Beauty

As the slick plastic alarm whistles louder and louder, I pull myself from the warm petroleum coated sheets and covers. I notice it everywhere as I sift through my mass of clothing created from synthetic fibers and repeatedly washed and soaked in commercial detergent. I have learned to coat myself in beauty products without a second thought. I am held up to a standard to wear the chemicals on my face without question. I lift the lid to my overflowing makeup case and begin to dig through the container to find a liquid that is supposed to make me feel natural. I rub the Clinique foundation and L’Oreal blush across my broken skin. I grip the plastic handle of the brush I use to apply my makeup from its plastic containers to my face. Next is the difficult task of choosing from the variety of colored eyeshadows, so many resting partially used at the bottom of the case. I carefully brush the powder on my eyelids closing my eyes so the chemicals can easily adhere to my delicate skin without irritating my eyes. I glide a ruby lipstick across my lips, altering their natural color as it stains the fragile skin. After I spray my face with a fine mist to set my makeup, I douse myself in perfume.

Although cosmetics and textiles are considered to be a large part of the beauty culture that is flowing through our society, they are often forgotten when thinking of petroleum. A vast majority of the clothing and fabrics we interact with on a daily basis have synthetic fibers in them and used petroleum in the production of the materials. Once the materials reach our homes
they are also repeatedly washed in detergent containing petroleum. Some people may be aware that petroleum is in textiles but not many are aware that petroleum is in the makeup that we wear everyday. Some companies have tried becoming “all natural” but a majority still use petroleum in the production or in the makeup itself. The “overflowing makeup case” represents that we continue to consume makeup when it is not needed and it mirrors society consuming petroleum that in the end masks and shapes our society. There are people who believe that petroleum and items that contain it such as makeup are harmful to us and our planet. But there are also those who are not aware of the petrochemicals in their makeup and don’t believe there is a serious threat. Beauty is often equated with women and looking “pretty”. Women are pulled between wearing makeup that can make themselves feel better and boost their self-esteem and those who believe makeup is unnecessary, and a waste. Multiple companies have created an industry off of the social pressure to be “pretty” such as Sephora, Ulta, Covergirl, Maybelline, etc. Women are conditioned to focus on their external beauty and how their skin, hair, clothing, and makeup appear. Often women perform this makeup routine to impress others and some may argue they do it for themselves. Girls from a young age are exposed to the makeup industry and are told they need it to become “pretty”. It is up to us to alter the image of being “pretty” and how much we allow petroleum to invade our lives.