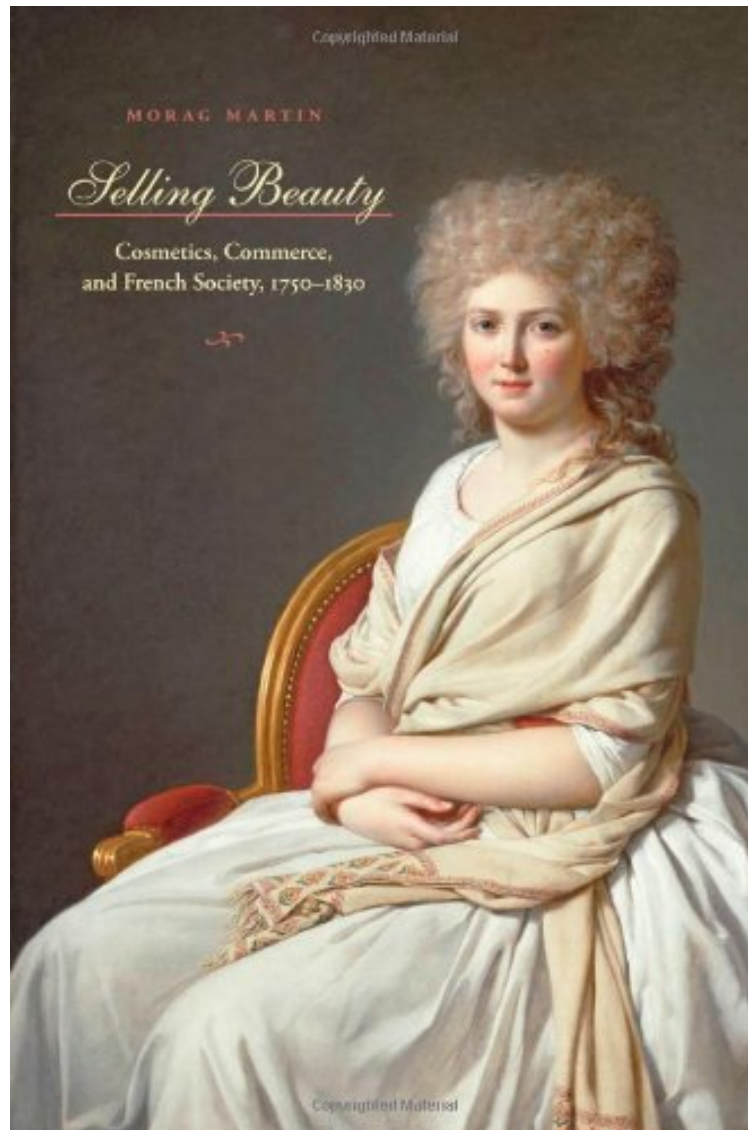


(Free) Selling Beauty: Cosmetics, Commerce, and French Society, 1750-1830 (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science)

## **Selling Beauty: Cosmetics, Commerce, and French Society, 1750-1830 (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science)**

*Morag Martin*

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**Morag Martin : Selling Beauty: Cosmetics, Commerce, and French Society, 1750-1830 (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Selling Beauty: Cosmetics, Commerce, and French Society, 1750-1830 (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science):

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Marketing Person's ReviewBy LaurelThis book is an exciting find that provides both a historical and marketing perspective of the development and details of the cosmetics commerce during the late 18th and early 19th century. I was extremely pleased since this book starts with a historical perspective that details the meanings and use of cosmetic during the noted time period then proceeds to document the development of commerce in the industry. The text is easy to read and understand, but not simplistic. I thank the author for such a unique interest in a topic that has greater meaning than most individuals realize. I find the text helpful when read along with another book that provides more visual depictions of historical costume dress and customs during the period; however, I find the book was well worth the cost. If you are planning to read the book simply for a historical backdrop to romantic novels or simply for because you have an interest in the topic, I also recommend the book since the author's style is not stilted nor pretentious.

Morag Martin's history of the cosmetic industry in France examines the evolution of popular tastes and standards of beauty during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. As the French citizenry rebelled against the excesses of the aristocracy, there was a parallel shift in consumer beauty practices. Powdered wigs, alabaster white skin, and rouged cheeks disappeared in favor of a more natural and simple style. *Selling Beauty* challenges expectations about past fashions and offers a unique look into consumer culture and business practices. Martin introduces readers to the social and economic world of cosmetic production and consumption, recounts criticisms against the use of cosmetics from a variety of voices, and examines how producers and retailers responded to quickly evolving fashions. Martin shows that the survival of the industry depended on its ability to find customers among the emerging working and middle classes. But the newfound popularity of cosmetics raised serious questions. Critics—from radical philosophes to medical professionals—complained that the use of cosmetics was a threat to social morals and questioned the healthfulness of products that contained arsenic, mercury, and lead. Cosmetic producers embraced these withering criticisms, though, skillfully addressing these concerns in their marketing campaigns, reassuring consumers of the moral and physical safety of their products. Rather than disappearing along with the Old Regime, the commerce of cosmetics, reimagined and redefined, flourished in the early 19th century, as political ideals and Enlightenment philosophies radically altered popular sentiment.

"An impressively wide-ranging and well-researched study of an important element of the new consumer society of late 18th- and early 19th-century France, which will be welcomed by French historians, historians of women and gender, as well as historians of material culture and consumption." (Clare Crowston, University of Illinois)"*Selling Beauty* is a well-written and impressively researched book." (Jennifer M. Jones H-France)"This book makes a scholarly and critical contribution to histories of the consumer revolution, commercial culture, and gender." (John Shovlin American Historical )"A well-researched analysis." (Pieter Francois)"Martin's study valuably contributes to the recent wealth of scholarship on the eighteenth-century consumer market." (Katharine Hamerton Journal of Modern History)"Well-written and enjoyable." (Jennifer Heuer European History Quarterly)"An important contribution to the history of fashion." (Tijl Vanneste European of History)About the AuthorMorag Martin is an associate professor of history at the College at Brockport, State University of New York.