Camera Beauty: Makeup and the Art of Image Making in Studio Era Hollywood

by

Marissa Spada

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Film, Television, and Media)
in The University of Michigan
2022

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Caryl Flinn, Chair
Professor Giorgio Bertellini
Professor Susan J. Douglas
Associate Professor Christianne Myers

Marissa Spada

mspada@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-0449-2001

For my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Caryl Flinn. This dissertation would not have been possible without her guidance and support. Caryl, thank you for taking me on as your student, for your honest and generous feedback, and for letting me borrow sweet Greta (Greta, thank you for all the walks). Gratitude also goes out to my committee, Giorgio Bertellini, Susan Douglas, and Christianne Myers, who provided valuable insights, research advice, and encouragement along the way.

I would also like to thank the faculty and staff in the department of Film, Television, and Media at the University of Michigan. I am especially grateful to those who helped me to grow as a scholar and develop this project in its early stages: Daniel Herbert, Sheila Murphy, Sarah Murray, Markus Nornes, Yeidy Rivero, and Matthew Solomon. I am also indebted to Mark Kligerman, a mentor and friend, who always replied to my emails whenever I had the most idiosyncratic film history question; Michele White, whose SCMS seminar, "Making Up Beauty Culture Studies," gave me just the confidence I needed (and when I needed it the most); Philip Hallman, for helping me locate archival materials and navigate the library system; Candace Moore, for believing in me and my work; and the staff and faculty in York University's film department, especially Mike Zryd.

I also wish to acknowledge my graduate peers and other members of this intellectual community, who I hope to know for a very long time: Tanite Chahwan, Sophia Chen, Bailey Compton, Joseph DeLeon, James Elrod, Brinni Gentry, Amber Hardiman, Nathan Koob, Kayti

Lausch, Vincent Longo, Júlia Martins, Josh Morrison, Richard Mwakasege-Minaya, Yuki Nakayama, Dimitri Pavlounis, Katy Peplin, Veerendra Prasad, Emily Saidel, Josh Schulze, Benjamin Strassfeld, and Grace Wilsey. A special thank you to Kaelie Thompson for driving me to Lake Michigan and back, for the marathon conversations, and for seeing the best in me. And to Sean Donovan, who was always one click away for every pain, frustration, and joy. It means so much to have shared this journey with you.

Finally, thank you to my friends and family in Toronto (and Montreal, Paris, or wherever you are in the world). It is because of all of you that I am happy and whole and never alone. A special shoutout goes to Glen Foster, who once drove me and all my earthly possessions to Ann Arbor through an epic summer storm on Highway 401. Glen, I wish you were still here to read this. To Sue Gilliver, my sister Liana, and my wonderful parents, Frank Spada and Halina Below: Thank you for supporting my every endeavor, for inspiring me, loving me, and letting me grow. I would not be here without you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

"Camera Beauty: Makeup and the Art of Image Making in Studio Era Hollywood" explores how screen makeup developed in the American motion picture industry, and how these developments subsequently shaped normative beauty standards and practices. Between the years 1927 and 1937, the art of screen makeup underwent critical transitions attendant to the maturation of the Hollywood studio system, its increasingly realistic modes of representation, and the growing omnipresence of its star culture. Additionally, during this decade, the mass cosmetics industry grew exponentially and symbiotically alongside these changes in Hollywood, despite the economic devastation of the Great Depression. New consumer products, beauty expertise, and selling methods often stemmed directly from the motion picture industry, while trade discourse doubled as everyday makeup advice. Beauty editorials, cosmetics advertisements, and star testimonials elicited the consumer's desire to embody Hollywood's beauty standards "naturally" – to efface the labors involved in the makeup process and to thus increase the "market value" of her image. To examine this history, I draw from a variety of materials, including motion picture fan magazines, trade journals, print advertisements, and memoirs. This study includes a brief discussion on the norms and conventions of silent screen makeup; however, its main analytical focus begins in the late-1920s and ends in the late-1930s. I argue that it was during these years that the relationship between beauty, makeup, and the cinema took root in American culture, alongside the growth of the Hollywood studio system, and the standardization of its technologies and creative practices.

INTRODUCTION

Make Up the Movie Way

For Jean McMichael, movie fan and *Photoplay* reader, all it took was "one short reel" to change her life. Her impassioned contribution to the magazine's January 1932 installment of "The Audience Speaks Up" paints for us a picture of the Hollywood consumer:

> I thought I knew something about facial make-up until I viewed a short talkie in color, showing how the movie stars do it. The next day I followed their directions, even to the little touch of rouge that was cleverly moulded into the center of the chin. The delicate and natural complexion resulting from the methods shown were amazing. Needless to say, from now on I make up the movie way. Just think – one short reel to me means a life-time of correct and pleasing make-up.[1]

Jean had *thought* that she knew a thing or two about makeup, but in that darkened theater, with lights flickering across her poorly rouged face, she learns that she has been doing it wrong this whole time. Jean can imagine herself projected on screen, especially since newsreels of this genre often featured not the stars themselves, but lookalike stand-ins. On screen, women, just like her, were primped and prodded by the film industry's renowned makeup artists, whose commercial products were newly available at drug stores in her hometown. Maybe Jean visits one of these retailers on her way home from the theater. Once home, she takes that freshly purchased jar of rouge and applies it to her own face, just as instructed. From now on, she knows

[1] "The audience speaks up," *Photoplay*, January 1932, 12.

to “make up the movie way” – to produce an effect that is, in her words, “correct,” “pleasing,” and “natural.”

It is very possible, even likely, that Jean never existed. Her comments are perhaps too precisely worded, containing just enough earnestness and zeal to cast doubt on their authenticity. But if Jean was indeed a figment of a public relations or advertising ploy, she tells us much about how the then-emergent mass cosmetics industry conceived of their model consumer: Jean goes to the movies. She reads the fan magazines. She wants to be like the stars. We have, in Jean, the ideal feminine subject, interpellated through various media texts – print ads, beauty editorials, and the feminized genre of newsreel that teaches women to make up like the stars.

While we cannot say for certain whether she was indeed, at one time, comprised of flesh and blood (plus that clever dab of rouge), from Jean’s *Photoplay* letter, we might extract a few key features which define the relationship between beauty, makeup, and the cinema. They are:

1. That with new media technology comes new standards of beauty, and new modes and methods of self-representation. Jean’s prior knowledge of facial makeup was satisfactory – or so she had thought. The Hollywood-inspired beauty tutorial (the “short talkie in color”) not only moved and spoke, but it did so in a spectrum of lifelike hues. Its realism allowed Jean to observe the makeup process in all its vivid detail; but by the same token, facial blemishes and flaws were exposed with the same unforgiving clarity.
2. That natural beauty is made, not born. The newsreel tutorial revealed to Jean that the beauty she sought was, in fact, an illusion generated by expert-vetted application methods. Jean would need to hone and perfect her technique, and to continue to purchase products to artificially maintain her “delicate and natural complexion.”

3. That there is a "correct and pleasing" way of doing makeup that is modeled by Hollywood stars. Jean's letter is aptly titled, "Educated Powder Puffs." Movie stars are not merely living embodiments of physical perfection; the public availability of their diet, exercise, and beauty regimens teach us how to be ideal citizens, ideal consumers, and for Jean in 1932, the ideal modern woman.

This dissertation explores each of these themes, which are in many ways still manifest in twenty-first century beauty cultures and practices. I propose that this relationship (between beauty, makeup, and the cinema) took root in America in the 1930s, alongside the growth of the Hollywood studio system, and the standardization of its technologies and creative practices. As for the then-fledgling cosmetics industry, it not only proved resilient throughout the Great Depression, but many of the business practices which were then instituted to ensure its survival are still the norm today. We often attribute the beauty industry's endurance through periods of financial crisis to the consumer's desire for escapism, morale boosters, or small and affordable indulgences. In the early 2000s, Leonard Lauder, chairman for cosmetics firm Estée Lauder, coined the term, "The Lipstick Effect," to describe an upward trend in cosmetics sales during an economic downturn – a phenomenon, its proponents argue, which dates back to the Great Depression.[2] Critics of Lauder's theory point out that the historical data is inconclusive; however, the cosmetics industry did indeed weather the 1930s, which witnessed the rise of several major firms, including Almay, Revlon, and as will be discussed at length in this dissertation, Max Factor. As historian Lois Banner has shown, in the year 1930, there were forty

[2] "Lip Service: What lipstick sales tell you about the economy," *The Economist*, January 23, 2009, https://www.economist.com/unknown/2009/01/23/lip-service.

thousand beauty parlors in the United States and national cosmetics sales totaled nearly $180 million – a growing sum which did not abate as the decade wore on.[3]

There is undoubtedly some merit to the hypothesis that the consumer experiencing economic hardship will invest in simple pleasures; however, during the 1930s, cosmetics firms also deployed increasingly sophisticated promotional strategies, which owed much of their persuasiveness to the American motion picture industry. Some of the most successful cosmetics manufacturers of the 1930s had their start in Hollywood and were among the first to adopt media-based advertising and the fabricated star testimonial. In 1934, consumer rights activist Mary Catherine Phillips wrote of makeup ads that allured, deceived, and enchanted the consumer with the promise of movie star glamour. "Just pick up the current issue of any one of the so-called women's magazines and turn to almost any cosmetic ad," she warned. "Whether it be rouge, lipstick, cold cream, or turtle oil cream, you get the impression that all a woman has to do is invest in five or six essential cosmetics and she will in short order acquire the lure of an oriental houri plus the finish of a Hollywood actress."[4]

This project considers how the "finish of a Hollywood actress" came to be such an alluring, deceptive, and enchanting product – one which would ultimately be packaged and sold in a pink and gold compact. It begins, however, not with the market, but behind the scenes in the American motion picture industry. This research has been guided by a series of questions: How did screen makeup (or in Jean's words, "make up the movie way") develop as a trade, a medium, and an art form? What role, if any, did these traditions play in defining normative facial aesthetics (what industry professionals sometimes called, "Camera Beauty") of the classical

[3] Lois W. Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1983), 272.

[4] M.C. Philips, *Skin Deep: The Truth about Beauty Aids – Safe and Harmful* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1934), 4.

Hollywood cinema? Finally, how did the decade's popular beauty literature communicate film industry practices for public consumption, and to what end?

Camera Beauty and the Art of Image Making

By the 1930s, film technology had progressed to such an extent that the camera could pick-up detail that would have previously gone undetected. Skin tone, blemishes, and the tell-tale signs of fatigue, ill-health, and aging were rendered with more accuracy than ever before – and then enlarged tenfold on movie theatre screens. When it came to on-screen beauty, Hollywood had invested so heavily in the illusion of its own design that the relatively true-to-life representation of the feminine visage was regarded as an error. One of the primary objectives of screen makeup, according to the experts, was to eliminate distortions or "defects" which might have gone inconspicuous in life, but were glaringly obvious when filmed, or viewed under bright studio lights. In the 1930 issue of *Cinematographic Annual*, Hollywood makeup artist Max Factor wrote: "In motion picture making, make-up is an exacting art. The keen eye of the camera sees every detail and imperfection, and the projector magnifies them."[5] The industry even had a name for beauty that passed the screentest: Camera Beauty. "Camera beauty," explained cameraman Hal Moher, "is the beauty of symmetrical features, of facial contour" and was not always perceptible to the human eye.[6] In what follows, I adopt the term Camera Beauty to

[5] Max Factor, "The Art of Motion Picture Make-Up," *Cinematographic Annual*, 1930, 158.

[6] J. Eugene Chrisman, "Cameramen Name Hollywood's Ten Most Beautiful Women," *Hollywood*, March 1935, 29.

describe a visual construct – one which was discursively paired with film technology and fortified, contested, and embodied through associated social, cultural, and industrial practices.

One of the most horrifying, albeit fascinating, materializations of this discourse headlined the grand opening of Factor's infamous Hollywood salon in 1932: a measuring device he named the Beauty Calibrator, which would allow the makeup artist to shade and highlight a woman's face to approximate a feminine ideal, reduced to a numerical code. According to the press, the machine had been necessitated by the heightened levels of realism afforded by recent advancements in cinematic technology:

> Flaws almost invisible to the ordinary eye become glaring distortions when thrown upon the screen in highly magnified images; but Factor's "beauty micrometer" reveals the defects. The device remotely resembling a baseball mask, fits over the head and face with flexible metal strips which conform closely to the various features. The strips are held in place by screws, allowing for 325 possible adjustments. If, for instance, the subject's nose is slightly crooked – so slightly, in fact, that it escapes ordinary observation – the flaw is promptly detected by the instrument and corrective makeup is applied by an experienced operator.[7]

Although the Calibrator was never put to practical use (too uncomfortable for high-maintenance stars, and to unwieldy for the average salon owner), Hollywood found softer, less overt (and indeed, less visually frightening) methods by which to generate Camera Beauty. From its messy and experimental beginnings during the silent film period, the art and science of screen makeup emerged in the 1930s as a vital cinematic technology – one which would produce and preserve the star's facial image, in accordance with prevailing aesthetic norms and conventions. The star was not only symmetrical and well-contoured, as Moher described, but often white, ageless, and naturally appearing so, effacing the makeup, lighting, and camera work that went into its construction.

[7] "Beauty Micrometer Analyzes Facial Flaws for Make-Up," *Modern Mechanix and Inventions*, January 1935, 66.

Camera Beauty, however, was not only for movie stars. In her comprehensive history of the modern cosmetics industry, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (1998), Kathy Peiss demonstrates how print advertisements for cosmetic products "endlessly reminded women that they were on display, especially conspicuous in a world peopled by spectators and voyeurs."[8] She writes: "Mirrors, movie cameras, and spectators placed in ads underscored the idea that the eye constantly appraised women's appearance. Women were thus urged to transform the spectacle of themselves into self-conscious performances."[9] Indeed, cosmetics manufacturers made ample use of movie metaphors, to sell products to the image-conscious consumer. In one advertisement, the "close-up" shot invokes the threat of exposure – if her smooth complexion was revealed to be a lie, what else might she be hiding? "Camera skin" was a term coined by Woodbury's Cold Cream to describe a smooth, blemish-free complexion, even if the wearer would be nowhere near a camera, let alone a film set (fig. 1).[10] Manufacturers that were already affiliated with the motion picture industry could be especially persuasive in their promise to deliver movie star good looks. Max Factor's first commercial line, Society Make-Up, claimed to evade the "searching eye of the camera," boasting a formula "so perfect, in texture, even the motion picture camera does not reveal it."[11] The product had allegedly stood up against "blazing motion picture lights," multiple takes, and the cruel, discerning lens of the camera – it could certainly withstand long work hours, dates, and social gatherings (fig. 2).

[8] Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books), 142.

[9] Ibid.

[10] "Advertisement: Woodbury's Cold Cream," *Radio Stars*, March 1932, 63.

[11] "Advertisement: Max Factor," *Photoplay*, September 1932, 91.

Figure 1. A print ad for Woodbury's Cold Cream. *Radio Stars*, March 1932, p. 63.

Figure 2. A print ad for Max Factor's Society Make-Up. *Photoplay*, September 1932, p. 91.

Print advertisements consistently exploited the specter of the camera. This trope invited women to see themselves as moving images; as one part of the visual tapestry of modern life, and as objects of an omnipresent, unseen, but ever-surveillant gaze. This gaze was subsequently internalized and manifested in beauty regimens. In *Unbearable Weight* (1993), Susan Bordo applied a Foucauldian framework to the politics of appearance, and demonstrated how self-surveillance and self-correcting measures condition the female body.[12] Beauty advice literature likewise required women to analyze their own reflections as though they were outside observers – much like what John Berger, in *Ways of Seeing* (1972), articulated as the two constituent elements of the woman's identity: the surveyor and the surveyed.[13] "Be impersonal about it," one

[12] Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 27.

[13] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 46.

advice columnist suggested, when it came to self-evaluation.[14] "Come face to face with yourself in the mirror – and then have a truth session with that mirror self![15] The mirror, however, proved to be limited in its capacity to offer a truly objective reading of one's own facial appearance. "It is very hard to know what we actually look like," one expert explained. "We grow accustomed to that same image in the mirror, and then, perhaps no one really sees exactly the same picture in the same person."[16] As a solution to this problem, Perc Westmore, who ran the makeup department at Warner Brothers, recommended that a woman start with a photograph of her own face and divide it into thirds, much like a cinematographer might approach a shot's visual composition. Beauty advice columnists frequently cited Hollywood experts, like Westmore, so that their readers might produce their own iteration of Camera Beauty.

As far as the film industry was concerned, Camera Beauty was a meticulously constructed illusion and from the years 1927 to 1937, it received an unprecedented amount of scrutiny, debate, and publicity. Factor spent years experimenting, in dialogue with other film industry professionals, to create formulas and methods which would be compatible with emergent screen technologies. Theatrical makeup, otherwise known as "greasepaints," were traditionally heavy, emollient concoctions, comprised of dry pigments and an oil or wax base. As a result of Factor's research, these products became more translucent, naturalistic, and comfortable on the skin. By the late-1930s, this research had revolutionized film industry practices, but it did not end there. The decade also marks a period of record growth for the American cosmetics industry and the improved screen formulations were easily modified for the

[14] Betty Longacre, "Give Yourself a Break," *Photoplay*, June 1932, 33.

[15] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Look in the Mirror! How Do You Rate Yourself?" *Photoplay*, January 1932, 70.

[16] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Finding Your Type in the Stars," *Photoplay*, October 1933, 94.

consumer market. The 1930s witnessed the invention of products, such as Max Factor's Pan-Cake Make-Up, which, in very tangible ways, closed the gap between what was to be worn on set, and what could be worn in everyday life. The press often referred to Max Factor and his contemporaries, including the men of the infamous Westmore family, as "glamour men," or "glamour masters." This PR elevated the most elite screen makeup artists to the status of film industry leaders: not below-the-line laborers, but rather, creative "geniuses" (a moniker which Perc Westmore was said to prefer over all others) on par with producers, directors, and A-list stars, with whom they collaborated and socialized regularly.

The word, "glamour," might call to mind images of luxury and extravagance: the decadence of the Hollywood studio system in its heyday; glossy print ads for high-end cars, watches, and clothing; or the curvaceous gold-painted bottle of perfume that seduces the middle-class buyer with an illusory connection to the elite world of designer fashion. Glamour, however, is rife of contradictions. Glamour blurs over imperfection and grittiness for an airbrushed quality of otherworldly transcendence. At the same time, glamour is material, tactile, and human – it is something that we can touch, buy, and own. Glamour often necessitates the tedium of assembly-line production, but it also connotes a certain *ease*. Glamour invokes something very old, perhaps even "timeless," even though, as others have argued, it is a unique manifestation of capitalist modernity. As Nigel Thrift writes, "Glamour is a form of secular magic, conjured up by the commercial sphere."[17] It is, in his words, an "object standing for a world without troubles or with troubles you want."[18] We might casually observe that glamour thrives in eras of economic prosperity – the post-WWII boom years, or the excessive and "glam" 1980s are prime examples.

[17] Nigel Thrift, "The Material Practices of Glamour," *Journal of Cultural Economy* 1, no. 1 (2008): 14.

[18] Ibid.

And yet, we can also see how the idea of glamour, as a soothing balm of utopian fantasy, equally appealed to a nation in the throes of the Great Depression.

The press nickname, Glamour Master, and its equally aggrandizing synonyms, functioned as publicity fodder for Hollywood's makeup men. It served to legitimize these individuals and their feminized industry craft, as well as their role in the burgeoning national cosmetics industry. Paradoxically, these makeup experts were best known for pushing "natural" makeup, on screen and off. As a beauty ideal, "natural" was curiously elusive; to achieve it, one would need to use specific products and techniques. Tellingly, "natural" also went by the name, "naturalism." The suffix, "ism," is tacked on to a word when it becomes enmeshed in philosophy, ideology, or an artistic movement. "Naturalism," as a beauty ideal in the 1930s, was implicated in all three. It was often deployed euphemistically, standing in for a pale complexion, or Anglo-American facial features. It had been systematized and codified in the film industry, and then repackaged as "beauty types" for the mass market. "Natural" was not synonymous with "truth" or "authenticity." It was, rather, an *image* or a *look* made to approximate these qualities.

The decade's most prolific beauty editors tended to favor "naturalism" over "glamour," however, these terms functioned primarily to categorize women, and to sanction certain behaviors over others. Both aesthetics required a flawless execution which concealed their construction with *ease* and *effortlessness*. Thrift argues that glamour is upheld by three "cultural pillars": the object effect, in which the object stands in for unrealized hopes and dreams; the alternate self, in which the "extra yous" are a source of pleasure and reflexive commentary; and finally, acts of seductive manipulation, which he describes as, "calculation that must go unnoticed." This calculation necessitates nonchalance, as one "edits out" incongruent details (in

the case of beauty, blemishes, wrinkles, or scarring) that might destroy the "spell."[19] It is the last of glamour's three pillars which also undergirds naturalism. Elizabeth Wissinger has coined the term, "glamour labor," to describe the work that is often effaced in the production of "the look." She writes: "The 'look' is elusive because the performance of glamour succeeds only when the work involved is deftly hidden from the audience."[20] Subtly, in the fashion world, is fluid and contextual: one "blends in" only when they are in style. Wissinger defines glamour not as an aesthetic, but as a yearning which "drives the calculated restraint demanded by editing a look to produce a saleable body and self in keeping with whatever is considered fashionable in the moment."[21] Wissinger's definition of glamour suggests a certain *ease* and *effortlessness* that is very much in accordance with what one beauty reporter explicitly called, the "effect of naturalism."[22]

This dissertation addresses developments in the art, science, and business of makeup from the 1910s through to the end of the 1930s; however, my main analytical focus rests between the years 1927 and 1937, when Hollywood and the American cosmetics industry each underwent critical growth, research, and systemization.[23] The glamour of the silent cinema, embodied by "The Vamp" Theda Bara and "It Girl" Clara Bow, was revised for an era of heightened censorship and increasingly consumer-driven offerings, which explicitly invited women audiences to replicate what was presented to them on screen. Max Factor and the

---

[19] Ibid, 15.

[20] Elizabeth Wissinger, *This Year's Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 10.

[21] Ibid, 10-11.

[22] Grace Grandville, "Beauty," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 1, 1935, 38.

[23] Though "cosmetics" and "makeup" have different connotations, in writing this dissertation, I use these terms interchangeably to reflect the dominant custom at the time.

Westmore men were some of the creative minds behind some of the screen's most admired women – screen stars who embodied the ease and effortlessness of Camera Beauty, and who thus served as templates for the proper expression of American womanhood (available for purchase through your local druggist). Throughout this dissertation, I emphasize their contributions and legacies; however, none of these individuals emerged singularly from the void. We might just as easily apply the moniker of Glamour Master to the American studio system at large, as well as to the public relations and advertising firms that "mastered" the art of image making during this decade.

Literature

This literature review has been divided into two sections: "Makeup as Industry Craft" and "Beauty: History and Feminist Debate." The first section provides an overview of historical studies on the art of screen makeup as it developed in the American motion picture industry, as well as scholarship which explores the relationship between stardom and body aesthetics – the primary function of screen makeup, after all, is to alter or enhance aspects of the performer's physicality. The second section selectively addresses key themes across histories of modern beauty cultures, in addition to feminist debates on the topic of makeup and cosmetics use. The latter texts invite us to consider whether the beauty industry forces women to internalize a patriarchal gaze in producing or "making" themselves, as well as how, via these processes, the body accrues symbolic value. While my own study does not preclude the potential for pleasure and resistance (indeed my attraction to this topic was born out of both pleasure and resistance), I lean towards a more critical examination of this history. Though I have separated these texts into

two categories, I propose that we consider these conversations together, since screen makeup evolved symbiotically alongside the growth of the mass cosmetics industry. Both sets of texts elucidate makeup's implication in modes of performance, visual presentation, and the conditioning of the face and body for optimal social, cultural, and economic returns.

Makeup as Industry Craft

One of my objectives, with this dissertation, is to foreground the significance of an understudied motion picture industry trade – its key players, as well as the institutions, technologies, and ideologies, which routed its development. This project has thus been informed by film and media historical studies, particularly that which sheds light on the studio system's below-the-line crafts and laborers. In *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (1985), David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson address Factor's participation in critical film industry experiments, including his contributions to Incandescent Illumination Research, also known as the Mazda Tests, which were sponsored by General Electric in 1928.[24] More recently, Luci Marzola has demonstrated the essential role that Hollywood's technicians and their trade organizations played in the formation of the studio system, despite their absence from the "dream factory" narrative generated by producers and

[24] David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

largely taken up by historians. The assembly-line analogy, she suggests, effaces the hundreds of workers involved in the more "unglamorous" aspects of filmmaking.[25]

The studio era makeup artist was both glamorous and unglamorous – well known within the industry but uncredited until the late-1930s and largely overlooked by film historians. An unofficial archive of their creative labor can be readily accessed in the form of motion picture fan magazine content and beauty advice columns, but other documentation is unfortunately limited. As Mary Desjardins has argued, fan magazine beauty content "strengthened the symbiotic relations among studios, female movie fans, and the consumer industries that relied on star testimony and a visualized glamour to sell their products."[26] These publications, she writes, "could intentionally or unintentionally trouble the efforts of studio publicity departments to create normative ideals and smooth over struggles and contradictions in these ideals and the labor processes of making pictures and stars."[27] Though fan magazines provide us with many insights, they offer a partial (and indeed glamorized) perspective on how the first makeup departments operated in Hollywood.

Studies which pertain to screen makeup are few, perhaps stymied by the same conditions which once necessitated an influx of publicity on the makeup man and his trade. First, the labor of makeup artistry is so often invisible. When not dealing in "special effects," the best screen makeup is that which works in tandem with filming conditions to produce the star as they are "naturally." These efforts are thus deemed most successful when they are subordinated in service

---

[25] Luci Marzola, *Engineering Hollywood: Technology, Technicians, and the Science of Building the Studio System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 2.

[26] Mary Desjardins, "Classical Hollywood, 1928-1946," in *Costume, Makeup, and Hair*, ed. Adrienne L. McLean (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 70.

[27] Ibid.

to cinematic realism. Second, despite that the first studio department heads were all men, the trade itself has historically been feminized and devalued. As Adrienne McLean writes:

> Conditions and wages for the costumers were among the worst in the motion picture industry. They were even worse for makeup "girls" and hairdressers.
>
> It did not help that the studios liked to promulgate the notion that many male stars did not wear makeup at all, or detested being made up when they had to be because of its association with femininity or with "swishy" men.[28]

The male screen actor's disavowal of screen makeup points to another historiographical challenge: it is difficult, and perhaps unproductive, to disentangle the study of makeup artistry in Hollywood from that of the American cosmetics industry. These two histories are intertwined in very concrete ways. As Drake Stutesman writes, by the 1920s, "both inside and outside the film industry, cosmetic empires were being built; the word makeup began to replace cosmetics in general usage when Factor promoted it (always as 'make-up' with a hyphen), linking the cachet of the world's film associations to the broader beauty market."[29]

As this project explores how film industry professionals determined the aesthetic value of star faces (for the box office, as well as for the consumer market), it is also very much informed by stardom and celebrity studies, particularly scholarship which explores the interrelation between bodies, self-representation, and forms of capital. Richard Dyer once argued that stars are "both labour and the thing that labour produces."[30] According to the studio era's popular beauty literature, stars were templates of self-representation; they modeled how one might manufacture or "make up" their image to improve their social standing, earning potential, or romantic

---

[28] Adrienne L. McLean, "Introduction," in *Costume, Makeup, and Hair*, ed. Adrienne L. McLean (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 9.

[29] Drake Stutesman, "The Silent Screen, 1895-1927," in *Costume, Makeup, and Hair*, ed. Adrienne L. McLean (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 22.

[30] Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2004), 5.

viability. Alison Hearn and Stephanie Schoenoff argue that capitalism conditions our modes of self-representation, as we seek to locate and accumulate new forms of value. They state: "The celebrity embodies exemplary forms of selfhood, models how these forms of selfhood might be achieved and lived, and functions as a catalyst in and through which desire and power are seen to coalesce."[31] Though "selfhood" implies more than appearances, we must note that movie stars come into their fame and fortune via a highly visual medium. Additionally, an actor's "type," which determines the roles for which they are cast, is often correlated with their physicality. In 1950, Hortense Powdermaker published her "anthropological study" of the Hollywood dream factory. In it, she described the significance of "star types" to the industry business model: "The star has tangible features which can be marketed and advertised – a face, a body, a pair of legs, a voice, a certain kind of personality, real or synthetic."[32] Physical traits, she observed, are part of the formula: they come to signify specific types of characters, such as the "honest hero," or the "sweet young girl," which can then be marketed and sold for more predictable returns.

Though the "dream factory" might have perfected the production of star types, the relationship between celebrity and somatic traits predates the studio system. As P. David Marshall observes, before information about the private lives and identities of motion picture players was readily available, moviegoers often identified performers not by their names (which were largely unknown to audiences), but rather, by their physical characteristics.[33] Although the

[31] Alison Hearn and Stephanie Schoenhoff, "From Celebrity to Influencer: Tracing the Diffusion of Celebrity Value across the Data Stream," in *A Companion to Celebrity*, ed. P. David Marshall and Sean Redmond (Hoboken, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2016), 195.

[32] Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), 228.

[33] P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 95.

industry did not invent American beauty standards, there is an economic imperative to reproduce certain aesthetic norms: "The industry attempts to read the public, based on a variety of polling techniques as well as less scientifically and more culturally defined conceptions of beauty and attraction."[34] As I explore throughout this study, makeup artistry in Hollywood evolved in pursuit of a culturally defined conception of beauty, often parading as a scientific absolute. An actress, attractive by the day's beauty standards (often – but not always – white, young, with Anglo-American features) was, in theory, a secure investment. In *White*, Dyer observes that the shape of the nose, lips, and eyes indicate racial color, even in the absence of color: "In the realm of glamour, a mouth or nose may be perceived as insufficiently attractive in terms that obviously, though not explicitly, declare it is not white enough."[35] When preparing an actress for a black and white film, the makeup artist needed to pay just as much attention to white beauty norms as they would for a film in color. Dyer notes that actresses with broad "ethnic" noses would be subjected to a slimming technique that involved a highlight along the bridge – an old facial contouring practice which was codified by studio era artists, Perc Westmore and Max Factor. This technique was often tested and implemented upon hire. The screentest, often accompanied by a full-body makeover, was one way that the studios determined an actress's commodity potential.

The increasingly unforgiving lens of the camera generated more expectations for the screen body and thus the implementation of more disciplinary measures for the screen star – diet, exercise, and eventually, cosmetic enhancements. Heather Addison speculates that, during the silent era, performers adopted "rigorous physical regimens," due to the widespread assumption

[34] Ibid.

[35] Richard Dyer, *White*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (London: Routledge, 2017), 42.

that the camera would exaggerate physical imperfections. She writes: "Bodies recorded by the camera are in a sense no longer *human bodies* but *camera bodies*, saddled with all the distortions, real or imagined, of the film medium."[36] The success of the camera body, Addison notes, could often be attributed to the bearer's "photogeneity" – an undefined and elusive arbiter of screen success which frustrated filmmakers and aspiring actors alike. In the form of various industry practices, including screen makeup artistry, the studios attempted to harness and predict that photogenic quality – one aspect of what I have referred to, in this introduction, as Camera Beauty.

As previously noted, Camera Beauty was not just for movie stars. When one "makes up" as part of their everyday routine, they prepare for the "role" they play in life. As James Naremore writes, "the wearing of visible rouge or paint is the most theatrical thing we can do in an offstage encounter."[37] Makeup – whether for screen or street – entails a ritual performance. In the case of the latter category, this performance is so normalized in daily practice that we rarely stop to examine it as such. The following selection of texts do just that. Though they vary in discipline and methodology, the scholarship covered in this section addresses how everyday makeup practices are implicated in modes of performance, self-representation, and the reproduction of normative facial aesthetics to maximize the value of one's image.

[36] Heather Addison, *Hollywood and the Rise of Physical Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 56.

[37] James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 93.

Beauty: History and Feminist Debate

Two of the most definitive written histories of modern cosmetics are Lois Banner's *American Beauty* (1983) and Kathy Peiss's *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (1998). Peiss, whom I cite frequently throughout this dissertation, argues that beauty culture "should be understood not only as a type of commerce but as system of meaning that helped women navigate the changing conditions of modern social experience."[38] She claims that "the act of beautifying often became a lightning rod for larger social conflicts over female autonomy and social roles."[39] Peiss and Banner both observe that cosmetics-use has historically served one of two imperatives: to confirm or reinstate one's "natural" beauty, or to performatively "put on a face."[40] These categories, however distinct in theory, are not mutually exclusive; "naturalism," as a normative beauty standard, assumes different attributes depending on the given period's prevailing conflicts, concerns, and aspirations. Peiss demonstrates how makeup's connotations began to shift at the end of the nineteenth century, from an act of deception (the "mask" of the painted woman) to an act of self-making. This phenomenon, she argues, occurs alongside the advent of photography and early celebrity culture. Women, inspired by theatrical makeup techniques, used makeup "paradoxically, to enact the part of one's true natural self."[41]

[38] Peiss, 6.

[39] Ibid, 7.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid, 49.

While we can neither credit nor blame the motion picture industry for our beauty standards, the camera has historically functioned to regulate the care and attention we put into our bodies. Peiss describes how many nineteenth century women would wear makeup exclusively for portraits. The extra effort was warranted because the photographic image was a permanent capture, which, in ways both credible and incredible, was thought to enhance human vision:

> What vexed the public was that the photograph revealed the face and body with a degree of detail and precision never before seen. Its realism raised questions about the body and identity: Did photography capture only surface appearances, or did it represent the inner self? As the photograph became a popular commodity, it made beauty a more problematic category. What had once been a matter more for the imagination and the mirror was now eternally fixed on the photographic plate.[42]

Indeed, the photograph recorded facial blemishes and fine lines that would have otherwise faded into memory or been flatteringly omitted in a painted portrait; however, the same technology was also erroneously believed to expose one's "inner self," thus reinforcing the notion that the facial image might register one's innate personality, moral character, or social identity. As I address most prominently in Chapter Three, the realism afforded by motion picture technology would accelerate the development of screen and street makeup alike, furthering the case for naturalistic formulas. These products were explicitly purported to solve the first problem posed by realism (the visible "defects" or "flaws"); however, in marketing, advertising, and industry conversation, naturalistic makeup is often implicated in normative beauty standards and their attendant racial, ethnic, and class confirming associations.

The relationship between the cinema and women's beauty practices has, for decades, been a topic of interest for feminist media scholars. In 1994, Jackie Stacey showed how British

[42] Ibid, 46.

women in the 1940s used fashion and makeup to forge an idealized feminine identity modeled by Hollywood screen stars. She called this process of copying and consumption, "extra-cinematic identification," through which the female spectator engaged "in some kind of practice of transformation of the self to become more like the star they admire."[43] Stacey's ethnographic study sought to reconcile two traditions in feminist cinema scholarship: feminist film theory, particularly that which followed Laura Mulvey's famous 1975 essay, "Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema," and cultural studies audience research. While the former subscribed to the notion that the woman's body is a construction of patriarchal cinema, or the "male gaze," the latter offered more flexibility to account for the female spectator's expressions of pleasure and resistance.

A similar dichotomy has shaped the scholarship on contemporary beauty cultures and practices. In the introduction to *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*, Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff outline the trajectory of beauty politics in feminist debate. They argue that the topic is "stuck in an impasse between polarized positions, stressing – for example – oppression by beauty norms versus pleasure and playfulness, female agency versus cultural domination, entrenched suspicion of the beauty-industrial complex versus hopefulness about women's capacity to resist."[44] In the early 1990s, the topic of beauty figured prominently in mainstream and academic discourse. In her bestselling book, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (1991), Naomi Wolf argued that the day's

[43] Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 159.

[44] Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff, "Introduction: Aesthetic Labour: Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism," in *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*, ed. Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 5.

normative beauty standards marked a regression for the feminist movement.[45] For Wolf, it was the beauty industry that was the culprit, weaponized against women's progress with seductive imagery and cruelly unrealistic standards.[46] In academic circles, feminist scholars argued that these standards were emblematic of Foucault's theory of disciplinary power. In Bordo's words:

> Where power works "from below," prevailing forms of selfhood and subjectivity (gender among them) are maintained, not chiefly through physical restraint and coercion (although social relations may certainly contain such elements), but through individual self-surveillance and self-correction to norms.[47]

Likewise, Sandra Lee Bartky argued that in the application of makeup and clothing, "art and discipline converge," though the latter, in her view, typically supersedes the former.[48] She wrote: "making up the face is, in fact, a highly stylized activity that gives little reign to self-expression. Painting the face is not like painting a picture; at best, it might be described as painting the same picture over and over again."[49] In opposition to the argument that the beauty industry is an inherently oppressive force, more recent scholarship suggests that makeup is a source of pleasure, playfulness, and self-expression. Due to the nature of this project and the limitations of available materials, I have been more inclined towards the former perspective. I cannot speculate as to how, for instance, a woman living in 1930 received and responded to the expertise of Hollywood's beauty reporters – no more than I can say definitively that the *Photoplay* testimonial that opened this introduction was penned by a person named Jean and not someone

---

[45] Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (New York: W. Marrow, 1991), 10.

[46] Ibid, 1.

[47] Bordo, 27.

[48] Sandra Lee Bartky, *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 31.

[49] Ibid, 33.

working for a cosmetics advertising firm. I can, however, observe how the beauty industry appealed to their target consumer, how it discursively produced a hierarchy of facial aesthetics, and how it consciously visualized the surveillant gaze in words and imagery. I can also note how cosmetics manufacturers promised a solution a woman's sense of dissatisfaction with her physical appearance – a temporary reprieve which often translates into something approximating pleasure. Elias, Gill, and Scharff argue that, by taking a historical view on makeup, we can observe patterns that cannot be attributed to idiosyncrasy or personal self-style. "Few people," they state, "live outside the fashion-beauty complex entirely."[50] Beauty, they contend, should be analyzed within the context of neoliberalism, under which makeup practices are a form of "aesthetic entrepreneurship," which involves not only the transformation of surface appearances, but that of the whole self.[51]

We might observe that many American neoliberalist ideals were planted in the 1930s, during a perfect storm of economic catastrophe and the growing omnipresence of the mass media and Hollywood star system. As Karen Sternheimer demonstrates, celebrity culture during the Great Depression helped to sustain the public's faith in the American Dream. Beauty products, she suggests, were sold to women as a form of insurance. They promised to prevent external judgment and the loss of opportunities, such as employment and marriage, which would ultimately make her more valuable in the eyes of society.[52] Similarly, Sarah Berry argues that, during the 1930s, marketing discourses emphasized "techniques of the self." By investing in

[50] Elias, Gill, and Scharff, 19.

[51] Ibid, 5.

[52] Karen Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream: Stardom and Social Mobility* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 88.

clothing and makeup, women were better poised to succeed socially and in the workplace.[53] Movie stars had ascended the socioeconomic ranks into extreme wealth and celebrity status; their success seemed to prove that upward mobility could be achieved through appearances, dress, and etiquette.

We often think of beauty regimens as part of our overall health and hygiene routines. Makeup is a "self-care" ritual which necessitates that we constantly purchase newer and better products (especially when the old ones fail to deliver, as they so often do). Unlike facial creams or shampoos, however, makeup does not even claim to clean or purify the body. The "self-care" of makeup is applied to the surface level only. Thus, we are reminded of the value of the image. Women are impelled to purchase beauty products and work on their bodies because they are taught that their value to society is based on "how they look." Recent beauty and fashion scholars have applied Pierre Bourdieu's theory of embodied cultural capital to beauty practices; however, questions of ownership, agency, and power remain. Sociologist Ashley Mears suggests that in male dominated social spaces, a woman is not the sole beneficiary of her bodily capital, which disproportionately provides economic gains to those in charge.[54] Likewise, we might argue that Hollywood actresses during the studio era, though often higher paid than their male counterparts, ultimately profited a patriarchal system for which their value and viability was unpredictable and short-lived.

[53] Sarah Berry, *Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), xix.

[54] Ashley Mears, "Girls as Elite Distinction: The Appropriation of Bodily Capital," *Poetics* 53 (December 2015): 22-37.

This dissertation aims to strengthen the ties between these two areas of study with a historically grounded analysis of the relationship between Hollywood and American beauty cultures, which, as I have proposed, was established during the studio era. So many of today's makeup formulas, tools, and application methods originated backstage in film and theater production, and this project considers how they were created, contested, and propagated within the motion picture industry and the American public at large. Makeup was the thing that promised to narrow the divide between screen and street; Hollywood and small-town USA; movie star and movie fan. It follows naturally that a history and analysis of makeup – its practices, institutions, and ideological underpinnings – receive serious consideration within film and media studies.

Methodology and Sources

Popular beauty texts are everywhere. There is an abundance of historical makeup guides, vintage print advertisements, and newsreels posted online. These materials are curated by collectors, makeup artists, and beauty hobbyists. Much of this information is therefore unreferenced and free-floating; it comprises an unofficial archive that is so widely and indiscriminately shared that its contents are essentially common knowledge. For instance, many believe that fashions in makeup, much like fashions in clothing, emerge in response to the cultural zeitgeist. Elizabeth Wilson has argued, however, that often "the relationship that exists between social change and styles of dress is drawn out in a superficial and cliché-ridden way."[55]

[55] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, revised edition (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 47.

Though some of these pervasive assumptions hold water, rarely do they adequately represent the complex historical processes at work. The original contexts and meanings of these popular texts are transformed via these practices, inflected by nostalgia and present-day motivations. I was first introduced to many of my archival materials in this manner: a casual internet search, guided by curiosity and an anxious pastime that involves investigating low stakes cosmetic enhancements in pursuit of my own self-betterment. One who studies these texts, as ubiquitous as they are, is necessarily conditioned by their residual presence in popular culture. Though there is no autoethnographic component to this study, as a researcher, I acknowledge my complicated relationship with this history and how it lives on in my own daily practices.

Academic research on the topic of makeup is scarce, considering how embedded its associated rituals are in everyday life. Historians often locate themselves peripherally alongside the more established (albeit very interdisciplinary) field of fashion studies. The study of costume and dress, however, has been shaped by methodological approaches that are in many ways intangible to the makeup historian. A garment still holds its shape; we can, to some extent, visualize the body that once inhabited it, and we can speculate as to its functionality and expressiveness. Though powder puffs, packaging, and lipstick tubes (some with unused product left behind) exist in museums and private collections, these consumable objects tell us little about how makeup ultimately adorned, enhanced, or transformed the face. We are thus likely to turn to images – photographs and film recordings which reveal how makeup was used (or was intended to be used), as well as supplementary texts, such as beauty editorials or trade journals, which offer insight into how fashions in makeup responded (or did not respond) to social, political, and industrial change. Michele White argues that "beauty culture studies is a form of feminist media studies. It is also somewhat unnamed and without a specific disciplinary

affiliation."[56] We might study the made-up face – its formal composition, as well as its social, political, and industrial practices – much like how we study other products of visual culture. In this dissertation, I offer a historically grounded exploration of how screen makeup developed in Hollywood, drawing from an array of archival materials and integrating discourse analysis insofar as it elucidates the texts' ideological operations and how makeup practices are co-constitutive of normative gendered aesthetics.

My analyses have been informed by archival research, conducted in-person at the Margaret Herrick library, as well as remotely via various online archives, including the Lantern Media History digital archive, and the Library of Congress. My primary sources include motion picture fan magazines, trade journals, films, newspaper articles, textbooks, and congressional documents. I have also drawn from an assortment of biographies and memoirs, some of them written by family members or those otherwise invested in the reputation and legacy of these individuals. There is a common theme that stretches across many of these materials, which limits the study at the same time that it offers an additional interpretive layer: Much of these texts were produced to promote or to hype a person or a thing – to make them appear more lucrative and valuable to various parties, including the motion picture industry and its audiences of consumers. Even the fan magazines depicted a fantasy America largely unfettered by the woes of the Great Depression. I reiterate that this project is very much about "image making." I seek to engage with these texts critically and reflexively – to examine the stories we tell about ourselves, and the identities we visualize, "make up," and present to the world.

[56] Michele White, "Beauty Culture Studies," *Feminist Media Histories* vol. 4, no, 2 (Spring 2018): 32.

Chapter Organization

This dissertation is divided into four body chapters, in addition to an epilogue which explores the contemporary reverberations of these historical phenomena. My research has been organized thematically, though Chapter One addresses a period which is chronologically first in the context of this study.

Chapter One, "Wizards, Magicians, and the Man of a Thousand Faces: The Art of Makeup and the Screen Actor (Before Beauty)," is a prehistory to the "beauty" age of screen makeup. By "beauty," I refer to a shift in the discourse which occurs at the end of the 1920s, with the Hollywood studio system's technological and industrial coming-of-age, the growing omnipresence of its star culture, and the rise of the mass cosmetics industry. During the silent era, screen makeup was not first and foremost a beautifying aid, nor was it associated solely with female stars. It was, rather, a critical performance object and technical requirement, which brought both challenges and opportunities for representing the human form. The silent era was a period of experimentation for screen makeup, as cinematic technologies had yet to be standardized. The trade, hobby, and fan magazines lauded the made-up movie face for its heightened expressivity and mutability, particularly for the seasoned male actor who had come to embrace the vigorous demands of his trade. This chapter explores the racial and gender politics of transformative makeup, often referred to as "trick makeup," which produced grotesque, horrifying, and "freakish" special effects, often representing those already relegated to society's margins. At the same time, "trick makeup" disrupted the cinema's increasingly realist representational standards, which so often idealized "perfect" bodies and – perhaps even more

than the silent screen's hyperbolized makeup creations – normalized physiognomic discourse with its relative subtlety.

Chapter Two, "Glamour Masters: Making Over the Makeup Man in 1930s Hollywood," analyzes the trade and popular discourse on the studio system's most high-ranking makeup men, particularly Factor and the members of the Westmore family. These men were the studio department heads and suppliers who, by the mid-1930s, were also two of the nation's leading cosmetics manufacturers. According to the publicity that surrounded these individuals and the art of screen makeup, these were men who embodied white, heterosexual values, and whose trade was emblematic of modern innovation, science, and technology. Factor and the Westmores where thus distanced from the creative laborers, or "operatives," who worked below them in Hollywood, as well as the vanity practices of women who purchased their products and followed their beauty advice at home. I demonstrate how this masculinizing discourse not only elevated the below-the-line craft during a period in which makeup artistry was largely underpaid and uncredited, but also assuaged public anxiety over Hollywood's made-up woman or "glamorous type." Additionally, as masculine archetypes, these men helped to legitimize the then-burgeoning cosmetics industry as it faced national scrutiny and criticism from consumer activist groups. Though we might argue that this narrative pushed the misogynistic notion that women were, in a word, "man-made," it nonetheless facilitated makeup's transition from wayward morals and bad taste, and into the mainstream.

Chapter Three, "From Screen to Street: Producing Natural Beauty," charts the evolution of screen makeup, from the thick, opaque greasepaints inherited from the stage to Factor's translucent, water-activated formula, Pan-Cake, which is widely regarded as the first foundation of the modern era. This revolutionary product was invented for Technicolor in the mid-1930s

and was introduced into the consumer market the year of Factor's death in 1938.[57] Factor's final achievement was the result of years of experimentation in Hollywood, in conversation with other film industry professionals, to ensure that screen makeup would be compatible with lighting and film stock. On Factor's part, the necessitation for this research was as follows: As film technologies progressed, old formulas were rendered obsolete; however, the Hollywood beauty expert was also said to be driven by the goal of "greater facial realism" – to produce a natural-appearing screen makeup which did not overtly declare itself as a construction. Facial realism was not as simple as recording the face as it appeared in life. In fact, the cinema's increasing capacity for realism had made starkly visible facial "flaws" and deviations from that which was determined to be the ideal feminine face – a normative standard that was constructed with makeup, lighting, and cinematography, and often implicated in the ideological valorization of white American beauty. This chapter demonstrates how "the effect of naturalism," which was so desired by the film industry and women alike, was not truly natural, unmediated, and makeup-free, but rather, an illusion upon which the era's dominant ideas about American womanhood could glom.

Chapter Four, "Hollywood Beauty Shop: 1930s Makeover Culture," explores the rise of the then-unnamed "makeover," which was heavily promoted by the decade's popular beauty literature. I argue that with the growing omnipresence of American star culture, which showcased the physical perfection embodied by the rich and famous, the makeover was sold to women with the promise of self-actualization, social mobility, and financial reward. Fan magazines pushed the notion that Hollywood, the renowned beauty capital of America, was a place where beautiful women could find fame, romance, success, and independence. Cosmetics

[57] Foundation is a flesh toned base makeup that replicates the appearance of skin.

purchases, by extension, were not luxuries, but rather, necessities; they allowed a woman to increase her "market value." This analysis considers the popular representation of movie star transformations, the emergence of the Hollywood beauty reporter and advice columnist, and the identity-conscious consumerism encouraged by the marketing and advertising of "beauty types."

Finally, in the epilogue that follows these four historical chapters, I address how this project's core themes continue to play out in contemporary beauty cultures and practices. How have new media technologies created new standards of beauty, and new modes and methods of self-representation? Is "naturalism" still made, not born? How has the relationship between beauty, celebrity, and capital adapted to the age of social media, internet fame, and the influencer? The goal with this closing discussion is not to exhaustively examine the issues pertinent to our increasingly image-saturated and beauty-obsessed culture, but rather, to foreground the legacy and living presence of this history, as well as to generate critical questions and topics of interest for further study.

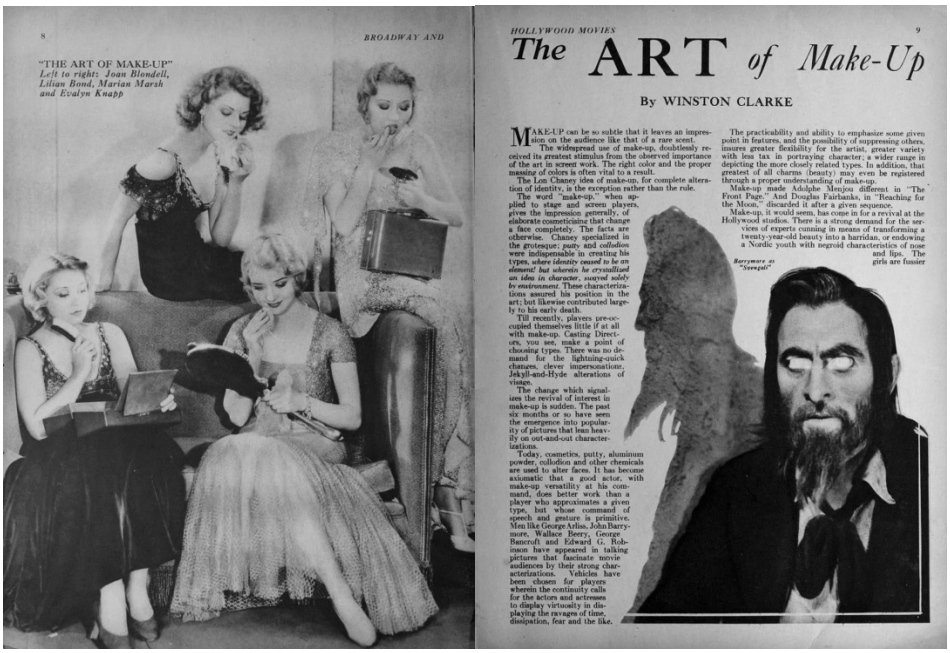
CHAPTER ONE

Wizards, Magicians, and the Man of a Thousand Faces:

The Art of Makeup and the Screen Actor (Before Beauty)

In 1931, *Broadway and Hollywood Movies* ran an article entitled, "The Art of Make-Up," which featured two starkly juxtaposed images: On the right of the spread is a promotional still of John Barrymore in the role of Svengali, the Jewish hypnotist of the 1931 film of the same name. The image showcases the actor's character transformation, complete with aging shadows and a ragged beard. The technique used on Barrymore in this role emphasizes his already angular features, resulting in an ethnic caricature, which, in the physiognomic language of the "Art of Make-Up," was said to convey sinister, malicious inclinations. Opposite Barrymore, however, on the left, is a wholly different image: Four young screen actresses, among them Joan Blondell and Barrymore's *Svengali* co-star, Marian Marsh, oblivious to the rest of the world, as they go about their beauty routines. Unlike Barrymore, the women do not don an obvious disguise, but rather, the latest in high-end fashions. The image of Barrymore, as Svengali, is cleverly situated so that his hypnotizing gaze is fixated upon the unsuspecting young women. With his special effects-enhanced eyes, he seems to leer across the spread; however, the power that Svengali held over Marsh's character, Trilby, is annihilated in the extra-filmic space of the fan magazine. These women do not cater to his desires, nor do they succumb to the deep, hypnotic slumber that had befallen so many others. Oblivious, they carry on with their lipsticks and powder puffs and pay him no mind. Upon closer inspection, however, we realize that the women are nonetheless

entranced, if not by an older man's spellbinding gaze, then by their own reflected images. As they peer into their hand mirrors, they are consumed.



8 BROADWAY AND

"THE ART OF MAKE-UP"
Left to right: Joan Blondell, Lilian Bond, Marian Marsh and Evalyn Knapp

HOLLYWOOD MOVIES 9

The ART of Make-Up

By WINSTON CLARKE

MAKE-UP can be so subtle that it leaves an impression on the audience like that of a rare scent.

The widespread use of make-up, doubtlessly received its greatest stimulus from the observed importance of the art in screen work. The right color and the proper massing of colors is often vital to a result.

The Lon Chaney idea of make-up, for complete alteration of identity, is the exception rather than the rule.

The word "make-up," when applied to stage and screen players, gives the impression generally, of elaborate cosmeticising that change a face completely. The facts are otherwise. Chaney specialized in the grotesque; putty and *collodion* were indispensable in creating his types, *where identity ceased to be an element but wherein he crystallized an idea in character, swayed solely by environment.* These characterizations assured his position in the art; but likewise contributed largely to his early death.

Till recently, players pre-occupied themselves little if at all with make-up. Casting Directors, you see, make a point of choosing types. There was no demand for the lightning-quick changes, clever impersonations, Jekyll-and-Hyde alterations of visage.

The change which signalizes the revival of interest in make-up is sudden. The past six months or so have seen the emergence into popularity of pictures that lean heavily on out-and-out characterizations.

Today, cosmetics, putty, aluminium powder, collodion and other chemicals are used to alter faces. It has become axiomatic that a good actor, with make-up versatility at his command, does better work than a player who approximates a given type, but whose command of speech and gesture is primitive. Men like George Arliss, John Barrymore, Wallace Beery, George Bancroft and Edward G. Robinson have appeared in talking pictures that fascinate movie audiences by their strong characterizations. Vehicles have been chosen for players wherein the continuity calls for the actors and actresses to display virtuosity in displaying the ravages of time, dissipation, fear and the like.

The practicability and ability to emphasize some given point in features, and the possibility of suppressing others, insures greater flexibility for the artist, greater variety with less tax in portraying character; a wider range in depicting the more closely related types. In addition, that greatest of all charms (beauty) may even be registered through a proper understanding of make-up.

Make-up made Adolphe Menjou different in "The Front Page." And Douglas Fairbanks, in "Reaching for the Moon," discarded it after a given sequence.

Make-up, it would seem, has come in for a revival at the Hollywood studios. There is a strong demand for the services of experts cunning in means of transforming a twenty-year-old beauty into a harridan, or endowing a Nordic youth with negroid characteristics of nose and lips. The girls are busier

Barrymore as "Svengali"

Figure 3. Two images. "The Art of Make-Up," *Broadway and Hollywood Movies*, November 1931, pp. 8-9.

The layout of this spread pictorializes the gendered norms which governed the film industry's relationship to screen makeup at this time. The author of the piece claims that the "revival of interest in make-up is sudden."[58] In fact, the industry's obsession with makeup – its tones, its transparency, and how it might alter or enhance the facial image – was not at all sudden; however, recent advancements in screen makeup technology had opened the door to faster, more intricate and involved transformations. The movie-going public's interest in makeup, on the other hand, was a much newer phenomenon. In a few short years, commercial cosmetics lines, such as Max Factor's Society Make-Up, had gone from a few covert and

[58] Winston Clarke, "The Art of Make-Up," *Broadway and Hollywood*, November 1931, 9.

scattered mentions to full-page and image-heavy advertisements in publications targeting female demographics. The connection between the American film industry and these new consumer products were their biggest selling point – even though, as the image of Svengali makes readily apparent, makeup did more than beautify.

By 1931, the industrial conversation on screen makeup had congealed into two apparently distinct categories: transformative effects for male actors and beauty effects (called "glamour" or "charm") for women. A retrospective piece on Barrymore revealed that the actor "did his utmost to find parts in which his handsome features could be distorted into fearsome ugliness."[59] For men, transformative makeup, often referred to as "trick makeup," when done well, was virtuosic: "It has become axiomatic that a good actor, with make-up versatility at his command, does better work than a player who approximates a given type, but whose command of speech and gesture is primitive."[60] Of these great artists, male performers dominated, since women, it was argued, already took long enough with their regular beauty preparations and were too "fussy" for the more complex applications.

Men, however, were said to transcend the superficial concerns associated with the art of makeup: the physical discomfort, the laborious applications, and the dramatic change to one's appearance that might negatively affect one's career. The "mad genius" stereotype, epitomized in he who was willing to endure pain and suffering for the art, frequented a latent discourse on screen makeup, alongside the period's widespread preoccupation with feminine "beauty makeup." In an interview, Marsh recounted that, during the filming of *Svengali*, Barrymore

[59] Joe Franklin, *Classics of the Silent Screen* (New York: Citadel Press, 1959), 126.

[60] Clarke, 9.

"*adored* his macabre makeup… playing with it as a child plays with a putty mask."[61] Gregory William Mank contends that Barrymore's grotesque performance was so convincing that despite its brilliance, audiences were put-off by the film, resulting in a box office failure.[62] Marsh's comments suggest an indulgent and child-like fascination with makeup. The American film industry was in the midst of major industrial and technological changes, which would ultimately shape its methods of storytelling and representation. Marsh invokes an image of the actor in a regressive state of play, as though the male lead might himself be recontoured as easily as a putty mask.

Much of this project revolves around the work of the American film industry's highly publicized makeup men, primarily Max Factor, the largest industry supplier of screen makeup, and the members of the Westmore family, who each ran their own department at a Hollywood studio in the 1930s. I explore how the discourse on screen makeup – in connection with these artists, the studio system, and the modern cosmetics industry – contributed to the *making* of men and women. In this chapter, however, I analyze the discourse that characterized an experimental phase of screen makeup that did not end in the 1930s, per se, but that which receded into the background as the studio system rose to prominence and beauty aids emerged as viable and lucrative commodities. My analysis begins with the performers who made up their *own* faces and bodies during the silent era, before makeup became a vocation separate from screen acting, and before its methods were standardized. For white male actors, screen makeup afforded grotesque, elaborate, and "horrifying" corporeal effects – or "trick makeup."

---

[61] Marian Marsh in Gregory William Mank, *The Very Witching Time of Night: Dark Alleys of Classic Horror Cinema* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company Inc., 2014), 41.

[62] Ibid, 59.

This discussion begins with a short history of screen makeup, "before beauty." By "beauty," I refer to the emergence of America's mass cosmetics industry in the late 1920s, as well as the rise of the Hollywood studio system and its star culture, which were intrinsic to the fledgling industry's success. Before beauty, the greatest screen makeup achievement was "trick makeup," which, as I demonstrate, was largely the calling of male character actors, who used the medium as a means of freeing-up artistic potential and fully immersing themselves in the character's physicality. Building on theories of embodiment and the silent screen, I define "trick makeup" as a subcategory of screen makeup artistry and demonstrate how its transformative potential was mainly afforded to those with normative white male bodies, which served to further subjugate marginalized identities.

There is a flip side to this narrative: namely, that these artificial and often hyperbolized makeup creations, at times, disrupted the cinema's increasingly realist representational standards, which are implicated in – among other ideological formations – the idealization of "perfect" bodies and the codification of racial and ethnic stereotypes. By the 1930s, screen makeup's greatest contribution to the cinema was not the spectacle of transformative makeup, but rather, the less overtly ideological effect of what industry professionals called, "naturalism." This chapter ends with a brief discussion on the residual presence of character makeup in 1930s horror films and biblical epics, which, as suggested by one reporter, was already a relic of a bygone era of screen makeup history.

Makeup and Mutability in the Silent Period (1916-1928)

During the silent era, actors were typically responsible for their own makeup preparations: procuring the materials, bringing them to set, and applying them to their faces and bodies. Producing one's own image in this manner was considered not tangential to screen acting, but rather, a core element of the art. Actor and makeup artist Cecil Holland once wrote: "A person should study the art of make-up just as religiously as they do the dramatic technique, for, first of all, you must look like the character which you are to represent."[63] These years are filled with men whose makeup skills earned them the title of "wizard" or "magician," or in the case of actor Lon Chaney, "the Man of a Thousand Faces." Many of these men would eventually leave acting for the makeup trade, but few of them would find themselves, like Holland – who went on to lead the first makeup department at MGM – perched above the rest on the studio system's creative ladder.

Up until the end of the 1920s, motion picture magazines rarely stressed any connection between screen makeup and everyday beauty aids. In part, this was because screen makeup, in its embryonic form, did not beautify. By this, I mean not to suggest that there was never a lovely face projected on screen that was not indebted to a skillful application of makeup. However, and as I discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, screen makeup did not initially translate to a world unmediated by film technology. In the flesh, and without the veils of bright lights, filters, and film stock, the made-up faces of actors would have appeared ever so slightly "off." The individual standing before you would have borne an uncanny resemblance to the one with whom

[63] Cecil Holland, "The Art of Screen Make-Up," in *The Truth About the Movies, by the stars*, ed. Laurence A, Hughes (Los Angeles: Hollywood Publishers, Inc., 1924), 296.

you were most familiar, their face obscured by layers of greasepaint that largely served the screen and the screen only. On film, the "mismatched twin" materialized as result of lighting and film sensitivity, which necessitated compensations and enhancements: to differentiate eyes from skin, and skin from teeth, which would have otherwise blurred together on the emulsion; or, to compensate for interior lighting that washed-out actors' faces. Like a blueprint that gave away its construction, greasepaints and powders were applied darker or lighter to emphasize (or deemphasize) different regions of the face and thereby alter the visual perception of its physical dimensions.[64]

The Magic of the Makeup Box

Despite these numerous technical specifications, the role of the makeup artist on film sets had yet to be codified, and therefore, actors were largely responsible for their own makeup preparations.[65] Pictured in trade journals and motion picture fan magazines, the image of the standard makeup box – typically a clunky, black train case with multiple compartments – was, for amateurs and aspiring actors, a symbol of fascination and promise. Even in the late 1920s, as studio makeup departments were beginning to consolidate, trade and hobby magazines claimed that makeup skills were as important as acting talent if one wanted to work in pictures. "Many heartaches, many shattered hopes and lost chances are due to lack of knowledge of this art,"

[64] Merry Elkins, "The Westmores: Sculpting the Faces of the World," *American Cinematographer*, July 1984.

[65] David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 253.

cautioned one advertisement for a screen makeup manual."[66] "Everything depends on it," claimed another.[67] The makeup box's contents needed to be just right – the perfect combination of paints and powders was the sign of an experienced actor who had done enough work in the business to anticipate how their face would ultimately translate to the screen. The makeup box itself was as unique and individualized as the performer: Romanticizing the mystic possibilities of the ancient East, actress Anna May Wong was said to have brought her antique lacquered box direct from China; whereas Elinor Fair's box (fig. 5) was of the "regulation, up-to-date, made-in-the-U.S.A variety."[68] As a physical object, the makeup box was easily commodified: it was something tangible, something that one could hold in their hand. It represented one's identity, as well as their hopes and dreams. The most superstitious players believed that the makeup box was somewhat of a talisman and tampering with it would only bring bad luck.[69]

[66] "Advertisement: Movie Make-Up Manual," *Photoplay*, June 1927, 116.

[67] "Everything Depends On It," *Picture Play Magazine*, August 1928, 99.

[68] A.L. Wooldridge, "Paints and Powder Puffs," *Picture Play Magazine*, August 1926, 89.

[69] Ibid, 88.

Figure 4. Actor Matt Moore applies his makeup on set. "Paint Pots and Powder Puffs," *Picture Play Magazine*, August 1926, p. 89.

Figure 5. Actress Elinor Fair with a "regulation, up-to-date, made-in-the-USA" makeup box. "Paint Pots and Powder Puffs," *Picture Play Magazine*, August 1926, p. 89.

Male and female players were equally expected to own a makeup box containing the on-set essentials; however, gender largely determined the manner with which these practices were discussed in the press. When covering the topic of screen makeup, the fan magazine press guided public interest to the cinema's masters of disguise. In the teens and early twenties, many of these men were experienced performers, who, having migrated from the stage, had since discovered that theatrical makeup, when paired with film technology, offered a new corporeal freedom. For Swedish-American actor Arthur Donaldson, whom the press referred to as a "Wizard of Make-Up," the goal was never to achieve beauty (nor manly good looks), but to increase the actor's versatility and range. For men like Donaldson, makeup was a medium of transformation – one that was made more potent before the camera, which came with its own power to manipulate images. In many ways, filmmaking allowed for a level of experimentation with makeup that would not have been afforded by the theater. "Hours of time can be spent over a screen make-up because it is used for only a few days. Such an elaborate make-up would become more than

irksome to any actor if he had to spend two or three hours in making up every day for a whole season."[70] With film editing, camera angles, and less time constraints, more elaborate creations were possible. The sum of these eccentric, hyperbolized, and grotesque effects was called "trick makeup."

Trick Makeup and the Politics of Transformation

Trick makeup was not an official term or classification, but it appeared with enough regularity in motion picture trade, hobby, and fan magazines to warrant that we assign to it a definition. Today, we might refer to trick makeup as "special effects," since it often challenged the limits of realism. The name itself invokes the cinema's earliest iterations of "movie magic," the trick film.

It might be said that theatrical makeup, as a medium that could, in effect, transform the face and body, had met its match in the movies. Although it came with a whole host of technical problems for the makeup artist-player, the cinema, in some ways, carried more potential than the so-called "legitimate stage." Before the camera, one could create complex characters, which did not require nightly reproduction. Screen makeup was enhanced by other optical illusions, which were uniquely afforded by film technology. The relationship between the moving image and the human body goes back to the earliest days of filmmaking. As others have argued, the cinema was invented to document and study bodily mechanics. By the same technology, however, the human form was pushed beyond its material limitations. Tom Gunning describes how the early cinema's

[70] Hugh Hoffman, "Arthur Donaldson, Wizard of Make-Up," *Motion Picture Magazine*, May 1916, 44-47.

preoccupation with corporeality took two different approaches: The first was that of late nineteenth century scientists, such as Eadweard Muybridge, whose infamous chronophotographic sequences allowed us to study the body in motion, and Étienne-Jules Marey, who used the photographic image to see beyond what was visible to the naked eye, and to subsequently distill the body into data.

The second approach is best exemplified by the work of early filmmaker Georges Méliès, known for his "trick films," which, in the tradition of the turn-of-century theater of illusions, "treated the body in a radically defamiliarized manner that drew on fantasy and traditions of the grotesque rather than scientific investigation."[71] Gunning contends that the latter genre "fundamentally reimagines the human body" and like the contemporary special effects film, draws on "fantasies of impossible bodies that could only be experienced through technology."[72] Matthew Solomon argues that by the 1910s, narrative editing techniques had rendered the trick film obsolete: "the magical visual possibilities conjured up by the cinema were more or less completely channeled into the 'magic' of storytelling."[73] Trick makeup remained a novelty throughout the silent period. We might attribute its longevity to the fact that, in many ways, screen makeup evolved slower than other cinematic technologies. It was not until the 1930s, after intense research and testing, that screen makeup achieved what industry professionals referred to as "naturalism." In many instances, the "magic" of trick makeup was assimilated into this emergent facial realism, or what we might call the "magic" of the classical Hollywood cinema.

---

[71] Tom Gunning, "The Impossible Body of Early Film," in *Corporeality in Early Cinema*, ed. Marina Dahlquist, Doron Galili, Jan Olsson and Valentine Robert (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 13.

[72] Ibid, 19.

[73] Matthew Solomon, *Disappearing Tricks: Silent Film, Houdini, and the New Magic of the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 5.

Echoing that which characterized the cinema's formative development, the discourse on screen makeup simultaneously invoked the transformative potential of the cinema's modern magic, as well as the scientific – or more aptly, *pseudoscientific* – method. Screen makeup practitioners regularly appropriated anthropological, medical, and psychological research to classify, study, and visually reproduce different types of characters. Whether scientist or magician, however, the makeup artist-player of the silent screen was almost always a man. In an industry that was still learning how to successfully use theatrical makeup to its advantage, his skills separated him from the rest.

Makeup and the Pseudoscientific Method

The makeup expert of the silent cinema was defined by his ability to visibly transform himself beyond recognition – a feat regularly exploited by fan magazines to hook their readers. "Have you ever seen a man change his face?" opened one feature on Donaldson. "I don't mean just his eyes look larger and his mouth a different shape; I mean actually change his face – build out his cheek bones and chin, make his nose broader, draw lines that will make his eyes cynical or kindly."[74] Fan magazines would regularly feature the cinema's makeup experts, as a series of screen stills and promotional photographs. A diverse cast of characters, it might appear; however, upon closer inspection, each one is revealed to be the same man.

Much like the method actor prepares for role, Donaldson was said to fully immerse himself in character study. "When he is cast for a part in a picture or a play he disappears for a

[74] Warren Reed, "The Master of Make-Up," *Picture Play Magazine*, June 1919, 299.

few days and leaves no clue," claimed one reporter. "If he were to be seriously traced, however, he would be found around the wharves, or railroad yards, or in some lodging house or park, studying or searching for a certain type."[75] Donaldson's method points to an apparent contradiction to the art of makeup: The made-up characters may appear "stagey," hyperbolized, and, unrealistic, even by the silent cinema's rudimentary representational standards (fig. 6); however, the process, in this case, is anthropological. It involves research and observation on the part of the actor, who becomes a voyeur in the process, guided by the pursuit of a more truthful, authentic portrayal. By this logic, the made-up characters are validated by quasi-empirical methods.

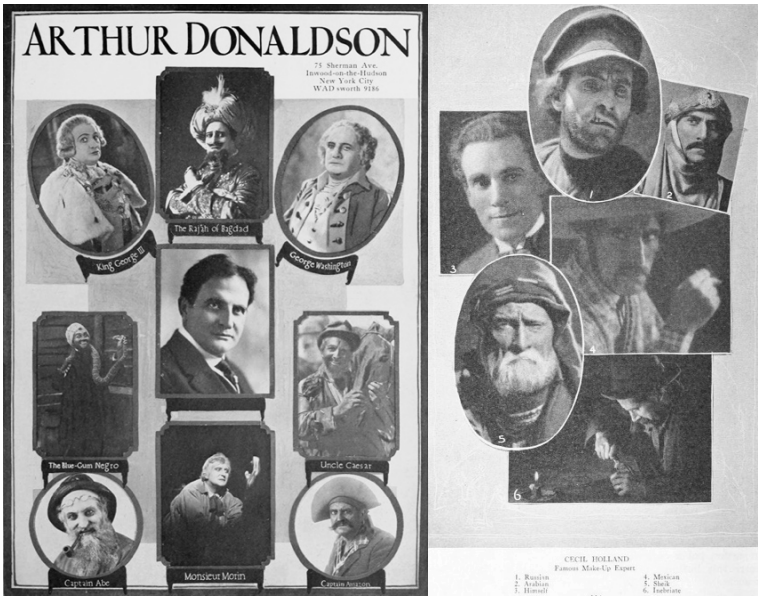


Figure 6. Arthur Donaldson's many faces. Standard Casting Directory, New York Department, 1925, p. 7.

Figure 7. Cecil Holland: Famous Make-Up Expert. *The Truth About the Movies*, 1924, p. 294.

[75] Hoffman, 44.

Pseudoscience of various forms factored heavily into the art of screen makeup. Most commonly, makeup artistry adopted physiognomic theory as a means of producing visual shorthand for a given character's inner nature. In the late 1700s, Swiss pastor Johann Kaspar Lavater proposed that by assessing the surface of the body – primarily its shape and form, such as the angle of the nose or width of the jaw – one could determine an individual's unique traits, personality, and predilections. This theory, he claimed, was "no black art," but rather, a "science" that would aid in the betterment of humankind.[76] By the late nineteenth century, however, physiognomy was implicated in various forms of scientific racism, and its principles deployed in service to the growing global eugenics movement. During the first half of the twentieth century, popular magazines would regularly include seemingly benign articles on physiognomy, which were purported to offer the reader valuable insights into her love life, friendships, and career opportunities. Fan magazines offered physiognomic readings of famous faces, claiming to reveal the secret lives and identities of Hollywood stars. Twentieth century makeup artistry was indebted to the pseudoscience of physiognomy, since narrative drama is largely propelled by characters, whom audiences need to recognize quickly, ideally with as little information as possible. It is no coincidence that early screen makeup manuals greatly resemble physiognomy textbooks in form and content. These textbooks reinforced racial, ethnic, and gendered stereotypes, and ultimately contributed to the "flattening" of already marginalized identities.

In film studies, physiognomy is most associated with early filmmaker and theorist, Béla Balázs. In 1924, Balázs wrote: "In film, we judge exclusively by external appearance and

[76] Johann Kaspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy for the Promotion of the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind* (London: G.G.J. & J. Robinson, 1793), 13.

because we have no words to enlighten us, every character must wear the symbols of his own nature."[77] For Balázs, the face and its expressions were a means of unifying the physical exterior with the psychical interior – an exploration of what he referred to as the universal language of gesture, which was, he argued, inherent to the silent cinema. While some have claimed that Balázs's theory is not a direct descendent of what has been rightly denounced as a racist and unsubstantiated philosophy, Balázs nonetheless argued that which many today still believe: that the "standard white man," unraced and ungendered, might serve as the exemplary conduit of this universal language.

Indeed, the most common and praised of all makeup feats was that of the white actor who would use makeup to play a man of a race or ethnicity other than his own. Creating racial and ethnic stock characters, by contouring and shading the faces of white performers, was a practice inherited from the stage which lingered on well into the studio era. Even Max Factor's stage and screen manual, "Hints on the Art of Make-Up," includes step-by-step instructions to guide the artist in the creation of these characters. A 1924 article entitled, "The Magic of Make-Up," (fig. 8) reads: "Putting in the villainy by means of adhesive tape – which gives a wicked, Chinese slant to one eye – and wax, which is moulded onto cheek, jawbone, and nose. A sinister effect."[78] In this instance, actor Lucien Littlefield is prepping for the role of a pirate. The racialized feature is not a necessary element of the guise; and yet, due to the ways in which facial features are classified, ascribed meaning, and reproduced over time, it generates –for white American audiences – the effect of mystery, otherness, and, as the article states, "wickedness."

[77] Béla Balázs, *Béla Belázs: Early Film Theory,* ed. Erica Carter, and trans. Rodney Livingstone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 28.

[78] "The Magic of Make-Up," *Photoplay*, September 1924, 72.

Figure 8. Actor Lucien Littlefield prepares for the role of a pirate. "The Magic of Make-Up," *Photoplay*, September 1924, p. 72.

Following Richard Dyer's assertion that whiteness assumes its own invisibility, the white face is presumed to be a blank, unmarked screen upon which racial and ethnic stereotypes may temporarily be projected.[79] According to white patriarchal society's long-held beliefs, the white man is the universal form of embodiment, or more aptly for this scenario, a universal canvas. We can observe manifestations of this ideology in medicine, politics, and fine art. For centuries, in Western anatomy textbooks, the white male body has served as the standard model; during presidential campaigns, the heterosexual white man is the most unencumbered by his social identity; in film and literature, the "everyman" sells. In screen makeup artistry, the white man, presumably unmarked by race and gender, was uniquely able to fully efface his identity in the transformation process.

Racial and ethnic caricatures obviously suppress the represented individual or group's three-dimensionality, psychological interiority, and humanity; however, we rarely consider how the transformation process itself contributes to this dynamic. During this period, white actors,

[79] Richard Dyer, *White*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2017), 45.

wearing makeup, were often hired to play non-white characters – a problematic tradition that still, to some extent, continues today. This casting practice thus separates racial and ethnic stereotypes, which are relatively static and two-dimensional, from their more nuanced counterparts. The latter is the natural appearing face, which is not "put on" – the face which generally belongs to a white individual. Whiteness, represented as "natural," thus allows for a fuller, more authentic, and layered expression of human subjectivity, embodied by the white character. As for the actor, it is critical that the ability to transform must come with the ability to *transform back*: It is the entire makeup process, from start to finish, which reinstates his essential whiteness.

Degrees of Difference

Trick makeup allowed the artist-player to show off his skills of the trade. It produced frightful faces: the grotesque, the comical, and the horrifying. The most elaborate examples of trick makeup fully transformed the actor from head to toe, though they nonetheless necessitated the viewer's suspension of disbelief. Trick makeup was hyperbolized and grossly artificial, often generating caricatures of marginalized individuals, such as the "tramp," or the "elderly drunk." It was also heavily implicated in the production and reproduction of racial and ethnic stereotypes, which the movies had largely inherited from the stage. Take, for instance, the following physiognomic description of "The Arabs," quoted in *Theatricals or The Art of Making-Up*, issued by professional greasepaint supplier C.H. Fox in 1890: "The Characteristics of the Arab race are a long face with a high shaped head, an aquiline nose nearly the length of the forehead, a retreating and small mouth; the eye not at all deep set in spite of the want of prominence in the

brow."[80] The instructional manual includes precise greasepaint shades, as well as comparisons between the physical attributes of "the Arabs" and those of other racial and ethnic groups.

We might observe these same physiognomic principles at work in silent screen characters, produced with trick makeup. In a 1918 article published in *Motion Picture Magazine*, actor Anthony Merlo is pictured making up as "the perfect replica of a young Arab."[81] As an Italian immigrant, Merlo would not have been considered "white" by early twentieth century American standards. In *Whiteness of a Different Color*, Matthew Frye Jacobson writes: "Racial categories themselves – their vicissitudes and the contests over them – reflect the competing notions of history, peoplehood, and collective destiny by which power has been organized and contested on the American scene."[82] Likewise, as Dyer argues, whiteness, as a racial category, is only visible in relation to notions of color. Furthermore, he contends, it is the apparent flexibility, instability, and attainability of whiteness that enables the policing of its borders in a politics of inclusion.[83] There are degrees of foreignness at play in Merlo's transformation into the "young Arab." We might argue that it exposes the permeable borders of whiteness; however, in its self-declaration *as makeup*, it fortifies the actor's proximity to whiteness while it maintains distance from the racialized character (fig. 9).

[80] *Theatricals or The Art of Making-Up*, C.H. Fox, 1890.

[81] Sue Roberts, "It's All in the Make-Up," *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1918, 59.

[82] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrant and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 9.

[83] Dyer, 57.

Figure 9. Anthony Merlo: "A perfect replica of a young Arab." "It's All in the Make-Up." *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1918, p. 59.

In this piece, Merlo is described as, "the convenient and immaculate masculine coat-shoulder for the feminine star to emote in – or on."[84] According to Merlo, when selecting greasepaints and powders for a given role, a man should choose a shade which does not clash or contrast too severely with that of his female co-star:

> Always notice what type of make-up she uses. If she favors a pure white make-up like Theda Bara, don't appear in a tan one yourself. If she uses a medium yellow powder like Alice Brady, never affect a startling white one; always remember that you are working for the artistic effect of the whole, and that as a supplement of the star, it us up to you to help that star appear as attractive as possible.[85]

Merlo's method, as detailed in this passage, is an early instance of a masculinizing disavowal of screen makeup that becomes more pervasive in the years to come. According to Merlo, makeup, on men, was not intended to beautify, but rather, to unobtrusively recede into the background and

[84] Sue Roberts, "It's All in the Make-Up," *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1918, 58.

[85] Anthony Merlo in Sue Roberts, "It's All in the Make-Up," *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1918, 58.

to make the female lead "appear as attractive as possible." His process of "working for the artistic effect of the whole," by selecting tones which complemented those of the female lead, ensured that the spectator's gaze would not be pulled away from her.

Merlo's comment also alludes to the cinema's normalized racial homogeneity in which anything that stands-out appears aberrant or, in the case of makeup, concertedly "put-on." The notion that varying base shades, on members of the same cast, might disrupt a film's artistic unity was echoed years later by the youngest of the Westmore men, Frank, who claimed that the makeup artist needed to "keep actors within the same range of color so no one person is too light or too dark, unless it's a story point."[86]

The Shapeshifting Woman

Trick makeup enabled the cinema's "wizards" and "magicians" to be remade into a wide range of characters, often representing those at the margins of society; but to appear older, monstrous, or ethnically Othered was a privilege primarily afforded to white men. There is no female equivalent to a "wizard" or "magician" that is not condemned or vilified in western society. Likewise, cinematic magic was to be wielded by men – even if the subject was a woman. As Lucy Fischer points out, the male magician-female subject paradigm that predominated the trick film genre is suffused with long-held fears, interwoven in the fabric of Western society, regarding women's power over men: "In the cases where women magicians exist, they are figures of dread. This makes clear the fact that woman is not always perceived as *powerless*, a

[86] Frank Westmore in Merry Elkins, "The Westmores: Sculpting the Faces of the World," *American Cinematographer*, July 1984, 39.

passive prop. Rather, woman's power is often acknowledged, but viewed as perilous."[87] Indeed, mythology teaches us that the most beguiling and dangerous of women is she who can change her physical appearance. For instance, the succubae or night spirts, who appear to their victims as beautiful young women, use their powers of transfiguration to deceive, seduce, and thus dominate unsuspecting men. The image of the shapeshifting woman is prevalent across geographical regions, cultures, and historical periods; she is a manifestation of deeply embedded and widespread misogyny. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that female players were rarely acclaimed for their transformative makeup skills.

As we have seen with the trick film, filmmakers used cinematic technology to record and study the human body; or, to distort it, transform it, or render it invisible. Likewise, as makeup artistry developed as a cinematic art, a similar duality emerged – one which represented equally the public's fascination with the human form, as well as its ever-pervasive anxieties about women, disguise, and deception. Male players and makeup artists who were known for their trick makeup skills were lauded; however, transformations of women were downplayed. While trick makeup was indeed used on and by women, female players were more often required to maintain their "natural" beauty – youthful, light-skinned, in good health, and attractive according to the day's aesthetic norms. As Alice Maurice has observed, if an actress was to be made up in a way that detracted from her conventional good looks, the press would "go out of their way to inform the reader that the actress is, in fact, pretty" – a pattern, she argues, which emerged during what film historians refer to as the transitional period (1908-1917), alongside the industry's early

[87] Lucy Fischer, *Cinematernity: Film, Motherhood, Genre* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 44-45.

efforts to promote its players as stars.[88] Maurice notes that, unlike her male counterpart who might radically alter his appearance, an actress was generally cast in a role only if she already "looked the part." *Typage*, she argues, was the standard for actresses, citing a 1905 professional manual, in which the author suggested for his readers that makeup would not convincingly age a young woman.[89] *Typage*, which adopted physiognomic principles to systemize and classify faces, would be absorbed by the fashion and cosmetics industries appeal to consumers, via "beauty type" systems that purported to assist in the production of "natural" beauty. "Naturalism," as I discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, was the gold-standard for women, on screen and off.

Death By Makeup: Trick Makeup After Beauty

In the most extreme cases, corporeal effects, including but not limited to that which was achieved through makeup, were alleged to end in physical death. Actor Lon Chaney, it was speculated, had so mastered the art of makeup that it had overtaken his body, contributing to his untimely passing in 1930 at the age of forty-seven. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Two, part of the era's fervent interest in makeup was characterized by widespread fear and consumer activism, incited by the presence of harmful – even deadly – ingredients found in cosmetic products. However, "death by makeup," in this case, was not only a cautionary tale of dangerous

[88] Alice Maurice, "Making Faces: Character Makeup in Early Cinema," in *Corporeality in Early Cinema*, ed. Marina Dahlquist, Doron Galili, Jan Olsson and Valentine Robert (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 13.

[89] Ibid, 211.

substances, but an exaltation of sacrifice and artistic merit. In euphoric testimony, one journalist wrote: "Chaney specialized in the grotesque: *putty* and *collodion* were indispensable in creating his types, w*here identity ceased to be an element! But wherein he crystallized an idea in character, swayed solely by environment.* These characterizations assured his position in the art."[90] There is a quality of idealization – indeed, glamorization – that overhangs this tribute to the late actor. Much like how we tend to romanticize pain for the sake of beauty, the author romanticizes the "putty and collodion," and the potentially toxic substances that elevated Chaney to new transformative heights.

The ideological implications of trick makeup are complex and multifaceted. Indeed, these creations often contributed to the romanticization and fetishization of racialized, disabled, or otherwise socially ostracized individuals; however, they also bore the potential to subvert normative representations of the human form and challenge fixed notions of human subjectivity. As Robin Blyn has argued, the late silent era was a decade of heavy experimentation as the film industry prepared for the coming of sound. During this liminal period, director Tom Browning in collaboration with Chaney, produced films which appropriated and assimilated the P.T. Barnum sideshow aesthetic. Blyn identifies these films as belonging to an avant-garde genre she calls the "freak-garde," found in various representational forms beginning in the late nineteenth century. She argues that the Browning-Chaney films destabilize the autonomous human subject, upon which liberal capitalism and Hollywood's narrative realism depend.[91] It is perhaps no coincidence that trick makeup was most celebrated during this period, just prior to the coming of

[90] Clarke, 9.

[91] Robin Blyn, *The Freak-Garde: Extraordinary Bodies and Revolutionary Art in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 41.

sound and color, as well as the standardization of film and lighting technologies which privileged cinematic realism. In its experimental approach to the human form, trick makeup simultaneously disrupted and reinforced representational norms.

From the perspective of screen makeup history, Chaney's death in 1930 marks a significant – and indeed eerily timed – shift in the discourse: After Chaney, the film industry's "makeup man" was not the character actor, but the studio suppliers and department heads, such as Max Factor and the Westmores, who worked not on themselves, but on Hollywood's lineup of physically immaculate stars.

Chaney, albeit a talented artist, was not conventionally attractive by the standards of the emerging star system. Michael Dempsey contends that Chaney was "the only actor to become a movie star without presenting himself in one basic guise."[92] Of the Man of a Thousand Faces' elusive screen persona, he writes:

> Lon Chaney was drawn not to offering one more protean version of a settled persona to his audiences but to evading their scrutiny, tantalizing them, clouding their conviction that they "recognize" or "know" him. His crafted faces and bodies, no matter how forcefully conceived and executed, no matter what pathos they seek and often achieve, are essential barriers between audiences and himself.[93]

The elusive Chaney was critically acclaimed for his ability to efface his own face and body in the role of a character. In a tribute to the late actor, published soon after his death**,** Chaney was canonized for his ability to endure pain, both physical and mental: "For years, beneath the make-up, Chaney has carried on his face the deep lines of suffering. He was less known in Hollywood

[92] Michael Demspey, "Lon Chaney: A Thousand and One Faces," *Film Comment* 31, no. 3 (May 1995): 65.

[93] Ibid.

than any other star and in person little known to the millions of fans who crowded to see his pictures."[94]

Figure 10. Chaney's makeup box. "The Face of a Thousand Memories," *The New Movie Magazine*, November 1930, p. 44.

The most revered makeup achievement of the 1930s – in other words, post-Chaney – was not the grotesque, the eccentric, or the horrifying, but rather, the production of "natural" feminine beauty via advanced formulas and methods. Chaney, never "leading man" material, had so conquered the magic of trick makeup that his body was not only transformed, but it had ceased to exist. In *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Era*, Gaylyn Studlar argues that Chaney's grotesque male body represents a radical negation of the "cult of the body" standards of masculine perfection that came to dominate the American cinema by the

[94] Dick Hyland, "The Face of a Thousand Memories," *The New Movie Magazine*, November 1930, 45.

end of the 1920s. Trick makeup, however revered, was in many ways antithetical to the increasingly feminized connotations of screen makeup and its relationship with stardom. Along with this commercial imperative, men, much like their female co-stars, needed to look good for the camera – to be recognizable as not only as themselves, but as a distinct iteration of American manhood. As the quintessential anti-star, Chaney's death coincides with the coming of age of the star system and its normative gendered bodies, in addition to the industry-wide standardization of the art of screen makeup, which meant that actors had considerably less agency over the makeup process.

I wish to return now to the image that headlined this chapter: Actor John Barrymore in full trick makeup in 1931, juxtaposed with a group of glamorous young female stars. Studlar argues that both Chaney and Barrymore embody what she refers to as a "transformative masculinity," defined as "a paradigm of gender construction that, in many different guises or 'masquerades,' foregrounds masculinity as a process, a liminal construction, and even a performance."[95] She writes: "In their wholesale consumption of popular representations of men, women were thought to be the force behind the creation of fictional ideals of masculinity that, in turn, negatively influenced real-life men."[96] Studlar demonstrates how, in the 1920s, Barrymore exemplified the "woman-made-man," brought on by the feminization of consumer culture. While Jazz Age movie culture negotiated traditional gender roles, Studlar notes that by the end of the decade, "Barrymore's films present his body in ways that become more consistent with the normative standard of cult of the body masculinity – muscular, athletic, stalwart."[97] Film stardom

[95] Gaylyn Studlar, *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 4.

[96] Studlar, 92.

[97] Ibid, 135.

increasingly necessitated a stable essence and the embodiment of a recognizable personality type, unobscured by transformative makeup. It might be ventured that, for male actors, horror and fantasy makeup were the final reprieve from the dictates of masculinity that, with the rise of Hollywood's star culture, were increasingly manifest in the cinema's male leads.

Frightful Faces: Glamour and Horror

It is tempting to believe that this era brought about a clean break – that once screen makeup was standardized and commodified, the former conversation on screen makeup was all but obliterated. Of course, this is an overly simplistic view on historical change. Although an in-depth discussion is outside the scope of this chapter, it is important to note that trick makeup continued to evolve alongside beauty makeup, primarily in the 1930s horror genre. In many ways, these iterations of trick makeup pushed back against the cinema's realist representational standards, as well as the oppressive moral criteria laid out by the Hollywood Production Code.[98] In part, we might also interpret this trend through the lens of labor: as lighting and film technology improved, and the goal of "naturalism" came to dominate in screen makeup, the work of the makeup artist was, quite literally, rendered invisible. Audiences too were alleged to be growing weary of the apparently un-garnished visage. As a 1932 newspaper article, "False Faces for Movie Stars," claimed, audiences were bored with Hollywood realism and thus yearning for the bygone days of character acting:

[98] The Motion Picture Production Code was a set of moral content guidelines proposed by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributers of America in 1927. In 1934, under the direction of Production Code Administration head Joseph I. Breen, the Code was enforced for all major studio film releases. The Code allowed the industry to self-censor and appealed to studios seeking to circumvent government regulation.

> For a while, with the coming of the supersensitive panchromatic film and improved incandescent lighting systems, it looked as though the art of make-up would go the way of the old silent movies. Men, with few exceptions, passed up make-up altogether. Women used only a little powder and lip rouge.
>
> Then came the demand for disguised actors and actresses. The public no longer was satisfied to see its favorite stars looking just as they do in real life. There was a cry for them to characterize their roles – making themselves fit the part rather than revamping the characters to fit themselves.[99]

As the author suggests, the then-recent influx of monster movies and biblical epics would satiate audiences' nostalgia for makeup that had recently "passed into history."

Though disguises might have been back in vogue, actresses were generally required to abide by a stringent set of rules, if they wished to retain their star status. "Actors Can Win Fame By The Use Of False Whiskers," proclaims a *Silver Screen* article from 1935. "But Girls Have To Stay Beautiful."[100] Through this wave of costume drama, the author argues, men may easily don a disguise, whether it be as simple as an added moustache, or as drastic as the makeover that changes the tone of the skin, adds wrinkles, eye bags, or disfiguring scars. Disguises for women, on the other hand, were not to obscure the star's natural beauty, unless she wished to end her career (fig. 11). In this article, images of Claudette Colbert and Marlene Dietrich, both in elaborate head gear, served to illustrate the extent to which an actress might deviate from her star image: "The decorative winged serpent of Cleopatra," the author explained, "hardly changed Claudette at all."[101] Alicia Annas notes this persistent phenomenon in period dramas throughout Hollywood's golden age: "Since makeup was an integral part of the female star's image, modern

[99] Dan Thomas, "False Faces for Movie Stars," *The Sunday Star* (Washington D.C.), October 23, 1932, 5.

[100] "It's Tough For the Actresses," *Silver Screen,* February 1935, 38.

[101] Ibid.

corrective glamour makeup was used in every film, regardless of period. There was absolutely no attempt to make women's film makeup reflect history."[102]

Figure 11. Marlene Dietrich and Claudette Colbert. "It's Tough For the Actresses," *Silver Screen*, February 1935, p. 38.

Although the horror genre was immensely popular during the 1930s, these character transformations did not receive as much mainstream public attention as "beauty makeup" at the time. In fact, the same men who worked on Hollywood's most glamorous women were also responsible for many 1930s monster films. Wally Westmore's pioneering special effects makeup can be seen in Paramount's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) and his brother Bud worked for decades with Universal, where making up monsters was par for the course. Like glamour,

[102] Alicia Annas, "The Photogenic Formula: Hairstyles and Makeup in Historical Films," in *Hollywood and History: Costume Design in Film*, ed. Jonathan Rabinovitz (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 58-59.

monsters often incited moral panic – the latter, however, was easily harnessed by the emerging beauty industry and proving to be big business.

"Naturalism" was the pinnacle of feminine beauty. The exception to the rule was "glamour" – although these categories, contentious as they were, were especially fluid and amorphous as the mass beauty industry expanded exponentially in the early-1930s. As we have seen, screen makeup was generally "frightful" to white, Protestant, Anglo-American sensibilities – it produced monsters, freaks, and the racialized Other. At first blush, horror makeup has little in common with glamour makeup. However, glamour indeed *horrified* as it flouted societal norms and expectations vis-à-vis a woman's physical appearance and conduct. As the day's most prominent beauty editors insisted, the pre-Code "glamorous type" of the Hollywood cinema was too transgressive to qualify as "elegant" or "lovely" by the day's residual, but nonetheless powerful, moral standards.

When we think about the relationship between women and makeup, we are often confronted with two contrasting narratives: In the first story, makeup symbolizes an oppressive consumer culture that sets impossible beauty goals for women, delineating the terms of ideal femininity. In the other version of the story, however, makeup is a creative and potentially transgressive medium that allows one to reinvent their image and push back against restrictive gender norms. Glamour makeup, prior to its association with Hollywood and the American mass market, was often considered outré, bad taste, and in word that was frequently used to describe the woman who indulged in beauty aids, "frightful." We might also argue, however, that glamour makeup was a liberating force for many women, in that it challenged essentialist notions of femininity.

As we have seen, men too engaged in "frightful" makeup creations that, in their own way, pushed back against normative modes of white, hetero-masculine representation. Chaney's grotesqueries, it might be argued, were, in many ways, an uncanny mirror image of the feminized glamour transformations – the cinema's vamps, bottle blondes, and "exotic types" – which, in their challenge to normative operations of gender, race, and class, equally awed and unsettled the public. As I address in Chapter Two, this iteration of glamour, most associated with pre-Code screen stars, did not vanish in the 1930s, but was discursively palliated by various social, cultural, and industrial developments, including the growth of the American mass market for cosmetics and the rise of Hollywood's makeup men, whose reputation quickly superseded that of their forerunners.

Conclusion

During the silent period, screen makeup was an essential film technology and performance aid. As players were generally required to make up their own faces and bodies, makeup skills were synonymous with a player's potential for screen success. The most revered of makeup artist-players, however, was typically not the leading man, but the character actor. This man was a "wizard" and a scientist – in other words, a master of movie magic. While his female counterparts were more often required to abide by normative beauty standards, he used the then-burgeoning art of screen makeup to produce spectacular feats of transformation. These transformations – or "trick makeup" – were often horrifying, "freakish," and outrageous. They disrupted the cinema's increasingly realist representational standards, but by the same token,

they reproduced stereotypes of marginalized individuals, flattening any semblance of three-dimensionality.

The master of disguise, who played strange, eccentric, monstrous or Other, is an unlikely predecessor to the man decked in a crisp white lab coat, paintbrush in hand and a beaming young starlet in his makeup chair. The male makeup artist-player, who made up his own face and body had his heyday in the teens and twenties; by the early 1930s, the topic of men wearing screen makeup was not regularly discussed in trade or fan publications. Over the next several years, the film industry's greatest makeup achievement became the alluring, bankable, and commodifiable face of the female star, earning only the most elite makeup men their high-ranking placement in the studios' creative order. The horror and fantasy genre continued to provide an exception; however, much of this talk was drowned-out by the much louder conversation on femininity, stardom, and the "makeup geniuses" who were indispensable to the studios, as well as to the legitimization and growth of the American cosmetics industry.

CHAPTER TWO

Glamour Masters:

Making Over the Makeup Man in 1930s Hollywood

"At present time," reported *Stage* magazine in 1936, "so important is the glamour business that make-up men, hair architects, and he-dressmakers rank just above directors and just below Adolph Zukor in the studio hierarchy."[103] This tongue-in-cheek article on Hollywood's suspected makeovers focused solely on women and the men who had made them. Referred to as "architects" and "mechanics," the studios' makeup men were masculinized in the popular press. Their medium, the screen actress, was objectified and commodified. Like a shiny new motor vehicle, she was named "Betty" or "Jean" and doused in a fine wash of sexual overtones. Joan Crawford was "a repaint job" who had left the shop leaking glamour all over the studio floor. Poor Anna Sten, however, who had been shipped cargo-class from the Port of Odessa, was a staggering loss. The glamour men had tinkered away at her for months, in "an old abandoned farm house back of the quarry," but when it came time for her final reveal, she had failed to impress.

This account of the makeup artist in Hollywood, however sensationalized, was not atypical of that which pervaded the 1930s popular discourse on the film industry's infamous makeup men – their lifestyles, their art, and the women they had ostensibly designed. "Dear girls

[103] Leonard Hall, "The Glamor Factories of Hollywood: In goes a Cinderella. Out comes a princess of plastic pulchritude," *Stage*, July 1936, 18.

just put themselves into the hands of the experts with faith and a prayer," one reporter wrote. "And the make-up men then make or break them; either is well within the power of their magic."[104] In the 1930s, the art of screen makeup was catapulted from a stagecraft dominated by character actors who made themselves up using a haphazard assortment of theatrical greasepaints, spirit gum, and collodion – concoctions that often uglified as much as they beautified – to a revered position in the star-making business. During this decade, makeup artistry in Hollywood was dominated by a few leaders, among them, Max Factor and his son Frank, and the men of the "first family of makeup," the Westmores. Unlike the many creative workers who comprised the engine of the studio system, the press depicted these men not as tradesmen or laborers, but rather, as modern achievement personified.

This chapter is about the making of Hollywood's renowned Glamour Men – and they were, indeed, *men*. Prior to their emergence as industry leaders, screen makeup was a technical requirement and performance aid with a tenuous connection to beauty. It was around 1930, however, that makeup artistry underwent a public transformation alongside two interrelated developments: the maturation of the Hollywood studio system and the emergence of the modern cosmetics industry. By this confluence of events, makeup was newly publicized as a mass commodity – one which, owing to media-based advertising, was discursively linked to images of Hollywood screen actresses, but largely disavowed by their male counterparts.

In a sense, screen makeup itself was gendered feminine, even though male screen actors were generally required to wear some form of skin-toned base for filming purposes. This fact was largely hushed or ignored by movie fan magazines (and to a large extent, the industry trade

[104] Lyle Rooks, "Genius in a Rouge Box: Screen Stars Are Made or Broken By the Art of the Make-Up Men," *Brooklyn Times Unio*n, September 29, 1935, 5.

journals) as screen makeup was conflated with "beauty makeup," and star faces were enlisted to sell products to women consumers. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the gendering of screen makeup was only about "making up" women insofar as it was about "making up" men. In the popular press, the studios' leading makeup artists were depicted as masculine archetypes: they were scientists, inventors, father figures, and womanizers. The "Glamour Masters" narrative, as I refer to this publicity, not only invokes the gendered gaze of the classical Hollywood cinema, but it discursively nullifies the woman's power in this exchange: The glamorous woman, who seduces and captivates her audience, is remade into the relatively innocuous product of masculinized expertise.

I begin this discussion with a discourse analysis on "glamour," to provide a theoretical and contextual lens through which to examine what it was, exactly, that men like Factor and the Westmores were said to have achieved – or "mastered." In this expanded definition, I explore glamour's historical resonances, as well as the social, cultural, and industrial developments of the period, which contributed to the public's ever-evolving relationship with the term. I have divided this section into two parts. The first, "The Synthetic Woman: Allure and Deception," addresses the popular discourse on on-screen femininity under the Hollywood studio system, and the "glamorous type," also known as the "synthetic" or "made-up" woman. The second, "Modern Magic and the Business of Selling Illusion," considers the unprecedented growth of the American cosmetics industry and subsequently, an increase in public distrust over unvetted beauty aids and misleading advertising claims. During the 1930s, the film and cosmetics industries would each undergo a public image overhaul. Hollywood's "makeup geniuses" – white, heterosexual, and good men of science – were vital to both reinventions.

I have included, in this discussion, a close reading of the Paramount film, *Kiss and Make-Up* (1934), which provides critical insight into the decade's ruminations on glamour, science, and the role of the male beautician. The film, which was released just as the Hollywood Production Code went into effect in July 1934, was described by one reviewer as "good entertainment for henpecked husbands who are tired of seeing their wives overdo their beauty treatments."[105] There is a dark cautionary tale embedded in the otherwise light and playful (however misogynistic) storyline. Dr. Lamar, played by Cary Grant, is a Dr. Frankenstein-like character who seeks to purge "ugliness" from the female population. His profession, much like that of Hollywood's real-life Glamour Masters, is heteronormatively eroticized when he romances a client whose beauty was made by his own hands. The film parodies the 1930s obsession with glamour; it produces the made-up woman as an object of horror, and ultimately reinstates the importance of science, virtuous femininity, and "natural" beauty.

The final component of this discussion explores how male beauty professionals were discursively constructed as men who embodied white, heterosexual values, and who typically (unlike the fictional Dr. Lamar) represented scientific integrity and modern innovation. Although we might argue that this discourse, quite literally, produced the "man-made woman," we must also acknowledge how the Glamour Masters personae served to legitimize the nascent American cosmetics industry and override its negative cultural associations. Max Factor and the Westmores were not only film industry leaders, but businessmen at the helm of this emerging market, which, in many ways, offered women consumers new means and methods of self-representation – so long as they were white and middle or upper-class. The "painted woman" of low social standing, and the unregulated sellers who, prior to the revision of the Pure Food and

[105] "Kiss, Make Up," *The Minneapolis Star*, July 21, 1934, 7.

Drug Act in 1938, sold ineffective, toxic, and, at times, deadly beauty aids, were effaced by a commercial beauty culture that, as Kathy Peiss has argued, allowed women to "navigate the changing conditions of modern social experience," and their increasing autonomy as citizens, workers, and consumers.[106] This chapter explores the complexities of this dynamic, and how two intertwined industries ultimately participated in the "making up" of men and women.

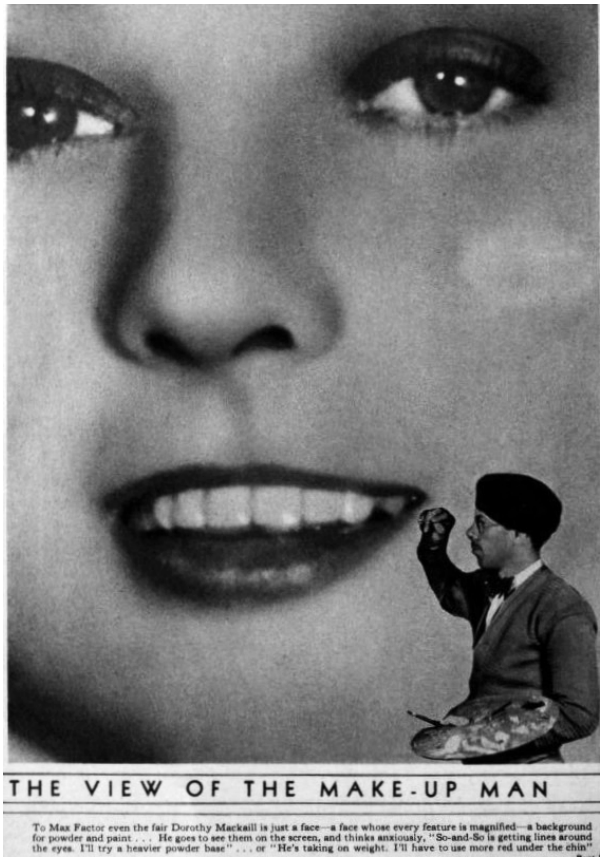


Figure 12. "The View of the Make-Up Man," *Motion Picture Classic*, July 1930, p. 64.

[106] Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books), 6-7.

Glamour Masters

Glamour is not a synonym for beauty, nor is it solely a feminine attribute; however, the film industry's makeup artists, who were said to have mastered glamour, were best known for "making up" beautiful women. To "make up," in this sense, means to use makeup, but it also means to compensate, or to produce an illusion. As for "glamour," the word deeply entrenched itself into the American lexicon in the 1930s, due to its association with the film industry and its stars. Glamour, however, originated not in Hollywood, but in eighteenth century Scotland as, *glamer*, derived from *gramarye*, connoting magic, spells, or an occult system of knowledge. An elusive and slippery concept, we might define glamour in a number of different ways; however, the glamour that the industry's makeup leaders were said to have harnessed with methodical, scientific, and reproduceable precision, referred primarily to the filmic spectacle of femininity – one that was commercially viable as more than an image, but as a product representing an aspirational state of being for white, middle-class American women.

The Synthetic Woman: Allure and Deception

It is no coincidence that men like Factor and the Westmores rose to prominence in the 1930s, alongside the growth and standardization of cinematic technologies, in addition to the implementation of the Hollywood Production Code in 1934, which limited depictions of transgressive femininity and various forms of non-normative sexuality. As Stephen Gundle and Clino T. Castelli write: "The development of cinema allowed male producers and artists new

possibilities for moulding women and creating figures of fantasy, even to the point of reconstructing ideals of femininity."[107] As they were portrayed in the popular press, the Glamour Masters instantiate many fundamental tenants of the "male gaze" as brought to the fore by feminist film theorists in the 1970s and 1980s. In this largely debated paradigm, the woman on screen is produced, through various filmic and narrative conventions, as the object of heterosexual masculine desire – in other words, as a "figure of fantasy." We might very well be able to locate, as many have, moments of power and agency – whether for the woman on screen or the woman in the audience. What I seek to emphasize in this discussion, however, is that the publicity on these men and their work underscores Hollywood's role in the manufacturing of gender norms (both on screen and off) and most significantly, an attempt to demonstrate institutional patriarchal control over these processes.

It might be said that the American film industry tamed and domesticated glamour – its assimilation in the 1930s allegorized by a short-lived expulsion of the letter "u." As Virginia Postrel states, "the movies did not invent glamour, but they permanently changed the meaning of the word, tying it not to witchcraft but to the benign and inspiring illusions of stagecraft."[108] In spite of glamour's public reinvention, residual connotations remained. Fashion historian Valerie Steele describes glamour's fluid and contradictory meanings, accumulated over centuries of definitional shifts:

> Glamour entered the English language in the eighteenth century with the meaning of "magic, enchantment." By the mid-nineteenth century it had acquired its contemporary definition as "deception or bewitching beauty or charm" or "a mysteriously exciting or alluring physical attractiveness, especially when artificially contrived." Notice the

[107] Stephen Gundle and Clino C. Castelli, *The Glamour System* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 69-70.

[108] Virginia Postrel, "A Golden World," in *Glamour: Fashion, Industrial Design, Architecture*, ed. Joseph Rosa, Phil Patton, Virginia Postrel, and Valerie Steele (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 26.

> ambivalence at the heart of the word: on one hand, beauty, charm, and allure; on the other, deception and artifice.[109]

Ambivalence indeed characterized the American public's ideas about glamour in the 1930s, particularly on the topic of women "making up." To reiterate: To "make up" is to generate an illusion – in this case, an illusion of femininity largely produced by women themselves; a re-coding of gendered aesthetics symbolic of women's political and economic agency, and discursively linked with their growing visibility in public life. "Synthetic" was an adjective regularly used to denounce the so-called "glamorous type," who was, at once, desirable and cause for suspicion. "Synthetic" called attention to the woman's efforts, as well as her failure to maintain the illusion; it valorized essentialized notions of femininity and discredited the made-up woman.

The popular press often employed metaphors and allusions, which anchored the modern iteration of glamour to its etymological roots. Take, for instance, the following words of advice, from one of the decade's most prolific beauty reporters, Gladys Glad. In this sardonic installment of her popular column, Glad invokes witchcraft and the occult when she suggests that the "misuse of beauty aids" is deserving of an archaic form of execution:

> Some time after the reign of Charles II, of England, a law was passed whereby any woman who lured a man into matrimony through the use of powders, perfumes, or cosmetics, was, upon conviction, to be burned at the stake, or to be condemned to eternal spinsterhood. And that certainly was a tough break for the Eves of the day, for it robbed them of one of woman's chief weapons.
>
> Nowadays, there is no law against the use of cosmetics. But in my opinion, the woman who misuses these beauty aids is just as deserving of being burned at the stake as her eighteenth century sisters.[110]

---

[109] Valerie Steele, "Fashion*," Glamour: Fashion, Industrial Design, Architecture*, edited by Joseph Rosa, Phil Patton, Virginia Postrel, and Valerie Steele (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 39.

[110] Gladys Glad, "Make-Up that is Becoming to Brunette," *The Ottawa Journal*, December 26, 1936, 11.

After this provocative hook, Glad states that "naturalness is the keynote of make-up today." Because a woman's capital was (and to a large extent, still is) determined by her physical appearance, cosmetics were, as Glad states, "one of woman's chief weapons." Under makeup's facade, a woman could, in theory, thwart the systems of patriarchal oppression that had determined her value. The way that Glad facetiously vacillates on the topic of makeup as a means of coercing hapless men into marriage echoes centuries-old cautionary tales of female monsters – particularly the shapeshifting *lilen* or succubae – who used magic to deceive their male victims. It is important to note, however, that Glad is not opposed to makeup, but rather, "the misuse of beauty aids," which destroy the illusion – a key component of "naturalism" that she and her contemporaries tout. Photographs of Glad reveal a former Ziegfeld chorus girl and beauty contest winner – in other words, the epitome of "synthetic" beauty, or glamour. Women columnists, like Glad, were alleged to be privy to the secrets of the rich and famous. These women were important intermediaries who, in their advice to beauty-obsessed women, mitigated the negative connotations of glamour and "making up," even though the film and cosmetics industries were increasingly dominated by male beauty executives.

We might argue that Max Factor and the Westmores emerged as figureheads of glamour's reformulation under the auspices the Hollywood studio system, during a period in which representations of men and women were in flux. Joseph Rosa argues that glamour "gains its power from its position outside normative culture," citing Hollywood's pre-Code depictions of transgressive femininity, represented by the likes of Mae West and Jean Harlow.[111] Glamour connoted a wayward femininity that was often celebrated on screen. As film critic Mick LaSalle

[111] Joseph Rosa, "Fabricating Affluence," in *Glamour: Fashion, Industrial Design, Architecture*, ed. Jospeh Rosa, Phil Patton, Virginia Postrel, and Valerie Steele (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 16.

contends, the best era for women on-screen was the pre-Code era between 1929 and 1934, when alongside broader social, political, and cultural advancements for women, screen actresses had more power and clout in the industry than they would have again for many decades.[112]

We know that the pre-Code screen actress was not entirely in control of her own image. Even though players were, to a large extent, responsible for their own makeup preparations up until the end of the 1920s, women were generally expected to adhere to the day's beauty standards. Additionally, filmmaking is an inherently collaborative affair – even if, as rumor has it, Marlene Dietrich indeed taught Ern Westmore how to contour her features (a thin strip of light powder down the nose, on the advice of filmmaker Josef von Sternberg), rather than the other way around.[113] Nevertheless, the glamorous on-screen woman regularly bore the burden and responsibility of her on-screen transgressions – in conduct, as well as in appearance. In 1932, *Photoplay* called the "glamorous type" an "outgrowth of modernity," whose destructive appeal stemmed from an embodied juxtaposition of masculine and feminine elements:

> Look over the standardized cinema star – those thick, heavily made-up lips, sloe eyes, lashes heavy with mascara, hair sweeping in a hard wave from high forehead. That's the face. The body? Slender hips, broad shoulders, lithe slim lines. And now for the voice – deep, throaty, guttural. You know that voice.[114]

The negative influence of Hollywood's new heroine was said to extend beyond the female population: in embodying this aberration of feminine sensibility, she had necessarily forced a new on-screen masculinity "to maintain a traditional balance between genders."[115] This new man

---

[112] Mick LaSalle, *Complicated Women: Sex and Power in Pre-Code Hollywood* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 4.

[113] Frank Westmore and Muriel Davidson, *The Westmores of Hollywood* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976), 69.

[114] Ruth Biery, "The New 'Shady Dames' of the Screen," *Photoplay,* August 1932, 28.

[115] Ibid, 90.

was allegedly rougher and more assertive than his forerunners; he could thus dominate Hollywood's new heroine who, in this description, is masculinized in physicality and temperament. The synthetic woman was thus not merely an affront to feminine virtue and propriety; she had thoroughly unsettled the heteronormative order.

Figure 13. Joan Crawford in *Rain* (1932), at the height of her "shady dame" period. The author asks: "Will she return to peppy, lovable roles again?" "The New 'Shady Dames' of the Screen," *Photoplay*, August 1932, p. 28.

Figure 14. A caricature of Greta Garbo, exemplifying the glamorous type. "The New 'Shady Dames' of the Screen," *Photoplay*, August 1932, p. 90.

The glamorous woman, without masculine intervention, was transgressive in more ways than one. Not only did she upset a whole host of heterosexual gendered norms and conventions, but her unnatural appearance appeared to distort and trouble the category of whiteness. The author states that large lips, all the rage after Joan Crawford's appearance in *Letty Lynton* (1932) and *Rain* (1932), only a few years prior would have been considered unattractive (fig.13). She describes Crawford's overdrawn pout: "The lipstick extended beyond the corner and the mouth

was greatly exaggerated in both thickness and length."[116] An implicit bias against features most characteristic of black individuals pervades the article, particularly when the author notes how the lip lining trend has been taken up by legions of imitators: "With few exceptions, these young girls had rouged their mouths until they looked like nothing so much as members of a minstrel show."[117] Whiteness is held up as the apogee of feminine beauty, challenged by the period's fashions in makeup, which obscure the natural-appearing face that is without a shadow of a doubt, white. The author laments that Crawford's weighted lashes make her eyes appear black on screen – an unfortunate outcome, she insinuates, given that the actress's eyes were, in fact, blue.[118]

While glamour, via the modern fashion and beauty industries, afforded liberating modes of self-representation to white European and American women, it often did so at the expense of nonwhite, particularly Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures, which were thus misrepresented in Western imagination and figured as "style." In her study of film fashions and consumer culture, Sarah Berry argues that the Orientalist fashions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century offered white Western women a fantasy – a means of exploring feminine desire, unbound by the strictures of white, Christian mores.[119] To a large extent, we can still observe this phenomenon today. The fashion and beauty industries, particularly on the level of haute couture, still participate in the commodification of an exotic, Other, or "otherworldly" beauty in the name of glamour.

---

[116] Biery, 28.

[117] Ibid, 90.

[118] Ibid, 29.

[119] Sarah Berry, *Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 133.

Indeed, prior to its adoption by Hollywood, glamour was most associated with the exotic: fragrances and furs that signified not only privilege and wealth, but in their unfamiliarity, an escapist fantasy. Carol Dyhouse demonstrates how, before it came to signify the modern woman, high fashion, and Hollywood, glamour primarily connotated travel. "Glamour attached to places rather than persons," she writes.[120] The Orientalist fashions and fragrances of the 1920s romanticized and feminized the East; there was an idealized potentiality imbued into these objects, as though they might visually or sensorily transport the wearer to an exotic locale or state of being – if only temporarily.[121] In other words, glamour afforded wealthy European and American buyers a form of escapism, rather than permanent exile into otherness. Dyhouse notes that, by the 1930s, glamour's primary connotations were no longer travel, but Hollywood's lineup of female stars.[122] Glamour's artifacts of imperialist conquest were thus replaced with those of a star-obsessed materialist culture, effectively absorbing any lingering associations with the East into Hollywood's own brand of imperialist fantasy.

Throughout the 1930s, glamour continued to be a contentious topic. Many beauty reporters adopted euphemistic synonyms, which privileged white middle-class notions of decorum, while nonetheless engaging women as consumers: "this business of charm, or glamour, or whatever your particular term for it may be," wrote one exasperated columnist.[123] "Charm," a term heavily employed by the decade's beauty reporters, exhausted glamour of its most transgressive connotations, but still encouraged women to pay attention to their looks, and to buy

---

[120] Carol Dyhouse, *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism* (London: Zed Books, 2010), 28,

[121] Emblematic of this trend: In 1925, Jacques Guerlain created his masterwork perfume, Shalimar, named for the Gardens of Shalimar in India.

[122] Dyhouse, 29.

[123] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Look in the Mirror! How do you rate yourself?" *Photoplay*, January 1932, 70.

into the day's most sought-after fashions, cosmetics, and beauty services. Hollywood, as Postrel suggests, slowly inoculated the threat that glamour posed to the American moral order. It was during this decade that the film industry reined in on glamour, commodifying its "magic," its occultism, and its otherness. The "u" might have snuck back in after a few failed attempts, but glamour, as a technology of mass consumer culture, was All American.

Modern Magic and the Business of Selling Illusion

The spectacle of femininity that the film industry's makeup men were said to have "mastered" was not simply one to be looked at, but one that, with new Hollywood-endorsed products on the market, was available for purchase. Stephen Gundle argues that glamour is a quintessentially modern phenomenon that best thrives in a "culture of dreams" – in societies in which aspirations are channeled through acts of consumption. Of its early modern origins, he writes: "It was not a property of the well-born or the well-bred and there was no such thing as pure or off-the-market glamour. It had no prior existence before becoming commodified and commercialized."[124] In this sense, glamour's ties to occult mysticism are only vestigially manifest in its promise of transformation, and an investment in material objects that might aid in the construction of an idealized self-image. "The trappings of glamour – makeup, clothes, accessories," Gundle writes, "give everyone a chance in theory of defying the effects of age and the limitations of the physical body. Through them, a vision of the dream self can be forged."[125]

[124] Stephen Gundle, *Glamour: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

[125] Ibid, 4.

Nigel Thrift refers to these objects as the "technologies of glamour": products of consumer capitalism which enable the aesthetic manipulation of surfaces, thus producing new affective fields and new modes of self-representation. He writes: "Style is a modification of being, which produces captivation, in part through our own explorations of it."[126] Though it may be one of glamour's most persuasive fallacies that it can be possessed by just about anyone, regardless of their social or economic status, it is, however, the commoditized object that promises to bridge the gap between the individual and, as Gundle terms it, the "dream self."

In this way, the 1930s cohort of makeup artists participated in another important facet of glamour: the business of "selling illusion." As Kathy Peiss has shown, by the end of the 1920s, the formerly women-led beauty business was primarily dominated by men.[127] Max Factor, who had started his career in Hollywood as a supplier of theatrical makeup, was a major player in the new mass market for cosmetics. This lineup of businessmen in the cosmetics industry included the Westmores of the short-lived House of Westmore, Charles Revson of Revlon, and Thomas Lyle Williams of Maybelline. The burgeoning cosmetics industry was, in many ways, legitimized with men at the helm – but not just any men. In the popular press, Max Factor and the Westmores were depicted as good men of science – men who embodied white, heterosexual norms and who were often photographed wearing lab coats. This publicity helped to cleanse the modern cosmetics industry of its historical association with unscrupulous profiteers, who sold unsafe products and false promises.

Critics of the industry argued, however, that archaic sales tactics were merely absorbed by modern advertising. The words "selling illusion" come from the 1934 book, *Skin Deep: The*

[126] Nigel Thrift, "The Material Practices of Glamour," *Journal of Cultural Economy,* 1 no. 1 (2008): 11.

[127] Peiss, 98.

Truth About Beauty Aids – Safe and Harmful, by consumer rights activist Mary Catherine Phillips. Phillips served on the Board of Directors for the advocacy group, Consumers' Research. Founded in 1929, the non-profit organization worked to raise public awareness of harmful ingredients in everyday consumer products, as well as the truth about deceptive advertising and PR. Consumers' Research were instrumental to the much-debated revision of the Pure Food and Drug Act, which, when first passed in 1906, did not anticipate the 1930s widespread use of beauty aids, nor the power and prevalence of the modern media. Inger L. Stole articulates the rise of American advertising "propaganda," which toyed with consumers' emotions to make the sale:

> Many advertising executives learned from the successful use of wartime propaganda that powerful images and slogans provided a key to controlling the public's actions, including their consumer choices. Advertisers' use of trademark or brand names helped serve this purpose, as did advertisements that stressed glossy illustrations over information. The emotional attributes associated with a trademark, and the corollary idea that the consumer could best be reached by an appeal to irrational thinking and unconscious desire, fit manufacturers' purpose perfectly.[128]

With sophisticated imagery bolstered by psychological studies into human behavior, the goal of 1930s advertising was to "sell illusion" to the American consumer. Beauty propaganda, however, not only encouraged irrational decision-making, disappointment, and financial debt – in the worst-case scenarios, it killed.

In one of the most famous of Consumers' Research publications*, 100,000,000 Guinea Pigs* (1933), authors Arthur Kallet and F.J Schlink warn Americans against the "beauty promised by magic and mysterious potions," which contained, amongst other dangerous substances, lead, arsenic, and rat poison.[129] Philips's *Skin Deep* told a similar story of "the magic that comes in

[128] Inger L. Stole, *Advertising on Trial: Consumer Activism and Corporate Public Relations in the 1930s* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 15-16.

[129] Arthur Kallet and F.J. Schlink, *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs: Dangers in Everyday Foods, Drugs, and Cosmetic*s (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1933), 78.

jars and bottles," educating the consumer of the dangerous, deadly, or merely ineffective ingredients found in popular beauty aids.[130] The criticism did not end with books and pamphlets. An exhibit at the Chicago World Fair in 1933, called the American Chamber of Horrors, showcased the dark side of makeup in gruesome detail. In discomfiting contrast with the event's celebrated theme, "A Century of Progress," the diorama featured the tragic tale of a woman who, in preparation for a PTA event, had visited her local beauty salon to have her eyelashes tinted with a product called Lash-Lure. As a result, her eyes had incurred disfiguring ulcerations, leading to permanent blindness.

The American Chamber of Horrors "pulled back the curtain" on beauty propaganda. It exposed the horror implicated in the pursuit of glamour, or, we might say, the "dream self." It dispelled Lash-Lure's "magic" and the empty promise of self-transformation generated by the company's marketing and advertising campaigns. "This is the manufacturer's version of the effect of this aniline eyelash dye," the exhibit explains, with an arrow pointing to a hand-drawn image of a woman with beautiful dark lashes (fig. 15). Another arrow points to a photograph of a woman with eyes corroded. "Total blindness was its actual effect in at least one instance."[131]

[130] M.C. Phillips, *Skin Deep: The Truth About Beauty Aids – Safe and Harmful* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1934).
[131] Ruth deForest Lamb and George Larrick, "The American Chamber of Horrors," Chicago World Fair, 1933-1934, Chicago, Illinois.

Figure 15. Lash-Lure in the American Chamber of Horrors at the Chicago World Fair, 1933.

The fact that this tragedy had befallen a white, middle-class woman was an important detail for this American horror story. As "making up" became a normalized ritual for white middle- and upper-class women, toxicity in cosmetics surfaced as a topic of concern. Of course, more individuals wearing makeup meant more opportunities for adverse reactions, and thus more public attention; however, toxins also signified old, unregulated selling practices, deviant femininity, sex workers, and lower-class women – women who would risk their lives in pursuit of vanity, only to appear "cheap." Even the term, "snake oil salesmen," which is often used to describe the seedy profit-hungry sellers of dubious health and beauty solutions, is a racialized concept. Often believed to refer to the use of water snakes in Chinese medicine, the term connotes an alluring and deceptive "magic" that is Other to Western modernity. Many members of the consumer rights movement were feminists, who interrogated the cosmetics industry for the health and well-being of American women; however, it is important to reflect on how their activism, perhaps inadvertently, reinforced the existing notion that white middle- and upper-class femininity stood for "purity." Indeed, African American women were especially at risk for

reactions to popular skin lightening products, but the push to ban toxins from cosmetic formulations was largely propelled by stories of white women, who had made fatal or debilitating mistakes as they chased white American beauty ideals.

Max Factor and the Westmores, backed by the science of the motion picture industry, dominated the makeup business during a decade when it was placed squarely under the nation's microscope. The "beauty culture" professions were subjected to harsh scrutiny, as the government sought to regulate cosmetology practices and institute universal licensing and examination procedures. Concurrently, members of Congress spent years deliberating over the proposed changes to existing Food and Drug laws, to reach a solution that would please big businesses and keep constituents alive. In a 1934 congressional hearing, Congressman William Sirovich delivered an impassioned speech on the dangerous substances in everyday consumer products, including that which was lurking in "cosmetics that scarify rather than beautify."[132]

To "scarify" was to have an adverse reaction, much like that of the unfortunate woman whose eyes had been corroded in her futile quest for glamour. It is subtly apparent, however, that "scarify" bore residual cultural connotations – old prejudices that glommed on to the consumer rights movement and the pushback against unregulated beauty aids. With the rise of the modern cosmetics industry, the white middle-class American woman was polluted, literally and metaphorically. We can still observe traces of this problematic discourse today in the "clean beauty" movement, which like this proto-iteration, is largely comprised of women-run organizations with the goal of protecting the consumer from big corporations and failing government regulations. In the movement's marketing and advertising, however, "clean beauty," is frequently imaged as white, middle, or upper-class. The antithesis of "clean," "toxic" often

[132] Congressional Record – House, March 6, 1934, 3833.

stands for those at the margins – those who cannot afford the high price tag of clean beauty, or whose proximity to environmental toxins is normalized as a necessary evil of the modern world.

Glamour might elude definition, but most consistently, it involves artifice and illusion: It was the allure of the screen star or the "dream self," just as it was the deception of the "cosmetics propaganda" that filled advertising sections of newspapers and magazines. It was the beautiful woman who could change her face; it was the false promise of Lash-Lure and the endless list of innocuous but ineffective products that enticed the consumer with the idea of a better life. We might argue that the 1930s attempted to purge glamour of all kinds of toxins. On screen, the transgressive femininity of the "glamorous type" was ultimately tempered by her association with Hollywood's makeup men. On drug store shelves, the same men served to assuage the public's fears of old, unregulated beauty treatments, which threatened the physical and moral health of white middle- and upper-class womanhood. What was left, after a decade of scrutiny, was no less artifice and illusion, but one that was newly backed by the epitome of modern innovation: the magic of the Hollywood dream factory.

Kiss and Make-Up *(1934)*

The Paramount musical comedy, *Kiss and Make-Up* (1934), in many ways embodies the era's complicated relationship to glamour, science, and the "synthetic beauty" of the made-up woman. Although it is never explicitly stated, the film makes clear references to Hollywood's infamous makeup men. Cary Grant plays Dr. Maurice Lamar, a renowned Parisian beautician

and plastic surgeon, who is better known round the world as the "high priest" of the Temple of Beauty, where he performs a full range of treatments on beauty-seeking women. For Lamar, "ugliness is a disease," and he has dedicated his years of advanced medical training to eradicating it from the female population. Although the film's contemporary listing on IMDB suggests that the Lamar character is an allusion to Max Factor, it is Lamar's estranged colleague who is the true Factor doppelgänger. Lucien Littlefield plays a bookish scientist named Max Pascal, who we first encounter in a room full of beakers and Erlenmeyer flasks – much like how Factor was often pictured in his Hollywood laboratory. Unlike Lamar, Pascal is a man of integrity. He prefers to pursue the goal of "scientific discovery," experimenting on rabbits and guinea pigs, rather than Lamar's "guinea pig" of choice: women.[133]

The film's parodic commentary announces itself through the mise en scène. It is hard to ignore the fact that, by its design and architecture, the Temple of Glamour bears an uncanny resemblance to both Factor's and the Westmores' Hollywood salons (in 1934, the former had been in operation for two years and the latter, which was in fact publicized as a "temple of beauty," was under construction). Modern medicine meets the ancient world as Dr. Lamar attends to his patients surrounded by classical décor and throngs of female assistants who wear the long, draped, Grecian style of garment popularized during this period by the designs of French couturiers Madeleine Vionnet and Madame Grès. As though they were living, breathing versions of the statues that appear throughout the facility, they are "masterpieces," as Lamar refers to his creations, but also imitations – standardized products which, by the end of the film, are deemed worthless, vapid, and symbols of a corrupt materialistic system. Indeed, behind this idyllic exterior, the Temple of Beauty, is a torture chamber: White clay masks, representing the

[133] *Kiss and Make-Up*, directed by Harlan Thompson and Jean Negulesco (Paramount Pictures Studio, 1934).

ideal feminine visage, line the walls of the examination room as Dr. Lamar performs his Frankenstein-like procedures. When he removes the wrappings of a client and would-be love interest, her beaming new face is revealed, already wearing a full face of makeup and a big smile. She asks, "Don't tell me there's still something you don't like?"

Horror tropes amplify the critique of the modern beauty industry. The Temple of Beauty is a full-service salon; treatments include not only makeup application, but slimming massage, hair removal, and belief-defying plastic surgeries that foretell a disturbing – albeit more "beautiful" – future. A female esthetician plucks a woman's brows to a foreboding and tense musical score, highlighting the pain that women are so often willing to endure in pursuit of physical perfection. The suspenseful tone dissipates and is replaced by playful, upbeat instrumentals, when Lamar takes the tweezers from his assistant and adjusts her inferior technique. She greets Lamar with a smile and the horror of glamour is temporarily subdued.

The uncanny nightmare that is the Temple of Beauty includes references to glamour's enmeshment in Orientalist discourse. On several occasions, a character listed as the "Maharaja of Boorona" and his many wives are seen parading through the facility in traditional dress, accompanied by vaguely Indian music. Nevertheless, the Temple of Beauty is indeed a temple of Western beauty. In a radio address to his followers, Lamar plugs his face cream, "Creme Supreme." An indigenous woman in tribal dress generously applies the product to her dark skin as Lamar's disembodied on-air voice explains that the cream bestows a "pink and white complexion that is lovely women's birthright." As for the Maharaja and his wives, they too, visited the temple to attain a white beauty ideal – ironically one that is itself implicated in glamour's commodified and whitewashed image of the East. The man has chosen to have his wives "done-over" after a night at a Parisian music hall. He shows Lamar's assistant his

programme, which features a hand-drawn image of a scantily clad group of harem women. “If this is a ‘Night in the Orient,’” he says. “I’m being gypped.” Pre-transformation, the wives’ faces are partially obscured by veils and strategic editing, so we have limited information as to what they looked like originally; however, after Lamar has worked his “magic,” they are clearly played by white women with little attempt to disguise their race or ethnicity. The Temple of Beauty reveals that a “Night in the Orient” is little more than a Western fantasy.

Lamar engages in a romantic affair with one of his clients, which not only eroticizes the relationship between him and his “creations,” but cements his status as an alpha male. When the client’s irate husband confronts Lamar and accuses him of “messing around” with his wife (in other words, “making her over”), Lamar insists that their relationship is business-only. He then further aggravates the man when he tells him that he cannot go in to see his wife as she might be undressed, but that he, as her doctor, will attend to her in his stead. Even though Lamar is a sleazy and dishonest character, he somehow remains salvageable as a romantic lead. He is so desirable that his plain, lovestruck secretary is willing to overlook his transgressions and take him back, when the made-up woman is discarded, and the Temple of Beauty is transformed into a scientific laboratory.

The film premiered in June of 1934, but when officially released a month later, had undergone significant changes, including an alternate ending, to accord with the newly implemented Production Code. Notably, in the original script, Lamar does not fully renounce the glamour business. When he is reunited with his beloved secretary, he tells her, “Oh, darling, your eyebrows do need plucking. You don't mind if I mention it.” She responds: “No. Maurice, please make me beautiful.” Once it had passed the censors, however, the film closes with a simple, “I

love you," and a kiss.[134] A passionate ending, to be sure, but apparently not as injurious to the nation's moral character as the implication that a naturally lovely and upright woman might indulge in a little eyebrow plucking.

In some ways, *Kiss and Make-Up* seems to malign the male beauty experts who were integral to the studios' operations; it is, in this sense, curiously at odds with the influx of PR that bolstered these men, their vocation, and their companies. At the same time, the film offers us a window into the period's meditations on the glamour business at large. It depicts the breakdown of marriages; a husband's desperate attempt to regain control over his beauty-obsessed wife; the intermingling of white women with the racialized Other; and science, corrupted by money and greed. There are indeed traces of the fictional Dr. Lamar in the Glamour Masters' public personae. As will be addressed in the following section, these men were, like Lamar, considered "High Priests" ("Masters," Kingpins," and "Geniuses") in their field. So too was their trade often eroticized – but only insofar as it confirmed the makeup man's sexual orientation and masculine prowess. Hollywood's makeup men were neither Maurice Lamar, nor Max Pascal, but the two men combined – committed to science and the production of "natural beauty."

Makeup and the Art of Masculinity:
Max Factor and the Westmores of Hollywood

Hollywood's glamour men rose to prominence as the studio system emerged as a distinctly hierarchical and vertically integrated commercial enterprise. It is important to note,

[134] Harlan Thompson, George Marion Jr., and Jane Hinton, "Screenplay: *Kiss and Make-Up*," 1934.

however, that the industry's rush to masculinize the makeup trade did not occur in a vacuum, but rather, alongside similar "genderings" of various filmmaking roles. The movie business was big business, with large sums of capital investment at stake. The day's patriarchal standards dictated that men were uniquely equipped to oversee its operations.

The American cosmetics industry experienced a comparable transformation during this period, as large corporations run primarily by male executives came to replace small-scale women-led entrepreneurships. While this growing market indeed attracted many successful businesswomen (among them, Helena Rubenstein and Elizabeth Arden, in addition to the legions of much lesser-known beauty culturists who worked locally in salons, drug stores, and department stores), the vast majority of the era's prominent cosmetics companies were controlled by men.[135] As Peiss argues, by the mid-1920s, local-run and service-oriented beauty culturalists were struggling to compete with large cosmetics firms: "Businesswomen were at a disadvantage in the new market for cosmetics, with its increased competition for consumers, commitment to costly national advertising, drug- and department-store distribution, and greater need for capital."[136] Even as intermediary and service-oriented jobs for women proliferated in this feminized industry, men were, by and large, the face of company management.

Male-led cosmetics firms were also financially and politically positioned to best respond to the nation's mounting need for health and safety regulations. Peiss notes that consumers were increasingly more likely to purchase beauty supplies from department and drug stores, rather than from their local women-run parlors.[137] Major retailers carried nationally advertised and

[135] Peiss, 107.

[136] Ibid, 106.

[137] Ibid.

trusted brands, which customers could, in theory, count on for nontoxic ingredients. Additionally, the big cosmetics firms could afford media-based advertising and celebrity endorsements. For many consumers who felt intimately connected to screen stars, this added an extra layer of assurance. Max Factor had a particular advantage in this market, due to his professional connections and the fact that the products themselves had originated in the film industry. By the 1930s, these professional-use formulas, with few modifications, were repackaged for the mass market and sold for everyday use. Their vetted, observable success in Hollywood was one of their most advertised selling-points.

Gendered Labor and the Studio System

Makeup artistry was not the only filmmaking trade to be "gendered" as the studio system took shape. One commonly cited example of this phenomenon is epitomized in the studio system's traditionally femininized role of the film editor. David Meuel demonstrates how, by the mid-1920s, women were pushed-out of the most high-ranking and visible fields, such as direction and production, but remained behind-the-scenes as editors (or "cutters," as they were called). Meuel argues that "as various work roles became more specialized, these roles also became 'gendered.'"[138] During this period, filmmaking conventions were codified for efficiency and profit, which effectively essentialized industry jobs as either masculine or feminine. Film editing was considered by many to be manual and tedious labor, on par with common forms of

[138] David Meuel, *Women Film Editors: Unseen Artists of American Cinema* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company Inc., 2016), 10.

"women's work," such as sewing and knitting. On the other end of the spectrum, the positions associated with the most leadership and creative agency were masculinized. Meuel writes:

> Reflecting the masculine sensibility of the industrial business model that film companies now embraced – and cognizant of the fast-growing costs of films – the new thinking was that filmmaking had become a far more serious business, one in which strong no-nonsense men were best suited for key management, production, and technical roles. To reinforce this stereotype, some male directors (most famously DeMille and Erich von Stroheim) even adopted overtly masculine forms of dress such as jodhpurs and high laced-up boots as well as stern, often harsh, on-set behaviors.[139]

Although makeup artistry might not have been the most conventionally masculine vocation, popular fan magazines made it clear that men unequivocally dominated the trade in Hollywood. One *Screenland* gossip columnist humorously recounted how she had vainly set out on a "woman hunt." In her painstaking attempt to locate where women called the shots in the movie-business, she was dismayed to discover that men oversaw the traditionally feminized work of interior set decoration, wardrobe, and even makeup.[140]

Women screen makeup artists did exist during this period, but rarely in leadership positions. Compared with their male counterparts, makeup women took care of the more menial tasks of applying a "suntan" or ensuring that an actress's body was appropriately shade-matched to her face. These women generally worked under the lead of the male visionary, whose creative talents placed him on the level of directors and producers. Even though he would not be credited until 1937, his work was well-documented and acclaimed in industry magazines, as well as in the popular press. The bigger the star, the more critical it was that she be made up by one of the male department heads. As one reporter explained: "Many of the make-up people in the studios are men. There is usually a special department devoted to this work, and the head of this is nearly

---

[139] Ibid.

[140] Beth Brown, "Man Made Movies for Women," *Screenland*, June 1934, 80.

always a man, although many of the operatives are women. This head of the department makes up all the most important players."[141]

Women's subjugated role in the screen makeup process was, in many ways, representative of the greater gender division of labor on film sets, as well as the masculinization of expertise. The author's choice of the word, "operative," to describe the female body artists is suggestive of a mechanized and dehumanized labor that is devoid of creative autonomy. Indeed, body makeup required significantly less artistry and skill than that which was required for the face. In many ways, the makeup woman's job was akin to that of an assembly-line worker in a factory setting; little could go amiss if instructions were provided and implemented. Additionally, most of the makeup woman's labor was invisible in the sense that it was rarely reported on, whereas the work of the studio department heads and suppliers were at the forefront of film industry research, which was venerated in both trade and popular magazines.

The role of the female body artist elucidates, via contrast, an important aspect of the Glamour Master persona: Hollywood's top makeup men were scientists and inventors, who worked to methodize the trade so that it would operate at top efficiency; however, the men themselves were never depicted as mere cogs in the studio machine. According to their publicity accounts, the Glamour Masters' ingenuity transcended the mindless tedium of factory-like production. In the context of film industry labor, creative vision is typically gendered masculine for reasons both concrete (men were far more likely than women to hold positions which afforded it), and rhetorical. We might observe a similar tendency in early film studies' canonization of the auteur-director, whose own creative vision was said to have thrived in opposition to the studio system's heavily commercialized and formulaic offerings, for which

[141] Helen Woodward, "Make-Up," *Muncie Evening Press*, Friday July 13, 1931, 16.

women were primary audiences and consumers. The production of "genius" is so often entangled in the production of masculinity, even in the case of he who controls or "masters" the highly feminized (and indeed commercialized and formulaic) art of screen makeup.

Makeup Men versus Makeup Geniuses

Many actors of the silent era, having acquired the skills of the makeup trade, would eventually give-up on their acting pursuits. Owing to their industry connections, established over many years in the business, these men would settle more firmly into the role of makeup man.[142] In Hollywood, the acting profession was oversaturated and precarious, especially if one did not possess the right look. Makeup skills, on the other hand, were rare and sought after by the studios.[143] Not all makeup men, however, were considered *makeup geniuses* – this aggrandizing moniker was reserved for the studios' highly publicized department heads.

The youngest of the Westmore brothers, Frank, once recalled that the term "makeup genius" was the preferred job title of his older brother, Perc, who ran the makeup department at Warner Brothers-First National. Newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst was alleged to be a big fan of the Westmore men, especially Perc. Hearst's girlfriend, actress Marion Davies, would be so overcome with anxiety prior to shooting a scene, that she would routinely spoil her

[142] Jurisdictional disputes in the motion-picture Industry: hearings before a special subcommittee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Eightieth Congress, first-session, pursuant to H. Res. 111 (Eightieth Congress), (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1948) 1013.

[143] Lyle Rooks, "Genius in a Rouge Box: Screen Stars Are Made or Broken By the Art of the Make-Up Men," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 29, 1935, 4.

makeup. [144] Frank recalls that Perc's patience and compassion for Davies, who required multiple reapplications, was compensated by Hearst, who "left a standing order with his influential newspapers to give Perc Westmore all the space he ever wanted for public-relations purposes."[145] As a result, the notion that a few elite men of the trade were befitting of the title, "makeup genius," was widely disseminated in Hearst's papers, particularly via Hollywood gossip columnist, Louella Parsons:

> Louella Parsons alone devoted thousands and thousands of words to "this makeup genius," as he referred to himself and the other Westmores. In fact, he completely obliterated the less flamboyant names for our profession, such as "makeup man" or even "makeup artist." I grew up thinking that "makeup genius" was part of our family name, because that's the way the newspapers and magazines always described us. (Perc generously did not restrict the term only to himself in his brilliant public-relations gambits.)[146]

Parsons, who eventually took up residence in the Westmore beauty salon so that she would have direct access to all the celebrity gossip, reported favorably on the Westmore family and their talents. She once claimed that, after a morning spent in Perc's chair, "all defects disappear as if by magic and a new face looks out upon you."[147] Parsons, however, was not the only member of the press to build-up Perc and his contemporaries. In addition to the title of "makeup genius," reporters used clever terms and phrases, including "glamour master," as well as "makeup maestro," and "The Rembrandt of the Make-Up World." In one instance that is most suggestive of the trade's creative hierarchy, Perc Westmore is named "kingpin among Hollywood make-up men"[148] Director Howard Hughes once said, "They worked on an actress's face with the quick,

---

[144] Westmore and Davidson, 76.

[145] Ibid, 78.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Louella Parsons, "Acting Job Tough For Louella, *Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph*, September 26, 1937, 52.

[148] Grace Grandville, "Beauty," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 1, 1935, 38.

sure creative strokes of a great painter like Gauguin."[149] As one reporter summed up: "The Westmore family is known as the Royal Family of Hollywood. Absolute monarchs in their field, the science and art of make-up."[150]

Most of the studio system's creative laborers were below-the-line employees; however, the Westmores, who held management positions, took in considerable sums of income, and were Hollywood insiders, as well as regular attendees at all the most lavish and exclusive social events. It is challenging, however, from a historiographical perspective, to separate truth from lore, as so much of the Westmore family history was produced by the Westmores themselves. Masters of image making, the Westmores projected an idea of wealth, fame, and success that manifested as their reality. In 1935, the Westmores opened their opulent Hollywood salon on Sunset Boulevard. *The Hollywood Mirror* used every adjective and noun available to invoke the impression of opulence, grandeur, and religious transcendence:

> Picture this. A thickly carpeted floor, the color of peach blush. Bronze and white furnishings. White lamps. White drapes with crystal fringe. White subdued lights. Yes, even the attendants, beautiful girls dressed in white, all bringing an air of restful beauty and peace, to this shrine of beauty.
>
> The golden guest register, to which Perc Westmore ushered us, rested on a crescent desk of antique white, the sides of which were murals in blending pastels, depicting the beauty rites of ancient Egyptian women.[151]

The facility was a testament to the Westmores' reign in Hollywood. The "first family of makeup," however, was powerful not merely because of their talents (and they were indeed

---

[149] Howard Hughes quoted in Alan Cartnal, "The Hollywood Westmores: Sitting on a Powder Keg," *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1976.

[150] "White House Opens New Cosmetic Salon," *The Press Democrat*, Santa Rosa, August 15, 1937, 8.

[151] "To the House of Westmore will come the most beautiful women in the world," *The Hollywood Mirror*, May 1935, 8.

talented), but because they knew how to sell themselves to the public, as well as to the Hollywood elite, with whom they were well-acquainted. At one point, Perc had a family crest made for what became known as the Westmore Dynasty, constructing an aristocratic lineage where there was none.[152]

The chasm that separated the "makeup geniuses" from the "makeup men" made national headlines during an industry-wide jurisdictional strike in 1937, when the House of Westmore salon was vandalized by disgruntled members of the Federal Motion Picture Crafts (FMPC). The FMPC was a newly formed organization, comprised of industry workers seeking more autonomy for local crafts and an alternative to the International Association of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE). IATSE, at the time, was run by leaders who largely worked in collaboration with producers and were thus less invested in the interest of the worker.[153] It is unclear as to where the Westmores stood on the matter of the strike, or on workers' rights more broadly; however, to avoid having their reputations damaged, none of the Westmore brothers had joined the picket lines. The saboteurs, armed with knives and a gun, had amassed up to $10,000 in damages, it was reported. Police believed that the Westmores' palatial establishment had been targeted due to an unsubstantiated rumor that the Westmores were supplying materials to non-union members to replace the striking makeup men.

It is no surprise that the House of Westmore, with its "imposing exterior fronting on Sunset Boulevard," became a symbol of the Hollywood oligarchy. The vandalism reports were gripping; they emphasized the House of Westmore's unmatched grandeur, which had been

[152] Westmore and Davidson, 108-109.

[153] Ida Jeter, "The Collapse of the Federated Motion Picture Crafts: A Case Study of Class Collaboration in the Motion Picture Industry," *Journal of the University Film Association* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 37-45.

tarnished in the invasion. It was said that after breaking and entering, the rioters proceeded to "spread creosote over the ornate furnishings," emptying cosmetics cabinets and dumping the precious wares indiscriminately across the floor.[154] While this news story might have bred sympathy for the striking workers, it was far more likely to have contributed to the sensationalism that more commonly characterized the Westmore publicity.

Makeup geniuses, like Factor and the Westmores, were integral to the film industry's coming of age. Neither the woman operative nor the average makeup man were responsible for the highly important task of making up leading actors and actresses. The makeup artists integral to this facet of the star-making process were all men, who were themselves celebrities and household names. It was their artistic and scientific knowledge – codified in the form of makeup charts, "maps" and, in the most ambitious attempt, a three-dimensional device known as the Beauty Calibrator – that was disseminated to the employees who worked under them, should they ever be absent from the process.

The Production of Genius: The Makeup Man's Laboratory

The Glamour Master public relations pushed the notion that screen makeup was a sophisticated art, guided by modern research and testing methods, and led by men – "geniuses" – who represented scientific integrity. The women they produced were said to embody "naturalness," which, in theory, was a far cry from the syntheticism of the cinema's glamorous type. Gone were the "extreme methods of the past," wrote House of Westmore representative

[154] "Cosmetic Salon Wrecked by Armed Vandals," *Daily News*, Los Angeles, May 4. 1937, 1.

Mel Archer, for a publication run by New York based film censorship organization, the National Board of Review.[155] As scientists, first and foremost, the makeup man's factory-laboratory was not Dr. Lamar's Temple of Beauty – although the press had bestowed upon the Westmore salon that very same name. It was, according to Archer, a clean and controlled environment:

> I'd like to say a few words about this production chief and his studio, because most people have strange ideas about this department and imagine it full of grease, bottles, little boxes, and even dungarees. Actually, the production chief's room is more like a doctor's laboratory than anything else. He and his assistants are dressed in spotless white, and the whole place is immaculately clean.[156]

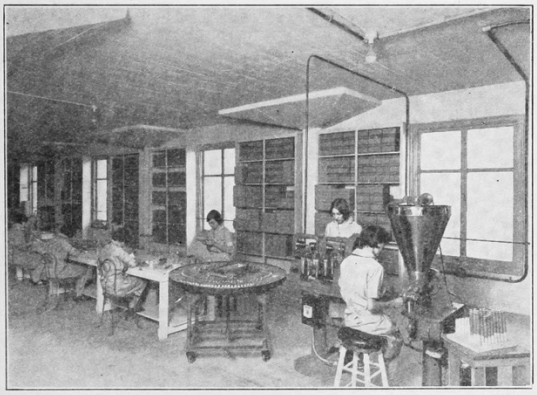
Max Factor's laboratory was described, similarly, as the pinnacle of modern innovation (fig. 16; fig. 17). Behind the storefront exterior, the renowned Hollywood makeup studio boasted a state-of-the-art facility where makeup was produced on "the finest machinery obtainable."[157] It was women, primarily, who worked in the factory; however, its operations were overseen by Factor himself. Factor's advanced methods were largely indebted to film industry-funded research, impelled by rapid developments in lighting and film technologies, which had rendered older practices obsolete.

[155] Mel Archer, "The Make-Up Artist in Hollywood," *The National Board of Review*, October 1939, 9

[156] Ibid.

[157] *The International Photographer*, March 1929, 11.

The magnificent new home of Max Factor Products, largest manufactory of make-up materials in America. Their Panchromatic Make-Up has swept both stage and screen and has become internationally famous over night. "Factor's Products—The Greatest Factor in Make-Up."



This is a corner in the new Max Factor Make-up Studios in Hollywood. The machinery shown here is that of filling and closing grease paint tubes. The Max Factor Laboratories are equipped with the finest machinery obtainable. Few realize the magnitude of this institution or its wide scope of operations. It is the only establishment of its kind in America, and its importance to the Motion Picture Industry is keenly felt by every Cinematographer.

Figure 16. Exterior of Max Factor's studio. *American Cinematographer*, February 1929, p. 30.

Figure 17. Interior of Max Factor's studio. *The International Photographer*, March 1929, p. 11.

Factor's facial measuring device, the Beauty Calibrator (or Beauty Micrometer), cemented his status as the "master" of feminine beauty (fig. 18). The machine promised to mechanize the makeup process, by allowing the artist to paint a woman's face according to his prescribed algorithm for feminine beauty. When the Beauty Calibrator was first introduced to the public in the February 1933 issue of *Popular Science Monthly*, it did not overtly declare its Hollywood connections. The then-unnamed instrument was featured alongside other hopeful innovations, each offering a solution to an emergent complication of modern living.[158] The Beauty Calibrator is pictured in use, worn over the whole head of a woman surrounded by three unidentified male lab technicians (who are, in fact, Factor and two of the Westmore brothers). Above the image, a header reads, "Machine Measures Beauty of the Face," followed by the description:

[158] "Machine Measures Beauty of the Face," *Popular Science Monthly,* February 1933, 48.

> Even beauty may now be reduced to cold, hard figures, according to the inventors of a device that is said to record the contours of the face with thousandth-of-an-inch accuracy. Beauty shops might use the device, the inventors say, to learn how to change their customers' features. In the inventors' opinion, the following measurements are ideal: *nose*, same length as the height of the forehead; *eyes*, separated by a space the width of one eye.[159]

The Calibrator was, in many ways, a concrete manifestation of the physiognomic theory that had, for decades, informed theatrical makeup practices. According to a 1935 issue of *Modern Mechanix,* the Beauty Calibrator "accurately registers an actor's facial measurements and discloses which features should be reduced or enhanced in the makeup process."[160] Upon determining the degree to which the subject's face deviated from the ideal feminine face, the technician shades the actress's face accordingly. With a measured application of Max Factor products, eyes could be made bigger, noses slimmer, and irregularities balanced to achieve calculable perfection. The Calibrator was purportedly a professional-use machine; however, in practice, the cumbersome, archaic-looking device served primarily to pique the curiosity of the movie-going public.

[159] Ibid.

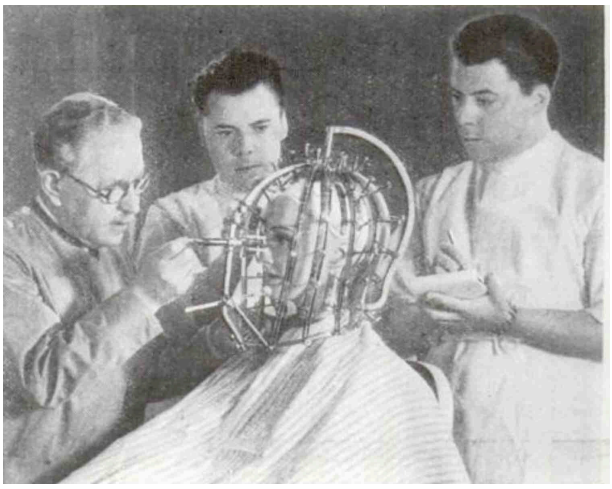


Figure 18. Max Factor and Perc and Ern Westmore with the Beauty Calibrator. *Popular Science Monthly*, February 1933, p. 48.

A more palatable version of the Calibrator was created by Factor's main competitor and collaborator, Perc Westmore. Westmore's facial charts (or "maps," as he jokingly referred to them) detailed the ideal screen makeup application for individual stars (fig. 19). These makeup charts were comprised of a standardized sketch of a woman's face, broken up into numbered regions, indicating which shade was to be used in that area.[161] Describing the studio's highly technical makeup process*, The Reader's Digest* reported: "If the combination is successful, she is permanently assigned that face, and a chart is made of it."[162] From then on, wherever the actress went, the chart went with her.

[161] Perc Westmore, "Cooperation Bulks Big in Work of Make-Up," *American Cinematographer*, December 1937, 497.

[162] Marguerite Wagner, "Custom-Made Faces: Adapted from the Stage," *The Reader's Digest,* December 1936.

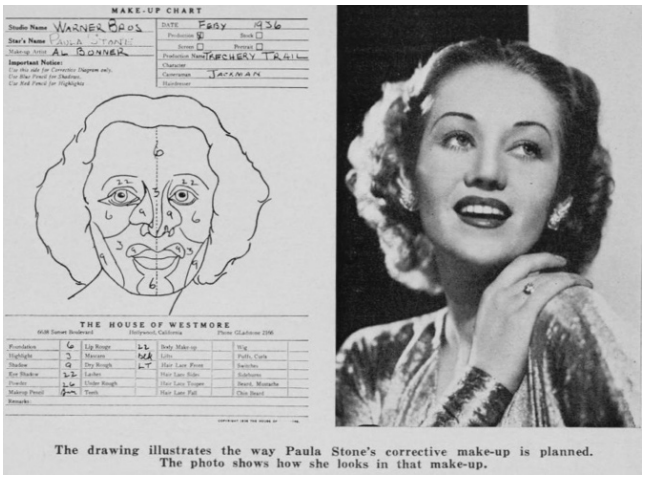


Figure 19. Westmore's facial maps. Perc Westmore, "Cooperation Bulks Big in Work of Make-Up," *American Cinematographer,* December 1937, p. 497.

Like Factor's Calibrator, Westmore's facial maps contributed to the production of American beauty standards. The numbers provide a recipe for "corrective" makeup, which works in cooperation with cinematographic technologies to produce a filmic illusion of the actress's face that is closer to society's feminine ideal – an ideal which was often implicated in white American aesthetic norms. In an issue of the trade journal, *American Cinematographer*, Westmore describes the methods used on actress Paula Stone. He explains that while the basic makeup techniques do not vary from actress to actress, in Stone's case, there was "no need to subdue the cheek bones," and so neither highlights nor shadows were to be applied in that area. Her lower jaw, on the other hand, was to be suppressed using a base shade darker than her natural skin tone.[163] Westmore's makeup charts visualize the codification of feminine beauty, as a reproduceable, step-by-step, or "color by numbers" process. It is unclear as to whether charts of this kind were also drawn-up for male stars; however, they were never reported on, nor were they used for demonstration purposes in industry journals. Westmore's facial maps suggest that

[163] Westmore, "Cooperation Bulks Big in Work of Make-Up," 497.

screen makeup is one part of a larger manufacturing process that produces the screen actress as a commodity. They mechanically produce illusions of femininity that have been largely devised by men.

In streamlining the screen makeup process, Westmore – one of Hollywood's foremost makeup artists and renowned Glamour Masters – demystifies and "masters" glamour. Based on the diagrams alone, one would surmise that beauty itself could be explained in technical terms, refined into data, and subsequently duplicated ad infinitum. In the aforementioned issue of *American Cinematographer*, Westmore is quoted as having said: "The man who tries to shroud either cinematography or make-up with an aura of mystery is fooling no one but himself. He is not increasing the importance of his work, but tearing it down."[164] Screen beauty was, however, not emptied of its "aura of mystery" – the discourse on screen makeup, is in fact, characterized by contradiction. Facial maps were intended to facilitate continuity and thus maintain the "movie magic," the illusion of feminine beauty, and the film's verisimilitude. The diagrams ensured that the star would read as the same individual, from one scene to the next, appearing seamless and thus effacing the labors involved in its production. Westmore's charts also made star beauty appear natural and authentic – the basic highlighting and contouring techniques, employed across projects, allowed her constructed facial image to coalesce with the star herself.

A similar paradox characterizes the Glamour Master persona. These men exuded a certain "aura of mystery," despite how their methods were distilled and disseminated. As Ronny Regev demonstrates, motion picture companies "subscribed to the industrial rationale emergent in America at the time," but nonetheless relied on the "unrulier talents of creative professionals." She argues that the creative laborer identity was thus defined by tension:

[164] Ibid, 496.

> The constant maneuvering between creativity and efficiency was embedded in the sensibility of all those involved, forging complex and unique worker identities. As it was institutionalized to fit the demands of the modern film business, every toil became an amalgam of creativity and productivity.[165]

The makeup man was both artist and technician – scientist and magician. In *Max Factor's Hints on the Art of Make-Up*, Factor wrote: "Remember, Make-Up is not a rigid science. It is an art; that offers wide latitude for individual methods and personal preferences as to technique."[166] Similarly, the Westmore family, who are frequently referred to as the Westmore Dynasty, were not "operatives," nor were they mere "makeup men." They were masters of their trade – in a word, *geniuses.*

A Most Virile Bunch: Sexuality and the Makeup Man

Hollywood's makeup men dominated in a field with undeniably feminized connotations. The makeup man, however, was discursively masculinized in the popular press, and his trade was often imbued with heterosexual eroticism. Female stars "just unbuttoned their minds," Wally Westmore remembered in 1956, metaphorically invoking the act of undressing.[167] In a similar vein, his brother Perc recalled the transformation of actress Olive Borden for the film *Fig Leaves*. "And there I applied to Olive's lovely body the preparation that rebuilt her lines," he stated. "Intimate, did I say. Well, you can picture it."[168] Makeup men would insist that these

---

[165] Ronny Regev, *Working in Hollywood: How the Studio System Turned Creativity into Labor* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 5.

[166] Max Factor, *Max Factor's Hints on the Art of Make-Up*, 3rd Edition (Hollywood: Max Factor's Make-Up Studios, 1933), 2.

[167] Wally Westmore, "I Make Up Hollywood," *Saturday Evening Post*, August 11, 1956, 17.

[168] Perc Westmore, "Secrets of the Make-Up Room," *Modern Screen*, May 1934, 29.

encounters were ultimately impersonal – it was all part of the job, to be sure. At the same time, the inherent physical intimacy of the star transformation was lucrative publicity fodder. While Borden was being primped and prodded by Westmore in his "private dressing room," her lover, actor George O'Brien, had allegedly worked himself into a cold sweat:

> George used to pace up and down the studio road outside the door. His temple muscles were twitching. I wouldn't even be surprised if he was muttering imprecations against the sort of business that made a man have to stand for it while his beloved was being pawed by some other man.[169]

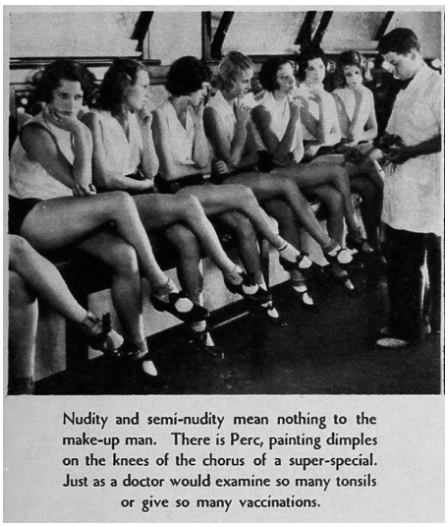
This publicity asserted the virility of the makeup man – one which was simultaneously hyped, hushed, and denied in the popular press. In one studio publicity image, Perc Westmore disinterestedly moves down the line of beautiful women, painting dimples to their exposed knees (fig. 20). "Nudity and semi-nudity mean nothing to the make-up man," reads the caption. "Just as a doctor would examine so many tonsils or give so many vaccinations."[170] This image of cold, clinical professionalism was, however, overshadowed by its implicit necessitation: Following an unspecified incident involving an artist who got "too handsy," Hollywood's makeup men were prohibited from taking their paintbrush below a woman's neck.[171] Generally, a male department head would be responsible for an actress's face, and then a woman body artist would be required to finish the job.

---

[169] Ibid, 116.

[170] Ibid, 29.

[171] Wally Westmore, 4.



Nudity and semi-nudity mean nothing to the make-up man. There is Perc, painting dimples on the knees of the chorus of a super-special. Just as a doctor would examine so many tonsils or give so many vaccinations.

Figure 20. Perc Westmore paints dimples on knees. "Secrets of the Make-Up Room," *Modern Screen*, May 1934, p. 29.

As men in the makeup business, Factor and the Westmores would have aroused suspicions: namely, that the man whose vocation was the powder puff was *himself* a "powder puff." As their trade and reputation began to expand outside of Hollywood, infiltrating white middle-class America with new commercial lines, these men, much like the actors they had made-up, were themselves celebrities, whose public images were consciously produced for broad appeal. Thus, while we might read the story of Olive Borden's makeover, which eroticized the encounter between the makeup artist and the screen actress, as common bait for the gossip-hungry fan magazine reader, we must also consider that this type of narrative would have necessarily reinstated the heterosexual masculinity of Hollywood's makeup men, had there been any doubt. Additionally, although the glamour men also worked on male actors, these encounters were not heavily publicized. On one hand, this served a commercial imperative – makeup on women's faces sold products. However, there is another facet: To have another man work on you in such an intimate manner, would have been homoeroticizing. Leading men often denied the use of basic screen makeup, which, in the eyes of the public without the technical knowledge, was

conflated and confused with the ultra-feminizing "beauty makeup." To maintain the image of American masculinity, actors were purported to shun makeup – even that which was only needed to cover red corpuscles or even-out the complexion for screen time.[172]

The family of Thomas Lyle Williams, founder of the first modern mascara brand, Maybelline, recalls that because the cosmetics industry was booming while most of the country suffered through the Great Depression, male beauty executives became the target of envy, suspicion, and resentment. If these men, were, in fact, "degenerates," their detractors would have one more reason to withdraw support from an industry experiencing an unprecedented and disproportionate amount of success.[173] Williams's relatives recall that, in the early to mid-1930s, public relations firms were sought out to construct a palatable public persona of the male beauty executive that would not violate the nation's moral standards. This publicity would counter the pervasive and irrational fear that homosexual beauty practitioners were the culprits responsible for America's moral degradation. Even decades later, the question of whether Hollywood's makeup men were indeed "sissies" continued to be assuaged by concertedly hyper-masculinizing PR. Of the makeup departments of the studio era, Wally Westmore reminisced: "In those days you had truckers, ex-football players, and lumberjacks rushing to get jobs in studio makeup departments."[174]

There is unfortunately scarce surviving evidence to argue conclusively that the traditionally hetero-masculine attributes of men in the cosmetics business were deliberately publicized to discourage allegations of homosexuality. However, publicity photographs and

---

[172] Merry Elkins, "The Westmores: Sculpting the Faces of the World," *American* Cinematographer, July 1984.

[173] Sharrie Williams and Bettie Youngs, *The Maybelline Story and the Spirted Family Dynasty Behind It* (Bettie Youngs Book Publishing, 2010), 140.

[174] Alan Cartnal, "The Hollywood Westmores: Sitting on a Powder Keg," *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1976.

articles that match these criteria are indeed present in the discourse and conspicuous in the regularity with which they appear. From displays of athleticism, family life, and scientific achievement, these images vary in content, but the message is conveyed all the same: These were men, who had entered a feminized profession, not because they themselves possessed woman-like qualities, but because they were the leaders and innovators who would cancel-out its negative connotations – make it safer, more regulated, and legitimate. The Westmore men were renowned for their numerous marriages and divorces, retrospectively referred to as "the most virile bunch one could possibly run across."[175] Factor and the Westmores were frequently pictured in ways that distanced them from women's vanity practices: wearing suits and lab coats, and thus playing-up their role as scientists and innovators.

Conclusion

In the 1930s, Max Factor and the Westmores were some of the most famous names in beauty. During a period in which the motion picture industry was undergoing major structural changes, they emerged as leaders, securing their revered station in the studio system hierarchy. The face of the glamorous movie star, increasingly synonymous with Hollywood itself, was, quite literally, in their hands. Although most film industry makeup artists worked below-the-line, uncredited, and struggling for fair wages and union representation, the Glamour Masters were neither tradesmen nor laborers, nor were they, like their female colleagues, "operatives." Their Hollywood connections made their affiliated consumer lines especially viable on the mass

[175] Julie Goldsmith Gilbert, "Touching Up Hollywood Visage," *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1976.

market. Their reputations as "star makers," and men invested in the most modern and up-to-date science and technology, gave them an edge over their competitors in a budding cosmetics business – one which was marred by its association with bad taste, low morals, false advertising, and dangerous and deadly ingredients. This discursive masculinization legitimized their role in two intertwined industries, and assuaged public anxiety over aberrant femininity and nonnormative sexuality; however, it also reinforced a heterosexist and patriarchal narrative in which the woman does not bear creative agency, but is, rather, the product of masculinized expertise. So too was the makeup man's role rigidly defined. The studio makeup suppliers and department heads may have held the most high-ranking positions in the business of beautifying women; however, they themselves did not present as effeminate in physicality, comportment, or lifestyle. As they made up women, so too did they make up men.

CHAPTER THREE

From Screen to Street: Producing Natural Beauty

"For the first time in the history of Hollywood," reported *The International Photographer* in 1937, "motion picture players do not offer an obvious appearance of wearing make-up as they work."[176] This milestone would mean the end of thick, opaque greasepaints, and the end of hot studio lamps drawing beads of sweat from star faces – faces that, when ultimately projected on screen, appeared sickly, "jaundiced," and perhaps worst of all for the most ardent proponents of natural beauty, *made-up*. In 1937, Pan-Cake Make-Up, a water-activated base formula, was the latest achievement of Max Factor and his son Frank, the primary suppliers of theatrical makeup in Hollywood. Frank, in a move that would preserve the credibility of Max Factor within the industry, would adopt the famous first name, Max, when his father died the following year. Factor's pseudo-resurrection would also secure the longevity of the Max Factor brand at a crucial point in the history of the American cosmetics industry. Factor died just as his breakthrough invention – a screen-inspired formula that did not look "obvious" on the street – was poised to enter the mass market.

The promotion of this new product involved a variation on the following theme: Factor, the man, held the key to movie glamour, having used the most up-to-date science and technology to transform the profession from a haphazard, unregulated, and sometimes dangerous trade to that which was emblematic of scientific progress. Factor's product was safe to use, backed by the

[176] "Color Make-Up: New Factor Development Solves Color Problem," *International Photographer,* June 1937, 27.

motion picture industry and its stars with whom movie-going consumers would relate and emulate. Products like Pan-Cake allowed women to achieve a "natural" effect with their vanity routines, which too had been proven by the American cinema's increasingly accurate representation of screen star likeness. Unlike the mask-like greasepaints that had for years been the industry-standard, Pan-Cake, which was invented for working with Technicolor, was quick and easy to apply, translucent enough to reveal an actor's natural skin-tone, and matte enough to eliminate the visible sheen that had previously been one of the tell-tale signs of screen makeup that had yet to catch-up with other motion picture technologies.

Makeup can generally be divided into three categories: *stage*, *screen*, and *street*, which each involve the use of different mediums and application methods. It was for this reason that Pan-Cake, which evened out the complexion without appearing unnaturally "put-on," was such a significant development in the history of modern cosmetics. This product, which we now widely think of as the first foundation-concealer of the modern era, transgressed these categories in a way that involved more than the product's labels, its ingredients, or its intended use. As the author of the aforementioned article boldly states: "Revolutionary changes affecting the lives, habits, and customs of people throughout the world each year have been traced directly to the influence of motion pictures."[177] In theory, Pan-Cake would allow filmmakers and ordinary women alike to construct a virtually seamless representation of something that *appeared* real, but was, in a word, "made-up." Although Factor's baked-in-a-pan miracle product would not be available to the average consumer until 1938, it would indeed have a "far reaching and revolutionary effect, both on the stars of the screen and the average woman."[178]

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

This chapter explores the impact (or, the "revolutionary changes") that the American film industry had on women's beauty practices, which was, in part, the result of years of research and experimentation conducted in the Max Factor laboratory, in dialogue with various trade organizations and agencies in Hollywood, including the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the American Society of Cinematographers. The title of this chapter, "From Screen to Street," is perhaps a misnomer, as this analysis in fact moves from "street" to "screen" – and then back again. First, I explore how "naturalism" was defined in relation to women's faces and bodies; how this beauty ideal was performed and produced, and how the motion picture industry helped to "naturalize" the appearance of makeup on women's faces. Then, I trace a series of artistic and scientific innovations which shaped the development of screen makeup up to 1938, when the Max Factor company finally introduced Color Harmony Pan-Cake into the mass market.

As David Bordwell and Janet Staiger have shown, technological change in Hollywood was a business strategy, "justified as progress towards better storytelling, greater realism, and enhanced spectacle."[179] Likewise, Factor's most lucrative product was created in pursuit of greater facial realism on screen. I argue that it was the motion picture industry's ability to capture an increasingly true-to-life facial image that necessitated the development of more translucent, natural-appearing formulas for making up film actors. With a few modifications, these formulas were made into consumer products, sold in department stores and via mail order throughout the country, and intended for everyday use. Therefore, in very tangible ways, thanks to the scientific research of the motion picture industry, what was once *stage* and *screen* became

[179] David Bordwell and Janet Staiger, "Technology, Style and Mode of Production," in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*, ed. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 244. `

street. These developments allowed both the film industry and the female consumer to produce an image of American womanhood that the press called "natural," even though the finished result involved just as much mediation, if not more, than that which preceded it.

In addition to the invention of Pan-Cake, which became the industry standard, this research also resulted in the codification of makeup application techniques. These methods mimicked and worked in tandem with the shading and highlighting methods used by cinematographers and lighting designers to create flattering representations of screen star faces, as well as to generate character effects. We often think of "verisimilitude," or the appearance of truth within the world of the film, as being achieved through the likes of continuity editing and adherence to generic conventions; but women's faces were likewise subjected to an "editing process" of sorts: screen makeup conventions which were developed in the film industry to create a truth-like – or "natural" – image of femininity.

This "editing process" was also a topic of interest for the day's beauty reporters. In the following passage, *Photoplay* journalist Betty Longacre details how the best photographers are the ones who use the technology to its fullest potential, to produce a flattering likeness of the sitter:

> Motion pictures wrote *mene tekel upharsin* (you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting – make the best of thyself) on the backdrops of the old-time photographer and his morgue-like studio, and *finis* to his "look at the birdie" mode of photography. While the photographer of today is certainly an improvement over those of a few years ago, the average photograph still falls woefully short of what can be done when a real artist combines his knowledge of line, form and shade with his subject's spiritual and mental reactions and is never satisfied to open the shutter of his camera until the sitter is in perfect position mentally and physically, enhancing good points and softening irregularities. Women trained to the value of the perfect photograph refuse absolutely to pose except under the most favorable conditions.[180]

[180] Betty Longacre, "Give Yourself a Break," *Photoplay*, June 1932, 33.

Longacre suggests that the old methods are obsolete – indeed, "lifeless" as the "morgue-like studios." The artist must use photographic technology to enhance certain features, while detracting from others. Women, on the other hand, must train to sit – to develop a working understanding of the art, but only insofar as she is to be captured on film.

It was perhaps her good fortune, therefore, that Hollywood was set to provide an education. Perc Westmore may not have invented the first screen-to-street formula, but he was intent on disseminating expert methods to the masses. As one journalist wrote: "Purc [sic] Westmore says that the motion pictures of the future will give perfect lessons in make-up. You will be able to go to the fil-ums, pick out the actress who best represents your type and learn from her appearance on screen the exact shade of foundation, powder, rouge, lipstick and eyeshadow to use and how and where to apply them with the most artistic results."[181] These "artistic results" were paradoxically referred to as "naturalism."

"The Effect of Naturalism"

.

The 1930s is often remembered as being the pinnacle of Hollywood glamour; however, women of this period were equally preoccupied with achieving the appearance of what cosmetics companies and beauty advice columnists called, "natural." The word frequents the pages of the popular press with so much regularity that it is hard to conceive of the thin arched brows and overlined lips that more generally characterize the makeup fashions of the era. While there was no doubt a gap, if not a chasm, between an ideal and a reality – between the images generated by

[181] Grace Grandville, "Beauty," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 1, 1935

the American studio system or the fashion industry, versus those which more accurately represented life during the Great Depression – the concept of naturalism, as it pertains to the representation and self-representation of women, deserves a double-take. As long-time fashion and beauty reporter for the *Detroit Free Press* Grace Grandville observed in 1935, each of the film studios' beauty experts operated according to the same basic principles:

> Mel Burns: "Men hate brilliantly rouged lips!" Perc Westmore: "The most general make-up fault is that women use too much – too much powder, too much rouge, too much lipstick." Brother Wally: "Anything unnatural and exaggerated is bad – cosmetics should never be conspicuous – it is better to use too little than too much." Jack Pierce: "Women use too much powder and rouge." Jack Dawn: "Women should try to look more natural."[182]

The makeup artists responsible for the most glamorous faces in America – listed here as Mel Burns of RKO, Jack Dawn of MGM, Jack Pierce of Universal, and the infamous Westmore brothers who dominated at every other major studio – all touted a natural look for women. Grandville, however, like many of her contemporaries who no doubt kept-on with their brilliantly rouged lips, remained unconvinced of the industry's preference for the simple, understated visage: "They all adore art and artifice," she asserted, deciphering the makeup man's code. "What they mean, one and all, is that the effect of naturalism is admirable."[183]

The "effect of naturalism" is difficult to pinpoint, in terms of any one visual aesthetic. Yes, Hollywood's leading cosmeticians claimed to shun the made-up face that was all-too conspicuous, but they were also the masterminds behind the glamorous faces that dominated the screen during this time. How could the man who infamously overdrew Joan Crawford's lips to create "the smear," or the man who bleached Jean Harlow's hair to a shade of white that is

[182] Grace Grandville, "Do Men Want Their Women 'Natural'?" *Detroit Free Press*, Dec 29, 1935, 69.

[183] Ibid.

practically nonexistent in the adult population, also be the champion of the clean, fresh, unadulterated face?

Naturalism was, and still is, a "look." Today, we even have a term for it (the "natural look"). The "effect" that had Grandville pulling out her hair, however, was not necessarily an understated one, but rather, one that, much like glamour, suggested *ease* and *effortlessness*. Even as the Depression wrought widespread financial precarity, advertisers pushed the notion that makeup was no longer an excess or an extravagance, but rather, a necessity if one wanted to succeed at work, love, and everything in between. If a woman required flushed cheeks and a clear complexion to look *like herself*, these products would eventually become an extension of her perceived body image. The threat of external judgement and ostracization added to the pressure: to encounter her without her makeup might be unsettling, if not jarring, to an employer or lover who had expected the rosy, bright eyed young woman from the day before.

Irrational or not, the fear of being exposed was one that cosmetics companies often exploited in advertisements and sponsored beauty editorials. An article published in *Modern Screen* in 1934 led with the warning: "In these days of keen competition, the girl with bright skin and eyes gets the job."[184] Makeup was considered a worthy investment, and one that might ultimately yield a very tangible form of currency, but only if it lent the impression of an untouched appearance. Beauty advice columnist Mary Biddle noted that even Hollywood's chief makeup men believed that "little spots of red on their cheeks, where they would not appear naturally, look ridiculous."[185] According to Biddle, this concerted attempt at a healthy glow would not achieve the desired effect; her boss was likely to catch her in the act immediately,

[184] Mary Biddle, "Beauty Advice," *Modern Screen*, May 1934, 6.

[185] Ibid.

revealing that she was not fresh from the countryside after all, but that she had, in fact, been living in a shared apartment with three other women and out of work for months. Citing an unnamed Hollywood makeup artist, Biddle offers extensive advice on how to make-up the face to achieve the natural – and employable – look: Eyes (a sparse brown shadow and a coating of mascara); the chin (a lighter shade of power to give the face a more oval appearance; and the cheeks (the color of blood). "That's all in tune with the looking natural idea," she states. "We're getting away slowly and surely from the artificial idea of make-up. We must look natural."[186]

Naturalism may not have originated in the 1930s, but it accommodated the ideological currents that moved through the decade. The "little spots of red" that stained a woman's cheeks conjured up the image of the previous generations' "painted woman." Just as it does today, "natural beauty" suggested inner health, and by extension, an individual who could afford to be well-nourished and rested. As Gwen Kay demonstrates, women had, for decades, constructed this image with beauty aids: "As more and more women discovered in the early 1900s, the trick to wearing cosmetics lay in the duality of appearing natural while using (nearly invisible but critical) artificial aids."[187] Natural, as Kay argues, has historically connoted whiteness; a pale complexion conflated with feminine virtue, or "purity." During the 1930s, an antonym for "natural" was "exotic" – a term which encompassed white women's glamour makeup, as well as the hypersexualized image of racial or ethnic femininity. As one reporter stated: "Except for lip tinting and an occasional head of hair that has been dipped in the dyepot, the present-day standard of good looks is naturalness. The exotic type is off-stage"[188]

---

[186] Ibid, 110.

[187] Gwen Kay, *Dying to Be Beautiful: The Fight For Safe Cosmetics* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), 31.

[188] "Daily Magazine Page for Everybody," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, Nov 9, 1935, 11.

The promise of subtly was one of the most consistent devices deployed by cosmetics companies in an emotional appeal to would-be customers. Tangee, a popular and long-lived brand, which sold a bright orange lip stain (the color of a tangerine, hence the name) that turned a muted shade of red when applied to the skin, had been available on drug store shelves since the early 1920s and was said to "defy detection." A 1932 print advertisement for Tangee visualized an encounter between a young woman and her husband, who, in condemnation of her "painted look" by the competitor's products, had allegedly called her "cheap" (fig. 21). Even as makeup was mainstreamed for white middle-class American women, this advertising trope continued to convey to women that there was a right and proper way to apply makeup: to use too much, too little, or a shade that clashed with one's innate coloring would result in a botched presentation. A Tangee ad that regularly circulated in the mid to late 1930s opened with: "The 'Painted Look' is out of style… Naturalness is the newest vogue in make-up!"[189] In fact, Tangee had been claiming that the painted look was out and over since its earliest days on the market; but by this point, other makeup companies were also pushing naturalism as the most coveted feminine aesthetic. As the caption explained, Tangee did not look like paint because it was *not paint*. Tangee, a product that, in its later twentieth century iteration, would be called "mood lipstick," owed its "color magic" to a chemical reaction generated by the wearer's body heat. There was thus something inherently intimate and personal about this product, which claimed to offer a lipstick tone as unique and individualized as the woman herself.

[189] "Advertisement: Tangee," *Movie Classic*, August 1936, 83.

Figure 21. "Just think… he said I looked cheap." Tangee Print Advertisement. *The New Movie Magazine*, July 1932, p. 92.

Figure 22. "It's smart to be natural." Tangee Print Advertisement. *Movie Classic*, August 1936, p. 83.

As a translucent lip tint, Tangee easily capitalized on the promise of a natural-appearing pout – after all, it was *not paint*. Other companies sold products that were far more paint-like; however, by the time the mass cosmetics industry hit its stride in the early 1930s, "naturalism" had become more forgiving of makeup – as long as it was applied judiciously and in accordance with the latest fashions. At some point, the untouched face would become more visually obtrusive than the made-up one. Peiss attributes this shift to the popularity of Hollywood movies, which, she argues, played a key role in "training the eye to perceive makeup as a natural feature of women's faces."[190] She writes:

> Even Max Factor, whose makeup was most closely associated with Hollywood glamour, described the "magic of make-up" to be an illusionism that made it "impossible for anyone to detect [where] the Make-Up begins or ends." But looking natural, like looking

[190] Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books), 152.

> glamorous, now required a box full of beauty devices: foundation, or vanishing cream, powder, rouge, lipstick, and for some, eyebrow pencil, mascara and eyeshadow.[191]

Although more natural appearing than its predecessors, Max Factor Pan-Cake was still makeup; however, the idea of "natural" had expanded as the image of the beautiful screen actress was normalized on screen.

Pan-Cake might have been the first screen formula to officially cross over into the consumer market; however, it was not the first product to boast its ties with the film industry. Advertisements for Max Factor's first commercial line, Society Make-Up, included long-form narratives, which likened the film industry to a research facility in which various aspects of modern existence could be observed and studied. A made-up face that would appear natural, even under harsh, unforgiving lights, was billed as the desired result.

Hollywood's makeup experts played a key role in educating the public on which commercial beauty aids to use, as well as *how* to properly work with these products to generate the effect of naturalism. Makeup artist Perc Westmore was said to believe that the cosmetics industry had "over-emphasized propaganda about what to use and under-emphasized the importance of how to put it on."[192] Westmore was allegedly "fascinated by the idea that women might employ the same principles used for professional makeup; that is, the blending of several shades of foundation at one and the same time to get shadows and highlights where they are desirable" to produce what he called a "'straight' feminine make-up"[193] In dramatic tradition,

[191] Ibid, 154.

[192] Grace Grandville, "Beauty," *Brooklyn Times Union*, Sep 1, 1935, 38.

[193] Ibid.

"straight makeup" is the opposite of "character makeup" – it implies that no extreme measures of transformation have taken place.

"Straight feminine makeup," however, assimilated the techniques of character makeup, as well as the lighting effects of *chiaroscuro* – a process systematized by Westmore himself who, as discussed in Chapter Two, famously drew detailed "facial maps" of Hollywood screen actresses. These diagrams, which were created to assist in the makeup process, were also featured in popular beauty editorials (fig. 23). By 1935, when the House of Westmore brand was first sold in stores, Westmore had made his maps even more accessible to the public, by providing the customer with instructions for how to determine and analyze her own facial type. According to Westmore, there were seven basic facial types: round, oval, triangle, inverted triangle, diamond, square and oblong. A woman was to take her own photograph and study this image, assuming a scientific, almost clinical gaze upon her own countenance, and evaluate its lines and curvatures for the ways in which they held up against the ideal face shape, which was, in Westmore's estimation, an oval. Later iterations of these instructions included a facial measuring wheel, so that she who attempted Westmore's makeup technique could obtain a precise read on her facial proportions. Once a woman knew her facial type, she could then shade and highlight her face accordingly, to enhance her natural beauty. He called this effect, "type harmony."

Figure 23. Actress Joan Blondell's makeup chart featured in Grace Grandville's popular beauty column. *Brooklyn Times Union*, 1935, p. 38.

The goal of "type harmony," as he referred to it, was natural looking makeup – in other words, makeup that did not call attention to itself *as makeup*. Natural makeup did not detract from a woman's personality, which, according to the day's popular pseudoscience, could, in large part, be determined by her facial proportions. If a woman was uncertain about where she fit in, she had only to look to the film star she most resembled. Facial types were ranked, however implicitly, constructing a hierarchy of feminine attractiveness. According to Westmore, actress Olivia de Havilland had "perfect physiognomy." Her oval shaped face would be diagrammed in Westmore's book on street makeup, and for years, he would use her photograph for demonstration purposes. Although most beauty experts advised that women not make-up "against-type," to some extent, faces could be shaded and highlighted, to generate an impression of the coveted oval shape.

Like Tangee, which promised its wearer an individualized and natural-appearing lip color, Westmore's facial type system appealed to the woman's desire to express her own unique personality. To be "natural" was to allow one's inner character to shine through to the surface, "unmasked," or unobscured by deceptive face paint; however, "straight feminine makeup" nonetheless employed a visual language to communicate personality. It encouraged women to produce an illusion of natural beauty, and most importantly, to obscure the mechanism behind that illusion – unsurprisingly so, as "straight feminine makeup" was taken straight from stage and screen.

Stage, Screen, Street: Three Distinct Methods of Makeup

In 1920, *Motion Picture Magazine* ran an article entitled, "The 'Why' of Motion Picture Make-Up," written by Victor A. Stewart, who, according to the editor's note, was "one of the greatest authorities on make-up in the country."[194] In it, the Vitagraph actor explains, in evocative detail, how ordinary stage makeup would register on orthochromatic film: "Eyes are made to appear like starfish with blackened radiations – radiations which cause light colored eyes to appear lighter still. Rouged lips lose their skin texture and are transformed into black patches of court plaster. The light powder causes an halation which could be adopted for heliographic purposes by our Army or Navy."[195] Defining the terms, "stage," "screen," and "street," Stewart stresses the difference between "three quite distinct methods of make-up":

[194] Victor A. Stewart, "The 'Why' of Motion Picture Make-Up," *Photoplay Magazine,* March 1920, 76.

[195] Ibid, 102.

> There is a make-up for the street, one for the stage and still another for the motion picture. They are quite different in character and not at all interchangeable. Make-up that would pass on the stage would be held up, literally and figuratively, on the street, and the make-up that appears well on the screen is entirely off-color elsewhere. This is very clearly demonstrated when one sees a lobby display at a theater where flashlights of the actors in stage make-up are in progress. The result is ghastly, and no artistic coloring applied afterwards can cover it or improve it. Red cheeks and lips become dark smudges, and actual likenesses are conspicuous by their absence.[196]

By the end of the 1920s, much of the technical dilemmas that had plagued Stewart and his contemporaries would be taken up by the American film industry's leading scientists and inventors, including Factor. Advancements in screen makeup technology were necessitated by what *Variety* once called, "the forward march of the camera." In other words, it was the film camera's ability to capture a more "true-to-life" facial image that forced the industry to adapt and develop products that would appear inconspicuous on the skin. These experiments initiated increased quality control, and thinner, more transparent, and wearable formulations. There would be no more "off color" movie faces, no more dark smudges, or makeup that would be "held up, literally and figuratively, on the street." Crucially, this development meant that there was no longer a marked distinction between the kind of products that were used for filming purposes, and that which was to be sold in stores.

The World's A Stage

Today, the term, "street makeup," is not one that most of us encounter regularly, unless we are involved in film or theater production. In the early twentieth century, however, it appeared frequently in the popular press because it accomplished something that was of

[196] Ibid, 76.

mounting urgency for a nation in the throes of "makeup madness": Street makeup distinguished everyday beauty aids, which were becoming the norm for women who would have previously eschewed or denied their use, from that which was to be reserved for dramatic purposes. Its counterpart, "stage makeup" – whether used for grotesque or fantastical effect, or simply applied "straight" to enhance the visibility of the face and its range of expression – was, first and foremost, a performance aid. On stage, the facial features of a made-up performer can be seen by those in the audience, but only when makeup is applied correctly, taking into account the combined effects of lighting and distance. "An audience does not realize the intensity of the light which surrounds an actor when he makes his entrance on the stage," wrote American Academy of Dramatic Arts instructor Helena Chalmers in 1925. She explained:

> The effect of all of this is to kill the natural color in the actor's face and destroy the natural shadows, while at the same time causing unnatural ones to appear. The color and the natural shadows must be put back, and furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize his features so that they may be seen from all parts of the theater. These results are obtained by means of makeup.[197]

Unbeknownst to those watching, the face on stage is, in a sense, a figment of light, shadow, and makeup. Operating invisibly, when done right, the primary objective of straight stage makeup is to compensate: It is a means of "making up" the difference between the face, as the wearer intended it to appear, and that which was destroyed by light.

Stage makeup also involves "making up" the difference between the face of the actor and the face of the character to be portrayed. This transformative effect is typically called "character makeup." Chalmers's treatise, *The Art of Make-Up: For the Stage, the Screen, and Social Use*, covered the basics of theatrical makeup in the 1920s, such as the advantages of dry powders

[197] Helena Chalmers, *The Art of Make-up For the Stage, the Screen and Social Use* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925), 1.

versus wet paints, when to apply a cold cream, and how to strengthen a chin, add wrinkles and hollows, or cancel-out the appearance of blemished skin. Significantly, however, the book also included detailed instructions on how to use these materials to visually construct an assortment of character types. A "Jovial Middle-Aged Lady" was to be created using a pink-toned base-paint, and a darker line that would run outwards from the eyes and down the cheeks, to give the impression of a face that was prone to laughter. She required an altogether different makeup than, for instance, a "Well-Preserved Society Woman of Fifty," whose frown lines were to be delicately shaded in grey, to give the appearance of age, "without causing ugliness."[198]

Early twentieth century theatrical makeup guides were organized much like cookbooks, and predominately covered makeup rules governing the creation of well-known character types. While the recipes varied to an extent, the key ingredients remained the same, as did the objective: Makeup, along with controlled light and shadow, was to produce a visual shorthand for a character's background, lifestyle, and psychological interiority. Each type had its own prescription, which was determined by sets of identifying factors, including, personality, age, gender, race, and ethnicity. Characters that were identified by race or ethnicity usually involved little variation or nuance, compared to their white counterparts. While white characters were often visually typed by age, socioeconomic class, or life choices – whether they drank, were educated, or washed their faces regularly – non-white characters were likely to be conceived in broad strokes, as little more than two-dimensional stock characters.

Literature on theatrical makeup was written for both professionals and amateurs; the knowledge contained in these books was in no way sealed to the world outside the performing arts. Acknowledging the fluid nature of their readership, many of these trade-oriented

[198] Ibid.

publications also included tips and tricks for everyday makeup use. In other words, "stage," "screen," and "street" co-existed within the same bindings. This content was also available in women's fashion and lifestyle magazines, such as *The Lady's Home Journal* and *McCall's*, which most often featured beauty advice in the form of advertisements for cold creams or related products; however, it was not yet the norm that it would be only a few short years later. Before the rise of the mass cosmetics industry, which mainstreamed beauty practices as acceptable feminine conduct, makeup advice was, for the most part, discreet and confidential, passed-around locally at salons, by mail-order, or door-to-door. Trade knowledge, therefore, was a valuable resource for the beauty-seeking woman. This casual crosspollination may have seemed innocuous enough; however, vestiges of the stage's norms and conventions would ultimately find their way into the marketing and advertising of street makeup, and onto the street itself.

Makeup guides acknowledged and addressed the-then proliferating "stages" upon which this specialized knowledge would inevitably be applied. Namely, the street, which, in technical terms, would be defined as anywhere that is not a place of performance. The street, however, has long been a venue for public display – a stage upon which to perform and a stage on which to be seen. The modern cosmetics industry capitalized on a growing image-consciousness, in which beauty was held to new standards, therefore necessitating new modes of presenting a constructed self-image to the world.

Screen Makeup: A Normalizing Process

From a technological standpoint, when stage makeup first took to the screen in the early twentieth century, it was forced to adapt to the cinema's strange new ways. In some respects, the camera was more discerning than the human eye, and thus required more restraint when it came to the makeup box. Silent screen performers, who were accustomed to making up for the stage, might have piled on the rouge, heavily kohled their eyes, or beaded their lashes, resulting in a visage that looked over-done, if not highly bizarre, even alien, on film. These gross distortions would have been painstakingly avoided on set; however, if an actor's makeup was even visible enough to reveal the cracks in the surface – both literal and figurative, in this case – it was regularly deemed gratuitous. Vocalized disapproval, from industry insiders and discerning audiences alike, reverberated into the teens and twenties, as the American cinema gradually moved towards a more realist visual aesthetic. In 1927, a discerning movie fan wrote to the editors of *Photoplay* to remark that screen performers were experimenting with makeup in a way that may have worked in the so-called "legitimate stage," but not on film: "Motion Picture directors should remember that the eye of the camera is cruelly accurate, emphasizing too-obvious and too-emphatic make-up," they write. "Without make-up they appeared as actors and not an exhibition of too-expensive, animated, stereotyped dolls."[199] So too was natural makeup privileged by industry professionals; if a made-up face gave the impression of being "put on," without narrative-based explanation, it threatened to interrupt the film's verisimilitude.[200]

[199] "Make-Up Madness," *Photoplay Magazine*, January 1927, 17.

[200] Cecil Holland in "The Art of Screen Make-Up," *The Truth About the Movies, by the stars*, ed. Laurence A, Hughes (Los Angeles: Hollywood Publishers, Inc., 1924), 296.

Though a truth-like representation of the human face was often the goal, it would not suffice to eliminate makeup altogether. Natural-appearing or not, throughout the 1920s and much of the 1930s, the cinema's facial image required a high-level of mediation. For an actor to be recognizable on screen, they would need to make compensations and adjustments before the camera. Makeup, therefore, played a vital role in the filmmaking process in its ability to achieve visual continuity by accurately and consistently representing the faces of screen actors. Depending on the type of illumination used on set, combined with the sensitivity of the film stock, in addition to the quality of the lens, the camera often failed to recognize the full spectrum of color on set and translate it into an on-screen world furnished in shades of grey. Makeup needed to cooperate with carbon arc and mercury-vapor lamps, which cast a violet or green tinge respectively. It also needed to be applied in such a way as to account for the sensitivity of the emulsion. Orthochromatic film, which was used in the vast majority of early film studios until 1928, overexposed blue tones and yet was blind to red spectrum light – a tragedy for crimson-painted lips, which were ultimately rendered in black.

Screen makeup's raison d'être, therefore, was all the more emphatic than that of the stage. Like its predecessor, it elevated an actor's dramatic range, visually communicating aspects of their character, including personality, age, ethnicity, and emotional state; however, it was also an indispensable component of filmic technology and needed to be specially formulated for compatibility. If not, the results were highly unpredictable. Screen makeup, in its most nascent forms, beautified solely for the movies. Viewed "in the flesh," it had quite the opposite effect. Makeup for the silent screen needed to trick the eye to achieve the final result – but more importantly, it needed to trick the eye of the camera.

Although screen makeup might as well have been called an "uglifying aid," women nevertheless sought out the glamour of the screen by appropriating professional greasepaints for everyday use. The press attempted to deter the female moviegoer from pursuing beauty *the wrong way*, with a variety of creative cautionary tales. To instill fear – and perhaps a healthy dose of fascination – fan magazine columnists would stress to their readers that, if one were to catch sight of an actress, having just stepped off set, she would not look the image of natural loveliness so coveted by her followers. If that image alone was not enough of a turn-off, the weight and consistency of professional-use formulas was an additional deterrent. Heavy, reflective, and occlusive on the skin, greasepaint often appeared harsh and altogether "unnatural" when used as street makeup. This did not deter the most ambitious of beauty seekers, but these attempts were frequently met with reproach from experts, who condemned the "smeared masks" resulting from the amateurish use of studio greasepaints.[201]

In the syndicated column, "Screen and Radio Weekly," reporter Lyle Rooks reflected on the makeup excesses of the silent era. "Grease paint and crepe hair were slung about with a fine disregard for economy," he writes. "Handsome heroes went in heavily for eyebrows and thickly powdered pans. Dastardly villains were distinguished by the length and ferocity of their false mustachios. Make-up was as unrestrained as the 'acting' it embellished."[202] The evolution of screen makeup, from the mask-like coating of greasepaint to the see-through, talc-based formulas of the late 1930s, was accompanied by a discourse that, in many ways, echoed that which had already shaped the development of film acting. From the tradition of large, emphatic gesture that Roberta E. Pearson calls the "histrionic code," to the smaller, more nuanced style that emerged

[201] Chalmers, 145-146.

[202] Lyle Rooks, "Genius in a Rouge Box," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 29, 1935, 36.

after 1908, screen acting was subjected to industry-fueled criticism that privileged naturalistic physicality and expression. As Pearson describes, "writers critical of the histrionic code used words such as 'real life,' 'naturally,' and 'realism,'" and "pleas for verisimilarly coded performance asserted that film acting should approximate real-life behavior."[203] The old histrionic style required that audiences "read" an actor's state of mind, based upon a repertoire of expressive techniques. By comparison, the emerging verisimilar code, as she refers to it, did not depend on standardized movement – at least not with overt and conscious intention. According to its proponents, it was true-to-life in its ability to represent psychological depth, which could be ascertained by way of quasi-scientific observation. Supported by a rudimentary understanding of human psychology, an aspiring actor might have chosen to sit down on a park bench to watch human beings interact in their "natural habitat." Rather than simply mimic their expressions and movements, they would attempt to "get in their head" and embody the character accordingly.

This naturalistic style of performance was (and still is) a cultural construct. While it may not employ a pre-established lexicon, it nonetheless conditions and reaffirms our expectations about how reality should look. As James Naremore states: "Naturalistic representation narrows the instrumental range of performance; by concealing the fact that actors produce *signs*, it disguises the workings of ideology."[204] The natural, life-like style of presenting the body on screen was weighted against its apparent opposite: the exaggerated, heavily embodied mode of performance, which was associated with melodrama, and other cheap, low-brow forms of entertainment.[205] Likewise, the face, made-up to appear natural or "straight," is juxtaposed with

---

[203] Roberta E. Pearson, *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 124.

[204] James Naremore, *Acting in the Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 49.

[205] Pearson, 138.

the grossly artificial "painted" character, which too comes loaded with their ideological connotations. As is evidenced by Westmore's "facial maps," as well as the sheer volume of research that went into developing screen formulations, naturalistic makeup is no less an expressive object which produces signs. "The very sign of theatre, makeup is the vestige of a mask," Naremore writes, adding that modern actors tend to conceal its tricks.[206]

Screen makeup was prone to technical mishaps, especially in the hands of inexperienced players who were largely responsible for their own applications. Consequently, one of the most vital of performance aids was lagging behind film acting in its realist ambitions. This only amplified the call for its looming scientific overhaul. What would be the sense of an actor looking natural, if in the end, their face gave them away?

Guided by the goal of allowing the individual to shine through the surface layers that had otherwise clogged-up its most essential channel, makeup was about to undergo what *Detroit News* movie critic Harold Hefferman would call a "normalizing process." This process, Hefferman claimed, extended "right down through every type of character being portrayed."[207] Reflecting in 1942 on the developments of the preceding decades, he contends, as many did, that "the makeup man's part in Hollywood has been one of naturalizing and normalizing his subjects. He no longer takes his role literally by splashing heavy layers of goo on the face."[208] Backed by scientific research, naturalistic screen makeup was considered sophisticated and evolved. The older, heavy makeup of the silent era, on the other hand, was equated with "hamming" and a

[206] Ibid, 93-94.

[207] Harold Hefferman, "They've Taken the Ham Out of Makeup," *St. Louis Post*, March 22, 1942.

[208] Ibid.

melodramatic, over-the-top style of performance that was considered by many to be outmoded and comical.[209]

Progress, in screen makeup artistry, was largely defined as makeup that enhanced the facial image – at times allowing it to appear *more natural* than natural. This face was one that, in its seamless perfection, silently disavowed the layers of artifice – or "goo" – that obstructed the "true self," or one's inner nature. Even though actors of all genders wore makeup while working, it was the female performers whom the press typically exploited as examples of "what not to do." In detail that verges on the lewd, Hefferman quipped, "Sometimes the camera even stopped grinding to allow the makeup 'expert' to scrape some of the coating off the heroine's face – so she could smile naturally or soften her plastic mouth for a kiss scene."[210] This kind of criticism served a dual-purpose: it simultaneously pushed the film industry's realist ideals, as it did the terms of proper feminine behavior.

In what was described as a move towards a more naturalistic, or "true to life," effect, by the end of the 1930s, makeup formulas had become thinner in consistency, more translucent, and more accurate in terms of shading. Over the course of several years, changes to consistency, pigmentation, and application methods, came about in response to tonal imbalances caused by an ever-growing assortment of technological quandaries, particularly those related to lighting and film sensitivity. This was due, in large part, to technological developments of the preceding decade, which allowed the camera to capture its subjects in a way that was more representative of human vision. By the same token, however, these developments called attention to the cinema's illusionism, as older makeup formulations stood out visibly on the surface of the skin,

[209] Ibid.

[210] Ibid.

placing a glaring spotlight on the artificiality of screen makeup. As a result, these formulations were no longer compatible with emergent technology.

Compatibility, however, was not an ideologically neutral concept. Stewart's article, for instance, claimed that the actors who wore yellow-toned greasepaints often looked like "mulattos" on screen. Indeed, early screen makeup was often purposely applied in a shade darker than the actor's natural skin tone, so that their face would not be washed-out by the bright lights used on set. Though yellow greasepaint tones were temperamental, they were altogether more desirable than pink, since, as previously noted, red photographed as black, which resulted in a white actor's complexion appearing much darker on film than it did in life. Without any makeup at all, however, bare skin was prone to the same results, due to the visibility of red corpuscles in the skin.[211] At times, this effect was exploited in a manner which sustained the cinema's tradition of racial and ethnic stereotyping. Provided that no elaborate "tricks" were required to visually alter the facial structure, villainous characters could go with little or no makeup, since a darkened and spotty complexion was desired. Years later, Factor would recall this technique, explaining that the hero's face, by comparison, would be slathered in makeup, to ensure the appearance of whiteness.[212]

[211] Chalmers, 129.

[212] Max Factor, "Standardization of Motion Picture Make-Up," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers*, January 1937, 54.

In Search for Greater Realism:

The Standardization of Screen Makeup

Factor once suggested that the American film industry had lifted the art of makeup out of a long period of stagnancy. In the preface to "Max Factor's Hints on the Art of Make-Up," a trade manual for stage and screen artists, he remarked:

> Over a long stretch of years no special changes in drama occurred which might affect the art of Make-Up.
>
> But with the advent of motion pictures came an altogether new dramatic expression, with new problems in lighting and perspective. The stage too was reaching out for strikingly new effects, and Make-Up, at last, was awakened by the new possibilities.[213]

Roused from its slumber, by the 1930s, makeup – the art, the science, and the beauty culture that would spring-up around it – was indeed wide awake. This series of colorful pamphlets, issued by Max Factor's Make-Up Studios, were then in their fourth re-printing due to the "rapidly changing requirements," which were pushing the previous decade's expertise into unforeseen obsolescence. For years, Factor's company, based in Hollywood, had operated as the leading supplier for the film studios. Factor had once been affiliated with the German manufacturer of theatrical greasepaints, Leichner; however, by 1922, he was experimenting with his own versatile formulas, which, compared to the heavy, emollient Leichner, were relatively lightweight and versatile.[214] These experiments intensified in the latter half of the decade, as one part of a film industry-wide process of technological standardization.

---

[213] Max Factor, *Max Factor's Hints on the Art of Make-Up* 4th Edition (Hollywood, California: Max Factor's Make-Up Studios, 1933), 2.

[214] Fred E., Basten, *Max Factor: The Man Who Changed the Faces of the World* (Arcade Publishing, New York, 2008), 46.

According to Factor's address to his readers, these industrial changes had incited a barrage of help and information requests to which his small – albeit rapidly expanding – studio could no longer respond individually. The "possibilities" of which Factor spoke included new ways to represent the face on screen; however, given that these changes ultimately led to the standardization of materials, methods, and the makeup profession itself, these possibilities might just as easily have been described as limitations. In a 1930 issue of *Cinematographic Annual*, Factor credited the efforts of the Motion Picture Make-Up Artists Association, the American Society of Cinematographers, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences responsible for "bringing make-up to its present high stage of development."[215] This collaborative effort was part of the industry's "Incandescent Illumination Research" – a series of tests which film historians regard as a critical moment in the development of classical Hollywood style. Significantly, this research led to Factor's invention of Panchromatic Make-Up, and application techniques which were designed to facilitate facial realism.

Max Factor spoke at the Society of Motion Picture Engineers Spring convention in 1935, during which he reflected on the American film industry's transition to panchromatic film, and how this development had impacted the makeup trade. His talk, entitled, "Standardization of Make-Up," suggests that, throughout centuries of theatrical traditions, every major reinvention in the art of makeup has occurred in response to the presence and quality of light: Whether oil burning, gas, or electric, the introduction of new lighting technologies had necessitated new ways of making up the face for dramatic purposes. Factor begins his remarks by charting out the historical evolution of stage and screen makeup, from the theaters of ancient Greece to the

[215] Max Factor, "The Art of Motion Picture Make-Up," *Cinematographic Annual*, 1930, 157.

American studio system.[216] This progressive timeline is parlayed in testament to the film industry's great achievement: the standardization of screen makeup, which appears natural on the face. Factor implies that earlier forms of makeup – that which are decorative, "primitive," and masklike – were crude, never codified, but passed-down through generations of performers. This latest development, however, is refined, scientific, and perfected. Though perhaps unintended, this evolutionary narrative suggests that trace elements of older and more overtly symbolic practices are present in current practices: that the latest iteration of this art had absorbed more rudimentary techniques.

Screen makeup was standardized when Hollywood adopted incandescent lamps as the industry standard. To reiterate: lighting and makeup go hand in hand. Screen makeup effects were not only dependent on the quality and quantity of light, but both offered the filmmaker a means of "painting" with light and shadow to produce character effects – a method known as *chiaroscuro*. Patrick Keating demonstrates how, during the first few decades of American filmmaking, cinematographers appropriated photographic conventions to convey the sitter's interiority. He writes: "Strategies of portraiture were guided by a logic of character, and the logic of character was shaped by a discourse of difference."[217] Keating argues that the closeup shot developed as it did, harnessing the various technologies at its disposal, according to specific aesthetic norms. These norms, he claims, included placement of key lights and the play of tone and contrast in a way that fundamentally emphasized gender difference. Although he concedes that the closeup shot of the 1920s and 1930s does not wholly resemble early twentieth century

[216] Max Factor, "Standardization of Motion Picture Make-Up," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers*, January 1937, 53.

[217] Patrick Keating, "From the Portrait to the Close-Up: Gender and Technology in Still Photography and Hollywood Cinematography," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 107.

portrait compositions, this pervasive logic, he argues, guided the various techniques that still shape how we perceive femininity on screen.

In 1927, cameraman and visual effects specialist Lewis W. Physioc wrote in *American Cinematographer* of a "matter of supreme importance, especially for our feminine stars."[218] According to Physioc, a tragedy strikes just when the woman's personality and talent has matured: her skin is not quite as smooth or supple as it was during her younger years. With the industry's move to incandescent lighting imminent, the preservation of feminine beauty topped the list of concerns. The old Cooper Hewitt lamps had produced a diffused lighting style, which, according to many in the industry, was the best way to visually cancel-out facial blemishes and fine lines. For proponents of the old system, the introduction of incandescent bulbs threatened an end to Hollywood glamour. These fears were unfounded, according to Physioc, who believed that the "burn out" effect generated by mercury vapor lamps had never been ideal. This obsolete method, he argues, destroys personality along with physical imperfection. He writes:

> There is no beauty in a white, flat surface outlined against a background. The elements of beauty in a face are nature's mould of the features, general coloring, the expression of intelligent features, the eyes and mouth, which are so much influenced by the development of character, the evidence of temperament and personality and above all, the soul that shines through all – and these marvelous elements can just as easily be burnt up as the purely physical imperfections in the skin texture. How can we hope to find the soul of a beautiful woman in a pair of "klieg eyes" – the lure of dainty lips lost in a flood of flat light?[219]

The cameraman, Physioc argues, must learn how to adapt to the new lighting technology – to employ light and shadow to his advantage. In accordance with physiognomic theory, Physioc demonstrates how to use lighting so that the star's physical appearance expresses the beauty of

[218] Louis W. Physioc, "Does The Camera Lie?" *American Cinematographer*, January 1927, 21.

[219] Ibid.

her inner character. Physioc, however, does not deny that this image is a construction. In fact, he argues that it is the cinematographer's job to will the camera to become "the biggest liar in all the world."[220]

Physioc demonstrates *chiaroscuro* on a bust of Venus (fig. 24). The stronger the light, he argues, the harsher the imperfection. Venus, under one poor lighting technique, appears "transformed into a stupid, gross featured, flat nosed bleary-eyed individual" and apparently masculinized in another, "destroying feminine delicacy by suggesting more an Adonis than a Venus."[221] Under the ideal lighting system of this modern art form, "the lovely work of this ancient and unknown sculpture is preserved and reproduced in all of its feminine delicacy and charm."[222] Physioc's definition of "feminine delicacy and charm," however, is a subjective one and that is based largely on white Anglo-Saxon standards of beauty.

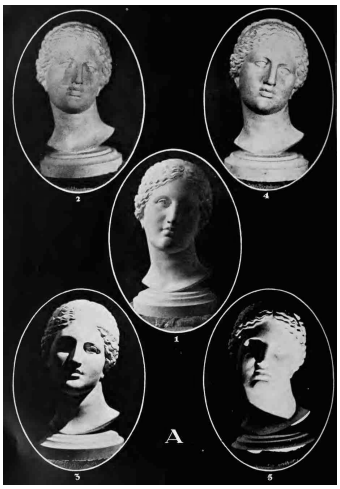


Figure 24. A bust of Venus is subjected to various lighting systems. The center image represents the ideal, conveying "feminine delicacy and charm." *American Cinematographer*, January,1927.

[220] Ibid.

[221] Ibid, 24.

[222] Ibid.

Like Physioc, Factor was involved in "Incandescent Illumination Research," which was carried out at the Warner Brothers' studio lot in 1928 and known within the industry as the "Mazda Tests," named for the General Electric trademarked lamps, or "Mazdas." The Mazda Tests were the first project of the newly formed Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and were conducted in collaboration with various film industry trade organizations and service firms. The experiments systematized scientific research in the motion picture industry and led to the standardization of equipment and materials, including a new kind of screen makeup. As David Bordwell states: "The tests established service firms as the chief sources of systematic, industry-wide technical innovation and made the Academy the coordinator of large-scale technological change."[223]

The Mazda Tests were designed to test the compatibility of panchromatic film with incandescent lighting. Incandescent bulbs were noiseless and therefore agreeable with new sound technology. According to their most fervent proponents, they were also economical, portable, and easy to maintain. As Luci Marzola has demonstrated, however, the Mazda Tests were primarily a means for the Academy to establish itself as the trusted scientific authority in Hollywood. She writes: "This period of experimentation with 'scientific endeavors' and industry-wide collaboration was deliberately built around a low-stakes technology."[224] Furthermore, Marzola argues, though the Academy claimed that innovation and progress were their primary objectives, their findings were not always gathered via the scientific method: "In seeking to imitate the

[223] David Bordwell, "The Mazda Tests of 1928," *The Classical Hollywood Cinema,* ed. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 294.

[224] Luci Marzola, *Engineering Hollywood: Technology, Technicians, and the Science of Building the Studio System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 108.

scientific process, the tests were the Hollywood industry's attempt to apply objective measures of quality and standardization to its operations. But when the professional engineers of SMPE looked at the results, the 'science' of the endeavor was unclear to them."[225] What was billed as straightforward progress was, in actuality, a struggle for creative dominance; what declared itself as objective scientific reasoning was, in fact, based in subjective notions of quality – as subjective as, perhaps, Venus's feminine delicacy and charm. These experiments nonetheless systemized film technologies, solidifying the combination of panchromatic film and incandescent bulbs as the industry standard. As a result, screen makeup was also standardized – not only the formulas, but the methods by which they were applied. Makeup departments would be instituted at every major studio, and actors would no longer be responsible for their own makeup preparations. As Bordwell and Staiger note, this research ultimately took the "make-up process out of the hands of the players and into the control of the studio."[226]

Upon completion of the Mazda Tests, the Max Factor company developed a special makeup formula that would cooperate with panchromatic film. Once again, however, compatibility was not an ideologically neutral concept. Due to the relative sensitivity of panchromatic film stock, old makeup formulas, which may have avoided off-shade results in the past, made pale complexions appear dark on screen.[227] The goal of on-screen naturalism came wrapped-up in racial anxiety: with poor makeup application, it was difficult to differentiate skin tones, and by extension, one race from another. Ironically, the solution to this problem was an

---

[225] Ibid, 122.

[226] David Bordwell and Janet Staiger, "Technology, Style, and Mode of Production," in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* ed. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 253.

[227] Fred E. Basten, *Max Factor: The Man Who Changed the Faces of the World* (Arcade Publishing, New York, 2008), 61.

unguent brown-toned foundation that appeared lighter when filmed. Panchromatic Make-Up was formulated specifically for black and white film and according to Factor's son Frank, "looked horrifying" in life.[228]

Ultimately, the brownish hue of Panchromatic Make-Up was an issue for Factor, who believed that true realism would not be achieved until actors could interact with one another, without off-shade makeup affecting the performance. In his 1935 Society of Motion Picture Engineers convention remarks, Factor discusses how makeup that appears unnatural on set might interfere with an actor's psychological processes, thus preventing a naturalistic, believable performance.[229] Factor fuses technological quandaries, which call for the need to compensate for tonal imbalances, with their effects on the human psyche. He states:

> A combination of the correct blue-violet and yellow-orange with sufficient blue in a range that would be desirable for a correct panchromatic recording would result in a brownish make-up. On the motion picture set before the camera, this brownish make-up would distinctly affect the psychological responses of the players; for example, if two players were enacting an emotional scene and had to look at each other in unnatural colors, a certain interference of response would result. Even though containing the desirable panchromatic colors in the make-up composition, the make-up must be sufficiently natural to overcome this psychological factor.[230]

Factor's reasoning was not necessarily unsound: brown makeup, on the face of a white actor, would not be conducive to Hollywood's increasingly realist standards of performance. This issue highlights, however, that whiteness was not only the norm in Hollywood, but that copious amounts of research would go in to preserving it.

---

[228] Ibid, 62.

[229] Max Factor, "Standardization of Motion Picture Make-up," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers*, 1937, 54.

[230] Ibid, 54-55.

Panchromatic Make-Up was the gold-standard in screen makeup, and not only in Hollywood. According to the Max Factor company publicity, this makeup was used in 96% of studios worldwide.[231] In 1928, Factor won an Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences award for this achievement, and Panchromatic Make-Up was trademarked one year later, in 1929.[232] For Factor's laboratory, this meant increased quality-control, and advanced research and testing, in addition to accelerated factory-line production.[233] In a 1930 issue of *Cinematographic Annual*, Factor wrote of this achievement:

> Today what we call Panchromatic Make-Up is the rule, being used by every studio in America and the principal studios throughout the world. And the development of Panchromatic Make-Up we consider one of the most important achievements in the art. This was brought about because of the introduction of Panchromatic film, a film sensitive to all colors, recording them in their true, harmonious relations, and eliminating finally those sharp, hard contrasts so common with the use of old-time orthochromatic film.[234]

With his newfound fame within the industry, and heightened levels of production in his studio-lab, Factor had an extra edge on the commercial market as well. Even though the products used on set differed from the line of powders and rouge that were sold in stores, the association with the movies gave the Max Factor company an advantage over its competitors. Factor's technological triumph was used to sell products to consumers: "Silent for years, reserving his discoveries and his make-up secrets for the exclusive use of the professions of the stage and screen, Max Factor now speaks," proclaimed one early advertisement for Society Make-Up, launching Factor as a public figure and beauty expert.[235]

---

[231] *American Cinematographer*, February 1933.

[232] Basten, 62.

[233] Bordwell and Staiger, 253.

[234] Max Factor, "The Art of Motion Picture Make-Up," *Cinematographic Annual*, 1930, 158.

[235] "Advertisement: Amazing New Beauty Secrets by Hollywood's Make-Up King," *Motion Picture Classic*, May 1929, 77.

A Revolutionary Idea: Screen Makeup for the Street

Factor's success in the film industry propelled the marketing and advertising for his first commercial line, Society Make-Up, in 1928. Along with this release, an instructional manual, *The New Art of Society Make-Up*, was made available via mail-order. Although Society Make-Up was neither for stage nor screen use, the Max Factor company had earned its legitimacy via its association with Hollywood. The first page of this manual featured an image of an unrolled scroll – a "Recognition of Valuable Service," issued by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to Factor for his contributions to Incandescent Illumination Research. Although the average cosmetics consumer was unlikely to have heard of the Mazda Tests, the write-up explains that the film industry had led to a major discovery in makeup. Titled, "How the Strange Motion Picture 'Kleig' [sic] Lights Caused a Make-Up Discovery," it reads:

> Tonight color pigments will be harmonized in cosmetics for the first time… As the star is being made, she wonders if the experiment will be a success… the camera will tell, for the camera never lies… On the set, under the 'Kleig' [sic] lights, the director marvels at her radiant beauty… Max Factor enthusiastically smiles approval… Intuitively she senses a success as the camera starts clicking… Now, later… the review of the film in the projection room… and as the scene flashes on the screen, the rare beauty of the star appears so lovely, so natural, so alluring, that Max Factor realizes the severe test of the Kleig [sic] lights that caused him to develop a revolutionary idea in cosmetics.[236]

The "revolutionary idea," according to this consumer-oriented publication, was not Panchromatic Make-Up, but rather, makeup which would harmonize with a woman's natural beauty. According to Factor, natural makeup was guided by the following principles:

---

[236] Max Factor, *The New Art of Society Make-Up* (Hollywood: Max Factor Studios, 1928), 6-7.

> *First*, make-up requires that each feature which adds to beauty must be considered individually as part of the harmonious whole. The face, the eyes, the lips, the neck, the arms, the hands, the hair – each should be beautified.
>
> *Second*, make-up should not be used in a haphazard fashion, but should be applied according to certain well-defined principles of art and cosmetic science.
>
> *Third*, all cosmetics must be in perfect color harmony with the individual complexion, or else they clash, producing an unnatural, grotesque effect.[237]

Hollywood's leading makeup expert thus invited women consumers to see themselves as visual images, and their various body parts as components of a "harmonious whole." Rather than apply makeup in a "haphazard fashion" that lent itself to the "grotesque," women would take a lesson from the American film industry and learn to produce the "effect of naturalism."

Indeed, film industry conversations were selectively shared with the movie-going public via fan magazine articles, beauty advice columns, and other promotional materials. Screen makeup that produced the natural-appearing face was a sign of the industry's scientific prowess, as well as its contribution to the progress and betterment of society. Much of this discourse was parlayed to the public in text-heavy print advertisements, which glossed over the industry's research and testing in layman's terms, and then explained how the same technology could be of benefit to the average woman. A 1930 print advertisement for Max Factor's Society Make-Up explained how Hollywood's foremost makeup supplier had rescued a young actress who looked "like someone else, not herself." "Like a miracle, she had been transformed into a fascinating beauty," the write-up explains. "Her allure and personality hidden before by her own grotesque application of cosmetics, now shone forth radiantly and vividly, emphasized and enhanced by the magic make-up of Max Factor."[238] By the 1930s, the word "paint," already residual by this point,

---

[237] Ibid,11.

[238] "Advertisement: Max Factor's Society Make-Up," *Motion Picture Magazine*, June 1930, 15.

fell out of use entirely. “Make-up” was a newer term legitimized by Factor, who, like many in the trade, went to great lengths to stress that the best makeup was that which assisted nature. The point of makeup, according to the loudest of voices, was not to paint over reality, but to enhance it, all the while effacing the labors and materials involved in the creative process.

Max Factor’s Panchromatic Make-Up was thinner than previous greasepaint formulations, which meant that screen makeup was one step closer to the “street” – in other words, that which would ultimately hit the consumer market. This was a professional-use product and not intended for the general public — at least not for every day “beauty makeup” purposes. Panchromatic Make-Up was, however, sold to amateurs and anyone who might be interested in enhancing their facial appearance for a black and white portrait. The use of Panchromatic Make-Up by photographers continued well past its period of dominance in Hollywood. Advertisements, directed at amateur filmmakers, boasted that the products would also work for ordinary photographs. In one 1939 editorial, titled, “How to Charm a Camera,” the author details, for women readers, how to correctly apply the brown-toned greasepaint so that the “photograph she hands down to posterity” is a “flattering likeness.”[239] The very idea that a woman might wish to “charm a camera” invokes a discursive collapse of “screen” and “street.” The woman makes herself beautiful not for “real life,” but rather, for the camera. Her descendants remember her for her idealized and technologically constructed self-image (fig. 25).

[239] Sylvia Blythe, “How to Charm a Camera,” *Evening Star*, Washington DC, January 8, 1939, 13.

Figure 25. "How to Charm a Camera," *The Evening Star,* Washington DC, January 1939, p. 87.

Max Factor's Pan-Cake

Although Perc Westmore would not be the one to go down in history as the inventor of Technicolor makeup, he foretold its legacy. As one columnist reported: "He predicts that color reproduction will be so true it will be like a mirror held up to each player. All this will revolutionize screen make-up and change it to beautifully executed street make-up."[240] Westmore's prophesy was fulfilled: Technicolor would not only offer the best, most vivid, and enticing advertising potential, but the material composition of Technicolor makeup would further narrow the gap between screen and street.

Max Factor's Pan-Cake Make-Up made its screen debut in *Walter Wanger's Vogues of 1938* (1937). Rumor had it that *Vogues* required four times as much makeup product as a typical film shoot because female members of the ensemble cast were stealing it for their own personal

[240] Grace Grandville, "Beauty," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 1, 1935, 38.

use.[241] Unlike Panchromatic Make-Up, Pan-Cake was a talc-based skin-toned foundation that could be worn on set, as well as off. Widely considered to be the first foundation-concealer of the modern era, Pan-Cake was invented in response to the film industry's adoption of three-strip Technicolor, which forced Hollywood's makeup artists to, once again, adapt to new lighting requirements on set.[242] Eventually, Pan-Cake would replace the oily, emollient greasepaint that had previously been the industry standard, and subsequently revolutionize the screen makeup process. Although Factor had been an industry leader for well over a decade, *Vogues* was the makeup artist's first screen credit, which not only solidified his dominance in the industry, but perhaps more importantly, it drew public attention to the Max Factor brand. Pan-Cake was the first makeup to be designed for the screen but repackaged for the commercial market and sold to the general public. As *Modern Screen* wrote: "No wife is going to see 'Vogues' without setting out on a shopping expedition the next day."[243]

With its enhanced spectrum of vivid color, Technicolor offered Hollywood new ways of visualizing the world on screen that could not be achieved in black and white alone. Technicolor enabled filmmakers to depict its subjects in a way that was more representative of human vision; however, by the same token, it also exposed the mechanism formerly shrouded in cinematic magic. Filmed in Technicolor, previous formulations of screen makeup left a perceptible reflective sheen, appearing decidedly artificial and "made-up." The older screen makeup formulas could no longer be counted on to successfully produce an illusion of feminine beauty.

---

[241] Basten, 113.

[242] Kirsty Sinclair Dootson, "'The Hollywood Powder Puff War': Technicolor Cosmetics in the 1930s," *Film History* 28.1 (2016): 108.

[243] "Reviews," *Modern Screen*, November 1927, 108.

On the contrary, they called attention to artifice and as such, were no longer compatible with the emergent technology.

In 1935, *Photoplay* ran an article ominously titled, "Will Your Favorite Star Survive Color?" The author, Mildred Mastin, explains that with the new developments in Technicolor, film stars would need to meet a whole new standard of physical attractiveness. "No more heavy make-up," she writes. An imperfect complexion would no longer suffice – the synthetic beauty, who may have gotten by in years past, would need to come out of the shadows. '"You can't fool the color camera! It catches the slightest artificiality, magnifying it, making it ridiculous. Bleached hair, which may be beautiful on the shadow screen, in Technicolor looks like a straw wig."[244] Likewise, heavy screen make-up, she explains, "is ugly and artificial in Technicolor. A light, natural make-up must be used."[245]

In the mid-1930s, three-strip Technicolor was the pinnacle of film realism. Mastin contends that audiences have been hesitant to accept color films because, prior to this development, they had not adequately represented a true-to-life spectrum. Like the audible "cracked voices" of early sound pictures, she explains, early color films revealed the construction of the star's beauty.[246] These "cracks in the surface" were evident because the emergent technology did not yet offer a seamless visual representation of the real world.

Mastin's *Photoplay* article makes the claim that Technicolor would ultimately usher in a whole new standard of beauty. Stars who relied on heavy make-up would be, quite literally, exposed. Sarah Berry argues that a solution to this problem was to cast actresses that were

[244] Mildred Mastin, "Will Your Favorite Star Survive Color?" *Photoplay*, January 1935, 26.

[245] Ibid, 104.

[246] Ibid, 27.

"Technicolor types": "One way that the chaos of the Technicolor palette was adapted to norms of facial representation and beauty was to use performers whose style could be 'naturally' associated with bright colors. Female stars who were the 'Technicolor type' had 'vivid' features and personalities, which often meant they were exotically ethnic."[247] While Technicolor may have indeed initiated more diverse casting practices in Hollywood, there remains the issue of "naturalism," and what it stood for during this period. Yes, blondes may have been on their way out, as Mastin claims, but only because there were so few natural blondes. Miriam Hopkins, the star of the Technicolor film, *Becky Sharp*, was so desired for the leading role because she had natural light hair that had "never been touched by bleach."[248]

Factor's Pan-Cake was not the only screen makeup specially developed for three-strip Technicolor. Elizabeth Arden and the House of Westmore were also contenders in the race to develop a suitable skin-toned base formula. This makeup would need to be quick and easy to apply and lightweight enough to allow the actor to comfortably withstand the heat produced by high-intensity arc lamps. Ultimately, Pan-Cake came out the winner because the results were deemed the most "natural." Kirsty Sinclair Dootson argues, however, that Max Factor's Pan-Cake triumphed over its main competitor, Elizabeth Arden's Screen and Stage Make-Up, not because it was a superior product, but because it was uniquely able to represent light skin tones in Technicolor. "This insistence on natural skin colors," she writes, "was in fact deployed euphemistically to mask an insistence on whiteness as a natural state, whereby all departures from this standard were characterized as excesses, problems, or flaws."[249]

---

[247] Sarah Berry, *Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 119.

[248] Mastin, 26.

[249] Dootson, 108.

The street version of Pan-Cake Make-Up was called Pan-Cake Color Harmony, and taking a cue from the movie business, it divided its customers into types: "blonde," "brunette," "redhead," and "brownette." This line promised its customers natural beauty, defined as a symphonic integration of one's personality and facial aesthetics – in other words, "harmony." Harmony, much like naturalism, was often euphemistic. For starters, the desired effect was mainly the privilege of women consumers with light complexions and disposable income. Color Harmony's categories may not immediately suggest whiteness, since they involve not skin tone, but hair color; however, these products were exclusively offered in light to medium tones. Additionally, and as I discuss in more detail in Chapter Four, the very concept of "harmony," as it applied to color theory, was not a neutral one, in terms of its racial, ethnic, and class connotations.

Conclusion

Factor died in 1938, which meant that Pan-Cake was his final achievement. According to his son, Frank (who, from then on went by the name, Max), Factor had for years sought naturalism so that the stars could be their own authentic selves.[250] Modern screen makeup, unlike the heavy powders and grease sticks that preceded it, was not heavy, occlusive, or mask-like. This meant that an actor's skin now *looked like skin*, that an actor's likeness could be achieved quickly and easily, and that the face could be expressively mobile and convey subtle, nuanced emotion and psychological depth. However, despite the relatively transparent quality of these

[250] Basten, 120.

new formulas, one could hardly say that the face of the modern screen was untouched. It only appeared in the way that it did, due to what was, at the time, the most advanced of motion picture technologies. An actress's on-screen beauty was a technological feat that laid claim to something pure, objective, and authentic, but was in fact, a meticulously constructed illusion upon which society's hopes, fears, and desires vis-à-vis ideal femininity could glom.

Factor's legacy, however – his search for "greater realism" – would not be contained to the motion picture industry. Due to its relatively sheer, mess-free formulation, Pan-Cake was also the perfect solution for a generation of American women, for whom makeup was becoming an acceptable means of enhancing one's physical appearance – so long as they did not overdo it. In other words, it was the ideal product for the woman who wanted to look fashionable and modern without being mistaken for one of *those* women – women who would powder and rouge for the sake of being ogled, or who, whether by birth or by choice, did not adhere to norms of feminine self-presentation, morality, and propriety. It was the ideal product for the woman during the Great Depression who desired to look richer, healthier, whiter, younger, and ultimately deemed more valuable to society, without looking like she "made it all up."

CHAPTER FOUR

Hollywood Beauty Shop: 1930s Makeover Culture

The clever catchphrase, "Give your face a New Deal!" appeared with some regularity in print advertisements and beauty editorials in the 1930s. While President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal promised financial recovery and government reform, the day's beauty culturalists offered an alternative form of relief. In her popular syndicated column, beauty and fashion authority Gladys Glad wrote:

> Newspapers have been carrying stories lately of famous Hollywood make-up men who have taken plain, mousey-looking women in hand and, through the skillful use of make-up, have transformed them into scintillating beauties. You probably have read one or more of these stories. You probably have wished, as a result, that someone would take YOU in hand and do YOU over.[251]

The "do YOU over," or, what beauty culturalists would eventually refer to as the "makeover," was propelled into the public consciousness with stories of Hollywood's star transformations. "When you consider beauty as a personal achievement you have captured the spirit that is Hollywood," wrote *Photoplay*'s Carolyn Van Wyck. Van Wyck, beauty editor and author of the recurring column, "*Photoplay*'s Hollywood Beauty Shop," encouraged her readers to "compare the butterfly with the grub," when observing two contrasting images of Joan Crawford, much like the now-familiar diptych – the poorly angled "before" featuring the out-of-season hairstyle, painfully juxtaposed with the sophisticated and up-to-date "after" – that accompanies

[251] Gladys Glad, "Beauty by Gladys Glad," *The News-Freemont Messenger*, October 10, 1933, 8.

contemporary makeover narratives.[252] "Gloria Swanson did not have glamour in 1926," Van Wyck attests, narrating another journey of transfiguration. "But today – her smile is unforgettable and even her nose is fascinating!" The secret to a fascinating nose, however, was not only on the screen, but, as the name of the column suggests, in the *shop*: "Was it heartache or ambition that changed Greta Garbo from this unkempt child into a national figure of romance? Certainly masterful eye make-up has done its part."[253]

With the average hourly minimum wage enough to buy merely half a tube of mascara, the eye makeup that had, according to *Photoplay*, outdone both heartache and ambition as catalysts to Garbo's self-actualization would have been unobtainable for many American women. The 1930s, however, had ushered in new beauty standards that wielded clear social and economic stakes. "Rouge, powder and lipstick are psychological necessities," claimed a participant at a conference for women in advertising.[254] For the first time, women professionals were encouraged to wear makeup on the job, to increase profit, and secure deals and transactions. The new social sciences were vital to America's burgeoning advertising industry, to generate, in the consumer, a sense of longing and necessity that would be temporarily satiated at the point of sale. When it came to fashions and makeup, the same applied psychology that would make a product more enticing, more coveted, and more representative of the ideal life, extended beyond the printed advert to women's faces and bodies. With the right combination of design elements, a woman might increase her "market value," elevating her appeal to potential employers, lovers, and friends. Makeup, applied judiciously to achieve a natural effect – a look that required discipline,

[252] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Photoplay's Hollywood Beauty Shop," *Photoplay*, April 1932, 55.

[253] Ibid, 54.

[254] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Hair Tricks That Change Your Face," *Photoplay*, February 1932, 75.

skill, and rouge – was indeed a "psychological necessity." For women who sought to transcend financial precarity, it promised tangible rewards.

In this chapter, I argue that the Depression era beauty literature, publicity, and marketing, contributed to a mass beauty culture which valorized Hollywood's elite physical standards, as well as the arduous aesthetic processes through which women consumers might increase their "market value." There are three stages to this analysis, which begins with the popular representation of industrial practices in Hollywood, the beauty capital of America. The star transformation, which I frequently refer to as the "makeover" to invoke its contemporary reverberations, not only set the standard in feminine beauty, but conflated the idea of physical perfection with the fame and success of film stardom. "Camera Beauty," however, was nearly impossible to achieve in life, let alone maintain, for someone without the industry's magic at their command. Furthermore, Hollywood's aesthetic norms not only excluded a range of "faults" and "defects" that could hardly be resolved with commercial beauty products and services, but also reinforced existing racial and ethnic categorizations and hierarchies. "Natural charm" was, paradoxically, the desired result of the makeover, which promised to uncover, or "peel back the layers" to reveal one's best (most marketable) self; however, this discourse often involved thinly guised euphemisms for whiteness.

The next stage of this analysis explores how beauty standards circulated, specifically, through the celebrity-inspired advice column in motion picture fan magazines. Contrary to the still or moving image of on-screen beauty, which effaced the labors involved in its construction, this emerging print genre demystified Hollywood glamour, breaking-down the how-to of hair, fashion, and makeup. In many ways, the advice literature of this period democratized celebrity beauty, making it accessible, reproducible, and down to earth. At the same time, these columns –

typically authored by women who went by their first names – reinforced readers' body-image doubts, by putting a friendly and trustworthy voice to the ever-gnawing unease aroused by the sight of Hollywood's beautiful people.

Finally, I consider the role of "beauty types," integral to the marketing and promotion of new commercial makeup lines, which although not a novel phenomenon in the 1930s, were modernized with the emergence and popular understanding of Hollywood star types. Images of well-known actresses injected these obsolescent categories of feminine self-representation with psychological depth and authenticity. Facial beauty type systems promised to facilitate an at-home "star transformation." To achieve the desired effect, however, women were required to buy multiple products and be identifiable within the limited range of types. Product-sponsored editorials warned women that, to exceed the limits of her category, was to appear unnatural, made-up, and "cheap" – rather than generate a harmonious integration of inner and outer beauty, personality and physicality. This form of identity-conscious consumerism made for productive, efficient commerce, but by the same token, it used the feminine form as the canvas upon which racial, ethnic, and class-based differentiations were drawn.

"Hades of Lovely Women": Beauty Capital of America

The growing omnipresence of American celebrity culture in the 1930s meant that some of the most visible of the nation's elite were increasingly defined by a high level of physical attractiveness. "Beauty," a reporter for *Modern Screen* wrote in 1933, "is Hollywood's most

saleable commodity."[255] This was especially the case for aspiring film actresses, whose faces and bodies were subjected to rigorous screen-testing and modifications, since the image of the beautiful woman was, in many ways, the image of Hollywood itself. In their co-authored book, *Star-Dust in Hollywood* (1930), English art world insiders, Jan and Cora Gordon, wrote of the "business harem" that was the American motion picture industry:

> Ordinarily we think of Hollywood in terms of the female. We judge by the posters, the film propaganda, by scandal, or by memories of films. The film world seems to be dominated by women stars. Yet with the exception of a lumber camp, it is possibly the most male place in America. No feminine paradise this, but the hades of lovely women. Here, if nowhere else, they are told bluntly the exact market-value of their looks.[256]

The Gordons – who clearly did not enjoy their stay in Los Angeles – evoked a drab, industrial, and disingenuous town, where, among other disappointments, feminism was all but dead. In Hollywood, they observed, beauty was a "drug on the market," since women depended upon the precarious, depreciating, and largely unpredictable currency that was their physical appearance. This system of value, they argued, was neither isolated nor exclusively bred in Hollywood, but had "been absorbed from every film-struck village in the States, where not only personal vanity, but local vanity too, urged any extra pretty face-and-legs to try her fortune on the films."[257]

Most of us are unlikely to have heard of the "vagabond travellers" from across the Atlantic, who found themselves at odds with America's world-famous film city. We must note that their experiences, like all experiences, are subjective, and undoubtedly inflected by their own self-interests. Nevertheless, throughout their colorful and shrewd report on the state of the film industry in 1930, they make several noteworthy observations and contentions regarding the

---

[255] Martha Kerr, "What Happens to You in a Hollywood Beauty Shop," *Modern Screen*, August 1933, 72.

[256] Jan Gordon and Cora Gordon, *Star-Dust In Hollywood* (London: George C. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1930), 88.

[257] Ibid.

value of beauty in Hollywood, or, as they call it, "the hades of lovely women." I defer to them here, as a starting point from which to lay-out the major themes and questions that feed this chapter.

Hollywood's Beauty Economy

The Gordons' account casts a shadow over the escapist utopia more commonly illustrated by the popular press: one where dreams were made, where female stars made as much as – if not more than – their male counterparts, and where women, in theory, could be self-sufficient.[258] In a 1936 interview, actress Carole Lombard was quoted as saying: "Once I said Hollywood is ruled by women – and it's true. I said that this new regime of financial independence and importance of women would bring about a new equality of the sexes. *It's happened!*"[259] The Gordons, however, would have likely disagreed, insisting that a woman's autonomy in "the most male place in America," came at a cost, if not an entrance fee. Hollywood's beauty ideals included symmetrical features, the appearance of youthfulness, and the exemplar oval-shaped face. Additionally, while several non-white actresses experienced fame and popularity during this decade, praised and envied for their "exotic" good looks, the most obvious physical markers of racial or ethnic difference were often tempered by the industry's implementation of white American aesthetic norms, most explicitly during the studio makeover, but also through a

[258] Karen Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream: Stardom and Social Mobility* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 83.

[259] Mark Dowling, "A New Way to Men's Hearts," *Motion Picture Magazine*, July 1932, 36.

discursive process carried out in the press. Fan magazines, sold nationally, featured beauty-focused content that not only endorsed Hollywood's aesthetic norms, but paired them with the fantasy of affluence, social mobility, and independence.

With few exceptions, beauty, for women, was a prerequisite for leading roles. A more apt term for this quality might have been "attractiveness," but "beauty" was the official name of the culture and the industry that germinated around this standard. With the line, "we think of Hollywood in terms of the female," the Gordons allude to the basic conceptual premise of what we often refer to now as the "male gaze." Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," argued that traditional film conventions, which were established under the economic conditions of Hollywood's studio system, visually position the woman on screen as the object of heterosexual, masculine desire.[260] The Gordons note that to even the most casual observer, Hollywood's end-product, as well as its promotion and hype ("the posters, the film propaganda"), is gendered feminine; however, we would be remiss to take this as a sign that women hold the power in this industry. The Gordons' account emphasizes the economic structures undergirding this phenomenon, in which a woman's visual appearance is explicitly assigned a market-value. Under the practices endemic to the studio system, an appraisal might have occurred during an early screentest, repeatedly throughout an actress's career, or in the process of a full-body makeover, prescribed and financed by the studio with which she was contracted.

The studios poured copious amounts of time, money, and personnel into the external transformations of female stars. Jeanine Basinger refers to this stage of the star-making process as the "looking over" period, during which the studio assessed a newly contracted actor's

[260] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no 3, (1975): 6-18.

physical attributes and decided which ones needed to be fixed before the star could be presented to the public.[261] Rigorous scrutiny and evaluative measures produced the star as a commodity; however, as many scholars over the years have demonstrated, actors were not simply passive, infinitely malleable, or uninvolved in this construction. Richard Dyer has argued that this process was one way in which the star, along with the team of makeup artists, hair stylists, dieticians, and others, participated in their own commodification.[262] The question of how much stars possessed agency over their image (physical or otherwise) has propelled research into an era of Hollywood history otherwise characterized by binding contracts, large sums of financial investment, and assembly-line levels of efficiency. Adrienne McLean writes of Columbia Pictures' transformation of Rita Hayworth in the late 1930s, during which the actress underwent diet, exercise, electrolysis, and hair bleaching to obscure her Spanish heritage and read as "white." This transformation was to make Hayworth more viable for leading roles, rather than those reserved for "ethnic types" – in other words, to raise her market value. McLean argues, however, that while Hayworth's persona was "at first weak, pliable, and excessively tied to her body and appearance," by the mid-1940s, the actress was defined more for how she disclosed, to the public, her struggles with identity and the star making process.[263] The authenticity that Hayworth conveyed to her audience made her no less saleable, and served to contradict the notion that she had been manufactured by the studio, in spite of the obvious changes to her appearance.[264]

---

[261] Jeanine Basinger, *The Star Machine* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 40.

[262] Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2004), 5.

[263] Adrienne L. McLean, *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 33.

[264] Ibid, 46.

In the 1930s, the manufacturing of screen beauty was itself a technological and artistic achievement worth reporting on. The discovery of one's inherent uniqueness or "real self" was, however, an equally vital component of the star makeover, in terms of its significance for the burgeoning cosmetics industry. It is important to remember that mass beauty culture was, at this time, a novel and rapidly growing phenomenon. As new makeup companies, salon services, and popular beauty literature flourished, the codes and conventions that would ultimately come to define this culture were very much in flux. Likewise, Hollywood transformation stories comprised a diverse print genre: sometimes, they were salacious in tone ("You won't believe what she used to look like!"); sometimes, they aggrandized the individuals in charge and their methods. Popular beauty literature was, at times, undifferentiated from trade discourse, and this convergence of interests produced content that was both vested in the representation of scientific achievement (the perfect woman, the perfect face) and the preservation of the human element – often expressed in equally misogynistic, moralizing statements about what a woman could and should do to her body. While some decried the loss of individuality, as dozens of similarly "perfect" women multiplied on screen, many more were sold by the prospect that their own Cinderella story might begin with a simple drug store purchase. The Hollywood transformation provided a model for women in the emerging beauty economy: A star's most saleable qualities were "discovered," as the studios mined their bodies for value; on the consumer market, this story translated into one of self-discovery, more opportunities and bodily capital.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Pierre Bourdieu, in his famous study on capital and class distinction, noted the value of beauty on the labor market, to which he credited "not only a number of changes in the norms of clothing and cosmetics, but also a whole set of

changes in ethics and a redefinition of the legitimate image of femininity."[265] For Bourdieu, capital was "accumulated labour" and beauty, as a form of physical capital, was one way in which a woman could gain social mobility. He observed that, women, particularly of the petite bourgeoise, who work in jobs that depend on various forms of self-presentation, derive occupational profit from their "charm." Hostesses, and retail and service industry workers are thus invested in beauty care, although often not as confident in their body capital as women of the dominating classes.[266]

The question of whether a woman's beauty can effectively function as a form of embodied cultural capital has been taken up more recently by sociologists. Ashley Mears explores the problem of ownership and questions who ultimately stands to profit from a woman's bodily capital. She argues that while many studies frame capital as a personal resource, due to gender inequality, women are not always able to convert their bodily capital to other forms of value.[267] Building on Bourdieu's conceptualization of the human body as physical capital, Sarah Berry notes that women's participation in consumer culture is "historically linked to their entry into the service-sector workforce, a context in which self-presentation and performance are material issues."[268] Berry demonstrates how the American fashion industry functioned to demystify assumptions around social mobility. "Fashion was suddenly seen as the marketing concept that would fuel a new consumer economy," she writes. "Along the way, worries that

---

[265] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 153.

[266] Ibid, 206.

[267] Ashley Mears, "Girls as Elite Distinction: The Appropriation of Bodily Capital," *Poetics* 53 (December 2015): 22-37.

[268] Berry, xiii.

popular fashion might disrupt social class distinctions were replaced by new rationales for fashion as a means of self-articulation, improvement, and upward mobility."[269] For most women, the realization of these fantasies would have remained elusive, but the illusion was nonetheless a powerful one, enabled particularly by star testimonials and the reinvention of older merchandizing strategies, such as the fashion type. Well-known actresses, perceived by their fans to be accomplished and self-made women, replaced the former fashion archetypes, imbuing these categories with a populist egalitarian ethos.[270]

Beauty Practices

Also worth mentioning are the Gordons' comments regarding the diffusion of Hollywood's aesthetic norms, adopted nationally in "every film-struck village in the States." As one beauty columnist claimed: "Going to the movies is one of the most stimulating beauty treatments I know!" She explained:

> Because I rarely ever see a glamorous looking star that a certain amount of dissatisfaction with myself is not created. I find I go home, wondering why my figure isn't as svelte, as say, Constance Bennett's. Or why my eyes aren't as expressive as Joan Crawford's. And after I have wondered long enough, I find that I have a new stimulus to take those exercises that have been boring me. And I find that perhaps I could find a little more time each day for the special care of my tired looking eyes.[271]

[269] Berry, 2.

[270] Ibid, 28.

[271] "Take These Beauty Tips To Gain What You Envy in the Stars," *Photoplay*, March 1932, 16.

Much like what Jackie Stacey, in 1991, referred to as a "cinematic identificatory fantasy," characterized by "the recognition of an immutable difference between star and spectator" and "the desire to move across that difference and become more like the star," the beauty columnist narrates the spectator's longing to close the gap between herself and the image on screen. From this cinematic fantasy, she is compelled to "find a little more time each day" to engage in what we would now call "self-care" – a contemporary concept with loaded connotations in an era shaped by neoliberalism and the commodification of feminist rhetoric. Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff call this phenomenon, "aesthetic entrepreneurship." Although it is a particular manifestation of the twenty-first century, the 1930s popular beauty literature embodies many of its core principles.

In the common verbiage of the fan magazine press, which frequently employed factory metaphors to describe screen beauty, Hollywood "set the standard," implying a one-directional relationship between the renowned beauty headquarters and the rest of the country. While there is ample evidence to suggest that the film industry was, in large part, responsible for a marked shift in the way Americans understood beauty, this relationship was likely far more complex and symbiotic. Women's advice columns, for instance, which aggressively promoted Hollywood as the new epicenter of fashion and beauty, were equally shaped by the expressed needs and longings of their readership. Julie Golia has demonstrated how the emergence of newspaper advice columns, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, changed the nature of public discourse, providing readers with the opportunity to participate in a public forum; however, these discussions, which revealed readers' deepest insecurities, also provided profit-driven advertising firms with consumer information.[272] While it is difficult, given the limitations of surviving

[272] Julie Golia, *Newspaper Confessions: A History of Advice Columns in a Pre-Internet Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 3-4.

documents, to say conclusively the means by which the cosmetics industry imagined their ideal consumer, as well as to identify precisely how and where our beauty standards originate, advice columns were a regular feature in Hollywood fan magazines. Readers' inquiries and confessions would have generated an aggregate sketch of she who was most likely to buy into Hollywood's ideals, as well as how best to appeal to her.

Hollywood may have "set the standard," but it did not dictate its values to a passive, acquiescent public. Makeup companies elicited the active participation of the consumer through various marketing strategies, including the popular "beauty type" model. Based on older fashion classification systems and integrating color theory previously used in fine art, merchandizing, and design, "beauty types" were revamped and revised with the advent of American celebrity culture and mass market cosmetics. Max Factor's Color Harmony system and associated product line promised self-actualization via the discovery of one's color type – a process which invited the movie fan to purchase goods, as a means of identifying with the stars, who were increasingly pictured in product advertisements. By emphasizing that exterior changes would make visible the authentic, inner self, "beauty types" paradoxically mitigated the threat of man-made or "standardized" beauty.

Type and the Market

Much like it functions today, the beauty literature of the 1930s counselled readers on how to minimize corporeal aberrations and disharmony: If your face was too wide, this product, applied correctly, would minimize it; colors would be matched to create a unified palette that

was unique to you – and everyone else who identified with your color type. Other systems, such as the Westmores' "Type Harmony" approach, which used facial shapes, stressed line and form over color. In stores where the House of Westmore cosmetics were sold, "magic mirrors" were installed to help the customer discover her facial type and compare it with those of different Hollywood stars.[273] In both cases, the objective was self-actualization and discovery. As one beauty editorialist explained, "The important points to follow… are the actual formations of your face – the shape of it, your nose, mouth, eyes – and then, yourself, the real you."[274]

Feminist scholars have commented on the contradictions inherent to profit-driven categorization systems, like the "beauty type" model, which claim to facilitate self-actualization and empowerment for women consumers. Fashion historian Elizabeth Wilson argues that the idea of the "Self as a Work of Art" developed over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, peaking in the mid-1900s with mass market periodicals. She writes: "The women's magazines urged every woman to discover her 'type' and yet to dress to 'be herself': the paradox of artificially created spontaneity. To reconcile the desire to look 'different' with the simultaneous yet conflicting compulsion to conform was the tightrope along which millions of women teetered."[275] Wilson argues that these categorization systems offer consumers a sense of cohesive identity, amidst the chaos and depersonalization of the modern industrial metropolis. She writes:

> The appeal of this kind of typology is rather like that of astrology. There's a strange psychological reassurance in the idea that one *can* be categorized, the thrill of self-recognition in saying "I'm a typical Leo," or "I'm the Artistic Type." For there is then the

[273] Frank Westmore and Muriel Davidson, *The Westmores of Hollywood* (New York: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1976), 110.

[274] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Finding Your Type in the Stars," *Photoplay*, October 1933, 94.

[275] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, revised edition (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 123.

> further assurance that by adherence to certain rules – whether celestial or sartorial – one can somehow make everything right.[276]

Wilson's analogy suggests that the fashion world's consumer typologies adopt a pre-modern, or, we might argue, pre-market, logic. They confirm, for their proponents, that there exists a true essence underneath the standardized modern facade; that there remains something eternal that can withstand rapid and unceasing change. The catch is that one must fully invest in consumer culture, purchasing fashions that inevitably outmode with every season, to maintain a unified sense of self.

The following words of advice, from *Photoplay*'s Van Wyck, capture the modern ambivalence Wilson describes. In an article titled, "The Hollywood Side of Make-Up," the beauty columnist refers to the film industry as the gold-standard in manufactured individuality:

> There is probably no one else exactly like you or me in the world. This is both a comforting and a discomforting thought. But there are our types. And these should be our guides. Even when we have the responsibility of using our own imagination to a small degree, adding this, taking away that. This development of self, of individuality, is a dominating aim among the lovely women of Hollywood. There, individuality comes at a premium.[277]

Hollywood's star system, which produced and commodified personality in its own way, was regularly invoked by beauty columnists in their address to readers seeking to define, affirm, or reinvent themselves. As Dyer writes, stars are "embodiments of the social categories in which people are placed and through which we make our lives – categories of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and so on. And all these typical, common ideas, that have the feeling of being the air that you breathe, just the way things are, have their own histories, their own

[276] Ibid, 125.

[277] Carolyn Van Wyck, "The Hollywood Side of Make-Up," *Photoplay,* November 1932, 102.

peculiarities of social construction."[278] Star types were produced to appear natural, which was only reinforced by the repetitiveness with which they appeared on screen.

Although "star type" was not synonymous with "beauty type," these two categorization systems were often conflated in popular discourse. As A.B. Shore, a Max Factor company representative, explained in a 1935 interview, the new art of makeup was one which involved the meticulous study of chemistry and physiognomy. "You cannot create personality," he stated. "You merely define it, by doctoring natural defects."[279] The notion that personality could be ascertained by way of analyzing facial features, according to a prescribed code, was facilitated by popular magazines. "Star physiognomy" – a recurring fan magazine feature in the early 1930s – allowed the fan to "get to know" the rich and famous. These articles satiated the fan's desire to feel a sense of intimacy and closeness with the star; however, by the same token, it reinforced the notion that the face "spoke for itself." One fan magazine article, titled, "Science Reveals Garbo's character," dissected the facial features of actress Greta Garbo, "one of the most intriguing faces of the screen." The author explained that though Garbo might be secretive about her private life, her silence was no match for the science of physiognomy (fig. 26). In the early 1930s, *Broadway and Hollywood Movies* maintained a recurring column entitled, "Physiognomy: Your Face and What it Reads." Often penned by a medical doctor – or, more likely, someone posing as one – each article offered a character analysis of a different film star: "Study Janet Gaynor's artistic profile. Have you her brow, eyes, nose, or chin? Or rather, do any of your features show similar outline? If so, they show similarities in temperament and talents. Remember that the entire

[278] Dyer, 16,

[279] Leicester Wagner, "Hollywood Shots," *Nevada State Journal*, Reno, September 29, 1935, 8.

knowable universe is made up of the same stuff – electrons."[280] This popular genre of fan magazine content reduced the face on screen to a legible and reproducible code; but the incentive was that it offered the movie fan a means of identifying with the star – to feel closer to her, and more like her. As the author summed up: "we are all Star Dust."[281]

Figure 26. A physiognomic analysis of Greta Garbo. *Movie Classic*, October 1931, p. 23.

For women especially, physicality was thought to be an expression of one's inner self, and Hollywood, the fan magazines claimed, provided a template. An article titled, "Finding Your Type in the Stars," suggested that a woman might identify her "true star type" via the affordances of the moving image. While watching a film, the beauty-conscious spectator could

[280] William E. Benton. "Physiognomy: Your Face and What it Reads," *Broadway and Hollywood Movies*, April 1931, 13.

[281] Ibid.

"study" her favorite star (or "mentor" as the author referred to her) "from every angle."[282] The fact that stars could be categorized as "star types," and still retain their uniqueness was especially valuable for the beauty industry that sold the idea of individuality, or, as Van Wyck calls it, "the development of the self," contained within a limited range of product offerings.

Figure 27. Max Factor cosmetics claim to enhance the "natural beauty" of screen star types, produced with Hollywood's Color Harmony: "Created to screen star types, the color harmony tones of Max Factor's Rouge impart a fascinating, natural and lifelike glow to your cheeks." Max Factor Advertisement. *Photoplay*, March 1934, p. 93.

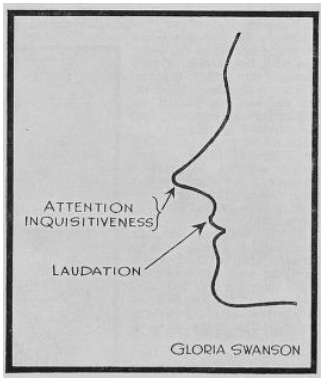


Figure 28. Star facial analysis in 1930. Fan magazines' overtly physiognomic offerings waned as the decade progressed, but beauty editorials adopted many of the same principles. "Won By a Nose," *The New Movie Magazine*, 1930, p. 35.

[282] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Finding Your Type in the Stars," *Photoplay*, October 1933, 94.

The spectrum of facial beauty types, such as those represented by Max Factor's Color Harmony, generally represented the target consumer – the white, middle-class, and able-bodied woman with disposable income. By extension, it was also this consumer who was afforded the product's claim to "natural beauty" – who could, in theory, purchase her way into "personality," "authenticity," and ultimately, a fuller expression of human subjectivity. Feminist disability scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thompson argues that the "be yourself" imperative, which promulgates the market for beauty treatments, procedures, and products, in fact, suppresses physical difference:

> This flight from the nonconforming body translates into individual efforts to look normal, neutral, unmarked, to not look disabled, queer, ugly, fat, ethnic, or raced. Beauty, then, dictates corporeal standards that create not distinction but utter conformity to a bland look that is at the same time unachievable, so as to leash us to consumer practices that promise to deliver such sameness.[283]

For a white, able-bodied woman without any obvious physical traits that differentiated her from the standard, what Garland-Thompson would call the "normate," "beauty types" simplified the impossible goal of "perfection" with consumer purchases. In this way, lured by the prospect of self-actualization, she participated in the regulation of what constituted ideal femininity.

Made in Hollywood

The day's beauty standards were not only affirmed, but in large part produced, by the American film industry. According to *Photoplay*'s beauty editor in 1937, much of the cinema's

[283] Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 2022): 11-12.

offerings – the fashions, the acting – were imports from New York and Europe. Beauty, however, was made in Hollywood:

> Whenever you talk of Hollywood fashions you have to concede the influence of Paris. When you talk of acting and writing you have to allow for New York and foreign influence. But there are no two ways about beauty. Every beauty trick that amounts to anything at all started out here in this one town. There isn't a week that goes by in Hollywood but what some new girl is introduced for her personality, since usually there is something the matter with her face or her figure or both.[284]

It was, she continued, "the skill of the Hollywood make-up men and beauty experts" that had transformed these young women into screen beauties, despite the "crooked teeth, overweight figures, drab hair, too-small eyes and everything else that could possibly be the matter with them."[285] While a team of surgeons, orthodontists, and other medical professionals did their part, makeup artists were the true miracle workers – as much scientists as their colleagues, and possessing specialized knowledge that had real-world applications for the beauty-obsessed movie fan.

As discussed in the preceding chapters, Hollywood's makeup artists to the stars, Max Factor and Perc Westmore, each developed mathematical systems in pursuit of the ideal feminine physiognomy: facial "maps" assigned to each actress, measuring wheels, and the wearable micrometer, the Beauty Calibrator. These endeavors served partially as publicity fodder, securing the public interest and legitimacy of a young profession tainted by its former associations with morally debased (and at times, deadly) vanity practices; however, they nonetheless generated and reproduced cultural norms and expectations vis-à-vis the visuality of women.

[284] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Photoplay's Own Beauty Shop," *Photoplay*, October 1937, 29.

[285] Ibid.

We might argue that Factor's and Westmore's methods, which sought to quantify feminine beauty, were antithetical to stardom, as well as to glamour, which in many ways, resists definition, let alone duplication. As Richard deCordova contends, the "vast machinery" of the star system "does not produce stars the way a factory produces goods." He explains: "The system is rationalized, but it is not geared toward producing a standardized product in the usual sense of the word."[286] Star quality – an intangible and ever-volatile combination of good looks, charisma, and special talent – cannot be factory-made. The production line allegory, as deCordova argues, oversimplifies the system by suggesting that its output is standardized, when in fact the star must be produced as an individual, with depth, personality, and uniqueness.[287] A similar tension – between authenticity and reproducibility, art and science, essence and style – characterizes the discourse on feminine beauty and makeup use. Factor would always insist that makeup, whether for the screen or for everyday life, was an art, first and foremost. He stressed that rules were meant to be broken, despite the scientific achievements that characterized his career, which resulted in the standardization of screen makeup, and which were visibly manifest in a machine like the Beauty Calibrator. But while the formula for perfection would remain elusive, Hollywood would find softer and less visibly mechanized means by which to manufacture its feminine ideal, which were then promoted to the American public. With selective casting practices, angles that flattered, lights that burned-out scars and other blemishes, and, of course, makeup, on screen beauty – what industry professionals sometimes called, "Camera Beauty" – was an illusion. It was an illusion, however, that was projected upon hundreds of screens in

[286] Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 9.

[287] Ibid.

theaters across America and promoted by the press that worshipped, analyzed, and criticized images of women's faces and bodies, and ultimately reasserted its value.

Uplifting Cinderella stories of discovery, transformation, and a "happily ever after" generally characterized the decade's star makeover narratives; however, some popular beauty literature served neither to deconstruct nor democratize celebrity beauty. At times, beauty editors would discursively idolize screen stars as "masterpieces in the gallery of life," whose superior physical attributes had set them apart from the homely, plain, and unextraordinary masses. A *Silver Screen* editorial, titled, "The Screen's Seven Gorgeous Women," proposed that, in the upper echelons of Hollywood's star system, women embodied "perfection in weight, form, color and beauty," placing them in a division above mere mortals.[288] A holy number that appears in many world religions and belief systems, "seven" has symbolized, in its various historical incarnations, perfection, unity, wholeness, and divine completion. The canonization of "seven gorgeous women" simultaneously distances the screen star from her hordes of emulators, but paradoxically conveys the sense that the cinema, not nature, had created this beauty, in a magnum opus that rivaled the seventh day of creation. We might liken the deification of screen beauty to what Walter Benjamin, in his famous 1936 essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," described as the technological simulation of the aura, or the authentic one-of-a-kind quality that exists singularly in time and space and is otherwise lost to modern productive forces that have enabled the infinite reproducibility of the image. In this case, the image of the screen star, or the "masterpiece," possesses an otherworldly beauty, resistant to mass standardization as the production of contrived religiosity reinstates the divide between the screen star and her legions of copies.

[288] "The Screen's Seven Gorgeous Women," *Silver Screen,* August 1935, 40.

Adoring movie fans, who sought to emulate their favorite stars with hair, makeup, and wardrobe choices inspired by the screen, were not the only sign that the motion picture industry would result in a nation characterized by dreaded sameness. Indeed, anxieties over the "standardization" of actors' faces also permeate the era's popular discourse on makeup and screen beauty. As early as 1924 – several years before screen makeup was standardized for industry use or adapted and mass produced for the consumer market – a concerned movie fan wrote to the editors of *Photoplay* to complain that the industry's makeup techniques, employed with no regard for individuality, masked the player's uniqueness and talent. "Standardization is commonly regarded as our country's greatest weakness," she wrote, lamenting that, due to makeup, actors were beginning to resemble "new and showily expensive" dolls – the kind that only the most "vulgar, newly-rich parents would pick out for a child."[289] The fan letter embodies a confluence of anxieties that still today govern how we think about the "made up" woman: on one hand, we have distrust and dismay regarding the industry's clearly artificial and constructed physical standards; but on the other, we have the condescending conflation of "standardization" with lowbrow culture. By invoking the "vulgar" individual's vain attempt at social mobility, we are reminded that beauty and mass culture – and especially, the two combined – threaten to upset existing social hierarchies.

This movie fan's most basic observations were correct: the rudimentary screen makeup of the silent cinema was lacking in the nuance and sophistication it would acquire only a few short years later. Mel Burns, beauty consultant at RKO, once reflected on the "rubber stamp" girls of the 1920s: "No matter what kind of girls they were supposed to be on screen," he wrote, "their

[289] "Make-Up Madness," *Photoplay Magazine*, 1927, 17.

makeup never varied."[290] By the 1930s, however, the quality of screen makeup, the formulas and the practices, had significantly improved as part of the industry's efforts to achieve transparency and naturalism – paradoxically, to not obscure the performer's individuality, but to do so, with technical proficiency and easy reproducibility. Much like what critical theorists, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, in the 1940s, referred to as "pseudo-individuation," Hollywood's beauty practitioners produced an on-screen beauty that privileged personality, uniqueness, and authentic representation, but nonetheless limited the range of possible variations. The "maps" for which Perc Westmore was known would follow an actress to every set, to ensure she would never be without the face that worked. Factor also took a systematic approach, which appealed to the desire for self-actualization: categorizing female stars by their coloring, to tailor their transformations and economize for predictable results. His infamous celebrity-frequented salon quite literally put women into boxes with each room dedicated to a specific color type. Within those walls, the star could be "made over" into her best, most authentic, and saleable self, insofar as she and her makeup artist stayed within the parameters dictated by the tenets of the color theory Factor named, "color harmony."

The Star Transformation: Defects, Faults, and "The Slightly Unreal Exotic"

One of the goals of the Hollywood transformation was to eliminate much of what the press referred to as, "defects," or "faults." In a story published in *The American Magazine*, entitled, "The Making of a Movie Star," actress Margaret Sullavan recounted her early

[290] Mel Burns, "Make-Up to Date," *Movie Mirro*r, June 1940, 78.

screentests – a grueling and demoralizing process, in her view, which was accompanied by a classic Hollywood makeover: extensive dental work; the removal of a beloved mole, just to the left of her nose; and the plucking of every strand of her natural brow. In a rare and unusually negative portrayal of the makeover process, which she referred to as a "renovation," she recalls:

> When they made the first test I sat in a chair with the camera pushed close to my face, and they moved lights and shouted to each other as though I were a horse. All day long the conversation went something like this: "Hit her on the nose with that baby spot. No. Her nose won't stand it. Her chin's crooked. See if you can kill it. Try to burn down that upper lip."[291]

Sullavan sardonically adds that, after the ordeal, the director insisted that she just "be natural," as though her "renovation" could ever have been possible without the throngs of doctors, makeup artists, and hair stylists attending to her beauty needs. Sullavan's experience in Hollywood was not an unusual one; however, negative first-person accounts of the star makeover, like this one, rarely made headlines.

At one point, Sullavan comments that the studio's efforts nearly resulted in her taking on a "mulatto" appearance – an undesired outcome for an industry governed by white Anglo Saxon aesthetic norms. At the same time, racialized features were not always considered "defects" or "faults," as far as the studio beauty departments were concerned – "exotic" beauty was, at times, very saleable. While fan magazines rarely addressed the topic of racial or ethnic difference directly, images of nonwhite femininity, particularly the idealized fantasy woman of Asia or the South Pacific, were regularly exploited in the marketing and advertising of makeup and cosmetics products. Sarah Berry refers to this phenomenon as an early form of "commodified multiculturalism," aided by the introduction of Technicolor, and the popularity of non-Anglo actresses, such as Lupe Velez, Dolores Del Rio, and Anna May Wong. Berry argues that this

[291] Margaret Sullavan, "The Making of a Movie Star," *American Magazine*, 1934, 112.

trend reinforced ethnic stereotypes with hypersexualized representations of nonwhite femininity, but nonetheless began to erode the dominance of white Anglo-American beauty norms. She writes: "The popularization of sultry, darkly hued feminine glamour and the marketing of cosmetics in terms of a spectrum of colored features helped to displace nativist beauty norms that non-Anglo-American women had long been seen as inferior to."[292]

In 1935, a *Silver Screen* article claimed that Hollywood had "found" (echoing imperialist rhetoric) a "new kind of beauty" called "exotic." This "new kind of beauty," however, was only valued only insofar as it was the latest fashion – something that could be "put on" and taken off at will, such as in the case of the euphemistically named, "tippy eyes," celebrated in white actress Myrna Loy. Early in her career, Loy had been typecast as the "exotic" woman, but according to the article, had "left the Oriental type behind her."[293] The racialized feature – the eyes with a "delightful slant" – in this instance, is alienated from an individual or group identity: "tippy eyes" are not Asian, but rather, cute, ambiguous, and fashionable. In Loy, who was not of Asian descent, the public could appreciate the shape of her eyes, removed from their racial connotations. An earlier article emphasized Loy's natural (white) beauty, claiming all-too concertedly that Loy's eyes, in fact, did "not slant and are no narrower than Swanson's," but due to their innate deep-set appearance, were easily modified with eye pencil. Loy's "one great, flaming desire," the author claimed, was "to get away from Oriental roles."[294] Hollywood's acceptance of a "new kind of beauty" might have broadened American beauty norms, but the

[292] Berry, 141.

[293] "Those Beautiful 'Tippy' Eyes," *Silver Screen*, June 1935, 41.

[294] Jeanne North, "No More Chinese Myrna?" *Photoplay,* April 1933, 53.

commodification of "exotic" femininity nonetheless reinforced whiteness as the enduring standard.

If star transformations served to carve-out a more authentic and saleable persona – the "real" individual who would successfully pass the screentest – nonwhite actresses presented a problem. As discussed in Chapter Three, the term, "natural," in Hollywood trade and popular discourse alike, rarely meant "untouched," and often served to normalize gendered, racial, and class-based beauty norms and hierarchies. Dyer has demonstrated how whiteness colonizes the definition of "normal." The property of whiteness – to be, in his words, "everything and nothing" – is the source of its representational power. "Paradoxes," he writes, "provide the instabilities that generate stories, millions of engrossing attempts to find resolution. The dynamism of white instability, especially in its claims to universality, is also what entices those outside to seek to cross its borders and those inside to aspire ever upwards within it."[295] In many ways, we might argue, transformation narratives attempt to resolve, in Dyer's terms, the "instability" of whiteness and the indeterminacy of its borders: constant upkeep is required to maintain something that claims to be a baseline. A white actress, like Sullavan, needed work, to squash any glimmer of indication that she might have been mixed race (she was not), and thus any suggestion that her whiteness was not a fixed, unchanging, truth. Conversely, for a woman of color, who might pass as white, such as in the case of British actress Merle Oberon, "normal" and "natural" was often used to reaffirm the illusion of whiteness and secure her enduring marketability, after moving on from the passing fad that was her "exotic" persona. Oberon's case reveals much about how the "natural charm," which was said to result from the star

[295] Richard Dyer, *White*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2017), 39-40.

transformation, was a way of talking about race (and subsequently reinstating racial hierarchies) without addressing the subject head-on.

Oberon, a biracial actress born in India, who, for most of her career, hid her South Asian heritage from the public, is a fascinating case through which to examine the racial implications of the star makeover, and more broadly, the notion of "Camera Beauty" as the filmic construction of ideal femininity. Oberon regularly used pale makeup and skin lighteners to pass as white; ironically, however, it was Oberon's characteristically Indian features that the press attributed to decorative makeup. As one reporter commented, Oberon's "exotic" appearance was simply a "camouflage," suggesting that her natural state was, in fact, white.[296] Like Loy, therefore, her "exotic" appearance was acceptable, even admired and coveted as the latest fashion – the difference was, of course, that Oberon's racialized physicality was not "put on" with eyeliner or dark makeup, nor could it be taken off. Babli Sinha describes the publicity surrounding the "revelation of natural Oberon," noting how words, such as, "natural" and "normal" were often code for white. One article, as Sinha notes, claimed that Oberon, post-transformation, could finally "be herself": a wholesome, modern young woman, distanced from the "exotic" and "tragic" roles that characterized her earlier career.[297] In fact, what was perhaps most tragic about Oberon was the lasting impact she had on "Camera Beauty": The skin damage she incurred, in part, from cosmetic poisoning, which led to the development of the catch light, nicknamed the "Obie," to wash out her scars and draw attention to her eyes – a milestone invention in the production of on-screen beauty.

[296] "Be Yourself, Merle, is Film Edict," *New York Post*, July 8, 1935.

[297] Babli Sinha, "A 'Strangely Un-English Actress": Race, Legibility, and the Films of Merle Oberon, *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 44, no. 4 (2016): 225.

Oberon's "natural charm," code for her ability to read as white, was achieved, paradoxically, through the highly unnatural process of the Hollywood makeover. In a print advertisement for Max Factor cosmetics, Oberon is pictured in black and white, wearing light makeup and a demure hairstyle. The accompanying write-up claims that the actress is "a dramatic example of how a change in make-up can mean a complete transformation of personality." Max Factor's Color Harmony makeup, an industry product rebranded for the consumer market, promised to enhance a woman's natural beauty, rather than produce an overdone, or obviously artificial appearance. The advertisement reads: "Before the slightly unreal exotic – now the beautiful, natural charming girl."

Figure 29. Merle Oberon for Max Factor Cosmetics, c. 1936.

Oberon's revelatory "change in make-up" is significant, not only for how it reinforces whiteness as the reigning physical standard, despite the decade's small influx of ethnically diverse screen actresses and the popularity of "exotic" makeup brands, such as, "Savage," or the smudge-proof, "Tattoo" lip tint in the shade, "Hawaiian." The term, "exotic" (Oberon's

otherness), in the Max Factor ad, is the opposite of "natural" (white), even though "natural" is, in fact, the product – the makeup, the construction, and the impossible feminine ideal that is dangled at the end of a transaction.

It must be emphasized, however, that "natural," in this instance, does not simply connote "white," but rather, an authentic, universal, and human quality that is discursively absorbed by whiteness, affording its bearer with psychological three-dimensionality. According to the advertisement's most heady claim, Oberon's Hollywood makeover had resulted in a total transformation of "personality" – something true, real, and utterly unique, despite its commodification. It implies that the actress's physical transformation into something approximating whiteness has endowed her with more nuance and depth than that which she had previously, in her role as "the slightly unreal exotic." The makeover is thus not merely a move towards a white feminine ideal, but a move away from the heavy embodiment of the racialized stock character – in this case, the vamp, or the so called, "exotic" – and towards a fuller expression of human subjectivity.

Max Factor ads, which generally featured extended descriptions of how makeup was employed in the film industry, are significant because they commodify the Hollywood transformation, offering a vital link between the beauty on screen and the beauty that women could produce at home. Just as it had done for the screen, Max Factor's line of cosmetics promised to generate an "effect of naturalism," and was one of several consumer brands to promote the notion that makeup, used correctly, was seamless enough to allow the inner self to shine through to the surface. "Personality" was thus only afforded to those who might identify themselves within the available shade range, or in Max Factor's terms, along the spectrum of "color harmony" types. Psychological depth, authenticity, and "natural charm" (the sought-after

outcome, not only for an industry preoccupied with realism, but for the modern woman and consumer seeking self-actualization) were therefore qualities ascribed to whiteness, even as both industries capitalized on a "new kind of beauty" in the ephemeral, fluctuating market value of the "slightly unreal exotic."

Beauty Advice and the Fan Magazine

Some of the main purveyors of the Hollywood makeover were the decade's print-famous beauty experts, whose columns and editorials presented women with strategies and guidance on how to look their best, for maximum reward: employment, romance, and the ever-coveted, "popularity." These women belonged to a growing class of female intermediaries who served as an indispensable link between the increasingly male-dominated cosmetics industries and women consumers.[298] Their allegiances to specific brands, stars, and products could rarely be spotted in the fine print of an otherwise objective sounding write-up. Long-form makeup product advertisements often resembled the beauty advice column and thus, the distinctions between the two print genres were generally fluid and ambiguous.[299] At times, these writers were not commissioned or sponsored. In these instances, these self-made women represented their own interests in service to their readership, having made the business-savvy move to capitalize on the growing prevalence of the "beauty culture" professions, which, by the mid-1930s, were pervasive enough to necessitate new and revised laws, licenses, and official designations.

[298] Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books), 97-98.

[299] Anthony Slide, *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine: A History of Star Makers, Fabricators, and Gossip Mongers* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 33.

However, unlike the saleswoman at the makeup counter or the esthetician at the salon, these writers served the public at a distance: They generated a semblance of intimacy with their columns, mimicking the feminized sociality of the local beauty salon as they shared their "secrets" in mass print. Their hair, makeup, and fashion how-to offered women ways to subsist in a patriarchal society where physical attractiveness was, and still is, a valued currency; however, their advice was dealt as a double-edged sword, in that they also exploited women's insecurities.

While beauty advice columns ran in an ever-widening selection of newspapers and women's lifestyle periodicals, motion picture magazines offered a special platform. Straddling the line between Hollywood "insider" and "outsider," the fan magazine beauty reporter could, in theory, connect with her readers on their level, without exclusivity or pretension. At the same time, she capitalized on her alleged connections to the film industry and its roster of beautiful people – images of whom became the metric for success.

Various manifestations of the celebrity beauty, fashion, and lifestyle reporter have carried on into the twenty-first century, and from this vantage point, we might critically examine her role and legacy. In her study of televised makeover narratives, ubiquitous in contemporary media, Brenda R. Weber argues that the image of the celebrity represents the ideal "made-over" or "After body" and thus restores the public's faith in the existence of an American meritocracy, where value is measured by appearances:

> Whether through consumerism or consultations, makeovers put "ordinary" people in contact with those who have touched, served, or represent the "extraordinary," creating an After-body where the features of glamorous selfhood signify for the average person with a similar semiotic intensity attached to the celebrity. The (ill)logics in this case make a certain kind of sense. If celebrity is all about appearance, and if a person transforms his or her outer features – even using the same mechanisms that a star might use – what distinguishing difference is there between the "real" star and the woman or man who just looks like one? Might not the made-over body also be eligible for the sorts of privileges

> and perquisites due the star? And wouldn't this, in turn, increase one's capacity to compete freely in a market where image constitutes a prime term of value?[300]

If, as Weber argues, celebrities serve as templates for the proper expression of American citizenship, their proxies – these celebrity beauty and wellness experts, who forge an imaginary connection between celebrities and their fans – facilitate the citizen-subject transformation into a somatic ideal, bringing them closer to the privileges associated with celebrity status: money, fame, and love, to name a few. "It is the idea of L.A. that factors most and supersedes even an urban and rural divide," Weber notes. Likewise, it was the idea of Hollywood that imbued the twentieth century advice columnist with power and influence, as her physical encounters with the stars were often vague and implicit, at best.

Weber's conceptualization of the makeover accounts for the twenty-first century; however, we might observe many of these same patterns and themes taking root in the advice literature of the 1930s, along with the veneration of the various ideologically charged iterations of the celebrity-inspired makeover that invite us to participate in consumer culture. Additionally, Weber argues that these processes of personal transformation and improvement are generally concerned with normative expressions of gender, race, and class identity, and are "by-and-large preoccupied with white female bodies, feminine affect, and feminized spaces."[301] Similarly, we might observe, in the beauty advice literature of this decade, the commodification of feminized cultural practices and the ascribed moral imperative associated with modes of self-betterment. Although race and ethnicity are rarely addressed in the 1930s fan magazine's nascent iteration of the celebrity-inspired makeover, except under the fleeting, and largely superficial terms of

---

[300] Brenda Weber, *Makeover TV: Selfhood, Citizenship, and Celebrity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 50.

[301] Weber, 42.

"style," the presumed universality of whiteness is nonetheless imbricated in the notion of the idealized feminine citizen-subject.

The notion that beauty, or the "After body," was a "personal achievement," as one columnist put it, paired well with Depression era rhetoric. It had become a common trope that the only things keeping a woman from self-actualization were not the limitations imposed by her biology, her inheritance, or the decimated economy, but her own indolence. A sponsored editorial goaded: "Eyes are looking up in the cosmetic world. If yours aren't beautiful it will be your own fault."[302] As Karen Sternheimer has shown, fan magazines, during the Great Depression, maintained the illusion of an ever-thriving American Dream. They generated a fantasy of wealth and social mobility, in which the collapse of the economy was rarely addressed, and poverty and unemployment were depicted as the result of individual shortcomings.[303] Consider the following words of advice from *Photoplay*'s Carolyn Van Wyck:

> The whole secret of this business of charm, or glamour, or whatever your particular term for it may be, is to create an aura about yourself. Make yourself look what you want. Suppose you are the most efficient business woman that ever lived, no man wants you to rub it in. The whole glory turns to so many ashes if you see a future that holds nothing but a desk in it. Be efficient in your office, but shed your competent shel when five o'clock rolls around.[304]

"Efficiency," in work, love, and everything in between, was key to success for women employed in the growing service sector, who were still required to maintain a feminine "aura," as Van Wyck states, in their roles as wives and mothers. Although working women were an asset to families struggling financially – as well as to employers who did not have to pay them as much

[302] "The Make-Up Box," *The New Movie Magazine*, July 1932, 100.

[303] Sternheimer, 73.

[304] Carolyn Van Wyck, "Look in the Mirror! How Do You Rate Yourself?" *Photoplay*, January 1932, 70.

as their male coworkers – fan magazines nonetheless stressed that a woman's beauty took precedence over her career ambitions: "Both fan magazine articles and ads warned readers that their future economic and emotional stability rested on their actions," Sternheimer writes. "Too much independence would leave them lonely, as would failure to pay enough attention to their appearance."[305]

A distinctly American literary form, fan magazines, as Anthony Slide notes, experienced a slump in sales in the early 1930s, but ultimately endured the Depression by lowering their newsstand prices and catering to the shifting interests of their readership.[306] At the height of the decade's financial crisis, Slide argues, magazines oriented towards "sensationalism" and "salaciousness" declined in circulation, in favor of those which covered the more optimistic fare of movie star glamour.[307] These periodicals, sold nationally for anywhere between five and twenty-five cents, targeted a white female working- and middle-class demographic and focused, primarily, on "the feminine aspects of life" and the enviable lives of Hollywood's female stars.[308]

Fan magazines were increasingly focused on the topic of facial beauty, following the previous decade's widespread preoccupation with "reducing" exercises to eliminate fat and obtain the trim, slender figure we typically associate with the Jazz Age flapper. Heather Addison argues that the press depicted Hollywood as "a land of physical culture," inhabited by those who embodied such enviable traits as beauty, health, and athleticism, which were both prerequisite and testament to their success: "Essentially, the American motion picture industry, synonymous

[305] Sternheimer, 88.

[306] Slide, 123.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Ibid, 4.

with Hollywood, became the first industry where success not only seemed to come quickly and effortlessly, but also seemed to depend (at least for stars) largely on physical appearance."[309] "Defining and identifying attractiveness," she states, "thus became an important part of the Hollywood mystique."[310] Addison notes that America's physical culture waned in intensity during the Depression years, since a restricted diet was, for those encountering financial hardships, no longer a matter of choice.[311] Body-shaping dictates remained to some extent in the popular discourse, particularly in the form of a rising genre of periodical content: the beauty advice column, which often doubled as a sponsored advertisement for makeup, as well as soaps, creams, and elixirs – anything that one could put on or in the body to affect its outward appearance. While a woman's weight and body size were still topics of interest, by the 1930s, much of the cultural obsession around physical perfection that characterized the preceding decade migrated north on the feminine form. Significant improvements in makeup formulations, as well as the unprecedented growth of the mass cosmetics industry, meant that women's faces became the primary site of discipline, scrutiny, and commodification.

Sylvia Ulbeck: "Pull Yourself Together, Baby!"

One of the most infamous of Hollywood's beauty and fitness experts was Sylvia Ulbeck, a Norwegian masseuse who, in contemporary terms, we might refer to as the first celebrity

[309] Heather Addison, *Hollywood and the Rise of Physical Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 37.

[310] Ibid, 38.

[311] Ibid, 10.

wellness guru. Ulbeck's methodologies, inspired by her medical training in Copenhagen, were not exclusive for women; however, the treatments she performed on female stars generally received the bulk of media attention. Her roster included leading ladies Gloria Swanson, Norma Shearer, and Marion Davies, whom she, in her own words, would "knead like bread," until they were camera-ready.[312] Ulbeck worked privately with the rich and famous, having been previously employed as a consultant with Pathé studios before building her own roster of celebrity clients. Her philosophy towards health and beauty, however, was ultimately disseminated to the greater American public through her popular radio program, *Madame Sylvia of Hollywood,* as well as her regular *Photoplay* column, in which her gruff and merciless approach to weight loss frequently extended to facial beauty advice. Ulbeck was also the author of several book-length publications, which provocatively straddled the line between what we would now classify as self-help and exposé. Her first book, *Hollywood Undressed: Observations of Sylvia as Noted by her Secretary*, opens with the line, "Jean Harlow is in the back room where Sylvia is giving her a spanking," and then proceeds to reveal the stars' beauty secrets with the same crude but tongue-in-cheek tone, which was rumored to have tarnished her reputation amongst the Hollywood elite, resulting in her eventual banishment from Hollywood's inner circle.[313]

Indeed, Ulbeck's humor – the "laughter" that she claimed was a key ingredient in her health and beauty regimen – did not always translate to the printed page. Her editorials offered solutions to common beauty problems, in a playful and teasing manner; however, if one was unable to overcome what she bluntly refers to as physical "defects," these failures were generally

[312] Gray Strider, "Can Beauty be Hand-Made?" *Screenland*, January 1930, 24-25.

[313] Audrey Rivers, "Famous Masseuse Denies She Has Offended Stars," *Movie Classic*, October 1931, 44.

attributed to the sufferer's own unwillingness, if not her deliberate and condemnable laziness. "Take a good long look at your face in the mirror," she instructs, in an installment of her column with the self-aggrandizing title, "Sylvia's Ideals for Mouth, Chin, and Face Structure." "Are you satisfied with its contours? Is the moulding of your face well defined and chiseled? No? Well, don't waste another minute. Get Busy!"[314] Ulbeck was not only the first wellness guru, but an early proponent of the makeover, sold by the visual aesthetic of Hollywood's screen stars. As *Photoplay* editor Kathryn Dougherty wrote in a promotional statement on Ulbeck's 1934 book, *No More Alibis*: "I sincerely think it can 'remake' *you* just as the methods it tells about 'remade' so many stage and screen notables"[315]

Women like Ulbeck had their own approach to "naturalism," with respect to the idealized woman's face and body. They knew that it was nothing more than an "effect" and their livelihoods depended on deconstructing it for their readers. Nonetheless, Ulbeck's expertise generated a hierarchy of body and facial types that, in accordance with fan magazine conventions, used star images to visually demonstrate the beauty task at hand. An article entitled, "Sylvia Sets the Standard For Facial Beauty," offers a pictorial meritocracy of eyes, ears, and noses (fig. 30). Significantly, there was little Sylvia could offer – merely creams and lotions, or facial massage to "slenderize" the flesh – that could actually change the shape of the face so that the reader might achieve Maureen O'Sullivan's "cute Irish nose." Hollywood's highly produced feminine beauty, therefore, set the – impossible – standard. "Next month," Ulbeck signed off,

[314] Sylvia Ulbeck, "Sylvia's Ideals for Mouth, Chin and Face Structure," *Photoplay,* May 1935, 72.

[315] Kathyrn Dougherty, "Here's News that Will Thrill Every Woman!" *Photoplay*, September 1934, 125.

"I'm going to set the standard for the perfect mouth, chin and cheeks and tell you how to improve on nature."[316]

Figure 30. Ulbeck highlights the stars' best features. "Sylvia Sets the Standard for Facial Beauty," *Photoplay*, April 1932, p. 76.

Figure 31. Ulbeck assessing the needs of a client. "Famous Masseuse Denies She Has Offended Stars," *Movie Classic*, October 1931, p. 44.

Today, the makeover is not only a beauty regimen, fitness routine, or fashion overhaul, but a synonym for self-improvement. The concept of the makeover came into its modern definition, in part, via the philosophies circulated by Ulbeck and her contemporaries. These

[316] Sylvia Ulbeck, "Sylvia Sets the Standard for Facial Beauty," *Photoplay*, April 1932, 94.

beauty and wellness experts stressed that, through practices which disciplined and modified the face and body, a woman might transform not only her physical appearance, but her entire life. The first chapter of *No More Alibis!* is titled, "The World is Yours," conveying to readers that there is more at stake than good looks. Amid an economic downturn, beauty was discursively figured as the solution to one's financial precarity, and women had a moral obligation and civic responsibility to maximize their attractiveness. "It is your duty to yourself, to your family and to your friends to be as attractive as possible," Ulbeck states. "Physical fitness, charm and attractiveness will increase your earning power! *Stop being lazy!*"[317] Ulbeck's hustling, "no-nonsense" style was an element of her tough immigrant persona; however, the "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" mentality was widespread, as many of the decade's beauty advice columnists employed a similarly disciplinary tone.

Carolyn Van Wyck: Friendly Advice on Girls' Problems

Photoplay, which experienced an increase in circulation during the Depression years, was the gold-standard in terms of celebrity-oriented beauty content. When Carolyn Van Wyck joined the magazine as a contributor in 1921, she was introduced as the woman who would be covering fashion and other "subjects of feminine interest."[318] In the early 1920s, beauty products, particularly that which were formerly considered "paints," lipstick and mascara, did not have the mainstream appeal that they would have, ten years later, and Van Wyck, who would defer to the

[317] Sylvia Ulbeck, *No More Alibis!* (Chicago: Photoplay Pub. Co., 1935), 13.

[318] Who is Carolyn Van Wyck?" *Photoplay*, May 1921, 6.

advertising section when doling out her wisdom, would adapt her content accordingly. Eventually, her recurring segment, "Friendly Advice," in which she addressed her readers' most pressing "girls' problems," was superseded by the more overtly consumerist offering, "Hollywood Beauty Shop," in which she would divulge the stars' favorite products, routines, and rituals. Compared to Ulbeck, who was notorious in Hollywood and regularly photographed with her celebrity clients, Van Wyck was enigmatic. "Carolyn Van Wyck" was, in fact, not a real name, according to *Photoplay*, but rather the "non de plume of a well-known New York society woman."[319] Although it is unlikely that Van Wyck was a complete fabrication on the part of *Photoplay*, whether the mysterious society woman, "famous for her good taste," eventually moved to the west coast as the studio system took shape is unclear, as is the nature of her relationship to the stars, whose intimate beauty, fashion, and lifestyle habits she meticulously reported.

Although the society woman persona might have otherwise come-off as distant or aloof, from day one, the editorial board assured their readers that Van Wyck had no elitist or self-aggrandizing objectives. This society woman promised to make accessible, for her attentive followers, the lives of the rich and famous: "She will make no attempt to cover the field of fashions in the accepted manner of the fashion magazines; she will only try to be of service to the women readers of *Photoplay*."[320] For years, Van Wyck's advice columns manufactured familiarity and closeness, bridging the gap between Hollywood, New York, and small-town America. Month after month, the phrase, "Let Carolyn be your confidante. She will also be your friend," encouraged readers to write-in to Van Wyck, who adopted the air of a sage aunt or

[319] Ibid.

[320] Ibid.

trusted mentor, helping the fan magazine reader discover her inner star. In fact, readers would have had little if any sense of who this woman was – what she looked like, how old she was, or even her real name. Van Wyck's contributions to *Photoplay* offered women an outlet, as well as a sense of community and connection, but like all advice columns, her interactions with her reader base would have generated consumer information upon which the beauty industries could then capitalize.

PHOTOPLAY'S HOLLYWOOD

BEAUTY SHOP

All the beauty tricks of all the stars brought to you each month

Conducted By Carolyn Van Wyck

perfumes or a practical little thought like hair pins designed for your special needs and the color of your hair.

So take a lesson from Rochelle, and invest in gay papers, ribbons and cards to make your thought look like a gift, not a mere package. The sentiment on your cards is important, because, with a little care on your part, you can hand the recipient a laugh as well as a gift. And a happy laugh is always a true gift.

The stars like to give beauty—gifts that are beautiful in themselves and that will make you more beautiful. Perhaps this tendency is largely due to the fact that these girls have learned the value of beauty or what passes for beauty. The compact, for example, which adds thrill and color to your street or evening bag. Perfumes, whose inspirational value can never be over-estimated. Irene Dunne will frankly tell you that the scent of perfume once saved her from a bad attack of stage fright. Powders, treatment and make-up kits, bath accessories, the list goes on. So for every girl confronted with a gift problem, I think I may safely advise, give beauty. It is lasting, inspiring, beautiful.

Dolores Del Rio exhibits one of the newest Hollywood and Paris fashions, mirror accessories for your evening bag. Here is a lustrous compact of inlaid mirrors with down puff

A gift gadget that many a girl will welcome for her bag is a purse perfume case in platinum tone with red and black accents. Protects and prevents spillage, and comes filled in any of ten favorite fragrances. Judith Allen suggests this gift

Complete treatment and make-up kits fill your stockings with delight. Evelyn Venable, appearing in "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," is enthusiastic about this compact arrangement containing everything that makes you well groomed and beautiful

79

Poised, beautiful, popular and successful—Kay Francis can meet her mirrored reflection face to face with the assurance that she has made the most of every asset. Why not let your mirror reflect as gratifying results? Just a little self-study and a lot of will power will do it!

Figure 32. Hollywood Beauty Shop: "The stars like to give beauty – gifts that are beautiful themselves and that will make you more beautiful. Perhaps this tendency is largely due to the fact that these girls have learned the value of beauty or what passes for beauty." *Photoplay*, January 1935, p. 79.

Figure 33. Stars model beauty conduct. "Look In The Mirror! How Do You Rate Yourself?" *Photoplay*, January 1932, p. 70.

The advice column embodied democratic values that were equally profit-driven and consumer-oriented. Golia demonstrates how, over the first half of the twentieth century, the advice column transformed the American newspaper into a participatory medium, in which

readers could write-in anonymously, connect with experts, and see their concerns addressed in a public forum. Moreover, the advice column, she argues, emerged as part of the overall feminization and commercialization of news media, during which content was selected for its appeal to women readers, whom advertisers had identified as being the primary consumers of the household:

> Publishers and female readers alike loved advice columns because of their interactivity. Newspaper executives recognized that the serial nature of the columns could help them build loyal, long-term customers who turned to the woman's page each day to follow ongoing conversations, look for updates from regular correspondents, and write in themselves. Reader letters, moreover, allowed publishers to quantify their female readership and provide concrete evidence of a column's popularity to potential advertisers, thus growing their profits. By contrast, women readers seized on the interactivity of advice columns to transform woman's pages into communities where their voices could be heard.[321]

The beauty advice column gave women readers a voice; however, by the same token, these letters contained valuable purchaser data to publishers and advertisers, who were now better equipped to predict their customer's anxieties, fears, and desires.[322] The advice column, therefore, did not merely respond to the period's most pressing "girl problems" – in many ways, it reproduced norms and expectations around feminine self-representation, as well as the needs and wants of she who was thus articulated as the ideal consumer: the white, middle-class woman with disposable income. For women of color, Golia notes, the assumed whiteness of the reader would have been alienating, while for white ethnic immigrants, the advice column provided a "blueprint for assimilation, acceptance, and social and financial success."[323]

---

[321] Golia, 3.

[322] Ibid, 4.

[323] Ibid.

The beauty advice columns of the 1930s spoke to their readers in a way that attended to the large-scale precarity of the Depression, in addition to the prevailing precarity of women. Serious hardships, however, were rarely addressed in explicit detail, and interestingly, while the columns invited write-ins, the letters themselves were not always published, but merely addressed. Beauty was one thing, among a long list of problems, that was, according to these columnists, fixable. We might argue, therefore, that their advice offered readers a sense of resolution and action when solutions to larger societal problems remained elusive.

"This Hollywood make-up… What will it do for you?"

"This Hollywood make-up… What will it do for you?
Hollywood's make-up originated by Max Factor will do wonderful things for you… it will 'discover' beauty in your face you didn't know was there… it will individualize that beauty, make you interesting, different!"[324]

Camera Beauty made its debut on drug store shelves in 1928, with the release of Max Factor's Society Make-Up. Within a few years, however, the line was rebranded to appear more accessible, modern, and consumer oriented. No longer the exclusive privilege of "society" women, Max Factor's line went through several name changes, eventually landing on Color Harmony Make-Up in 1937, alongside the release of the Technicolor fashion film spectacle, *Walter Wanger's Vogues of 1938*. Throughout the 1930s, Max Factor's Hollywoodized approach

[324] "Advertisement: Max Factor, Hollywood, *Hollywood Now,* April 1937, 31.

to color theory, which rode the wave of enthusiasm over the cinema's increasingly realistic color representations, was a major component of the line's production and marketing. Like Max Factor's infamous Hollywood salon, in which stars were transformed into their own "unique" star types, the Color Harmony system divided women into four separate categories, which simultaneously personalized and commodified. They were: "Blonde," "Redhead," "Brunette," and her slightly lighter-hued sister, "Brownette." Although Max Factor produced dark complexion shades for industry-use, women of color were not included along the spectrum of consumers and therefore, excluded from the "you"-centered discourse.

Max Factor was one of several brands to use the facial beauty type model in their promotion, advertising, and merchandizing. Color harmony armed women against the confusion of the market and the bewildering assortment of new products that lay before her on the shelf; however, by the same token, it increased efficiency and profit for manufacturers and distributers. For the Max Factor company, the Color Harmony system increased brand loyalty and better profit margins. Sales builders wanted consumers to purchase the entire product line (lipstick, rouge, powder), rather than pick and choose amongst multiple brand offerings. With Color Harmony, customers would need not one, but all components of the system, to achieve the finished look. There was an appeal in its simplicity: In a period during which makeup companies were multiplying at an unprecedented rate, lines that used a system, like Color Harmony, would have offered a semblance of order: It facilitated a streamlining of choices, a fortified sense of self, and the elimination of wasteful purchases. In other words, rather than get stuck with a dozen shades of lip tint that are so "not you," and will hang around forever in the back of your drawer, buy *this* one — and then buy *everything* else that matches it.

One of the ways Color Harmony functioned was through guided self-analysis. Upon entering a drug store, a woman would receive a complexion card, with boxes to check-off to determine her "unique" color type. This was a diagnostic tool, intended to be handed out by sales associates to drug store patrons. After logging her information, a woman would then receive a personalized Color Harmony Prescription.[325] A cut-out version of the complexion card was also printed in Max Factor advertisements for a mail-order diagnosis (fig. 34). "Test YOUR Color Harmony in Face Powder and Lipstick," an advertisement reads. For ten cents, a woman could send her completed complexion card to "Max Factor, Hollywood," for an at-home iteration of the studio screentest. She would then receive, in the mail, her own Color Harmony chart, four sample shades, and an illustrated guide authored by the film industry's renowned makeup artist himself, Max Factor. Even more so than Hollywood beauty reporters, such as Ulbeck and Van Wyck, Factor had a direct connection to the stars. A sponsored beauty editorial explains the appeal:

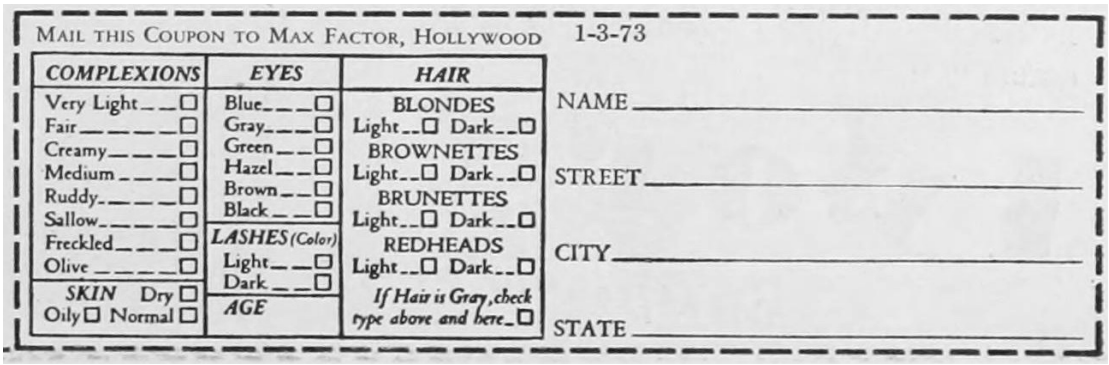
> Wouldn't you like a personal complexion analysis by Hollywood's famous make-up expert? He will select for you the color harmony which is individually yours, which harmonizes your complexion and emphasizes your personality. What you do is to fill out a questionnaire in which you tell all (about the color of your eyes, hair, complexion, skin texture, and so on). Then you are told exactly what make-up is correct for your type. Armed with this knowledge, you dash out and purchase the color harmony ensemble.[326]

Max Factor's company ads were typically full page and prominently featured screen stars applying makeup in their own "color harmony." The "idea of Hollywood" was, therefore, a strong motivator, for potential customers. Ten cents worth of postage would close the gap between Hollywood and anywhere, America – between movie stars and movie fans.

---

[325] Fred E. Basten, *Max Factor: The Man Who Changed the Faces of the World* (Arcade Publishing: New York, 2008), 60.

[326] "The Make-Up Box," *New Movie Magazine*, August 1934, 94.


MAIL THIS COUPON TO MAX FACTOR, HOLLYWOOD 1-3-73

COMPLEXIONS	EYES	HAIR
Very Light ☐	Blue ☐	BLONDES
Fair ☐	Gray ☐	Light ☐ Dark ☐
Creamy ☐	Green ☐	BROWNETTES
Medium ☐	Hazel ☐	Light ☐ Dark ☐
Ruddy ☐	Brown ☐	BRUNETTES
Sallow ☐	Black ☐	Light ☐ Dark ☐
Freckled ☐	LASHES (Color)	REDHEADS
Olive ☐	Light ☐	Light ☐ Dark ☐
SKIN Dry ☐	Dark ☐	If Hair is Gray, check type above and here ☐
Oily ☐ Normal ☐	AGE	

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

Figure 34. Complexion analysis card. *Photoplay*, March 1934, p. 93.

Not only did complexion analysis mimic the screentest and star transformation, but the film industry practice was regularly referenced in product advertisements. A 1935 advertisement (fig. 35) alleges to be Maureen O'Sullivan's old diary, from early in her career and reprinted with special permission. The actress confesses that her upcoming screentest has her nervous, but that she is looking forward to her appointment with the highly in-demand make-up artist, Max Factor. "Told me he would create powder, rouge, and lipstick in a color harmony shade that would dramatize my type," she writes.[327] The final entry declares her screentest a success – the color harmony formula had worked, transforming O'Sullivan's budding career into full-fledged movie stardom. "I never knew that make-up could mean so much!"[328]

[327] "Make-Up Secrets from the Diary of Maureen O'Sullivan," *Photoplay*, November 1935, 81.

[328] Ibid.

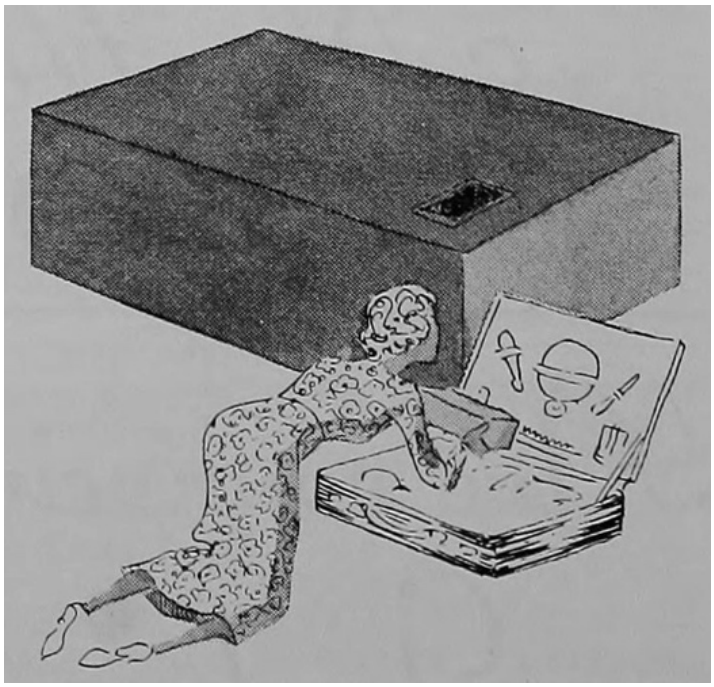


Figure 35. Max Factor ad featuring actress Maureen O'Sullivan's screentest diary and a cut-out complexion card. *Photoplay*, November 1935, p. 81.

Figure 36. A woman opens her Color Harmony makeup kit, filled with harmonized and personalized shades. "The Make-Up Box," *New Movie Magazine*, August 1934, p.94.

Although Factor may have been the first, and as of then the most famous, to apply color theory to makeup, his system had its precedents. In fine arts and industrial design, modern color theory had been percolating since the nineteenth century. A *Godey's Lady's Book* article from 1855, entitled, "Choice of Colors in Dress; Or, How a Lady May Become Good Looking," encouraged women to seek out the writings of the French chemist, Michel-Eugène Chevreul, which had recently been translated into English. The pursuit of beauty informed by Chevreul's theory was one that used surrounding color – whether in dress, décor, or draperies – to bring-out the complexion's natural luminosity. Women who wished to look healthier, younger, and more beautiful were thus grouped together with the likes of, "artists, home-furnishers, ornamental

gardeners, and others."[329] In the early twentieth century, American painter Albert Munsell worked for years to devise his own color harmony system, developed in conversation with the day's leading psychologists. As Regina Lee Blaszczyk argues, Munsell's system was a tool for managing new pigments, their usage, and eventually, their role in commerce. Munsell's goal, she writes, was to confront the "visual chaos" of the American commercial landscape, with "aesthetic reform" and "good taste."[330] Blaszczyk writes that, in Munsell's view, American taste was struggling to keep pace with advances in color technology. To him and many of his contemporaries, vivid colors appeared gaudy or cheap, unlike the subdued tones of upper-class refinement.

One result of this research was the TCCA (Textile Color Card Association), a universal shade identification chart, which was created in 1915 for the purpose of coordinating the use of color in manufacturing, distribution, and merchandizing.[331] Although largely based on Chevreul's older system, color harmony was the progeny of the American mass market. "Standard Colors," Blaszczyk notes, quoting an issue of *Women's Wear*, was an "American idea," which reduced the subjective world of color to a scientific code, and did so, in the name of progress.[332] She argues that it was, in part, a reaction to the Orientalist fashions coming out of Paris in the 1920s, that provoked the American fashion industry to seek out color harmony. "Harmony" was, in many ways, a euphemism for good taste, which was itself euphemistic of racial and ethnic purity and class distinctions. It was done, however, in the name of productive,

---

[329] "Choice of Colors in Dress; Or, How a Lady May Become Good Looking," *Godey's Lady's Book*, April 1855, 330.

[330] Regina Lee Blaszczyk, *The Color Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012), 46.

[331] Blaszczyk, 80.

[332] Ibid, 92.

efficient commerce, and productive, efficient, and identity-conscious consumerism. This preoccupation only intensified, as producers increasingly sought to eliminate waste and guesswork surrounding consumer choices.

Color Harmony fused two systems of categorization: color theory and the film industry logic of star types. While its declared objective was to bring visual balance to one's facial features, true to the physiognomic principles that undergird facial classification systems of this kind, Color Harmony was also a means of codifying the face to better express one's true self. It was about synthesizing the physical exterior with the psychological interior, even if the latter was purely aspirational. Like the fashion types that leveraged the rise of ready-to-wear fashion in decades previous, Color Harmony put women into categories, and their purchases would have provided valuable data on product demand and future sales. By appealing to the buyer's desire to be legible, as a particular type of modern woman, she was more than willing to check off the boxes.

Conclusion

The beauty industry's resilience during the Great Depression is often cited, contested, and mythologized. In the late 2000s, on the heels of another major recession, Leonard Lauder coined the term, "lipstick effect," to describe a negative correlation between Estée Lauder's volume of makeup sales and the health of the economy. Though Lauder's claim has invited detractors, it should continue to inspire discussion since a woman's "market value" is so often determined by the way that she looks. Though makeup is inherently superficial, it is rarely advertised as such.

According to the 1930s popular beauty literature, it was a woman's responsibility to "make herself" – to capitalize on her image and thus better her life. The American film industry was not only the authority on all-things makeup and beauty, but the popular representations of its star transformations offered the consumer a template. From celebrity-inspired advice columns and editorials, which came to dominate fan magazine content, to the marketing logics of "beauty types," the prototypical makeover culture of the 1930s allowed the then-fledgling beauty industry to not only survive, but thrive, during the Great Depression.

EPILOGUE

Camera Beauty in the Twenty-First Century

By way of a conclusion, I wish to return to Jean McMichael, the movie fan and beauty aficionado whose enthusiastic *Photoplay* testimonial introduced this dissertation. In 1932, Jean had discovered that the movies held the secret to "correct and pleasing make-up."[333] From her letter, I identified three key themes – common perceptions, guiding beliefs, and unconscious motivators. These themes, as I proposed, have come to define the relationship between beauty, makeup, and the cinema. In brief, they are: 1) That with new media technology comes new standards of beauty, and new modes and methods of self-representation; 2) That natural beauty is made, not born; and 3) That there is a "correct and pleasing" way of doing makeup that is modeled by Hollywood stars.

Ninety years have passed since Jean first viewed that "short talkie in color" – the beauty tutorial which enlightened her to the art of "make up the movie way." Of course, neither beauty nor makeup were invented by the American motion picture industry, neither at its inception, nor between the years 1927 and 1937. Cosmetics predate the movies by thousands of years, and these ideas were indeed percolating prior to this historical moment, simply manifest in different formations. However, as I hope to have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, due to a special convergence of scientific, industrial, and cultural developments, the topic of beauty was

[333] "The audience speaks up," *Photoplay*, January 1932, 12.

treated to intense interrogation, contestation, and fascination. Specifically, these years witnessed: advancements in film technology which afforded new levels of cinematic realism; the growth and maturation of the studio system and its star culture against the backdrop of the Great Depression; the rise of the mass cosmetics industry and media-based advertising; and pushback from citizens and consumer advocates seeking safer products and truth in advertising. All this combined to shine a spotlight on the made-up face – its allure, its deceptiveness, and its inherent dangers, material and ideological. We can glean much from the discourse which was generated in the process of standardizing and institutionalizing methods, formulas, and practices, for the greatest value to the American film industry, cosmetics manufacturers, audiences, and consumers.

The themes which I have mined from Jean's *Photoplay* letter might have surfaced in the 1930s; however, as I explore in this epilogue, they continue to mold and shape contemporary beauty cultures and practices. This is not to suggest that little has changed in nearly a century of new media technologies, structural changes to industry and commerce, developments in fashion, feminism, and so on. Rather, with this short discussion of twenty-first century phenomena, I seek to emphasize the legacy and significance of the history offered up by this dissertation, as well as to gesture towards new questions and opportunities for further study.

Theme 1: "With new media technology comes new standards of beauty, and new modes and methods of self-representation."

In 2019, staff writer for *The New Yorker* Jia Tolentino wrote of the "emergence of a single cyborgian face."[334] This face has come to be known as the "Instagram Face," named for the popular social media platform, Instagram. The "Instagram Face," according to Tolentino, is "a young face, of course, with poreless skin and plump, high cheekbones" and is "distinctly white but ambiguously ethnic."[335] Over the last decade, user-friendly apps and filters, which airbrush the complexion, erase blemishes, and plump the lips (to name just a few of their effects) have generated beauty ideals that are only attainable as still or moving images. Psychologists have observed an alarming increase in cases of body dysmorphia; not only are these doctored images setting new aesthetic standards, but social media practices have radically changed how we relate and identify with our own photographed image. The term, "Snapchat Dysmorphia," was coined by plastic surgeon Tijion Esho in 2018, to describe an upward trend in young people seeking cosmetic procedures to look not so much like celebrities, but rather, like the filtered versions of themselves shared on Snapchat.[336] In 2021, *Forbes*' Anna Haines reported a similar phenomenon, attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic, which necessitated that much of the population communicate virtually: "We've been looking in the mirror a lot more lately – that is

[334] Jia Tolentino, "The Age of Instagram Face," *The New Yorker*, December 12, 2019, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/decade-in-review/the-age-of-instagram-face.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Elle Hunt, "Faking it: how selfie dysmorphia is driving people to seek surgery," *The Guardian*, Jan 23, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jan/23/faking-it-how-selfie-dysmorphia-is-driving-people-to-seek-surgery.

the mirror of our devices."[337] An increase in body image consciousness has resulted from the use of video calling apps, such as Zoom, which force users to look at themselves during virtual interactions.

Today, our phones and other media devices, equipped with front cameras, function, quite literally, as mirrors. When beauty columnist Carolyn Van Wyck instructed her *Photoplay* readers to examine their reflections and rate themselves, she could not have known that nearly a century later, the mirror would offer more than a starting point for self-evaluation. We might argue that updated versions of the House of Westmore's "magic mirrors," once installed in department stores to facilitate a rudimentary assessment of a woman's basic facial shape, are now pervasive on social media. The faint lines that would overlay the customer's mirrored image are taken to a new level of accuracy with apps, such as FaceTag (fig. 37), which use artificial intelligence to analyze the user's facial dimensions according to a predetermined ratio. Not only does the app score the user's attractiveness, but it automatically generates a hashtag, such as #Elegant, or #Cute, so that the image can then be shared on social media with the appropriate qualifier. The app thus revives physiognomic doctrine in the name of good fun; squashing boredom and satiating curiosity, but also reinforcing beauty standards, as well as gendered, racial, and ageist stereotypes. Similar apps even claim to detect a user's ethnicity by scanning and assessing their facial structure. Like the popular "star physiognomy" columns of the 1930s, which offered detailed assessments of an actor's facial features and what that should mean for their inherent personality, this technology appeals to the user's desire for self-knowledge, as well as self-

[337] Anna Haines, "From 'Instagram Face' to 'Snapchat Dysmorphia': How Beauty Filters Are Changing The Way We See Ourselves," *Forbes*, April 27, 2021, https://www.forbes.com/sites/annahaines/2021/04/27/from-instagram-face-to-snapchat-dysmorphia-how-beauty-filters-are-changing-the-way-we-see-ourselves.

improvement. It invites users to be themselves – only better – and to optimize the value of their image.

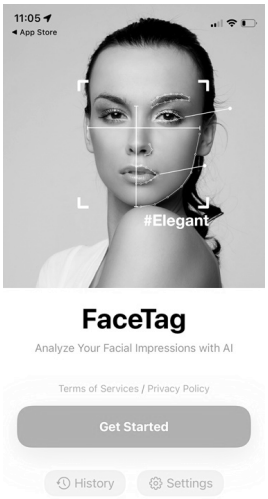


Figure 37. FaceTag app, 2022.

With an app, such as FaceTag, a user may attempt to game the system by posing with different light sources or more subjectively flattering angles to achieve their desired result. In fact, the habitual practice of taking multiple photographs, rating their aesthetic values, and posting only the "best" images online, does not require a special app; image curation has become routine, with unspoken norms dictating self-representation. The face has taken center stage in this discourse thanks to the selfie – a style of self-portraiture largely made possible by the fact that our camera devices double as mirrors. Alice Marwick argues that selfies have become a "genre unto themselves, with their own visual conventions and clichés."[338] Indeed, most social media users can identify "Instagram Face," without the aid of a mathematical equation: the poreless, high cheekboned face that dominates the accounts of celebrities and influencers, as well

[338] Alice Marwick, "Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy," *Public Culture* 27, no. 1 (2015): 141.

as their fans and followers. While many apps and filters classify faces according to an essentializing logic (for instance, #Elegant or #Cute, depending on one's facial proportions), they coexist on a platform where photo manipulation is a built-in and expected component of the user's engagement.

But if filters and digital editing tools can so dramatically and easily alter the facial image, what is left for makeup? Along with the birth of the "Instagram Face," the 2010s are likely to be remembered for makeup trends that, first and foremost, served the selfie. Over the last decade, a subcategory of social media influencers, known as "beauty gurus," have emerged as critical intermediaries between the cosmetics industry and its target consumers. Beauty gurus generally promote heavy full-coverage makeup, which offers a smooth and blemish-free complexion in photographs and videos. However, if one is to attempt to reproduce their looks at home (for any other reason than to snap the perfect selfie), they are likely to appear "overdone" and "made-up." We might recall the 1930s newspaper article, "How to Charm a Camera," which advised portrait photographers and their white clients to use thick, tan-colored Panchromatic Make-Up to achieve the perfect photograph. Likewise, in the 2010s, beauty seekers adopted theatrical makeup techniques to take the perfect selfie – in other words, to charm the iPhone camera. Facial contouring, pejoratively known as "clown contouring," was popularized on social media by reality star Kim Kardashian, who subsequently released a line of contouring kits branded with her famous name. The technique, much like that of Westmore's facial maps to the stars, involves shading different regions of the face with analogous concealer tones, blending with a sponge, and layering under foundation to create the illusion of higher cheekbones, larger lips, and a slimmer nose (fig. 38). Kardashian once admitted that the routine took her at least half an hour to complete, but that the superior selfies which resulted from this method were worth the effort.

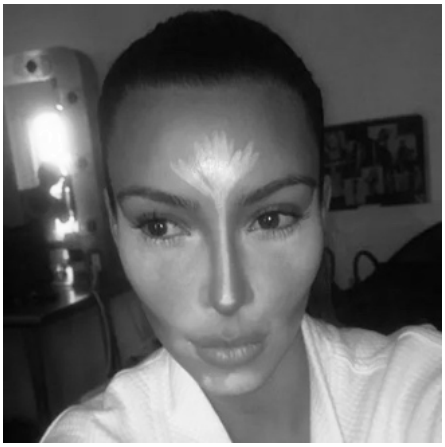


Figure 38. Kim Kardashian shares the contouring process with her Twitter followers, 2012.

The Kardashian-Jenner family has earned a reputation for capitalizing on the twenty-first century's iteration of Camera Beauty. Their Instagram selfies are often digitally enhanced; however, these images regularly serve as advertisements for their popular beauty brands. Kardashian's younger sibling, Kylie Jenner, launched her own cosmetics line in 2014 and a few years later, *Forbes* named the star the "youngest ever self-made billionaire" – a status that was later contested, as Jenner was technically neither a billionaire, nor was she "self-made," having been raised in a famous television family. The specifics of her earnings aside, Jenner's sizable fortune was amassed from the sale of her popular Kylie Lip Kits, which included a liquid lipstick, typically in a neutral matte shade, paired with a matching liner. Though it has been speculated that the fullness of Jenner's own lips was achieved with a combination of digital editing effects and injectable fillers, her social media posts nonetheless sold millions of Kylie Lip Kits to fans seeking to emulate the star's iconic pout.

Jenner's Instagram-worthy lips were, of course, most saleable on a white woman. As many online commentators were apt to point out, using the star's lip kits, white teenagers were overlining their lips to achieve a look that, historically, many black women have been shamed for having been born with. In 2021, *Time* reporter Cady Lang argued that the Kardashian-Jenner women have redefined beauty standards in "a vicious culture that valorizes curves on wealthy, racially ambiguous white women, but stigmatizes these traits on Black women; one that plays into a longtime fascination with the aesthetics of Blackness and the unwillingness to engage with the ugliness of anti-Black racism at the same time."[339] Much like how "exotic" beauty was promoted to white women consumers of the 1930s, today's beauty standards selectively glamorize racialized features, such as large lips or a bronzed complexion. As Tolentino so eloquently put it, the Instagram Face is "distinctly white but ambiguously ethnic."[340]

The 2010s witnessed the emergence of a "new face of beauty:" the Instagram Face, or the heavily contoured, impossible feminine ideal epitomized by celebrities like Kardashian and Jenner. In a word, this new face of beauty is "virtually flawless." Indeed, with new technology has come new standards of beauty, and a widespread preoccupation, particularly amongst young women, with how we present online. Beauty products, treatments, and even surgical procedures are sold to us as a means of "making up" the difference between our material bodies, and the technologically enhanced doubles that appear on the likes of Instagram, Facebook, and Zoom. At the same time, however, many of our means and methods of self-representation are not necessarily new, but rather, resurrected and remixed in the contemporary media environment. Although many of her followers believe that Kardashian invented the art of facial contouring in

[339] Cady Lang, "*Keeping Up with the Kardashians* is Ending. But Their Exploitation of Black Woman's Aesthetics Continues," *Time*, June 10, 2021, https://time.com/6072750/kardashians-blackfishing-appropriation.

[340] Tolentino.

pursuit of the perfect selfie, many critics have been quick to point out that similar techniques had been used for years in the drag community, and that the practice originated in studio era Hollywood. In fact, as I have suggested throughout this dissertation, neither Factor nor the Westmores truly invented facial contouring; by the 1930s, basic iterations of this tradition had been passed down through generations of dramatic practitioners. Factor and the Westmores did, however, put these practices into writing during a period of rapid technological change when the question of what constituted the visuality of Hollywood's perfect woman was a matter of research, testing, and debate. It is perhaps during these periods when we are offered opportunities to reflect on how this aesthetic language was formed, which ideological tensions it brings to a head, and whether we wish to sustain these ideals or seek alternate modes of expression.

Theme 2: "Natural beauty is made, not born."

In the twenty-first century, with the ease and accessibility of digital editing tools, almost anyone can convincingly retouch their own photo for a look that says, "I woke up like this." Much like it did in the 1930s, when beauty reporter Grace Grandville proposed that her readers seek-out the "effect of naturalism" with their beauty routines, the "natural look" (or the "no makeup look") similarly suggests an absence of mediation. Today's "naturalism" similarly disavows various forms of intervention: makeup, as well as skin treatments and surgical procedures, camera angles, lighting, and retouching effects which alter the facial image. In the twenty-first century, just as it was a hundred years ago, the goal is rarely to appear as one would

sans assistance; rather, it is to obscure the labors behind the illusion – to efface its production and to generate the "effect of naturalism" through artificial means. This "truth-like" appearance embodies certain codes, conventions, and ways of being in the world, and ways of being a woman. These images of femininity are not natural, but, over time, have come to appear natural to our eyes.

Recent years have witnessed the rise of a celebrity-led "no-makeup" trend on social media. Started by singer Alicia Keys in 2016, the contemporary bare-faced movement was born of an ethos of self-empowerment, feminism, and authenticity.[341] In apparent contrast with the heavily contoured and made-up selfies posted by Kardashian and other lesser-known beauty influencers, proponents of this movement post selfies with the hashtags #NoMakeup or #Natural. A study published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* in 2022 suggested, however, that the "no-makeup" movement coincided with an overall increase in cosmetics sales. Researchers found that many #NoMakeup selfies were in fact enhanced, and often the posters were indeed wearing makeup. Furthermore, these constructions of natural beauty were generally rewarded and viewed more favorably than the truly makeup-free face. Natural beauty, the findings suggested, is simply a normative beauty standard; it is not the natural look that many people find attractive, so much as it is the appearance of low effort.[342]

As many critics have commented, we seem to have forgotten what real skin looks like, inundated as we are with doctored facial imagery. Intellectually, we might understand that the facial images we see on social media have been "made-up," whether by makeup, lighting, or

[341] Penelope Green, "Alicia Keys and the 'Tyranny of Makeup,'" *The New York Times*, September 14, 2016.

[342] Rosanna M. Smith, Elham Yazdani, Pengyuaun Wang, Saber Soleymani, and Lan Anh Tom, "The Cost of Looking Natural: Why the No-Makeup Movement May Fail to Discourage Cosmetic Use," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 50 (2022): 324-337.

editing effects; however, these images have nonetheless produced new body image disorders, popularized new cosmetic procedures, and ultimately, set new standards in beauty. We might argue, then, that the twentieth century definition of "naturalism," championed by Hollywood's beauty experts in the 1930s, has been taken to a new level of simulated authenticity. For years, we have been sold strategically lit, angled, and retouched images of celebrities, alleged to be fresh-faced and makeup-free in the pages of popular magazines. We are most likely familiar with cosmetics giant Maybelline's infamous tagline, "Maybe she's born with it. Maybe it's Maybelline." The notion that the best makeup is that which might be mistaken for natural beauty is one which curiously continues to hold strong – despite the presence of social media's prolific "beauty gurus." These makeup experts showcase the pleasures of creative experimentation insofar as they also instruct their followers on the best ways to conceal blemishes, or to detract attention from fine lines and under eye circles – naturally.

Theme 3: "There is a "correct and pleasing" way of doing makeup that is modeled by Hollywood stars."

While the rich and famous still seem to set the standard in beauty, in the last ten to fifteen years, we have witnessed the emergence of a new small-time celebrity: the beauty guru, also known as the beauty vlogger, beauty YouTuber, or Beautuber. These content creators are some of the most powerful social media influencers, boasting tens of millions of followers and lucrative brand deals. In 2016, YouTuber James Charles made headlines when he became the

first male CoverGirl spokesperson.[343] As a teenage boy known for self-producing makeup tutorials from his house, Charles was an unconventional choice for CoverGirl not only because of his gender, but because the contract is generally reserved for more traditional celebrities: supermodels, pop stars, and actresses. We might argue that the beauty guru is a microcelebrity – a term coined by Theresa M. Senft in the early 2000s to describe the practices of the "branded self" afforded by webcam technology.[344] On their YouTube channels, the beauty guru fosters an intimate relationship with their viewer that often appears more authentic than that which mainstream celebrities have with their fans. In the context of the cosmetics business and its key players, the beauty guru is a new hybrid figure: they are a cross between makeup artist, brand owner, beauty advice columnist, and star.

From the mid-aughts to present day, the beauty guru has evolved out of their humble roots and into multimillion dollar internet fame. It is perhaps not surprising, however, that in the beginning, beauty gurus most often uploaded celebrity-inspired content. Marlena Stell, known by her channel name, Makeup Geek, was one of the original beauty YouTubers. Among her first posts are instructional videos for copying the makeup styles of music stars Taylor Swift and Hilary Duff. This genre of tutorial significantly waned in popularity in the 2010s, as beauty gurus themselves acquired enough currency – in the eyes of their fans, cosmetics companies, and advertisers – that the customary invocation of mainstream celebrity was no longer necessary to attract or sustain viewership.

---

[343] Valeriya Safronova, "Meet CoverGirl's New Cover Boy," *The New York Times*, October 12, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/fashion/meet-covergirls-new-cover-boy.html.

[344] Theresa M. Senft, "Microcelebrity and the Branded Self," in *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*, eds. Hartley Jean Burgess and Axel Bruns (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), 346.

Most beauty gurus today are women, with a few notable exceptions, including Charles and makeup artist Jeffree Star. These creators maintain their loyal followings by uploading content according to a regular and predictable schedule. When recording, they speak directly into the camera, simulating eye contact with their fans. This form of direct address facilitates intimacy and interactivity; the makeup tutorial itself is often secondary to self-disclosures and general life advice only tangentially related to the task at hand. Alison Winch adopts the term "girlfriend" to describe a genre of postfeminist popular texts which idealize feminine sociality in service to consumerism. Winch writes: "Girlfriend culture does not develop female connections in order to defy patriarchal systems. On the contrary, it celebrates women networking in the service of the postfeminist lifestyle industries which sell the allure of girliness, particularly through the mechanics of makeover."[345] In many ways, the beauty guru embodies the commodified feminine identity of the "girlfriend." Even Charles, as a young queer man, engages his followers in this manner with his infamous catchphrase, "Hi, sisters!" The beauty guru voice performs a stream of consciousness monologue, which overlays the makeup application and only breaks for the introduction of sponsored products. It has been decades since *Photoplay* first suggested that women readers write-in to their confidante and friend, Carolyn Van Wyck, who offered her monthly "friendly advice on girls' problems." Staged feminized sociality, however, continues to serve consumer capitalism in new and ever-evolving ways. Set in the YouTuber's home, the intimacy of this quasi-relationship is forged. Viewers do not "write-in" in the traditional sense, but they can "like," comment on, and submit special requests for content. These actions engender familiarity and closeness; the beauty guru is confidante and friend.

[345] Alison Winch, "Your new smart-mouthed girlfriends: postfeminist conduct books," *Journal of Gender Studies* 20, no. 4 (2011): 360.

Beauty gurus often refer to makeup application as an act of "self-care" – an easily commodified concept exploited for neoliberal objectives, as much as these rituals provide comfort, a sense of control, and distraction. One of the most popular subgenres of beauty YouTuber content is the "Get Ready With Me" video. Just by watching, the viewer is offered a therapeutic reprieve from the pressures of the outside world. There is indeed a hypnosis-like effect that comes from watching someone methodically apply their makeup, which typically takes at least twenty minutes and often much longer. Though the viewer might be enticed to purchase the showcased products, their attention alone generates revenue for advertisers, as well as for the YouTuber herself. This financial imperative is often disavowed; YouTubers go out of their way to disclaim sponsorships and to perform authenticity. Sarah Banet-Weiser argues that, in the context of neoliberalism, the aesthetic labor of beauty vlogging is rarely recognized as "work." In the spirit of entrepreneurialism, beauty vloggers depict themselves as ordinary women, driven by their passions, rather than by a hunger for profit.[346]

Like the "shopping parties" popularized in the mid-to-late twentieth century, the beauty vlog is in many ways a symbol of women's enduring financial precarity. In the latter half of the twentieth century, "pink pyramid schemes" similarly capitalized on feminized sociality and the promise of entrepreneurial success. Like the iconic pink Cadillac rewarded to only the top sellers of Mary Kay Cosmetics, financial stability in the Beauty YouTuber world is more elusive than it appears. The most successful YouTubers are masters of image making, and makeup is just one component of the larger aesthetic enterprise. Another popular subgenre of guru content is the "haul" (which we might define as, "fruits of a shopping spree") video. In a haul, YouTubers

[346] Sarah Banet-Weiser, "'I'm Beautiful the Way I Am': Empowerment, Beauty, and Aesthetic Labour," in *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*, eds. Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 274-275.

show off the various products they appear to have purchased (though many of these items were likely offered to them in exchange for promotion). The haul is a celebration of consumerism, as one product after another is opened, tested, and reviewed. As viewers, however, we rarely bear witness to the waste and the accumulation of discarded objects. The typical guru's mise en scène is crisp, clean, and white – the best backdrop for displaying products, but also one which cleverly conceals the consumer excess encouraged by the haul subgenre. Though it might be argued that this content teaches women to be savvier consumers and to make better purchase choices, they rarely expose the mountains of packaging and unused products, nor do they acknowledge that this behavior might financially destroy a lesser-known YouTuber and her followers if they were to "haul" on their own, without the support of sponsorship deals and advertising revenue.

Based on their content and intimate style of address, we might argue that the beauty guru is the internet-age descendent of women like Sylvia Ulbeck, Gladys Glad, and Carolyn Van Wyck. In the 1930s, their articles taught women how to look better, feel better, and ultimately, shop better. Popular beauty literature offered readers a sense of connectedness, despite the physical distance between them. This print genre invited readers to assume a quasi-friendship with a woman that they had never met but felt they could trust due to the consistency with which her columns appeared in newspapers and magazines. With her authentic persona, her sage advice, and her alleged proximity to the stars, the motion picture industry and its glamour authorities, the beauty reporter was a powerful force for the cosmetics industry. Today's beauty gurus similarly connect with their followers in disparate regions around the world, presenting as ordinary, authentic, and real. The mainstream celebrity might still model a physical appearance that stands for success and social mobility; however, the beauty guru seems to offer living proof

that anyone can achieve fame and millionaire status, by investing in face powders, mascara, and lipstick.

In Closing: A Note on Make-Up

Lore has it that it was Max Factor, Hollywood beauty expert, who normalized the once taboo term, "make-up." In writing this dissertation, I opted for the more familiar spelling, "makeup." The original hyphenation might appear odd to the contemporary reader; however, it perhaps reveals more about what makeup is, what it does, and what it meant before it became so embedded in the popular lexicon. Make-up, for Factor, was a noun – a thing, an object, and a consumer product. Make-up, however, was also an action (Jean "makes up" the movie way). "To make up" is an act of pretending, associated with the dramatic illusions of stage and screen, but it also connotes an act of fabrication or deception – hence why it was once uttered with disdain. During Factor's time, "to make up" increasingly took on more palatable connotations: "to make up" was to compensate, and to "assist nature" where it was deemed lacking. But make-up was more than an act commodified. It was a sensation or a feeling of unease, congealed into a thing we could buy. As one beauty editorialist admitted, she always left the movies overcome with a visceral sense of dissatisfaction. Feeling inadequate in her own skin, she attempts to "make up" the difference between herself and the glamorous woman on screen, compelled to take better care of her body, and to pay more attention to her looks. All this combined to produce "makeup" as we know it today: a product that implies both action and object, nature and artifice, fabrication and compensation – a product which promises to fill the void between a reality and an ideal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Addison, Heather. *Hollywood and the Rise of Physical Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

"Advertisement: Amazing New Beauty Secrets by Hollywood's Make-Up King." *Motion Picture Classic*, May 1929.

"Advertisement: Max Factor's Society Make-Up." *Motion Picture Magazine*, June 1930.

"Advertisement: Max Factor's Society Make-Up." *Photoplay Magazine*, September 1932.

"Advertisement: Max Factor, Hollywood." *Hollywood Now,* April 1937.

"Advertisement: Woodbury's Cold Cream." *Radio Stars*, March 1932.

"Advertisement: Movie Make-Up Manual." *Photoplay,* June 1927.

"Advertisement: Tangee." *Movie Classic*, August 1936.

Annas, Alicia. "The Photogenic Formula: Hairstyles and Makeup in Historical Films." In *Hollywood and History: Costume Design in Film*, edited by Jonathan Rabinovitz, 52-77. London: Thames and Hudson, 1987.

American Cinematographer, February 1933.

Archer, Mel. "The Make-Up Artist in Hollywood," *The National Board of Review*, October 1939.

Balázs, Béla. *Béla Belázs: Early Film Theory,* edited by Erica Carter. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah. "'I'm Beautiful the Way I Am': Empowerment, Beauty, and Aesthetic Labour." In *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*, edited by Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff, 265-282. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Banner, Lois. *American Beauty*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

Bartky, Sandra Lee. *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression.* New York: Routledge, 1990.

Basinger, Jeanine. *The Star Machine*. New York: Vintage Books, 2007.

Basten, Fred E. *Max Factor: The Man Who Changed the Faces of the World.* Arcade Publishing, New York, 2008.

"Beauty Micrometer Analyzes Facial Flaws for Make-Up." *Modern Mechanix and Inventions,* January 1935.

Benton, William E. "Physiognomy: Your Face and What it Reads." *Broadway and Hollywood Movies*, April 1931.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing.* London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Berry, Sarah. *Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

"Be Yourself, Merle is Film Edict." *New York Post*, July 8, 1935.

Biddle, Mary. "Beauty Advice." *Modern Screen*, May 1934.

Biery, Ruth. "The New 'Shady Dames' of the Screen." *Photoplay*, August 1932.

Blaszczyk, Regina Lee. *The Color Revolution*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012.

Blyn, Robin. *The Freak-Garde: Extraordinary Bodies and Revolutionary Art in America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Blythe, Sylvia. "How to Charm a Camera." *Evening Star*, Washington DC, January 8, 1939.

Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Brown, Beth. "Man Made Movies for Women." *Screenland*, June 1934.

Burns, Mel. "Make-Up to Date." *Movie Mirro*r, June 1940.

Cartnal, Alan. “The Hollywood Westmores: Sitting on a Powder Keg.” *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1976.

Chalmers, Helena. *The Art of Make-up for the Stage, the Screen and Social Use.* New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925.

Chrisman, J. Eugene. “Cameramen Name Hollywood’s Ten Most Beautiful Women.” *Hollywood*, March 1935.

“Choice of Colors in Dress; Or, How a Lady May Become Good Looking,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, April 1855.

Clarke, Winston. “The Art of Make-Up.” *Broadway and Hollywood,* November 1931.

“Color Make-Up: New Factor Development Solves Color Problem.” *International Photographer*, June 1937.

“Cosmetic Salon Wrecked by Armed Vandals.” *Daily News*, Los Angeles, May 4, 1937.

“Daily Magazine Page for Everybody.” *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, Nov 9, 1935.

deCordova, Richard. *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

deForest Lamb, Ruth and George Larrick. “The American Chamber of Horrors.” Chicago World Fair. 1933-1934, Chicago, Illinois.

Demspey, Michael. “Lon Chaney: A Thousand and One Faces.” *Film Comment* 31, no. 3 (May 1995): 62-69.

Desjardins, Mary. “Classical Hollywood, 1928-1946.” In *Costume, Makeup, and Hair*, edited by Adrienne L. McLean, 47-74. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016.

Dootson, Kirsty Sinclair. “‘The Hollywood Powder Puff War’: Technicolor Cosmetics in the 1930s.” *Film History* 28. no. 1 (2016): 107-131.

Dougherty, Kathryn. “Here’s News that Will Thrill Every Woman!” *Photoplay*, September 1934.

Dowling, Mark. “A New Way to Men’s Hearts.” *Motion Picture Magazine*, July 1932.

Dyer, Richard. *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

Dyer, Richard. *White*. Twentieth Anniversary Edition. London: Routledge, 2017.

Dyhouse, Carol. *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism*. London: Zed Books, 2010.

Elias, Ana Sofia, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff. "Introduction: Aesthetic Labour: Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism." In *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*, edited by Ana Sofia Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff, 3-49. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Elkins, Merry. "The Westmores: Sculpting the Faces of the World." *American Cinematographer*, July 1984.

"Everything Depends On It." *Picture Play Magazine*, August 1928.

Factor, Max. *Max Factor's Hints on the Art of Make-Up*. 3rd ed. Hollywood: Max Factor's Make-Up Studios, 1933.

Factor, Max. "Standardization of Motion Picture Make-Up." *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* XXVIII, no. 1, January 1937.

Factor, Max. "The Art of Motion Picture Make-Up." *Cinematographic Annual*, 1930.

Factor, Max. *The New Art of Society Make-Up*. Hollywood: Max Factor Studios, 1928.

Fischer, Lucy. *Cinematernity: Film, Motherhood, Genre*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Franklin, Joe. *Classics of the Silent Screen*. New York: Citadel Press, 1959.

Garland-Thompson, Rosemarie. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 2022): 1-32.

Goldsmith Gilbert, Julie. "Touching Up Hollywood Visage." *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1976.

Golia, Julie. *Newspaper Confessions: A History of Advice Columns in a Pre-Internet Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Glad, Gladys. "Beauty by Gladys Glad." *The News-Freemont Messenger*, October 10, 1933.

Glad, Gladys. "Make-Up that is Becoming to Brunette." *The Ottawa Journal*, December 26, 1936.

Gordon, Jan and Cora Gordon. *Star-Dust In Hollywood*. London: George C. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1930.

Grandville, Grace. "Beauty," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 1, 1935.

Grandville, Grace. "Do Men Want Their Women 'Natural'?" *Detroit Free Press*, Dec 29, 1935.

Green, Penelope. “Alicia Keys and the ‘Tyranny of Makeup.’” *The New York Times*, September 14, 2016.

Gundle, Stephen. *Glamour: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Gundle, Stephen and Clino C. Castelli. *The Glamour System.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

Gunning, Tom. “The Impossible Body of Early Film.” In *Corporeality in Early Cinema*, edited by Marina Dahlquist, Doron Galili, Jan Olsson and Valentine Robert, 13-24. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018.

Haines, Anna. “From ‘Instagram Face’ to ‘Snapchat Dysmorphia’: How Beauty Filters Are Changing The Way We See Ourselves.” *Forbes*, April 27, 2021. https://www.forbes.com/sites/annahaines/2021/04/27/from-instagram-face-to-snapchat-dysmorphia-how-beauty-filters-are-changing-the-way-we-see-ourselves.

Hall, Leonard. “The Glamor Factories of Hollywood: In goes a Cinderella. Out comes a princess of plastic pulchritude.” *Stage*, July 1936.

Hearn, Alison and Stephanie Schoenhoff. “From Celebrity to Influencer: Tracing the Diffusion of Celebrity Value across the Data Stream.” In *A Companion to Celebrity*, edited by P. David Marshall and Sean Redmond, 194-211. Hoboken, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2016.

Hefferman, Harold. “They’ve Taken the Ham Out of Makeup.” *St. Louis Post*, March 22, 1942.

Hoffman, Hugh. “Arthur Donaldson, Wizard of Make-Up.” *Motion Picture Magazine*, May 1916.

Holland, Cecil. “The Art of Screen Make-Up.” In *The Truth About the Movies, by the stars*, edited by Laurence A, Hughes, 294-297. Los Angeles: Hollywood Publishers, Inc., 1924.

Hunt, Elle. “Faking it: how selfie dysmorphia is driving people to seek surgery.” *The Guardian*, Jan 23, 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jan/23/faking-it-how-selfie-dysmorphia-is-driving-people-to-seek-surgery.

Hyland, Dick. “The Face of a Thousand Memories.” *The New Movie Magazine*, November 1930.

“It’s Tough For the Actresses.” *Silver Screen*, February 1935.

Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrant and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Jeter, Ida. “The Collapse of the Federated Motion Picture Crafts: A Case Study of Class Collaboration in the Motion Picture Industry.” *Journal of the University Film Association* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 37-45.

Kallet, Arthur and F.J. Schlink. *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs: Dangers in Everyday Foods, Drugs, and Cosmetic*s. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1933.

Kay, Gwen. *Dying to Be Beautiful: The Fight For Safe Cosmetics*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005.

Keating, Patrick. “From the Portrait to the Close-Up: Gender and Technology in Still Photography and Hollywood Cinematography.” *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 90-108.

Kerr, Martha. “What Happens to You in a Hollywood Beauty Shop.” *Modern Screen*, August 1933.

“Kiss, Make Up.” *The Minneapolis Star*, July 21, 1934.

Lang, Cady. “*Keeping Up with the Kardashians* is Ending. But Their Exploitation of Black Woman’s Aesthetics Continues.” *Time*, June 10, 2021. https://time.com/6072750/kardashians-blackfishing-appropriation.

LaSalle, Mick. *Complicated Women: Sex and Power in Pre-Code Hollywood*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000.

Lavater, Johann Kaspar. *Essays on Physiognomy for the Promotion of the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind*. London: G.G.J. & J. Robinson, 1793.

“Lip Service: What lipstick sales tell you about the economy.” *The Economist*, January 23, 2009, https://www.economist.com/unknown/2009/01/23/lip-service.

Longacre, Betty. “Give Yourself a Break,” *Photoplay*, June 1932.

“Machine Measures Beauty of the Face.” *Popular Science Monthly,* February 1933.

“Make-Up Madness.” *Photoplay*, January 1927.

“Make-Up Secrets from the Diary of Maureen O’Sullivan.” *Photoplay*, November 1935.

Mank, Gregory William. *The Very Witching Time of Night: Dark Alleys of Classic Horror Cinema*. Jefferson: McFarland and Company Inc., 2014.

Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Marwick, Alice. “Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy.” *Public Culture* 27, no. 1 (2015): 137-160.

Marzola, Luci. *Engineering Hollywood: Technology, Technicians, and the Science of Building the Studio System.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Mastin, Mildred. “Will Your Favorite Star Survive Color?” *Photoplay*, January 1935.

Maurice, Alice. “Making Faces: Character Makeup in Early Cinema.” In *Corporeality in Early Cinema*, edited Marina Dahlquist, Doron Galili, Jan Olsson and Valentine Robert, 206-217. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018.

McLean, Adrienne L. *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

McLean, Adrienne L. “Introduction.” In *Costume, Makeup, and Hair*, edited by Adrienne L. McLean, 1-20. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016.

Mears, Ashley. “Girls as Elite Distinction: The Appropriation of Bodily Capital.” *Poetics* 53 (December 2015): 22-37.

Meuel, David. *Women Film Editors: Unseen Artists of American Cinema*. Jefferson: McFarland and Company Inc., 2016.

Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Screen* 16, no 3 (1975): 6-18.

Naremore, James. *Acting in the Cinema*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

North, Jeanne. “No More Chinese Myrna?” *Photoplay*, April 1933.

Parsons, Louella. “Acting Job Tough For Louella.” *Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph*, September 26, 1937.

Pearson, Roberta E. *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Peiss, Kathy. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America’s Beauty Culture*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998.

Phillips, M.C. *Skin Deep: The Truth About Beauty Aids – Safe and Harmful*. New York: The Vanguard Press, 1934.

Physioc, Louis W. “Does The Camera Lie?” *American Cinematographer*, January 1927.

Postrel, Virginia. “A Golden World.” In *Glamour: Fashion, Industrial Design, Architecture*, edited by Joseph Rosa, Phil Patton, Virginia Postrel, and Valerie Steele, 24-35. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Powdermaker, Hortense. *Hollywood, the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951.

Reed, Warren. “The Master of Make-Up.” *Picture Play Magazine*, June 1919.

“Reviews.” *Modern Screen*, November 1927.

Roberts, Sue. “It’s All in the Make-Up.” *Motion Picture Magazine*, December 1918.

Rooks, Lyle. “Genius in a Rouge Box: Screen Stars Are Made or Broken By the Art of the Make-Up Men.” *Times Unio*n, Brooklyn NY, September 29, 1935.

Rosa, Joseph. “Fabricating Affluence.” In *Glamour: Fashion, Industrial Design, Architecture*, edited by Joseph Rosa, Phil Patton, Virginia Postrel, and Valerie Steele, 16-23. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Safronova, Valeriya. “Meet CoverGirl’s New Cover Boy.” *The New York Times*, October 12, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/fashion/meet-covergirls-new-cover-boy.html.

Senft, Theresa M. “Microcelebrity and the Branded Self.” In *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*, edited by Hartley Jean Burgess and Axel Bruns, 346-354. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2013.

Slide, Anthony. *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine: A History of Star Makers, Fabricators, and Gossip Mongers*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010.

Smith, Rosanna M., Elham Yazdani, Pengyuaun Wang, Saber Soleymani, and Lan Anh Tom. “The Cost of Looking Natural: Why the No-Makeup Movement May Fail to Discourage Cosmetic Use.” *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 50 (2022): 324-337.

Solomon, Matthew. *Disappearing Tricks: Silent Film, Houdini, and the New Magic of the Twentieth Century*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Stewart, Victor A. “The ‘Why’ of Motion Picture Make-Up.” *Photoplay Magazine,* March 1920.

Stacey, Jackie. *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Stole, Inger L. *Advertising on Trial: Consumer Activism and Corporate Public Relations in the 1930s*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

Sullavan, Margaret. “The Making of a Movie Star,” *American Magazine*, 1934.

“Take These Beauty Tips To Gain What You Envy in the Stars.” *Photoplay*, March 1932.

“The Make-Up Box.” *The New Movie Magazine*, July 1932.

“Those Beautiful ‘Tippy’ Eyes.” *Silver Screen*, June 1935.

Thrift, Nigel. “The Material Practices of Glamour.” *Journal of Cultural Economy,* 1 no. 1 (2008): 9-23.

Tolentino, Jia. “The Age of Instagram Face,” *The New Yorker*, December 12, 2019. https://www.newyorker.com/culture/decade-in-review/the-age-of-instagram-face.

Regev, Ronny. *Working in Hollywood: How the Studio System Turned Creativity into Labor*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

Rivers, Audrey. “Famous Masseuse Denies She Has Offended Stars.” *Movie Classic*, October 1931.

Rooks, Lyle. “Genius in a Rouge Box: Screen Stars Are Made or Broken By the Art of the Make-Up Men.” *Times Union*, Brooklyn, September 29, 1935.

Sinha, Babli. “A ‘Strangely Un-English Actress”: Race, Legibility, and the Films of Merle Oberon, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 44, no. 4 (2016): 220-226.

Steele, Valerie. “Fashion.” In *Glamour: Fashion Industrial Design, Architecture*, edited by Joseph Rosa, Phil Patton, Virginia Postrel, and Valerie Steele, 38-49. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Sternheimer, Karen. *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream: Stardom and Social Mobility.* New York: Routledge, 2011.

Strider, Gray. “Can Beauty be Hand-Made?” *Screenland*, January 1930.

Studlar, Gaylyn. *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Stutesman, Drake. “The Silent Screen, 1895-1927.” In *Costume, Makeup, and Hair*, edited by Adrienne L. McLean, 21-46. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016.

Theatricals or The Art of Making-Up. C.H. Fox, 1890.

“The audience speaks up.” *Photoplay*, January 1932.

The International Photographer, March 1929.

"The Magic of Make-Up." *Photoplay Magazine*, September 1924.

"The Screen's Seven Gorgeous Women." *Silver Screen*, August 1935.

Thomas, Dan. "False Faces for Movie Stars." *The Sunday Star*, Washington D.C., October 23, 1932.

Thompson, Harlon and Jean Negulesco, directors. *Kiss and Make-Up*. 1934. Paramount Pictures Studio.

"To the House of Westmore will come the most beautiful women in the world." *The Hollywood Mirror*, May 1935.

Ulbeck, Sylvia. *No More Alibis!* Chicago: Photoplay Pub. Co., 1935.

Ulbeck, Sylvia. "Sylvia's Ideals for Mouth, Chin and Face Structure," *Photoplay*, May 1935.

Ulbeck, Sylvia. "Sylvia Sets the Standard for Facial Beauty." *Photoplay*, April 1932.

Van Wyck, Carolyn. "Finding Your Type in the Stars." *Photoplay*, October 1933.

Van Wyck, Carolyn. "Hair Tricks That Change Your Face." *Photoplay*, February 1932.

Van Wyck, Carolyn. "Look in the Mirror! How Do You Rate Yourself?" *Photoplay*, January 1932.

Van Wyck, Carolyn. "Photoplay's Hollywood Beauty Shop." *Photoplay*, April 1932.

Van Wyck, Carolyn. "Photoplay's Own Beauty Shop." *Photoplay*, October 1937.

Van Wyck, Carolyn. "The Hollywood Side of Make-Up." *Photoplay*, November 1932.

Wagner, Leicester. "Hollywood Shots," *Nevada State Journal*, Reno, September 29, 1935.

Wagner, Marguerite. "Custom-Made Faces: Adapted from the Stage." *The Reader's Digest,* December 1936.

Weber, Brenda R. *Makeover TV: Selfhood, Citizenship, and Celebrity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

Westmore, Frank and Muriel Davidson. *The Westmores of Hollywood*. New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976.

Westmore, Perc. "Cooperation Bulks Big in Work of Make-Up." *American Cinematographer*, December 1937.

Westmore, Perc. “Secrets of the Make-Up Room.” *Modern Screen*, May 1934.

Westmore, Wally. “I Make Up Hollywood.” *Saturday Evening Post*, August 11, 1956.

“White House Opens New Cosmetic Salon.” *The Press Democrat*. Santa Rosa, August 15, 1937.

White, Michele. “Beauty Culture Studies.” *Feminist Media Histories* 4. no. 2 (Spring 2018): 31-37.

“Who is Carolyn Van Wyck?” *Photoplay*, May 1921.

Williams, Sharrie and Bettie Youngs. *The Maybelline Story and the Spirted Family Dynasty Behind It.* Bettie Youngs Book Publishing, 2010.

Wilson, Elizabeth. *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*. Revised Edition. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013.

Winch, Alison. “Your new smart-mouthed girlfriends: postfeminist conduct books.” *Journal of Gender Studies* 20, no. 4 (2011): 359-370.

Wissinger, Elizabeth. *This Year’s Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour*. New York: NYU Press, 2015.

Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. New York: W. Marrow, 1991.

Woodward, Helen. “Make-Up.” *Muncie Evening Press*, July 13, 1931.

Wooldridge, A.L. “Paints and Powder Puffs.” *Picture Play Magazine*, August 1926.