A Client writes:—
The treatment you gave me yesterday I consider simply wonderful in its results.

Write for free
Beauty Booklet.

The patent **Ganesh Chin Strap** restores lost contours and cures double chins, lines running from nose to chin: will also keep the mouth closed during sleep and prevent the habit of snoring. 21/6 and 25/6.

Under Royal Patronage.

Recommended by the Medical Profession.

Mrs. E. ADAIR
92, New Bond St., London, W.1
(Phone: Mayfair 3212) PARIS and NEW YORK.

Fig. 2 Advertisement for Eleanor Adair's Beauty Aids, 1922, *The Sphere* Royal Marriage Number, np. This figure is covered by the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0). Reproduced with permission of Pamla J. Eisenberg; copyright © Flickr, all rights reserved

system involved an elaborate “muscle-strapping method” for both the chin and forehead to “restore lost contours” (That Popular Event, 1908, p 706; Advertisement, 1913, p 46) (Fig. 2). But Adair was not the only beauty provider offering some version of the bandage technique. Watson, for example, touted similar bindings, which, in addition to “toning up drooping cheeks, curing double chins, and clearing the forehead of furrows,” also trained protruding ears to lay flat against the head in their “proper position” (Hunt After Beauty, 1904a, p 11).

Despite the novelty of Adair and others' contraptions, no regenerative techniques were more transformative—or controversial—than those employing electricity, which subsequently demanded considerable coverage and clarification via textual registers. Through the fin de siècle, a number of metropolitan beauty providers adopted electrical innovations in the quest to combat age. As Rebecca Herzig argues (2008, p 867), these nineteenth-century “body practices” stood at the “juncture of... minute bodily procedures and the growth of vast, integrated

technological systems.”³³ Print publications underscored this relationship, characterizing beauty providers’ use of electricity as a harnessing of its effects. According to one account (The Modern Beauty Doctor, 1903, p 6), beauty specialists transformed it from the source of “much of the strain and stress of modern life” to a “soother and healer” that could be used for good. “The mysterious and invisible force has been brought under control and turned to utilitarian purposes,” proclaimed a 1902 *Daily Mail* column (Producing Beauty by Electricity, 1902, p 7), “that now many beauty specialists in our midst are using it in almost all their schemes for the production and perpetuation of beauty.”

News of electrical beautification first garnered press coverage in the late 1880s, when the press reported the opening of the “Dynamodermic Institute” in Paris. There, practitioners used electrolysis to “repair the worn out epidermis, nutrit[y] and revivify[y] it until it rises up into its proper place, and the whole surface of the skin becomes as smooth as that of a young person full of bloom and beauty.”³⁴ While the French were frequently positioned as innovators in beauty and fashion, the focus across the Channel obscured the fact that British beauty providers had offered electrolysis and other electrical services from the 1880s onwards.³⁵ While often restricted to hair removal, some British practitioners also deployed electrolysis to resurface the skin. As one anonymous “beauty doctor” claimed in 1904 (Curious Characters of Modern Life: The Beauty Doctor, 1904, p 6), “with the aid of the needle I can entirely change the character of the face, as if I were painting upon it with a brush.”³⁶

Beyond electrolysis, a number of additional “apparatus for electrical beautifying” gained traction at the turn of the century. These services were initially relegated to the commercial milieu though meticulously described for British readers across popular print publications. All things electrical captivated the fin de siècle reading public, as electricity represented the pinnacle of technological mastery defining the late industrial era.³⁷ Articles and advertisements touted facial massages with electricity as the latest application of electrical innovation, as a means to “stimulate... and revive... flabby muscles and the tiny blood vessels of the face” (“Fair as a Lily”, 1906, p 47). An important part of this process, according to press features, were novel contraptions to communicate gentle electrical pulses, including the electric roller, which could be applied to either wet or dry faces. “In the wet process,” touted an extensive 1902 column “Producing Beauty by Electricity,” “the patient wears round her wrist a metal band in which there is a wet sponge, or she places her fingers in a basin of water and there holds the sponge.” Taking up the electrical roller, the “beauty doctor” turned “on the current, [and] gently moves the roller over the patient’s face.” Operators focused on wrinkles between the eyes, moving the roller “up and down just over the nose in a straight line from the roots of the hair down to the eyebrows.” Alternatively, a chamois leather cover was attached to the roller, allowing practitioners to “invigorate the cuticle, open the pores, and...vitalise the skin” of the forehead.³⁸

Electricity was not limited to the face, and services extended from the hairs on the head to the tips of the toes, a fact reported with delight in articles and advertisements. According to reports, electric brushing, as offered by Mrs. Spencer Ward of Hanover Street and others, entailed “a little padded instrument” being placed “beneath [the] collar, so that it rested at the top of the spine, just beneath the base of the neck” and attached to a portable galvanic battery. This produced “a tingling sensation at the top of [the] spine,” which reportedly gave “new life to the hair, vitalising the roots, strengthening the fresh growth that is always in the course of making, and bestowing upon the long tresses the glossiness of perfect grooming that every woman desires shall be the characteristic of her coiffure.” According to the same author, it also caused hair to “stand on end like quills upon the fretful

porcupine,” a seemingly desirable effect for those suffering from limp and lifeless locks. For electrical treatment of the aging body, electric baths consisted of a standard tub with an (ostensibly mild) application of electricity to the water. This service, according to the report from the *Daily Mail*, was “an experience which nervous women enjoy because they find it rests them,” although it was only to be undertaken with “the permission of a doctor” (Producing Beauty by Electricity, 1902, p 7).

Consistent across coverage of electrical innovations was attention to the potential discomfort or risk undertaken by clients. The press did not report any specific instances of injury from beauty by electricity. Nonetheless, articles and advertorials went to considerable lengths to assert the harmlessness of the treatments, insisting that “beauty would most decidedly not follow” the administration of severe shocks. In one installment of the “Hunt After Beauty” series (1903b, p 11), a fictionalized female client directly addressed inaccurate perceptions of the electrical massage experience, describing her time at Pomeroy’s Old Bond Street operations.

Many girls will imagine, I am sure, that my eyes nearly started out of my head, and I literally jumped from my chair as the result of the shock that ensued. Nothing of this sort happened; the current used was very gentle, and the effect produced nothing more than a prickly sensation.

This was corroborated in an aforementioned piece charting electrical experiences from the perspective of the client (Producing Beauty by Electricity, 1902, p 7), which emphasized the innocuous nature of innovations that produced nothing more than a “merry whirr.” Shocks were touted as “mild and hygienic,” with some clients being “so constituted that they [could not] feel in the smallest degree the current that in another case would be quite strong enough.” Another (The Modern Beauty Doctor, 1903, p 6) insisted that “the sensation [was] very soothing, and not at all alarming.” To counter concerns over risk, articles argued that processes differed from patient to patient and, as such, required a degree of participation from clients that heightened consumer agency. Specifically, most electrical techniques by battery required the client to complete the circuit by holding “instrument[s] like a small stick” (Hunt After Beauty, 1903c, p 11). In closing the loop, as Herzig argues, consumers transformed from passive recipients into active elements of the electrical treatment. Patients’ bodily connection to electrical beauty innovations directly implicated them in technologies of the self specific to the turn of the century, imbuing them with an agency that countered narratives of vulnerability and ill effects.³⁹

Elaborate details of tonics, massage, and electrical contraptions served a number of purposes for newspaper columnists and beauty culturists alike. On their end, the periodical press seemingly benefited from playing into readers’ fascination with—and fear of—wrinkles, hair loss, and decay, not to mention the novelty of techniques on offer across Britain. Such coverage also shaped the success of commercial beauty providers, who relied on the press to advance messages about the efficacy and innocuousness of their services, while countering potential narratives to the contrary. In yet another form of textual advertising, self-produced advertorials and instructional manuals garnered beauty practitioners even greater discursive control over representations of their goods, services, and reputation. Self-authored publications also functioned as a means to assuage concerns of wary consumers and initiate readers-cum-clients into the world of commercial beautification in terms of both space and techniques.

Revelatory narratives of new anti-aging opportunities, marked by an alleged transparency that departed from older generations of beauty businesses, meant that the new cohort of beauty

providers revised standard forms of press exposés made popular in the era of New Journalism. Rather than reveal the sordid side of beauty praxis, journalists and advertisers ventured into specialists' places of business to "reveal" the efficacy and harmlessness of anti-aging services.⁴⁰ In this way, beauty culturists amended the existing genre of the "undercover exposé," common to the New Journalism of the late nineteenth century. By implicating reporters in their self-promotion, they highlighted the *legitimacy* of commercial operations rather than their inauthenticity.⁴¹ Specialists' control was limited, however, in that they could not regulate all depictions of their anti-aging services circulating in fin de siècle print. This was particularly the case when subject to court proceedings, the contents of which featured in police columns across popular periodicals. Despite beauty specialists' attempts to construct discourses around new anti-aging technologies, court proceedings and their fallout took up older narratives of deleterious ingredients, female vanity, and consumer vulnerability in the face of self-interested quacks.

"Police-court revelations": conventional narratives and quackery

In October 1904, Britain's periodical press covered the scandalous case of a "beauty doctor" taken to court over the alleged defrauding—and deep discomfort—of a client. Under headlines like "Wrinkles Came Back" and "Beauty Doctor's Promise," articles detailed a Marylebone Police Court case in which a dissatisfied dressmaker described the effects of commercial regeneration to the delight of the court gallery and readers alike. Under care for a red nose, the dressmaker was exposed to more general treatments to combat aging, treatments that departed significantly from those advertised by beauty culturists themselves. Garnering laughter from the court, the plaintiff used vivid language to describe the beauty doctor's dealings. To revivify the complexion, the specialist purportedly "put some stuff on her clients' faces... which had a burning effect, and caused them to swell to a tremendous size." The client was then covered with a "sticky plaster" for over twelve hours, producing a countenance like "a half-roasted beefsteak." A "stickly [sic] jelly" was subsequently applied and left on the face for four to five days, during which the client was reduced to a liquid diet of milk from a feeding cup; this resulted in an appearance resembling "a pudding basin." Despite the unappetizing descriptions, the plaintiff reported that the effects were transformative. When "the mask was taken off... whatever your age, the face was that of a young woman of 18 years of age—full, clear, and fat; beautiful, in fact, without a wrinkle, a scar, or a blemish." Although the client's skin was "very, very red," the effects reportedly delighted "deluded" customers, who were coerced by the specialist into providing a "splendid testimonial." Within days, however, "wrinkles gradually reappeared, and the face became like a collapsible concertina." Following the dressmaker's revelations, magistrate Curtis Bennett declared that "[w]hatever the treatment she had undergone...it was clear it had done her little if any good," before referring her to the care of a Detective-Sergeant (Price of Beauty, 1904, p 5, A 'Beauty Doctor's' Victim, 1904, p 165).⁴²

With its laughter from the gallery and magisterial admonishments, the trial situated anti-aging treatments firmly within the realm of quackery, featuring naïve female clients who fell for false promises of renewal. While beauty culturists exerted considerable control over self-published tracts and some press coverage, periodic ruptures threatened to undo their careful rhetorical work by offering a dramatically different depiction of anti-aging techniques. The 1904 Marylebone trial was one of a handful of such damaging reports that appeared in the pages of the very periodicals that simultaneously lauded the innovative new services of

the beauty culturist. These trial accounts did not follow the form of sensational exposés popularized by late nineteenth-century New Journalism. Nonetheless, detailed coverage of disgruntled customers, creditors, and medical professionals introduced the public to a seedier side of commercial beautification that contradicted messages from beauty culturists themselves. These narratives turned on older conceptions of beautification, stressing the debilitating and even life-threatening effects of anti-aging treatments, including the cost, time, and pain demanded by the new beauty culture.⁴³ Ultimately, such accounts challenged commercial providers' radical transparency, suggesting that culturists did not draw back the curtain on regenerative services so much as use it to obscure their own pecuniary ambitions to the detriment of vulnerable female clients.

Trial coverage peppered the fin de siècle periodical press, providing glimpses into an alternate version of anti-aging services that involved fraud, disappointment, and loss. Beauty culturists found themselves in court for a variety of reasons, from their inability to outrun creditors to their suing of electrical instrument providers for falsely promising exclusive use of new contraptions.⁴⁴ Most damaging were trials instigated by dissatisfied clients, as they focused on specific treatments and directly countered the self-promoting narratives of beauty culturists. Appearing across British papers just a few weeks before the dressmaker's trial, for example, was a lady's maid's application to a West End magistrate. In mid-October 1904, the maid looked to recoup £20 from a West End "beauty doctor" who claimed she could "transform a woman of 70 years into one of 30 years." To this, the magistrate replied, "You see you went to a 'quack,'" before denying her claim.⁴⁵

As for clients, the relatively modest standing of both the dressmaker and the lady's maid suggests pressures on women across social classes to meet modern aesthetic standards. When beautifying attempts went awry and large sums of money were lost, the police courts emerged as a means to reclaim payment. However, magistrates in both instances dismissed clients' complaints as inevitable consequences of the pursuit of feminine vanity. This trivialization of commercial beauty affected many women, but especially those of lesser means who had limited options for recourse. Beauty treatments may have figured more prominently in the fin de siècle press, but this did not necessarily enhance clients' respectability in the public eye.

While court officials reproached beauty plaintiffs, some observers in the medical press laid the blame on commercial practitioners. Responding to the case of the lady's maid, *The Lancet* argued that the situation "afforded a glimpse of the methods of an advertising quack without shedding upon the subject the full light it deserved." Objecting to the magistrate's dismissal of the case, *The Lancet* concluded that "[t]o obtain £20 from a credulous lady's maid and to inflict pain and injury upon her in addition to robbing her are at least...deserving of punishment." For medical professionals, beauty culturists' self-promotion was part and parcel with the charlatans pervading the late nineteenth-century commercial health marketplace. *The Lancet* (1904, p 165) challenged specialists' performative transparency by characterizing their claims as "puffery" and their authors as "quacks." If called to "face a jury," they surmised, a beauty specialist would have her "specious promises exposed and the composition of her nostrums with their probable effects explained after analysis by an impartial witness," which would, of course, reveal her treachery.⁴⁶

The 1904 case of the lady's maid was not the only instance in which the medical profession waded into debates over the cost and dangers of new anti-aging treatments. As *The Lancet* column attested, medical professionals took issue not only with the defrauding of female victims but also the potentially life-

threatening effects of regenerative wares. At the fin de siècle, sporadic critiques from the medical establishment circulated in tandem with press coverage of beauty trials, reflecting enduring tensions dating back to the early nineteenth century. Indeed, there existed a longstanding tradition of medical professionals and didactic authors condemning the deleterious effects of beauty goods, including those aimed at countering the effects of age.⁴⁷ This was revived in the fin de siècle by the strained relationship delineating professionals from commercial health providers in the crowded medical market. As Takahiro Ueyama (2010) argues, Britain's medical professionals adopted a "watchdog" role in the wake of an expanding commercial medical marketplace populated by physicians, patent medicine providers, homeopaths, masseuses, and alternative health practitioners.⁴⁸ Late nineteenth-century professional medicine was not a unified front, however, and there existed what Ueyama terms "[i]ntra-professional struggles" that saw some medical practitioners dabbling in commercial practices that bordered on quackery (2010, p 231). Despite this crossover, there seem to be few medical professionals who endorsed new regenerative beauty services, unlike other health goods such as electro-magnetic belts, diet aids, and exercise systems. Rather, medical professionals seemed relatively united in their characterization of beauty doctors as frauds out to dupe innocent female victims. While the medical establishment had long spoken out about the dangers of paint and powder, new electrical techniques—not to mention culturists' depiction of themselves as beauty "doctors"—seemingly spurred renewed attention from the professional medical establishment.

The medical press produced and circulated their own set of narratives via a handful of textual campaigns calling out beauty specialists. Subject to one 1893 campaign was none other than Anna Ruppert, who had so deftly mastered textual modes of self-promotion earlier in the decade. Ruppert's advertisements most often touted her "Skin Tonic," which allegedly helped "the preservation of beauty" via safe, gentle ingredients. However, Ruppert's insistence on the mildness and efficacy of the product was proven false in an 1893 police trial in Dublin, following a series of critiques in leading medical journals that ultimately brought about her demise.

In August 1893 Ruppert stood accused by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland of including poisonous ingredients in her beautifying tonics. Despite self-published tracts claiming, "the preparation was harmless, and contained nothing injurious to the skin," testing revealed some eight grams of corrosive sublimate in her "Skin Tonic." Death, the expert witness testified, could occur with a dose of just five grains. The court fined Ruppert £5 plus cost, but not before noting "the ingredients were worth about a halfpenny" while "the price to the public was 10s. 6d" (Skin Specifics, 1893, np).⁴⁹

The Dublin trial, with its damaging revelations, was the culmination rather than the onset of Ruppert's troubles. In April 1893 the *British Medical Journal* had published an account under the heading "Poison by Advertisement," charting adverse effects experienced by a client of Mrs. Ruppert: "sleeplessness and tremor, soreness of the gums, neuralgic pains in the face and head and salivation," giving way to the painful loosening of teeth. These were telltale signs of mercurial poisoning, leading to calls from the *BMJ* (1893, p 911–912) for newspapers to "warn its readers that the advertiser is a quack, and the so-called remedies worthless or dangerous."⁵⁰ Following her conviction under Ireland's Pharmaceutical Act six months later, Ruppert attempted to regain control over the public narrative, publishing a series of advertisements titled "Anna Ruppert on Poisons: Every Lady Should Read This Carefully," in which she denied the dangers of toxic ingredients in her Skin Topic (1893, p 754). Admitting that she periodically recommended "stronger and more effective

preparations," she insisted they were "applied *externally* and in small quantities" and were "never injurious, but also beneficial." As Caroline Rance notes, she also invited a *Chemist & Druggist* reporter into her shop (A Fair Litigant's Bower, 1894, p 77), deploying the revelatory strategies of a textual tour to reestablish transparency and "get at the truth about [her] business."⁵¹ But counternarratives planted in advertisements, interviews, and textual tours seem to have had little effect. Ruppert was sued once again in January 1894 by an imperiled client. She abandoned her business soon after for an unsuccessful career in the theatre.⁵²

In Ruppert's case, her dominant presence in popular print publications could not protect her from conventional narratives promoted by leading medical journals that drew attention to the genuinely life-threatening effects of her beautifying remedies. Despite her ubiquity across textual forms, she could not contain the fact that her beauty remedies were ineffective if not lethal; her counternarratives could not transcend the dangerous nature of her rejuvenating services. In this way, beauty specialists' advertisements, articles, and texts had limits and could not necessarily obscure the material effects of their goods, nor the lived experiences of their clients. While it meant her demise, Ruppert's unequivocal "outing" as a quack was a welcome revelation for at least one popular periodical. Her conviction, insisted the *Graphic* (Grenville, 1893, np), would "surely at last prove to women how fatal such things are to beauty," arguing that if ladies insisted on pursuing youth, "why, like our grandmothers, do they not prepare them themselves, so they would be...certain of their harmlessness?" What commentators at the *Graphic* and leading medical journals did not foresee was the impending move towards the alternative, as women of the twentieth century moved definitively away from home production towards new commercial beauty providers—Ruppert's neighbors and contemporaries—in the quest to prevent or reverse the effects of aging.

Conclusions

The medical press' distrust of beautifying techniques delineated them from other, more laudatory narratives circulating in the fin de siècle periodical press. Eventually, such complimentary coverage of commercial regeneration proved a point of contention. In October 1904, *The Lancet* (1230) called out the popular press for their advancement of new beauty narratives. "[W]e would suggest to some of our contemporaries," they wrote, "that they should exercise a little judicious censorship over their advertisements." Comparing the promotion of beautifying techniques to other, more controversial services available to women, *The Lancet* warned that "[t]he advertising of quack concoctions sold for the procurement of abortion was not discontinued until the prosecution of a few prominent advertisers made the discreditable nature of gains derived from publishing incentives to crime conspicuous." Blaming newspaper advertisements for attracting "victims," *The Lancet* called on the periodical press to limit its attention to "quack compounds." "To come to the same conclusion without the publicity of police-court revelations," they argued, "is a course which prudence, if not a sense of decency, should recommend."

And yet, despite the medical journal's plea, "police-court revelations" remained the principal form through which conventional narratives railing against commercial beauty services were sustained. By the early twentieth century, the British press, consumers, and commercial providers alike increasingly embraced the more overt beauty culture that would dominate through the interwar period. This was due, in part, to discursive shifts advanced by fin de siècle beauty culturists, who moved feminine beautification and regeneration from the realm of vanity to necessity, from a question of moral character to commercial

undertaking. However, beauty culturists paid the price for these interventions, existing as a liminal group straddling respectability and quackery. Public revelations about beauty culturists suggest that their place in the fin de siècle market was tenuous and subject to sudden shifts in popular reception of regenerative techniques. While their efforts eventually informed public understandings of the aging body—and what consumers could do to combat it—the transition from quackery to legitimate trade was far from linear. Despite being at the forefront of new ideas about the aging female body, beauty culturists nonetheless made themselves subject to an interested press and public who carefully monitored their activities for signs of success and failure, triumph and defeat—all of which were well documented in fin de siècle print.

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Notes

- 1 On the elaboration of Victorian advertisements and visual forms, especially after the 1880s, see Church, 2000; Nevett, 1982, chapter 5; Ramamurthy, 2003; and Richards, 1990.
- 2 On the fin de siècle commodification of health, see Loeb, 1994, p 103–111 and pp 117–118; Heath, 2009, p 180; Richards, 1990, p 196; Ueyama, 2010, p 15.
- 3 On mid-century concerns amongst middle-class consumers over fraudulence and trickery, see Church, 2000, p 633. On patent medicines, see Richards, 1990, chapter 4; and Ueyama, 2010, chapter 1.
- 4 On fin de siècle developments that made for an increased attention to aging, national health, and beauty, see Heath, 2009, p 14 and chapter 6; Ueyama, 2010, chapter 2; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2011; and Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2010.
- 5 On the twentieth century, see Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2001. On the earlier history of cosmetics in Europe and America, see Angeloglou, 1970; Black, 2004: chapter 2; Clark, 2012; Jones, 2010; Kay, 2004; Peiss, 1998; Riordan, 2004; and Scranton, ed., 2001.
- 6 See, for example, Boia, 2004; Haycock, 2008; Heath, 2009: chapter 6; Stark, Recharge, 2016a; Stark, Age, 2016b; Trimmer, 1967. An exception to this is Trimmer's (1967, p 149–151) brief consideration of Marguerite Maury.
- 7 For more on this group, see Clark, 2013.
- 8 Both women and men pursued solutions to counter the effects of aging. However, public attention coalesced more potently around the female body, given gender norms regulating female consumers, feminine beautification, and women's alleged susceptibility to commercial fraud. For historical discussion of men and commercial beautification see The City Rejuvenator 1898; Entire Toilet of the Man Beautiful, 1906; and Face Massage for Men, 1908. For scholarly considerations of male aging, see Heath, 2009, chapter 2. On male beauty more generally, see Deslandes, 2010, p 1191–1208.
- 9 See also Wrinkles 1885a; and Wrinkles 1885b, p 4.
- 10 For an overview of western histories of aging, see Thane, 2003. See also Thane, 2001.
- 11 Loeb, 1994, p 4; Ueyama, 2010, p 15; and Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2010.
- 12 For historical takes, see, for example, (1904, 5 November) Curious characters of modern life: the beauty doctor. The Morpeth Herald, p 6. For more on Pomeroy see Clark, 2013.
- 13 On women's shifting public role at the fin de siècle, see, for example, Heath, 2009, p 15; Holton, 2001; Gleadle, 2001, chapter 11; Jordan, 1999; and Walkowitz, 1998.
- 14 On the fin de siècle health movement see Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2010.
- 15 There was also the process of facial skinning or early chemical peels, perhaps the least publicized of anti-aging treatments. Quoting Joan Kron, Teresa Riordan notes that the 1880s saw the proliferation of "skinning" in the US as a "thriving, unregulated business." Kron, 2000, p 145 in Riordan, 2004, p 164.
- 16 See also Heath, 2009, p 16; Loeb, 1994, p 5; and Nevett, 1982, chapter 5.
- 17 Church notes that, in general, "products linked to personal hygiene and appearance were...the subjects of persuasive advertising from the mid-century." Church, 2000, p 642–643.
- 18 Rance, 2016. For Ruppert's *Hearth and Home* columns see, for example, Ruppert, Health and Beauty, 1893c, p 794; Ruppert, A Few Wrinkles Upon Wrinkles 1893b, p 384; and Ruppert, Natural Beauty 1893d, p 284.
- 19 Ruppert has yet to be situated in the context of Britain's late nineteenth-century commercial beauty scene. However, two excellent blog posts explore Ruppert's legacy as an individual provider and alleged fraud. See Rance, 2016 and Jackson, 2010.
- 20 Ballin's fall from a window at her Portland Square home was ruled accidental.
- 21 For Ruppert on aging, see also Mrs. Anna Ruppert's Lecture 1892, p 30.
- 22 I have yet to locate a surviving copy of Pomeroy's *Beauty Rules*, although advertisements and personal correspondence describe the "little booklet" as providing advice on health, exercise, and appearance. Sanders, 1902. See also Elise, 1906; Hara, 1907; and Gent, 1909.
- 23 Stark addresses shifting meanings of "rejuvenation" in the early twentieth century and shows that, until the mid-1920s, the term often applied to male hormone-based treatments. Two press accounts suggest that some beauty providers also adopted the term "rejuvenator" to describe their role. In 1898, a columnist profiled a self-described "muscular and mental rejuvenator" who ran a City hairdressing saloon. By 1908, a press account described Bond Street proprietor Madame Auguste as a "rejuvenator and beauty doctor." See Beauty Doctor Must Pay £500, 1908; City Rejuvenator, 1898; Stark, 2016a, 2016b, p 501.
- 24 Sanders, 1902, p 7.
- 25 Marwick (1987, p 230) cites the lack of advertisements in some texts to argue that "[i]f one were to comb through the literature constantly seeking overt commercial motivation one would be disappointed." However, this fails to take into account the commercial standing of many of these authors, who encouraged custom merely through their textual presence as experts and arbiters of taste.
- 26 On women, urban space, and consumption in late nineteenth-century Britain more generally, see Nord, 1995; Rappaport, 2000, p 7; Walker, 1995, p 70–85; Walkowitz, 1992, p 46–50; Walkowitz, 1998, p 1–30; and Whitlock, 2005 p 109–112.
- 27 See also histories of Sarah "Madame Rachel" Leveson, whose trials in the late 1860s scandalized the British public. Whitlock, 1998, p 29–52; Miller, 2006, p 311–322 and Rappaport, 2010.
- 28 For other textual tours of beauty shops, see, for example, Aria and Sims, 1902, p 42 and At Mrs. Pomeroy's, 1896, p 239.
- 29 In an interesting blend of the new and the old, Cornelia Gray of Newman Street used modern distillation techniques to create "old-world complexion washes used by our great-grandmothers in the bygone days." A Dainty Distiller advertisement, 1894, p 787.
- 30 The debate extended across the British World, with readers as far away as New Zealand introduced to Miss Sanders' techniques ("the circles should be small, but as the fingers sweep back to the starting point they must sink well into the flesh"). As Seen Through Woman's Eyes, 1900, p 24.
- 31 See also Selections for Ladies, 1897, np; Toilet Hints, 1901, p 7; and Ladies' Column, 1902a, 1902b, 1902c, 1902d, p 6.
- 32 The emphasis on vitality and revitalization echoes the more general rhetorics characterizing electrical innovations of the late nineteenth century. Ueyama, 2010, p 67 and chapter 3.
- 33 On electrical technologies and health, see also Ueyama, 2010, p 16 and chapter 3. On electricity and rejuvenation in the early twentieth century, see Stark, 2016a, 2016b.
- 34 Wrinkles on Ladies' Faces, 1889, p 1; Passing Notes, 1889, np; Removing Wrinkles by Electricity, 1889, p 2; and The Cure for Wrinkles at Last, 1889, p 3. For other depictions of French innovation, see Tell-Tale Wrinkles: How Paris is Fighting Them, 1899, np; Powder-Puff Wisdom, 1901, p 7; French Beauty Doctors, 1902, p 4; and Beauty Institute, 1902, p 2.
- 35 Herzig dates the first use of electrolysis for hair removal to 1877. Herzig, 2008, p 867; Riordan, 2004, p 123. On the work to legitimize electrotherapeutics in Britain, see Rhys Morus, 1999, p 254 and Ueyama, 1997. On electrotherapy and rejuvenation in the 1920s, see Stark, Recharge, 2016a.
- 36 See also Anon, 1897, p 72.
- 37 Riordan, 2004, p 155–156; and Rhys Morus, 1999, p 249–250. For American parallels, see Nye, 1990.
- 38 See also Chats with Well-Known Women 1901, Ladies' Column, 1902a, 1902b, 1902c, 1902d, p 6 and Electrical Beauty 1906.
- 39 On grooming, consumer agency, and technologies of the self, see Herzig, 2008 and 2015. On women's empowering embrace of "body management," see Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2010, p 12. On the "body electric," see Ueyama, 2010, p 118–129.
- 40 For additional examples of "inside stories" in the late nineteenth-century medical marketplace, see Ueyama, 2010, chapter 1 and chapter 5.
- 41 On sensationalist exposés of the late nineteenth century, see Walkowitz, 1992, chapter 3 and Koven, 2004, chapter 3. For New Journalism in the context of the medical marketplace, see Ueyama, 2010, p 75, p 263–269.
- 42 See also Beauty for £20, 1904, p 3; A Concertina Face, 1904, p 5; A Face Cure, 1904, p 11; Beauty for a Day, 1904, p 6; and Another 'Beauty Doctor's' Victim, 1904, p 1230.
- 43 On parallel concerns over the skills of American electrolysis operators, see Herzig, 2008, pp 872–873.
- 44 In 1903, Mme. Hoffman of New Bond Street sued O. Muschik for falsely promising exclusive use of his instruments across London. In August 1905, Mme. de Medici of New Bond Street was sued by a court dressmaker for outstanding debts. In August 1906, Mme. de Medici was once again in the news, in an attempt to reclaim two rings and a chain stolen by a lover. In December 1906, Jeanette Pomeroy was in court over the use of her name in commercial practice. In March 1908, actress Gladys Desmond sued Miss Harriett Meta over the use of her image in Meta's anti-aging advertisements, claiming she was "too young to be subjected to that slight disfigurement" of wrinkles. On Hoffman, see 'Natural Beauty Culture' 1903a: 2; Natural Beauty Culture 1903b: 4; Beauty Culture, Derby 1903a, 1903b, p 2; Beauty Culture 1903a, 1903b: 7; and Beauty

- Culture Dispute Settled 1903: 2. On de Medici, see Face Specialist's Troubles 1905, p 3; Case of Stealing Rings 1906: 15; London Police Courts 1906: 4; Women his Dupes 1906: 3; and County of London Sessions 1906: 5. For Pomeroy, see Clark, 2013. On Meta, see About Wrinkles: Gaiety Actress Complains of an Advertisement 1908): 8; and Too Young to Have Wrinkles 1908, p 8.
- 45 Maid and the 'Beauty Doctor' 1904, p 3; 'Beauty Doctor's' Promise 1904, p 5; and Lady's Maid and 'Beauty Doctor', 1904, p 3.
- 46 Court cases were not always related to anti-aging innovations. In 1908, Rose Edith Heath successfully sued Bond Madame Auguste for the considerable sum of £500. The specialist's treatment for smallpox scars reportedly burned a hole through Heath's nose. See Story of a Disfigured Nose 1908, p 6; £500 Damages: Sequel to a Beauty Doctor's Work, 1908, p 16; Action Against a 'Beauty Doctor, 1908, p 7; Beauty Doctor Must Pay £500, 1908, p 7; Beauty Doctor: Methods of a Bond-Street Specialist, 1908, 7; Fraud of a Face 'Specialist', 1908: 1; £500 Damages Against Beauty Doctor, 1908, p 5; A Lady's Facial Disfigurement, 1908, p 4; The Dispute Against Beauty, 1908, p 3; Small-Pox and the Beauty Specialist, 1908, p 1511; and Thrilling Experiences of a 'Beautifier' in a London Court, 1908, p SM7.
- 47 For scholarly considerations of the American context, see Kay, 2004 and Peiss, 1998, pp 21–22 and pp 41–43. Mid-nineteenth century British commentary on the poisonous effects of cosmetics is too plentiful to list in full. Illustrative medical examples include Arsenic for the Million, 1860, p 592; Hair-Washes, 1868, p 228; Poisonous Cosmetics, 1870, p 115; and Lead-Poisoning from the Use of Cosmetics, 1881, p 231.
- 48 See also Heath, 2009, pp 178–179; Neveit, 1982, p 72; and Richards, 1990, pp 170–172.
- 49 See also Beauty Doctor Fined £5, 1893, p 2; A Lady Quack Doctor Fined, 1893, p 2; and A Skin Specific Containing Poison, 1893, p 6.
- 50 See also Case of Acute Periostitis of the Jaw from Mercurial Poisoning, 1893, pp 889–890.
- 51 Rance, 2016. See also Legal Reports 1894, pp 70–71.
- 52 According to Rance (2016), Ruppert returned thereafter to her hometown in Missouri, where she died of tuberculosis in April 1896.
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Data availability

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