

### **The Early Years of Glamour Magazine: Changing Constructions of Glamour, Fame and Femininity**

In April of 1939, a new magazine hit American newsstands. This magazine, entitled *Glamour of Hollywood*, advertised itself as “The Hollywood way to Fashion, Beauty, Charm” and promised to help the average American woman emulate the remote glamour of Hollywood’s screen stars, and to cultivate some of the illusive and magical qualities of these stars for herself, through clothes, hair, make-up, posture, social graces, and personality. The years that followed would see a major transformation of this new magazine. Within the first few years of publication, the magazine would drop “*of Hollywood*” from its name, becoming simply *Glamour*, it would begin to feature models and “average” women on its covers instead of Hollywood stars, and its content would purport to reflect an increasing emphasis on the everyday realities of ordinary women in the context of a nation and a world at war. Articles about Hollywood designers and interviews and profiles of stars and their opulent, fashionable lifestyles would be more and more frequently replaced by articles about decorating and dressing on a budget, marriage, current affairs, and, most of all, work and career. Indeed, by August 1943, the magazine would change its tagline to reflect this shift, branding itself as “Glamour—For the girl with the job.”<sup>1</sup>

This new emphasis may at first seem to indicate a clear shift away from Hollywood and the lifestyles and values it represented, away from what Warren Sussman called a “culture of

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<sup>1</sup> *Glamour*, (New York: Conde Nast, August 1943), Cover.

personality” and Leo Lowenthal labeled a culture of “idols of consumption,”<sup>2</sup> and toward a new, modern set of values which reflected the stark realities of that unique moment in history. However, it may be argued that in the wartime climate of the early 1940s, the shift represented in the pages of *Glamour* magazine did not reflect a divergence from the values of Hollywood, but rather, at least in part, reflected image changes and strains of propaganda that were beginning to emerge in Hollywood itself at the time, motivated by economic interests and a strengthened allegiance with the federal government and its agendas, as well as a genuine emerging sense of social responsibility and public duty.<sup>3</sup> Just as the pages of *Glamour* reflected major changes during the period from 1939 to 1944, Hollywood’s self-image and output shifted dramatically during this period as well. Undoubtedly the movement en masse of American women into the work force during these years changed their relationship to Hollywood forever, but rather than understand this shift as a simple, straightforward renunciation of the values of Hollywood and its star lifestyles and glamorous conceptions and ideals of femininity and a move toward a more enlightened, liberated conception of womanhood, it is worth exploring more nuanced explanations for the apparent value shift that occurred in this cultural text during these years.

In exploring the concurrent changes that took place during these years in Hollywood and in the pages of *Glamour*, it becomes apparent that Hollywood remained a model of values and a powerful producer of cultural messages, though changing values and messages, in *Glamour* during the war years to a much greater extent than it initially appears. Through exploration of *Glamour* magazine and its transformation in the years 1939-1944, it is possible to explore the shifting values and changing messages and expectations for women during these years—the way

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<sup>2</sup> Leo Lowenthal, “The Triumph of Mass Idols” in *The Celebrity Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 15

that concepts like femininity, stardom, and glamour itself, through the skillful manipulation of Hollywood and related cultural texts like *Glamour*, came to take on new meanings and to establish how similar or different these actually were from the original meanings. Within the historical context of this period, it is possible to explore *Glamour*'s rhetorical and ideological shift and what it reflects about the changes and shifts in Hollywood during the same period of time and how and why these changes were happening.

*Glamour* (then called *Glamour in Hollywood*) in its first issues set out to establish for its readers the dual objectives of the emulation of star style and glamour and the cultivation of personal, individual style and glamour. In *Culture as History*, Warren Sussman notes the “almost too perfect irony”<sup>4</sup> of the tension between these two objectives in relation to his discussion of the concept of personality, writing “The importance of being different, special, unusual, or standing out in a crowd—all of this is emphasized at the same time that specific directions are provided for achieving just those ends.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Sussman’s broader argument about a shift from a cultural emphasis on character to an emphasis on personality is extremely useful in looking at *Glamour* during these years. Sussman writes that “‘personality,’ like ‘character,’ is an effort to solve the problem of self in a changed social structure that imposes its own special demands on the self.”<sup>6</sup> It is fascinating to look at the construction of ‘personality’ in the context of *Glamour*'s changing solutions to the “problem of self” in a time when rapidly changing social structures imposed great and unforeseen demands on the self. Jackie Stacey’s observations about the relationship of “female spectators” to their “star ideals”<sup>7</sup> also seems relevant to understanding this interesting

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<sup>4</sup> Warren Sussman, *Culture as History* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 278

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 279.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 278.

<sup>7</sup> Jackie Stacey, “Feminine Fascinations” in *The Celebrity Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 253.

tension between individuality and emulation, so central to personality formation. Stacey's exploration of the contradictory relationship of "similarity and difference, recognition and separateness"<sup>8</sup> which exists between "female spectators" and their female idols, the level of identification of "negotiation between self and other"<sup>9</sup> is interesting in looking at the earliest issues of *Glamour in Hollywood*, but also in contextualizing the shifts to follow. While the work of this paper deals mainly with the messages being put forth and not with their reception by women as individuals or groups or their long-lasting effects in the years after the war, Stacey's arguments present a hopeful view of the ability of female spectators, as she calls them, to subvert constraining and oppressive patriarchal cultural messages and to appropriate and reconstruct these messages for purposes of personal fulfillment, skills that would have helped women find empowerment in the maze of cultural messages being put forth by Hollywood through the pages of *Glamour* at this time.

When it emerged in April 1939, *Glamour in Hollywood* very much reflected an emphasis on the construction and privileging of the thing that Sussman calls "personality". The magazine spent the majority of its first few issues trying to define "Glamour...that strange chameleon word with a different meaning for each user."<sup>10</sup> Words like "miracle" and "magic" were bandied about—one feature stated that glamour "is a potent brew of ambition, work and health, mixed and watched over by wizards of make-up, design and personality coaching,"<sup>11</sup> while another explained that "...glamour starts with the external self but includes the development of individuality, that acquisition of those inner qualities of vitality, warmth, intelligence, and many

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 253.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, 254.

<sup>10</sup> "America's Glamour Center" in *Glamour*, April 1939, 35.

<sup>11</sup> "America's Glamour Center" in *Glamour*, April 1939, 35.

other intangibles.”<sup>12</sup> The magazine during these early issues framed itself as a direct conduit between Hollywood and the reader that would “let Hollywood talk to you, tell you its aims, techniques, achievements...be your distiller of the right way to use Hollywood.”<sup>13</sup> The kind of language Sussman points to in relation to “personality”<sup>14</sup> is heavily present in these early issues—words like “individual”, “attractive”, “magnetism”, “image”, “fascinating”, and above all “personality,” pepper the pages of the magazine, in profiles of actresses like Joan Crawford<sup>15</sup> and Alice Eden,<sup>16</sup> features on topics such as getting lips like Bette Davis’<sup>17</sup> and whether eye glasses and glamour can co-exist,<sup>18</sup> and pictorials depicting stars modeling the latest fashions (like “Designed for Deanna...Available to You”<sup>19</sup>), posed glamour shots, or movie stills. In the way that Sussman discusses the emergence of a culture of personality as, in part, a reaction to and against life in a mass society,<sup>20</sup> the construction of personality in the early days of Glamour seems to put a high premium on self-differentiation and individuality, but only within the confines of acceptability delineated by Hollywood stars. In its premiere issue, the magazine promised to show readers “how to become more lovely—not by mere imitation—but by developing your own potentialities in the Hollywood manner.”<sup>21</sup>

In mid 1940, the beginnings of a shift were already starting to emerge in the magazine’s content. Interspersed between articles like “Be Guided By the Stars—Hollywood’s Glamorous

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<sup>12</sup> “This is Glamour” in *Glamour*, April 1939, 42.

<sup>13</sup> “America’s Glamour Center” in *Glamour*, April 1939, 35.

<sup>14</sup> Sussman, *Culture as History*, 277.

<sup>15</sup> “Crawford: Fashion-Starter” in *Glamour*, June 1939, 18.

<sup>16</sup> “Gateway to Hollywood” in *Glamour*, August 1939, 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> “Lip Service” in *Glamour*, June 1939, 52.

<sup>18</sup> “Can Girls Who Wear Glasses Have Glamour?” in *Glamour*, December 1939, 14.

<sup>19</sup> “Designed for Deanna...Available to You” in *Glamour*, February 1940, 12-13.

<sup>20</sup> Sussman, *Culture as History*, 277.

<sup>21</sup> “Would You Like to Have...Glamour?” in *Glamour*, April 1939, 2.

Stars Choose their Letter Papers to Suit their Personalities”<sup>22</sup> and fashion pictorials, such as one inspired by the film version of *Gone With The Wind*<sup>23</sup>, articles like “Glamour Goes to Business”, a piece by Loire Brophy, a “nationally known employment counselor” and “author of the book ‘If Women Must Work,’”<sup>24</sup> began to appear. This article argued that the possession of glamour was a “definite asset” for women in the workplace. Increasingly, content dealing with the concerns of women in finding jobs, resolving workplace issues, dressing appropriately for the workplace, and other similar issues appear. In the Loire Brophy piece and many others which began to appear, the implication, sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, seemed to be that *Glamour*, both the magazine and the concept, was increasingly becoming defined by a new set of criteria and values. In fact, the magazine itself acknowledged as much in its April 1941 issue when, in an article celebrating its second birthday, it wrote “Two years ago, *Glamour* started as a voice for you, the young American woman. If our focus has changed somewhat since that time, it was to make that voice stronger and more authoritative. And, frankly, we have grown up here. Since our credo is based on you, our readers, we could not possibly have done otherwise.”<sup>25</sup>

Slowly, the magazine seemed to be redefining itself as the voice of the working woman, rather than the conduit straight from Hollywood to the reader. Hollywood-related content continued to appear, though in ever smaller quantities. However, when this content did appear, the lives of the stars—their beauty regimes, glamorous clothing, parties, and marriages—began to be framed more and more as enjoyable diversions for the working woman as opposed to essential prescriptions for how to live her life. Instead, these prescriptions were now delivered

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<sup>22</sup> “Be Guided By the Stars—Hollywood’s Glamorous Stars Choose their Letter Papers to Suit their Personalities” in *Glamour*, April 1940, 25.

<sup>23</sup> “‘Gone With The Wind’ Inspired This Design” in *Glamour*, April 1940, 59.

<sup>24</sup> Loire Brophy, “Glamour Goes to Business” in *Glamour*, April 1940, 36-37.

<sup>25</sup> “Glamour’s America” in *Glamour*, April 1941, 23.

through the career, marriage, and homemaking content. In August 1941, the magazine for the first time featured an issue without a star on the cover (the cover depicts a “girl with contented cow”)<sup>26</sup>. From this time forward, through the end of the sample period, a star never again appeared on the cover, replaced by “all-American” looking models and, sometimes, lucky readers. In August 1943, the magazine, which had modified its name from *Glamour in Hollywood* to simply *Glamour* in May 1941 changed its tagline to “*Glamour—For the girl with the job*”<sup>27</sup>.

This shift in the portrayal of the concept of glamour, and by extension concepts of normative femininity within the magazine, seems to represent a clear-cut transition in broader cultural and social values, a transition that clearly coincides with the buildup to and outbreak of World War II, and America’s eventual entering into that conflict. It is a well-documented fact that World War II represents a crucial transitional moment in the emergence of the modern American woman. With a large portion of the male population of working age drafted into service, American women were drafted into their own form of service—domestic labor, from factory work to stenography.<sup>28</sup> The huge growth in the numbers of American women in the workforce—more than six million new women workers, or an increase of over fifty percent<sup>29</sup>—wrought far-reaching effects on the very fabric of American life and social dynamics, with “Traditional configurations of the female, chiseled in granite in art, history, and law,” undergoing “official remodeling.”<sup>30</sup> In light of these facts, it would be easy to read changes in the content of *Glamour* magazine over the years from 1939 to 1944 as a direct reflection of a shift in

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<sup>26</sup> *Glamour*, August 1941, Cover.

<sup>27</sup> *Glamour*, August 1943, Cover.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Renov, *Hollywood’s Wartime Woman: Representation and Ideology* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988), 39.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 40.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War*, 150.

cultural values for American women that privileged work, celebrated their newfound independence and social power, and devalued Hollywood stardom and its emphasis on personality and consumption.

While there is undoubtedly some degree of truth to this textual interpretation, historical evidence shows that Hollywood maintained a much stronger control over dominant cultural messages during this time than that understanding might suggest. Furthermore, while major shifts in the ideological and practical realities of women's lives were undoubtedly taking place, Michael Renov argues compellingly in *Hollywood's Wartime Women* that "public images may undergo rapid changes while sex roles are far more intransigent and resistant to change."<sup>31</sup> Indeed, upon closer examination, it would appear that the shift that occurred on the pages of *Glamour* magazine did not represent as much of a divergence from pre-existing social structures or from Hollywood values as it might at first appear. Hollywood values shifted dramatically during this time, motivated by a complex mix of patriotism, economic pragmatism, and the fact that a symbiotic relationship had grown up between Hollywood (particularly studio heads) and the federal government.<sup>32</sup> But as Renov explores, many of the changes that occurred, particularly in the portrayal of and perspectives on women and families, still relied on many of the same underlying structures of value, which remained as deeply consumer-oriented and entrenched in normative gender constructions as ever.<sup>33</sup>

In the years before World War II, Hollywood was not immediately eager to take a public stance on controversial social and political issues or to accept the job of shaping public opinion on the global and domestic turmoil. As David Welky writes in *The Moguls and the Dictators*, the

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Women*, 33.

<sup>32</sup> David Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators: Hollywood and the Coming of World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 8.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Woman*, 35-36.



concept of “celebrities as advocates for controversial issues was entirely foreign, uncharted territory for Hollywood and its stars.<sup>34</sup> The established wisdom at this time held that entertainment, not education, was Hollywood’s appropriate function.<sup>35</sup> Because of this, despite the fact that many of the studio heads were Jewish,<sup>36</sup> there was widespread initial resistance to taking a stand on the Fascist dictatorships taking hold in other parts of the world. Indeed, this resistance persisted almost until the outbreak of war in Europe.<sup>37</sup> By the late 1930s, though, President Franklin Roosevelt had begun to have increased success in establishing a relationship of sorts with the powers that be in Hollywood<sup>38</sup>, and it was this partnership, along with the increasing seriousness of the escalation of the situation in Europe, which ultimately brought about major changes in Hollywood’s inward and outward messages and attitudes about the war effort. Ultimately, Hollywood would play “an integral role in preparing the country for war.”<sup>39</sup> This represented a major departure from the understandings of Hollywood and stardom within American culture up to this point, and required a new understanding of Hollywood’s purpose and it’s place within society. In the words of Thomas Doherty, “...the nature of the contract between Hollywood and American culture was rewritten during 1941-1945,”<sup>40</sup> as America adjusted to the idea of Hollywood as a source not only of entertainment but social and political commentary and activism.

Hollywood during the war years, therefore, maintained and indeed in some ways increased its level of cultural influence and because of this was able to become a powerful

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<sup>34</sup> David Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 18.

<sup>39</sup> David Welky, *The Moguls and the Dictators*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War*, 4.

producer and disseminator of patriotic propaganda. Through the wartime work of its stars, like Veronica Lake and Carole Lombard who volunteered their time and set an example through lifestyle and fashion changes<sup>41</sup> and their enactment of new, dramatically different models of citizenship, and perhaps most importantly, through the values embedded in the films that were produced and disseminated during these years, “war films” and otherwise, Hollywood was able to successfully continue to define ideals for “average” American women (and men) to aspire to, though these ideals were changing to reflect the times. The new ideals were patriotic ideals, not ideals of luxury and fashionable living. Yet, no less than before, they were ideals constructed within a particular set of values and assumptions and were meant to inspire American audiences, especially women, to act, think, and spend, in particular ways. No less than before, to use Leo Lowenthal’s words “the language of promotion” often replaced “the language of evaluation.”<sup>42</sup>

In *Visions of War*, Kathryn Kane discusses some of the predominant values exhibited by Hollywood through its stars and the films it made during this period. One theme which recurred with great frequency, according to Kane, is the protection of home and country as a primary motivating force for soldiers on the war front.<sup>43</sup> Coded in this mythologized “home” are traditional values about women and families, which come to represent “security, stability, peace—the antithesis of war”<sup>44</sup> and must therefore be protected, kept sheltered and safe. The woman in the home, waiting for the return of her husband or son, became a central image in many films, one which seems to contradict the reality of women’s increasing liberation from the home through work during the period. Indeed, even while dominant cultural messages, from the

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Leo Lowenthal, “The Triumph of Mass Idols” in *The Celebrity Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 142.

<sup>43</sup> Kathryn Kane, *Visions of War: Hollywood Combat Films of World War II* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982), 17.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, 17.

government, from Hollywood, and in the pages of *Glamour* encouraged women to heed the call of duty and take a job, concurrent messages from these same sources reinforced the notion that this was a temporary act of virtue and encouraged the maintenance of a traditionally home-and-husband-centric world view and a continued emphasis on appearances, glamour and traditional femininity, though within war-imposed limitations.

In a self-proclaimed Career Issue of *Glamour*, which came out in April 1941, one particularly candid piece entitled “We CAN Take It With Us” described the priorities of modern American women thus: “We are putting an almost Victorian aura around marriage and the home—a regard for the deep security two people can find in each other. We are putting our faith and hope in the future in children, pathetically unfashionable a few years ago. Now we WANT them.”<sup>45</sup> This piece sat between an article entitled “Careers—The New Frontier,” and a quiz entitled “What’s Your Role in Life—See If It Is a Career, Marriage, or Both.” As Richard Dyer explains in his description of Marjorie Rosen’s argument in her book *Popcorn Venus*, “The narratives of the independent woman films always show the star’s independence and intelligence in the service of men. It is men who define social goals and norms; it is to get a man, or for the love of a man, that the star acts as she does.”<sup>46</sup> Indeed, in this way, Hollywood cinema in the early 1940s managed to portray women in new, seemingly more liberated roles, while at the same time substantially undercutting the empowerment of women as holders of social power and agency in their own right. Women, like men, were exhorted to do their part in the war effort in order to preserve a traditional way of life, a set of existing values, rather than as a means of liberation or progressive social reformation or reimagination.

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<sup>45</sup> “We CAN Take It With Us” in *Glamour*, Career Issue April 1941, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Dyer, “Stars as Images” in *The Celebrity Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 173.

The maintenance of the pre-existing values of personality, consumption and glamour can be seen in the pages of *Glamour*, for even as a shift in content occurs, a shift in underlying values does not—women are still exhorted to strive for personal glamour, though now this glamour is achieved through different means—the patriotic glamour of helping to bring American men home safely, thus proving one’s womanly commitment to home and husband, and accomplishing all of it with carefully coiffed hair (the April 1941 Career Issue toasted the “career girl” for “her greatest triumph—frontier fighting without a hair out of place”<sup>47</sup>) and a full face of makeup (February 1942’s “No Blackout For Beauty”<sup>48</sup> discussed women in Britain and America who continue to prize their cosmetics even in the midst of war). But the purpose is still much the same as it was in earlier issues of *Glamour*—to attract a man (through beauty, charm and virtue) and tend a model home and family for him. In fact, along with increased emphasis in *Glamour* on the working girl and her unique circumstances and interests comes a greatly increased emphasis on finding a man (preferably a soldier), weddings, marriage, children, home decorating, and entertaining guests. This content, which aggressively normalizes and prioritizes a particular set of values and expectations for women, seems to reflect the same kind of ideological work being done by Hollywood cinema of the time in its constructions of home and women’s place in it, as discussed by Kane<sup>49</sup>, and appears positioned in such a way as to counteract the potentially revolutionary new possibilities for women outside the home. Just as women faced contradictory messages from Hollywood, which presented the propaganda of the essential value of women’s work to the war effort alongside messages about the upholding of traditional values

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<sup>47</sup> “Careers—The New Frontier” in *Glamour*, April 1941 Career Issue, 25.

<sup>48</sup> Marcella Holmes, “No Blackout For Beauty” in *Glamour*, February 1942, 68.

<sup>49</sup> Kathryn Kane, *Hollywood Combat Films of World War II*.

systems which placed women firmly in the home, *Glamour*, too, seems to want to have it both ways when it comes to constructing the modern woman.

This can also be seen in the fact that although the content of *Glamour* was changing, the language of personality and consumption continued, though adapted to changed circumstances. Significantly, a primary tool of much of the propaganda around women and work disseminated during this time by Hollywood and reflected in the pages of *Glamour*, was to equate working women with glamour. Now instead of articles encouraging readers to copy Joan Crawford's style<sup>50</sup> or "Laugh Your Way to Glamour" with Gracie Allen,<sup>51</sup> the magazine offered up articles like October 1941's "Beauty Pep Talk for Career Girls"<sup>52</sup> and December 1941's "Beautiful But Not Dumbo," Walt Disney's thoughts on career girls.<sup>53</sup> Though *Glamour* was now invested in the same efforts to get women into the workplace and help them adjust to their new roles, this shift was framed rhetorically and ideologically in a surprisingly similar way to the content about Hollywood stars and fashions which it replaced—as a means through which to develop one's personality and to live up to older, pre-existing expectations and ideals of femininity—above all, a way to achieve personal glamour and appeal. The frequency of the use of this tactic and the success it obviously had in recruitment efforts which, as mentioned previously, netted millions of new female workers,<sup>54</sup> is concrete evidence of the way that the new realities of American women's lives were continuing to be purposefully and successfully framed within old frameworks of value and ideology. These modern American women were expected to strive for glamour, personality, and an attractive image, goals deeply tied to consumer identity and

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<sup>50</sup> "Crawford: Fashion Starter" in *Glamour*, June 1939, 18.

<sup>51</sup> "Gracie Allen Says 'Laugh Your Way to Glamour'" in *Glamour*, October 1939, 50.

<sup>52</sup> "Beauty Pep Talk for Career Girls" in *Glamour*, October 1941, 86.

<sup>53</sup> Walt Disney, "Beautiful But Not Dumbo—Walt Disney's Comments on the Working Girl are Animated" in *Glamour*, December 1941, 41.

<sup>54</sup> Michael Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Woman*, 38.

normative femininity. While “the altered profile of the American woman was having a profound effect upon marketing strategies,”<sup>55</sup> these strategies were still drawing upon pre-existing messages and values. In redefining and reappropriating “glamour” to this new purpose—the recruitment of women workers—Hollywood did what it had always done best—rebranded and repackaged a product to accomplish a desired economic and social end.

There is an interesting tension that develops between the individuality and “personality” ideals inherent in the language and messages put forth by Hollywood and *Glamour* and the constructs of home, family, and country so central to the construction of womanhood they put forward. Within the pages of *Glamour* in the early 1940s, increasingly, the kinds of words Sussman cited as “related to the notion of character,” words like, “citizenship, duty, democracy, work”<sup>56</sup> and others, frequently appear alongside the kinds of words “frequently associated with personality,” such as “fascinating, stunning, attractive, magnetic, glowing,”<sup>57</sup> and other words previously used in the magazine to discuss stars. P. David Marshall in *Celebrity and Power* writes that “...the *hyperindividuality* that had developed from the focus on individual power has left the population without the traditional institutions of authority of family, church, and state.”<sup>58</sup> If Marshall is correct that “The celebrity is centrally involved in the social construction of division between the individual and the collective,”<sup>59</sup> what can be made of the fact that Hollywood, as reflected in *Glamour*, undertook extensive patriotic propaganda work and emphasis on collective social goals during this period and not only that but set about accomplishing this work through an appeal to individual personality and glamour formation?

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<sup>55</sup>*ibid.*, 28.

<sup>56</sup> Warren Sussman, *Culture as History*, 273.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, 277.

<sup>58</sup> P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 36.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 25.

This contradiction, like the contradiction of framing a transformational and potentially liberatory moment in the history of American women in the language of a return to traditional ideals, seems to demonstrate above all the skill with which Hollywood, and by extension *Glamour*, shaped and deployed their wartime propaganda. They did so in such a way as to appeal to the modern American woman, a woman accustomed to the values of a star-centric, individualistic consumer society and versed in the language of personality development as represented by pre-war *Glamour* of Hollywood magazine, while attempting to frame and delimit this woman's personal development within the context of more traditional, collective communal values of womanhood. The very fact that the messages being produced by these cultural institutions were fraught with these basic contradictions reveals them as agenda-laden propaganda all the more clearly.

*Glamour of Hollywood's* premiere issue blithely proclaimed "let's admit we're under the Hollywood influence."<sup>60</sup> Though the evolution of *Glamour of Hollywood* to *Glamour* magazine would at first glance appear to represent a reduced position of cultural and social power for Hollywood during the years that followed this unabashed avowal and an elevated level of agency and a new set of values for American women as they moved into the working world, it can be seen that in reality, it largely reflects a major shift undertaken by Hollywood studios and actors during these years to keep themselves aligned with the times. By redefining concepts like "glamour" and "personality" within the changed realities of the lives of women in the war, Hollywood and its stars were able to remain a relevant, powerful force in the shaping and dictating of American cultural values. In her book, *Forever Feminine*, Marjorie Ferguson argues that women's magazines "comprise a social institution that serves to foster and maintain a cult of femininity," which reaffirms itself through the establishment and upholding of common

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<sup>60</sup> "Hollywood Influence—5 Very Important Pages" in *Glamour*, April 1939, 64.

“practices and beliefs: rites and rituals, sacrifices and ceremonies.”<sup>61</sup> Indeed, through its Hollywood-mirroring evolution in portrayals of womanhood, *Glamour* magazine seems to exemplify just such a “cult of femininity.” Though the specific realities of women’s lives as reflected in *Glamour* change, from peacetime aspirations toward distant movie star glamour and personality to wartime aspirations toward the more familiar “glamour” of patriotic hard work, home-building, and husbands, the underlying assumptions about acceptable femininity as well as the institutional mechanisms through which these assumptions were upheld remain surprisingly constant. Ferguson writes that women’s magazines promote their “cult of femininity” not only by “reflecting the female role in society,” but by “supplying one source of definitions of, and socialization into, that role.”<sup>62</sup> In thus upholding the “cult of femininity,” as it shifted to make use of female labor during time of war, *Glamour* magazine and the Hollywood image machine it so closely reflected skillfully and perceptively managed to remain relevant and powerful institutions of value formation and social influence by re-forming familiar, existing messages to the new circumstances and realities of life in wartime America. “Frivolous?” Scoffed *Glamour* in its first issue, “No, we are the realists.”<sup>63</sup>

### Methodology

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<sup>61</sup> Marjorie Ferguson, *Forever Feminine: Women’s Magazines and the Cult of Femininity* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983), 184.

<sup>62</sup> Marjorie Ferguson, *Forever Feminine*, 184.

<sup>63</sup> “Beauty Begins” in *Glamour*, April 1939, 75.



In conducting my primary source research on this topic, I drew on data gathered from the examination of the first five years of *Glamour* magazine (which was, to be precise, called *Glamour of Hollywood* magazine for the first two of its existence). Within this five year period, I examined the entire contents of the issues published in the even numbered months, beginning with the first issue which was published in April 1939 and ending with the April 1944 issue. When I say I examined the entire contents, I mean that I looked at the cover, the tagline, the masthead, all of the editorial content, the images (both photographic and pictorial) accompanying this content, and even, where relevant, the advertising content.

My reasons for delineating and delimiting my sample in this way were, first of all, that this was a span of time which encompassed the trajectory of the shift I was looking at, from *Glamour of Hollywood: The Hollywood Way to Fashion, Beauty, and Charm*, a magazine whose contents revolved around defining glamour in terms of high fashion, stardom, and Hollywood beauty and lifestyles, to *Glamour: For the Girl With the Job*, a magazine ostensibly geared much more to the everyday concerns and realities of the “average” modern American woman. The choice of this time frame also reflects the intended scope as well as the time constraints associated with the project. While continuing the sampling further would have allowed me to extend the argument further, perhaps looking at the long-term results of the cultural shifts, particularly those having to do with gender, which I explore in my paper. However, for the purposes of the specific phenomenon I was exploring and the argument that emerged from the data, this five year period was the sampling I deemed most appropriate. Due to the fact that I was looking at broad trends happening over time, I also did not feel that the sample lost any coherence or was otherwise compromised by including only issues published in even numbered months (February, April, June, August, October, and December). Due to the amount of time

involved in examining entire issues cover to cover, this was the most feasible and appropriate solution to covering the necessary time period.

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