

KIRSTY SINCLAIR DOOTSON

“The Hollywood Powder Puff War”: Technicolor Cosmetics in the 1930s

ABSTRACT: This essay examines the rivalry between cosmetics firms Max Factor and Elizabeth Arden in 1930s Hollywood as they competed for dominance in the field of Technicolor cosmetics. This rivalry, dubbed “the Hollywood Powder Puff War” by the press, was far from a trivial skirmish but is discussed here as the site where labor practices, racial constructions, and female identity were contested. Against a backdrop of industrial action in studio makeup departments, I argue that Factor’s Technicolor cosmetics line ultimately triumphed over Arden’s by reinforcing whiteness as a beauty ideal during the transition from black-and-white to color film.

KEYWORDS: Max Factor, Technicolor, makeup, cosmetics, Hollywood, labor history, whiteness, female spectatorship

In July 1935 *Variety* warned Los Angeles to brace itself for “the Hollywood Powder Puff War.” Three rival cosmetics giants would compete for victory in this fierce conflict: Max Factor, Elizabeth Arden, and the House of Westmore, which *Variety* warned were “out for blood” in a gruesome battle for Hollywood dominance.¹ Hostilities reached their peak in the summer of 1935, when makeup became a critical concern for Hollywood studios. That summer Pioneer Pictures released *Becky Sharp*—the first feature film using Technicolor’s three-strip process. The press bemoaned the poor rendition of skin tones, as well as the “gaudiness” of the film’s cosmetics, and an internal report on *Becky Sharp* described how “nearly all reviews advised that a new make-up be devised immediately.”² Similarly, the feedback from preview audiences confirmed that “extensive color research, especially in backgrounds and personal makeup,” was “imperative.”³

The problem for makeup artists was that Technicolor stock required much higher levels of illumination than black-and-white film, and studios had to use high-intensity arc lights to achieve the correct level of exposure. The consequences of these lighting changes were twofold. First, the switch to carbon

arcs drastically increased the physical temperature on set. This caused actors to perspire heavily through their dense greasepaint makeup and burdened cosmeticians with the task of constantly retouching sweat-streaked faces. Second, although this thick greasepaint gave a uniform, smooth complexion and concealed blemishes, it became reflective when exposed to the bright arcs. Faces coated in greasepaint therefore picked up the bright colors from their surroundings, resulting in highly saturated flesh tones.⁴ These vivid skin colors contravened Technicolor's official rhetoric, which emphasized that "a superabundance of color is unnatural."⁵

That color was considered by the press, the studios, and Technicolor itself as an undesirable excess in relation to so-called natural skin tones is key to understanding that the search for a new makeup was not simply a technical problem but also an ideological one. This insistence on natural skin colors 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.⁶ The true drawback of the existing greasepaint makeup, then, was that it failed to maintain a natural—that is, white—complexion. The solution to this problem would be a new makeup compatible with Technicolor's three-strip process that could accurately represent Caucasian skin onscreen. Such a makeup would be of great interest to Technicolor, the studio system, and the cosmetics industry and would ultimately win the brutal Hollywood Powder Puff War.

While *Variety* noted that there were three parties competing for victory, the Westmore brothers never truly entered the fray. Although a powerful force within studio makeup departments, their attempts to produce and sell their own cosmetics during the Depression proved less successful, and they sold this branch of their business in 1936.⁷ The battle for the Technicolor cosmetics market was therefore principally fought between two brands and their respective products: Max Factor's Pan-Cake Make-Up and Elizabeth Arden's Screen and Stage Make-Up.⁸ However, if we consult almost any history of color film or screen cosmetics, only Factor's name and Factor's product appear.

History, of course, is written by the victors, and Pan-Cake has entered film and cosmetics history as the unchallenged champion of the Powder Puff War. The description of Pan-Cake by Factor's biographer as "the fastest and largest-selling single make-up item in the history of cosmetics" and one which became the "industry standard make-up for all Technicolor films" is typical of accounts of Factor's success as untroubled, uncontested, and inevitable.⁹

Certainly, the scale and longevity of Pan-Cake's success is undeniable: a number of color systems aside from Technicolor (including Cinecolor and Dufaycolor) all employed Pan-Cake in their productions; it also negotiated the

successful translation to television, was used in Hollywood as late as the 1990s, and was still available to purchase in America until 2010.¹⁰ However, there is little evidence to prove the often-repeated claim that Factor's makeup became the industry standard in Hollywood, or that Technicolor incorporated the makeup into their fixed package (which included the obligatory rental of Technicolor cameras, cinematographers, and the expertise of the Color Advisory Service).¹¹ These troublingly hyperbolic claims made for Pan-Cake Make-Up have completely dominated histories of screen cosmetics to the point that Arden's cosmetics line is rarely, if ever, mentioned.

But why should it matter that film historians have erased Arden's failed cosmetics line from their record? Why should it concern us that Factor's dominance in this field is presented as a straightforward teleology? And why should we take seriously at all a technology whose importance is diminished by its dual taints of femininity and commodification? I will demonstrate that despite its name, the stakes of the Hollywood Powder Puff War were far from trivial, as the erasure of Arden's product from this historical moment has overdetermined Factor's success to a problematic degree. By reinscribing Arden into this historical narrative and examining the reasons her makeup technology failed, Factor's success—and the technological, ideological, and aesthetic determinants that enabled it—is thrown into sharp contrast. While Factor's makeup undoubtedly won the Hollywood Powder Puff War, his brand's achievement was predicated not simply on technical superiority but the ability to maintain a palatable form of whiteness as a beauty ideal during the transition from black-and-white to color film.

Historicizing the Powder Puff War requires untangling a complex matrix connecting films to products, spectators to stars, and the beauty industry to the film industry. I will begin with a brief history of Arden and Factor's products, as well as the technical differences that distinguished them within the context of studio production at a time of industrial unrest. I will then analyze how the films that launched the products onscreen in 1937 operated allegorically to bolster their appeal, looking at key scenes from *A Star Is Born* for Arden's Screen and Stage, and *Walter Wanger's Vogues of 1938* for Factor's Pan-Cake Make-Up.¹² Finally, I will examine why these products fared so differently when sold to the general public through commercial tie-ins, and how they navigated the shifting deployment of ethnicity within contemporary beauty culture.

SCREEN AND STAGE

How Elizabeth Arden came to develop a new makeup for use in Technicolor pictures is not entirely clear.¹³ By the mid-1930s, she was the head of a hugely successful beauty business comprising twenty-nine salons in Europe and America

that she managed from her headquarters in New York. Specializing in luxury beauty products and expensive consumer goods, her salons stocked lipsticks and lotions, negligees and handbags, and also offered treatments such as haircuts, manicures, and massages, catering to a host of beauty needs. In March 1935 Arden expanded her empire with the purchase of the DeLong laboratories in Los Angeles in order to take over production of their Nuchromatic theatrical cosmetics.¹⁴ Rebranding the DeLong cosmetics as Elizabeth Arden Screen and Stage Make-Up (with negligible alterations made to the product), Arden advertised her new line in *Vogue* as early as July 1935, and theatrical productions began using it that summer.¹⁵

In the spring of 1937, Screen and Stage made its cinematic debut in David O. Selznick's production of *A Star Is Born*, accompanied by a full advertising campaign exploiting the product's association with the film.¹⁶ Two other Technicolor films that year employed the makeup: another Selznick production, *Nothing Sacred*, and a Paramount picture, *Ebb Tide*, as well as a black-and-white Warner Bros. film, *Tovarich*. The following year Selznick used Screen and Stage again for *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, but by the end of 1938, Arden's product seemed to have disappeared from the screen and was no longer advertised in fashion magazines.¹⁷

Few complaints were levied at Arden's makeup in the press, and it received positive reviews from *Photoplay's* beauty columnist Carolyn Van Wyck, who cited it among the "perfect examples of what the right make-up means to the stars and the color cameras of Hollywood [*sic*]."¹⁸ However, it was not so much the appearance of the makeup onscreen as the method of its application that proved to be the product's primary technical drawback in the studio.

Arden's system required at least two colors of foundation to be blended on the skin in order to achieve the desired effect: a primary layer to give "the illusion of velvet smoothness" and another to "model" the planes of the face, helping conceal unattractive features while highlighting more appealing ones.¹⁹ Not only was this two-color method a lengthy process that required a high degree of skill (the makeup came with a detailed instruction booklet), but it also doubled the amount of foundation used by the studio makeup department. The purchase of a special makeup remover was also a necessary as the foundation was waterproof.²⁰ Technicolor itself already added around 30 percent to the budget of any production, and it is safe to assume that the added cost of Arden's cosmetics would have been unpopular with studio executives. Her biographers claim that the product line was therefore failing to generate sufficient profits to continue as a sustainable enterprise and "quietly folded."²¹

PAN-CAKE MAKE-UP

It is unsurprising that Technicolor approached Max Factor toward the end of 1935, with the hope that he could develop a makeup for their three-strip process.²² Factor's brand had been synonymous with Hollywood since he established a wig and makeup store there in 1908, at a time before makeup departments were fully incorporated into the studio system. Actors were required to have their own makeup applied prior to arrival on set, and Factor's studio was therefore a regular calling point for actors on their way to work. When the industry incorporated makeup departments within studios themselves, Factor became the main supplier of theatrical makeup, which he produced in his on-site laboratory in Hollywood.²³ Factor also had a well-established relationship with Technicolor by this time as he had provided makeup for their two-color films since at least 1930.²⁴

By 1937 Factor's laboratory had created a formula for the three-strip process that was called the T-D Series in development but named Color Harmony Pan-Cake Make-Up when released for sale.²⁵ The makeup received its first screen credit in *Walter Wanger's Vogues of 1938*, released in August 1937 to great acclaim, with *Variety* describing the new makeup as a "clincher" for the success of color film.²⁶

While greasepaint concealed skin by covering its surface with a thick, uniform coat, Factor's T-D Series solution was a thinly applied, translucent layer that allowed light and oxygen to penetrate its surface. Since the makeup suspended a range of pigments in a colloidal mixture, it also blended with the actor's own complexion.²⁷ Pan-Cake came in numerous shades and required no mixing to reach the correct hue, and its translucence heightened the luminosity of the skin, creating glow without sheen. This not only helped spread its popularity with female stars but also meant that faces did not have to be lit quite so brightly, reducing lighting costs and diminishing the risk of actors overheating.²⁸ A further distinguishing feature of Factor's product, which is enormously important, was that it could be applied quickly with a wet sponge, allegedly reducing the time stars spent in makeup from two hours to just over fifteen minutes.²⁹

The speed with which Factor's makeup could be applied proved particularly important at this moment. In May 1937 Hollywood makeup artists, along with scenic artists and hairdressers belonging to the Federated Motion Picture Crafts and the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees, began an industrial strike.³⁰ In a bid to have their union recognized, their wages regulated, and their working conditions improved, makeup artists formed picket

Beauty Salon Damaged by Vandals



Ernest Westmore looks over the damage done by vandals in his lavish Hollywood beauty salon which was suspected of supplying strike-breakers to film studios. The vandals, who were armed, intimidated the janitor, a woman operator and a customer and poured creosote over the white furnishings and decorations.

Fig. 1: The attack on the House of Westmore during the 1937 strike by Hollywood makeup artists. (*Reading [PA] Eagle*, May 5, 1937, 13)

lines outside nine Hollywood studios.³¹ When the Westmore brothers continued to cross picket lines, strikers launched a violent attack on their salon, leaving windows smashed and the interior smeared with creosote (fig. 1).³² The *San Francisco Examiner* noted that the strikes disrupted normal studio operations and shooting schedules, and the cast members of *Vogues* were “doing [their makeup] themselves as best they could without professional beauticians.”³³

An agreement created in September 1937 gave the Hollywood Make-Up Artists’ Guild an official charter, which included a standardized tariff for wages and guarantees that they would be paid health benefits and receive pensions.³⁴ The studios therefore placed a premium on the speed with which Factor’s cosmetics could be applied given that they would have been eager to minimize the amount spent on the increasingly expensive makeup department.³⁵

It is tempting to think that the industrial benefits of Factor’s makeup fully explain its triumph over Arden’s rival product; it was quicker, cheaper, and therefore more popular with executives and stars. However, unlike other cinematic technologies used almost exclusively within the context of film production, such as deep focus or synced sound, the efficacy of makeup within the studio system cannot wholly account for its commercial success. As screen cosmetics are consumed both visually, inside the cinema, and as products available for purchase outside the cinema, their reception in drugstores and beauty salons is vital for understanding the differing fates of these rival products.

STREET APPEAL

By the 1930s Hollywood had perfected its mutually beneficial relationship with the American marketplace, a relationship formalized through what was known as a “tie-up.” By arrangement, films were used to promote consumer goods to the American public by showcasing cars, refrigerators, soda, and soap, and in turn, print advertisements for these products would highlight the films in which they were featured. As Charles Eckert has described in his incisive analysis of the tie-up, the consumer most highly prized by studio publicity departments was not the American public in general, but “*one girl*—single, nineteen years old, Anglo-Saxon, somewhat favoring Janet Gaynor.”³⁶ The emergence of the female consumer in the 1920s, the preponderance of women among cinema audiences, as well as the dominance of the star system by actresses, meant that products, particularly fashion items, targeting young women with disposable incomes were absolutely central to the development of the symbiotic system whereby the ideal viewer and the ideal consumer were identified as one and the same.

Cosmetics were undoubtedly the cornerstone in this structure and perhaps benefited from the tie-up more than any other industry. Edgar Morin, in his assessment of the Hollywood star system, went so far as to claim that “movie

make-up is associated with the movie star to such a degree, that the whole modern cosmetics industry is nothing but the offspring of Max Factor and Elizabeth Arden, make-up artists to the Hollywood stars.³⁷ The success or failure of a makeup product in Hollywood was therefore inextricably linked with its street appeal, and an analysis of Technicolor film makeup technology would be incomplete without assessing how these products were mediated through the films that helped to sell them.

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU!

Charting the transformation of typical girl-next-door Esther Blodgett (Janet Gaynor) into the glamorous Hollywood actress Vicki Lester, *A Star Is Born* was the ideal film to promote Arden's Screen and Stage Make-Up, as the belief in the transformative power of both cosmetics and the Hollywood star system was central to the commercial appeal of both.

As Richard Dyer has noted, a fundamental contradiction that allowed the Hollywood star system to operate was that stars were presented as ordinary people (since anyone potentially could become a star) yet were also special (for which read: wealthy, talented, lucky, beautiful). This paradox permitted stars to be revered rather than despised, particularly during the Depression, as they were presented not as an exclusive elite preselected by the system to succeed but as a group of normal people who had attained stardom through (an implausible) combination of hard work and happenstance.³⁸

What visually transformed an ordinary person into a star was glamour, an ineffable quality that the studio system bestowed upon the most special of ordinary people. Indeed, Stephen Gundle, in his history of glamour, notes that the appeal of Hollywood's particular form of glamour, as opposed to, say, that of the European aristocracy, was its (spurious) accessibility, "the promise that *anyone* could benefit from the application of the techniques of the glamour factory" (emphasis added), or as the advertisements for Arden's Screen and Stage promised, "It could happen to YOU!"³⁹

What we might then expect in a film about one girl's journey through the glamour factory, particularly one trying to promote the sale of cosmetics, is a scene that reveals the magical process by which, as Arden's advertisements described, "grey Esther Blodgett" becomes "glamorous Vicki Lester" (pointedly making the association between the lack of color and the lack of glamour). However, in *A Star Is Born*, the Hollywood makeover scene does not operate as we might expect.

Once Esther is offered a contract with Oliver Niles Productions, she is passed through various sectors of the publicity machine, where her name, biography, posture, and elocution are all "corrected," before she finally arrives in the



Fig. 2: Chromatic excess in the Hollywood makeover received by Esther Blodgett (Janet Gaynor) in *A Star Is Born*. (Selznick International Pictures, 1937)

makeup department. The two male cosmeticians begin by painting a series of new eyebrows on her forehead, giving her a comically overwrought expression.⁴⁰ Dissatisfied, they decide to give her “that Crawford smear,” a technique of applying lipstick beyond the natural lip line, synonymous with Joan Crawford, but which on Esther’s petite face looks vulgar. Still unconvinced, they apply powder to “give her that Dietrich *mmmnech*,” that is, to highlight Esther’s cheekbones, but instead giving the impression that she’s been caked in flour (fig. 2).

Although the makeup artists admit they’re “on the wrong track,” the scene nevertheless conveys the result of the Hollywood makeover as a crudely painted face rather than genuine beauty. Fred Basten has read the strong resemblance between one of the cosmeticians (Arthur Hoyt) and Max Factor as a complimentary testament to Factor’s dominance in the field of Hollywood makeup, as it was indeed Factor who had invented Crawford’s iconic smear.⁴¹ However, this ersatz Factor suggests that this scene is both a satirical swipe at the overdone contrivances of Hollywood makeup in general, and at Max Factor in particular, since the Hollywood glamour with which his products were so synonymous is presented here as coarse, overblown, and risible. That the verb to “Max

Factorise” is still used today to imply artificial beauty testifies to the association between his brand and the laughable duplicity of Hollywood glamour.⁴²

However, brand rivalry cannot fully account for the strangeness of a scene that mocks the chromatic excesses of the makeup department in a film supposedly selling both color film and color cosmetics to audiences. This seems particularly odd in light of Sarah Berry’s analysis of how Technicolor in fact catalyzed a trend for brightly colored cosmetics through their films.⁴³ How, then, do we account for this peculiar makeover scene?

First, we could imagine that *A Star Is Born* marks a shift away from the trend that Berry describes. In fact, as early as January 1937, beauty advisors hailed “naturalism” as the new trend, with columns projecting that “no matter who you ask in Hollywood about the beauty trend of 1937, you’ll get the same answer, the highly polished chic type is an also ran, while natural femininity wins acclaim.”⁴⁴ The Westmores in particular were extremely vocal in backing this trend, as they warned women against “those unnaturally rosy cheeks and exotic, hand-drawn eyebrows,” given that even “the most gullible men couldn’t miss [their] artificiality.”⁴⁵

Second, Esther’s curious makeover scene could be connected to changing discourses surrounding glamour at this time. By the summer of 1938, stars like Joan Crawford and Marlene Dietrich, iconic of those “exotic hand-drawn eyebrows” and whose appearances are ridiculed in *A Star Is Born*, would be denounced as “box office poison” by the Independent Theatre Owners’ Association, when the public became disillusioned with their particular brand of Hollywood glamour.⁴⁶ The affiliation between these stars and the kind of excess depicted in the makeover sequence in *A Star Is Born* was partially what soured audience opinion in 1938. These overdone appearances spoke of lavish lifestyles that were out of touch with the experiences of the cinema-going public in Depression-era America.⁴⁷ As such, a large part of a star’s appeal was contingent upon audience identification, and the more distanced from reality stars like Crawford and Dietrich became, the more their popularity dwindled, while (supposedly) down-to-earth actresses like Myrna Loy began to supplant them.⁴⁸

Finally, we might link the rhetoric of naturalism promulgated by the beauty industry in 1937 to the corporate values of Technicolor. Scott Higgins has charted how in its earlier phases (1933–36), Technicolor adopted a “demonstration mode” of color design. The aim was to exhibit the spectacular potential of color in order to justify the increased costs of adding color to a production. However, from 1936 onward Technicolor adopted what Higgins describes as a “restrained mode,” as it became increasingly concerned that the industry and audiences perceived color as a distracting gimmick.⁴⁹ By 1937, the corporation was adamant that color was a means of achieving a higher degree

of naturalism in the cinema, which we could easily connect with the humor of Esther's painted face in *A Star Is Born*—a joke about the consequences of departing from standards of naturalism.

We find these propositions borne out throughout *A Star Is Born*. Esther is awarded a contract with Oliver Niles Productions, even though, according to Niles (Adolphe Menjou), “all the experts seem to think that your type is a little mild for present day tastes.” However, Niles reassures her that “tastes change, like eyebrows, and I think that also like eyebrows, tastes are going back to the natural”—vocalizing the shifts in Technicolor's corporate rhetoric and changing beauty norms that correlated to the fall of stars like Dietrich and Crawford, whose eyebrows were anything but natural.

That Vicki Lester's “type” is of the “mild” variety is vital for conveying her star image as accessible, a notion emphasized in the scene that follows her first preview. As audiences pour out of the theater, snippets of their conversations can be heard. One woman comments “Ain't she cute? You know I think she's the same type I am, don't you?” while her friend responds “I think she's sweet.” A third remarks, “I think she's the most precious little thing I've ever seen,” while both she and her friend powder their noses. This scene demonstrates the accessibility of Lester's stardom to the diegetic female audience but also instructs the female audiences of *A Star Is Born* that Gaynor is a star not dissimilar from their own “type”; that is, her appearance is down-to-earth, and most importantly, it is reproducible through the application of cosmetics (as suggested by the fans' nose-powdering).

Arden's advertisements for Screen and Stage similarly tried to convince consumers that purchasing her products could bridge the gap between star and spectator, as her advertisements promised that “every star . . . every movie fan . . . every woman who ever dreamed to possess glamour, may share in the discovery.” The idea of *sharing* aspects of a star's image was central to the consumption of cosmetics by audiences who hoped to incorporate elements of a star's identity within their own.⁵⁰ Using Gaynor as a vehicle to market Screen and Stage made the kind of beauty associated with Arden's product appear attainable. As David Thompson notes, Gaynor was a star known for her “wholesome beauty,” a star image that Catherine Jurca describes as compatible with “sensible” and “folksy” characters, not to mention with the image of the ideal consumer as described by Eckert.⁵¹ That the advertisements for Arden's product promised “subtle coloring” further implied that Gaynor's “mild” form of Hollywood glamour was one that could easily be incorporated into one's everyday life and was in keeping with the general vogue for naturalism that year.

However, if *A Star Is Born* was such a deft advertisement for Screen and Stage, and the product itself capitalized on shifts in Hollywood glamour and

color design, one is left wondering why it fared so poorly when sold to the general public through tie-ins with the film. In order to understand the failure of *Screen and Stage*, we need to interrogate further this insistence on naturalism.

By no means was the mandate that women's makeup should be natural a phenomenon specific to the 1930s. As Kathy Peiss has demonstrated, the association between the painted face, licentious sexuality, and low social class (by negative association with prostitution and the stage) was a recurring theme throughout the history of cosmetics.⁵² That makeup should appear natural rather than artificial or labored had been a mainstay of beauty advice for at least the past century. What we should interrogate here, then, is not so much the turn to the natural as a concrete shift in the aesthetics of makeup design but this insistence, noted earlier, upon the natural as a euphemism for whiteness as a beauty ideal.

Berry has described how Technicolor both catalyzed and capitalized upon a shift away from whiteness as a beauty norm, as color film generated a vogue for "exoticism-as-masquerade" in the 1930s: a trend for dark hair, "Oriental" costumes, and brightly colored makeup.⁵³ There were indeed technical reasons for this apparent trend: as platinum blond hair was extremely difficult to photograph in three-strip Technicolor, many stars were required to dye their hair darker shades, and their fans followed suit.⁵⁴ A wave of articles lamented that "gentlemen are having a difficult time finding blonde in Hollywood these fine spring days [as] moviedom's golden-tressed lassies are abandoning the cotton and corn colors for something darker, and the rush is on among the crowd which follows the film styles."⁵⁵

However, as Berry notes, the ideological underpinnings of this trend drew upon long-held associations between color, femininity, and nonwestern cultures.⁵⁶ As an unstable and subjective phenomenon, color has consistently been characterized in Western culture as an unruly, sensual excess associated with irrationality and the bodily. According to David Batchelor, color has therefore typically been considered a property of the Other: "the feminine, the oriental, the primitive, the infantile, the vulgar, the queer or the pathological."⁵⁷ Such prejudices manifested themselves in the 1930s as an insistence in beauty and fashion columns that women of nonwhite ethnicities were best suited to the palette of the new color film technology, as their complexions were thought to accommodate bright colors more successfully than pale Caucasian skin.⁵⁸

Berry further describes how this trend amounted to a form of commodified Orientalism whereby nonwhite ethnicities typically excluded from American beauty norms were adopted by the fashion world as a troubling form of "Hollywood exoticism."⁵⁹ One newspaper even wondered whether "the darkening influence" in cosmetics and fashion "was born of sympathy for Ethiopia,"



Fig. 3: Continuity stills show Arden's cosmetics being used as props in *A Star Is Born* (Selznick International Pictures, 1937). (David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin)

evidence that nonwhite identities (whether African or Asian) were conflated easily in the press at the time and simply branded “exotic” in contrast to white Europeans and Americans.⁶⁰

This returns us to the problem of Esther's makeover in *A Star Is Born*, which was far from exemplary of a trend in brightly colored cosmetics. In fact, the screenwriters intended Esther's exaggerated lips and painted face to make her appear not as an exotic beauty but, as the notes in the script had it, “like a blackface comedian,” whereby the black greasepaint and white lips typically used in blackface makeup are here transformed into white powder and red lipstick.⁶¹ The scene therefore operates didactically, warning audiences that the chromatic excesses of Technicolor cosmetics result not in the kind of performative racial masquerade that was so in vogue but an undesirable racial othering of the female star. Ironically, this was precisely what proved problematic for Arden when her products were released for sale to the public, an irony enhanced when one realizes that the cosmetics used as props within the scene are indeed Arden's (but a fact only discernible upon close scrutiny of continuity stills) (fig. 3).⁶²

Selznick complained about the poor quality of the flesh tones during the production of *A Star Is Born* because he believed that the skin colors at times appeared “*much too dark*,” (emphasis in original), an issue that could be

resolved within the studio through adjustments to the carbon arc lighting.⁶³ However, when sold to the general public and used under the weaker artificial light found in homes, offices, and stores, this darkening effect persisted. *Vogue* warned its readers that due to this darkening effect, Screen and Stage was not for everyday use in daylight but indeed “definitely a ‘special occasion’ make-up . . . for balls and fancy dress,” best saved “for amateur theatricals,” while beauty expert Mary Lee warned *Silver Screen* readers only to use it “lightly for social evenings” as it produced effects that were “dramatic.”⁶⁴ Arden herself advised that the firm scale back the sale of Screen and Stage face powder to the general public, writing that it was “too heavy for ordinary use.”⁶⁵ Although pale, white skin had seemingly been displaced as a beauty ideal by the recent wave of exoticism, the criticism of Screen and Stage’s inability to maintain a light skin tone for Caucasian consumers underlines that whiteness remained an ideal during an era of Technicolor cosmetics.

The failure by the Hollywood studio system to adopt Arden’s Screen and Stage Make-Up was therefore only partially due to its more lengthy and costly application in the studio makeup department and cannot be separated from the more complex ways in which it failed to conform successfully to racial beauty standards when sold to the American public. In contrast, Max Factor’s Pan-Cake Make-Up succeeded due to the central premise that it maintained the racial ideals implicit in creating a so-called natural appearance at this time.

SEE MR. FACTOR

Max Factor introduced his new Color Harmony Pan-Cake Make-Up in *Walter Wanger’s Vogues of 1938*, which follows the fate of spoiled, New York socialite Wendy Van Klettering (Joan Bennett), who abandons her fiancé on their wedding day. In order to support herself financially, she begins a fashion-modeling career with the House of Curson, where she learns to value hard work and team spirit. However, Mr. Curson (Warner Baxter) is himself under significant financial strain due to competition from the rival House of Miratoff, run by a phony Russian aristocrat-cum-fashion-designer. Curson ultimately triumphs over his corporate adversary by mounting a spectacular fashion show, which concludes with his successful proposal to Wendy.

As Berry summarizes, *Vogues of 1938* demonstrates the preeminence of “the democratic abundance of mass-produced consumer fashion” over “the aesthetic pretensions of European couture.”⁶⁶ While the vanquished House of Miratoff caters to older women seeking to recover their youthful spirits by paying exorbitant prices for what they believe to be one-of-a-kind gowns, the House of Curson achieves success selling mass-produced clothing through department stores to a younger clientele. The women who patronize the House of Miratoff

evidently resemble Arden's clients, who her biographer describes as "seriously rich" women "who had inherited or married great wealth."⁶⁷ This elite clientele valued the association between Arden's brand and European elegance. They frequented her expensive spa in Maine (at a cost of \$500 a week) and appreciated that her products were available only, as her advertisements put it, in "smart shops." Factor's products, on the other hand, in no way offered exclusivity, as their popularity traded upon their ability to democratize the glamour available to the stars. This association between Factor's brand identity and the kind of mass consumerism on display in *Vogues of 1938* is key to understanding the success of his product both within the industrial context of the Hollywood studio and on the high street.

Factor's close affiliation with Hollywood was not simply contingent upon his physical proximity to the film industry but also upon the fact that he ran not a "house" or "salon" but a "studio," just like his corporate customers. Bordwell and Staiger list Factor's firm as one of the "Hollywood Institutions" that were codependent on the studio system, integrated through the "systematized and guided technological research and development" they undertook for studios on an industrial scale. The level of systematicity (of control, regulation, and standardization) necessary for the studio system to function was therefore replicated by Factor's own studio. As Bordwell and Staiger describe: "[Max Factor's] first major success was the standardization of panchromatic make-up, which helped take the make-up process out of the player's hands and into the control of the studio. After 1928, to guarantee uniformity, Factor had to create careful testing and research procedures. By 1934 his factory had an assembly-line operation, a quality-control laboratory, and a research laboratory to develop new formulas. Every innovation in lighting or film stock sent studios to Factor."⁶⁸

Unlike the rest of the beauty industry, which prided itself upon the individuated attention it could offer its customers, Factor won popularity with studio executives because he was able to make up hundreds of cast members in an identical fashion at an incredible pace. He even developed a system of spray-painting extras similar to the application of paint on a car production line (fig. 4).⁶⁹ As the 1958 version of the famous song from Busby Berkeley's *Hollywood Hotel* (1937) proclaimed, Factor was not only celebrated for the reproducibility of the looks he created for stars but also the speed with which he could deliver them: "You may be homely in your neighborhood / But if you think you can be an actor, See Mr. Factor / He'd make a monkey look good / Within a-half an hour you'll look like Tyrone Power / Hooray for Hollywood!"⁷⁰ So synonymous was Factor's brand image with the industrial principles of mass production that when he opened his new studio with a lavish party in the winter of 1935, one reporter proclaimed that "Hollywood had opened a factory."⁷¹



Fig. 4: Detail of undated photograph of makeup artist Flora Jaynes applying body makeup to extras in the manner pioneered by Max Factor. (Hollywood Make-Up Artists and Hair Stylists Guild, Burbank, CA)

We might paraphrase Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer and say that what underpinned this similarity between Factor's cosmetics studio and the Hollywood movie studio (as two facets of mass culture) was a method of masking sameness by calling attention to difference. To put it another way, the standardization of the consumer, necessary to make these systems work, was concealed by emphasizing superficial product differentiation, so that every consumer seemed individually catered to within a system of mass (re)production.⁷² But how does this affect the way in which we understand the relationship between Technicolor, race, and cosmetics, which so negatively impacted Elizabeth Arden's Screen and Stage Make-Up?

It is important to note that Pan-Cake Make-Up was launched as part of Max Factor's Color Harmony series, a line that aimed to encourage shoppers to buy three matching makeup products (powder, rouge, and lipstick) from his brand, rather than matching a Max Factor product with one from a rival line. The purported goal was to achieve a color scheme that was tailor-made to each woman's coloring. In order to help consumers select their products and create

a bespoke palette, they first had to identify their “type.” However, there were in fact only four types to which one could conform (blonde, brown, brownette, and redhead; black hair was excluded from consideration, although “grey” did receive a concession). Despite proclaiming a makeup combination for every complexion, Factor’s products only catered to a small number of skin tones, which ranged from “Very Light,” “Fair,” and “Creamy,” to “Medium,” “Ruddy,” “Sallowed,” “Freckled,” and, at the extremity of the spectrum—“Olive.”⁷³

While Max Factor claimed in an interview in 1936 that “special make-up for racial groups is being made,” his reference to makeup for “swarthy Mexicans,” “Arab types,” “South Sea Islanders,” “Negroes,” and “Orientals” makes evident that this was theatrical makeup intended for characterizing stereotypes within the studio (largely extras, one imagines), not a makeup that could be used by women of color in their daily lives.⁷⁴ Although Pan-Cake Make-Up was available to purchase for industrial studio use in shades such as “Tahitian,” “Spanish,” and “Light-Egyptian,” the shades listed in promotional pamphlets and magazine advertisements for purchase by the general public were “cream-rose,” “tan-rose,” and of course “natural” (all differing shades of peaches-and-cream tones prepared for white skin).⁷⁵ Therefore, although Factor’s new Technicolor makeup made a range of skin colors possible in the industrial context of film production, only a very narrow spectrum was available for sale, that is, considered acceptable for use by the public.⁷⁶ If we understand Factor’s cosmetics business to be modeled along Fordist lines, then it should come as no surprise that his customers could have any color, as long as it was white.

We find this strategy expressed allegorically in *Vogues of 1938* during the Fête de Rayon Fantastique, a fancy-dress ball with a prize awarded to the best costume. The ball offers narrative motivation for a chromatic spectacle, as myriad exotic outfits, accessorized with turbans, fezzes, and veils, are worn in a garish spectrum of saturated colors. Yet the costume that wins first prize is not Miratoff’s outlandish creation but Curson’s “Spartan Princess,” a simple, Grecian gown in “virginal white.” As Curson explains to Wendy before the ball: “all the women there are going Oriental. You’ll stand out like an oasis in the desert.” We are reminded that what is necessary for the ideal of white beauty to function is the suggestion of a nonwhite Other against which it can be contrasted, a visual tradition with a long history.⁷⁷ The ball scene confirms that the contemporary trend for exotic cosmetics and costume was not so much a way of displacing whiteness as an ideal but reinforcing it by contrast. This strategy of displaying the technological possibility of color but rhetorically emphasizing the primacy of whiteness was also repeated in the advertisements of Factor’s products.

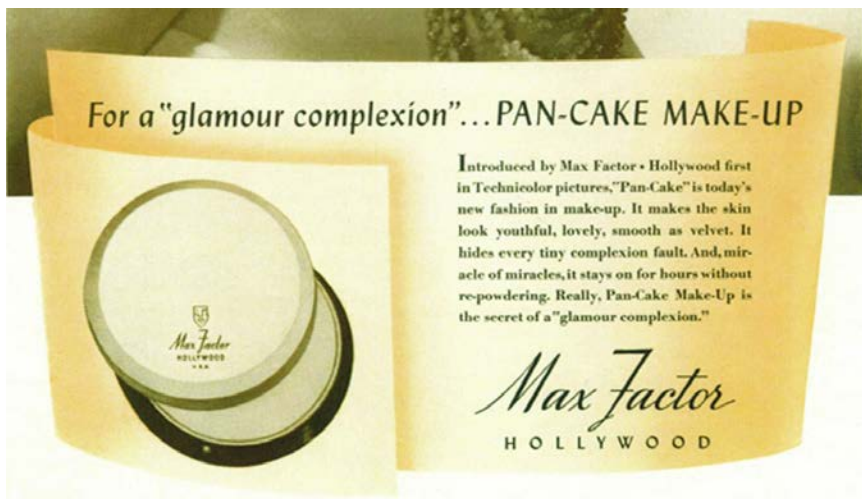


Fig. 5: Detail of the monochrome compact from an advertisement for Pan-Cake Make-Up. (*Vogue* 93, no. 9 [May 1, 1939]: 108) Detail

Pan-Cake did not go on sale to the general public until the spring of 1939—an eighteen-month lag between its appearance in *Vogues of 1938* and its availability in drugstores. The death of Max Factor in the summer of 1938 undoubtedly delayed its release, as his son Frank, renamed Max Factor Jr., took over the firm. But as Factor's biographer notes, the key reason for this delay is that the company developed a different formula for the makeup during this time. Like Arden's Screen and Stage, Pan-Cake had a darkening effect on (light-colored) skin when used outside the studio, so the cosmeticians at Max Factor needed time to develop a new formula suitable for everyday use.⁷⁸

Once the firm adjusted the formula for Pan-Cake and felt secure in releasing it for general sale in 1939, we might expect Max Factor Jr. would exploit the product's connection to Technicolor, which was having its most successful year to date with enormously popular films such as *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*.⁷⁹ However, quite the opposite was the case, as all the films used to promote Pan-Cake that year were not Technicolor at all but black and white.⁸⁰ Far from exploiting the over-the-rainbow aesthetic so firmly associated with Technicolor by this time, only three colors are used in these advertisements: black, white, and what might be described as peach, buff, or what is controversially often referred to in the fashion industry as "nude," that is, an approximation of a light shade of white skin (fig. 5).⁸¹ Each

of these advertisements featured monochrome stills of the film's lead actress, including down-to-earth star Myrna Loy, surrounded by large unfurling scrolls in blush shades of peachy pink. These scrolls carried details of the product's glamor-giving benefits as well as an image of the Pan-Cake compact itself, which, like the female stars, was pictured in black and white. This continued promotion of Factor's makeup by its dissociation from the perceived chromatic excesses of Technicolor makes evident that Pan-Cake's success was predicated not on expanding the range of colors acceptable in cosmetics but maintaining its narrow spectrum. Tellingly, when released for general sale, *Vogue* praised Factor's makeup as a kind of "white shoe-polish," returning us to the make-over scene in *A Star Is Born* and reminding us that the racial masquerade that Factor's makeup encouraged its users to perform was not one of exoticism but of whiteness.⁸²

CONCLUSION

The reasons Factor's product triumphed over Arden's in the Hollywood Powder Puff War were numerous and complex. There were clearly technical and financial advantages to Factor's product in the industrial context of the Hollywood studio system, particularly at a moment when the unionized labor of makeup artists demanded the use of time-saving technologies. Similarly, these efficiencies in cost and time were equally popular with the general consumer when this makeup was sold on the high street.

However, by examining the parallel trajectory of Factor's and Arden's products, it is possible to discern that Factor's Pan-Cake Make-Up did not simply win the Hollywood Powder Puff War for its technical merits but also for its greater ideological compatibility with the standardized mode of production and consumption synonymous with the Hollywood studio system (a system predicated on masking sameness through difference). Furthermore, it was aesthetically conducive to an acceptable presentation of race during the transition from black-and-white to color film (which displayed the possibility of color but reinforced the primacy of whiteness). Far from a trifling, mock-historical conflict, the Hollywood Powder Puff War was the site where labor practices, racial constructions, and female identity were contested; its violence was real (for those makeup artists participating in strikes), its stakes crucial (for understanding the ideological underpinnings of the film and beauty industries), and its outcome definitive (Arden's line was effectively erased from the historical record). Factor's product was undoubtedly the victor of the Hollywood Powder Puff War, but without the necessary correlate of Arden's failure, the historical density of this victory is flattened into anecdote.

Notes

1. "H'wood Powder Puff War: Trio in Grab of Cosmetics Field," *Variety*, July 10, 1935, 3.
2. Paul Snell to John Hay Whitney, "A Report on the Reviews of Becky Sharp in the Press," 24 July 1935, Becky Sharp Publicity Files, Paul Snell Papers, 1934–1936, David O. Selznick Collection, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin [hereafter HRC].
3. Preview postcard comments from the RKO Hill Street theater, Los Angeles, 19 June 1935, Becky Sharp Publicity Files, Paul Snell Papers, 1934–1936, David O. Selznick Collection, HRC.
4. Nancy Smith, "The New Max Factor Technicolor Make-Up," *International Photographer* 8, no. 5 (June 1936): 10. See makeup artist Perc Westmore's firsthand account of these problems in James Layton, David Pierce, Paolo Cherchi Usai, and Catherine A. Surowiec, *The Dawn of Technicolor, 1915–1935* (Rochester, NY: George Eastman House, 2015), 220.
5. Natalie Kalmus, "Color Consciousness," *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* 25, no. 2 (August 1935): 139.
6. This is of course one instance of a much broader history in which photographic technologies are biased toward the accurate replication of whiteness at the cost of other skin tones, what John Akomfrah describes as the fallacy of the "correct exposure truth" that "increasingly worked against appropriate black skin tones." John Akomfrah, "Digitopia and the Spectres of Diaspora," *Journal of Media Practice* 11, no. 1 (March 2010): 23. For an overview of the ideological underpinnings of technical developments in relation to whiteness specifically, see Brian Winston, "A Whole Technology of Dyeing: A Note on Ideology and the Apparatus of the Chromatic Moving Image," *Daedalus* 114, no. 4 (1985): 105–23; and Richard Dyer, *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 90–93. On the deployment of the term *naturalism* as a euphemism for whiteness in beauty culture, see Susannah Walker, *Style & Status: Selling Beauty to African American Women, 1920–1975* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 82.
7. Perc Westmore was head of the makeup department at Warner Bros., Ern at 20th Century-Fox and RKO, Bud at Universal, and Wally at Paramount (where Frank also worked). Monte freelanced, most notably for David O. Selznick. For a historically rigorous account of the Westmores' business, see Liz Willis-Tropea, *Hollywood Glamour: Sex, Power, and Photography, 1925–1939* (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2008), 254–304.
8. However, these were not the only brands of makeup available for use with Technicolor. For example, Lechner's Kamera Klear Base was used on British Technicolor films, including *Jassy* (1947) and *The Blue Lagoon* (1949).
9. Fred E. Basten, *Max Factor: The Man Who Changed the Faces of the World* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2008), 117.
10. Humphrey Jennings's 1938 demonstration short for Dufay-Chromex, *Making Fashion* (also known as *Design for Spring*), lists "Color Harmony Make-Up by Max Factor" in its credits. On Max Factor and Cinecolor, see John Belton, "Cinecolor," *Film History* 12, no. 4 (2000): 349. Most recently, Pan-Cake was used during the filming of *Pleasantville* (1998), as it was the only makeup found to minimize sheen during the film's vacillations between black and white and color. My thanks to Susan Cabral-Ebert, key makeup artist for *Pleasantville* and president of the Hollywood Make-Up Artists & Hair Stylists Guild, for providing me with this information. My thanks to Joe Brasco for his recollections of working with Pan-Cake for television. The Max Factor brand was discontinued in America in 2010 but is still available to purchase internationally. See Ellen Byron, "Max Factor Kisses America Goodbye," *Wall Street Journal*, June 5, 2009.

11. No mention of standardized makeup is found upon reviewing contracts and correspondence in the Natalie Kalmus papers, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences [hereafter MHL]. For further examples of Factor's product presented as the only available Technicolor makeup (and in some cases stated as part of the Technicolor "package"), see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 355–56; Scott Higgins, *Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow: Color Design in the 1930s* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 87–88; and Richard Misek, *Chromatic Cinema: A History of Screen Color* (Chichester, England, and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 36.
12. It wasn't until *Vogues* that the makeup received its first screen credit and official tie-ins, but tests of Factor's makeup had already been carried out on *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* (1936), *Dancing Pirate* (1936), *The Garden of Allah* (1936), and *Ramona* (1936). See "Make-Up for the New Technicolor Process: An Interview with Max Factor," *American Cinematographer*, August 1936, 331–32.
13. Technicolor does not appear to have approached Arden directly. Arden's racetrack associate John Hay "Jock" Whitney may have encouraged her to develop a makeup for color films as he had invested a sizable sum to found Selznick International Pictures, the studio where Arden's makeup received its cinematic debut. On Arden and Whitney's relationship, see Lindy Woodhead, *War Paint: Madame Helena Rubinstein and Miss Elizabeth Arden, Their Lives, Their Times, Their Rivalry* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 211. For a thorough account of Whitney's involvement with Technicolor, see Layton et al., *The Dawn of Technicolor*, 278–83.
14. "Arden's New Nuchromatic Make-Up," *Drug and Cosmetic Industry* 37, no. 1 (1935): 57.
15. The makeup was used for the stage production *At Home Abroad* at the Shubert Theatre in Boston. See "New Arden Make-Up Created for Stage," *Boston Daily Globe*, August 31, 1935, 10; "Discoveries in Beauty," *Vogue* 86, no. 1 (July 1, 1935): 59.
16. Advertisements exploiting the connection between *A Star Is Born* and Arden's product began appearing in fan magazines such as *Photoplay* and *Motion Picture* from August 1937.
17. The last advertisement I can locate for Arden's products appears in *Picture Play*, March 1938. This coincides with the closure of an exhibition entitled *The Making of a Contemporary Film* (exhibition no. 67) at MoMA, featuring Arden's Screen and Stage products. Installation photographs and wall text describing the makeup can be found in CE 11.1.73.4, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
18. Carolyn Van Wyck, "Photoplay's Own Beauty Shop," *Photoplay* 52, no. 1 (January 1938): 60.
19. "Discoveries in Beauty," 59.
20. For more on the complex application process, see "Stage and Screen Make-Up by Elizabeth Arden," *Drug and Cosmetic Industry* 37, no. 3 (September 1935): 329–30. The *Professional Information* booklet was mentioned in various advertisements throughout 1937.
21. On the closure of this line of Arden's business, see Woodhead, *War Paint*, 211; and Alfred Allan Lewis and Constance Woodworth, *Miss Elizabeth Arden* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1972), 185.
22. The precise date when Technicolor approached Max Factor isn't clear from existing archival evidence, but Basten claims it was shortly after Factor opened his new makeup studio in Hollywood on November 26, 1935. Basten, *Max Factor*, 110–12.
23. For more on the early history of Max Factor, see Fred E. Basten, *Max Factor's Hollywood: Glamour, Movies, Make-Up* (New York: General Publishing Group, 1999). Willis-Tropea notes that a study by the Domestic Bureau of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce reported that 96 percent of the

- makeup used in the film industry was supplied by Max Factor in 1929. See Willis-Tropea, *Hollywood Glamour*, 271n464.
24. Max Factor's makeup was used "exclusively" (according to advertisements) in numerous early productions with Technicolor sequences, such as *Hit the Deck* (1930) and *Dixiana* (1930), as well as features shot entirely in Technicolor's two-color process, such as *The Rogue Song* (1930) and *Vagabond King* (1930). Factor also seems to have provided special makeup for Technicolor as early as 1929 for *Redskin*. See Layton et al., *The Dawn of Technicolor*, 198.
 25. The product was patented March 24, 1936, and trademarked September 28, 1937. "Max Factor Fact Book 2013," courtesy of Lisa Mulvaney of the Procter & Gamble Heritage and Archives Center [hereafter PGHAC]. The name Pan-Cake was given to the makeup due to the pan in which it was sold and the small cake-like form of the actual product.
 26. "Color Comes into Its Own in 37," *Variety*, October 7, 1937, 5.
 27. "Make-Up for the New Technicolor Process," 331.
 28. Smith, "The New Max Factor Technicolor Make-Up," 10.
 29. "Color Comes into its Own in 37," 5.
 30. The strike was reported in numerous papers: "Film Strike Riots," *Los Angeles Examiner*, May 5, 1937; "Men Picket Film Studios," *Idaho Falls Post Register*, May 4, 1937; "Movie Strikers Make Photos of Defiant Actors," *Beaver County (PA) Times*, May 4, 1937. All collected in Perc Westmore Scrapbooks, Perc Westmore Papers, MHL.
 31. The number of workers estimated to be involved in the strike varied from "1,000 to 5,000." See "Picket Lines Pass Actors Unions Active in Field," *Motion Picture Herald*, May 8, 1937, 13.
 32. "Violence Adds Tenseness to Film Walkout," *Arkansas City (KS) Traveler*, May 4, 1937, Perc Westmore Scrapbooks, Perc Westmore Papers, MHL.
 33. "Studio Strike in Hollywood," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 4, 1937, Perc Westmore Scrapbooks, Perc Westmore Papers, MHL.
 34. My gratitude to Susan Cabral-Ebert for allowing me to review documents held in the Hollywood Make-Up Artists & Hair Stylists Guild private collection in Burbank, California, some of which are reproduced in "Guild News," *The Artisan* 8, no. 4 (2012): 13–14.
 35. For example, the "make-up man" for *A Star Is Born* received fifteen dollars a day, but after the charter was approved, the pay for this role increased to \$16.50 a day. Production Files 1936–1941, *A Star Is Born*, HRC.
 36. Charles Eckert, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 3, no. 1 (1978): 10.
 37. Edgar Morin, *The Stars*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 31.
 38. Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London : New York: British Film Institute, 1982), 50.
 39. Stephen Gundle, *Glamour: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2.
 40. It is worth noting that almost all makeup artists working in Hollywood studios at this time were male, while hairdressing was the preserve of female labor.
 41. Basten, *Max Factor*, 112.
 42. For example, Stephen Gundle describes how "the perfect Max Factorised faces of the stars bore witness to their role in representing an ideal rather than the real." Stephen Gundle and Clino Trini

- Castelli, *The Glamour System* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 70. However, Morin describes how makeup can be used to hide a star's age so that "the Max Factorised heroine may actually reach forty." Morin, *The Stars*, 15. Similarly, Jean Luc Godard described the color design of *Schindler's List* as "Max Factor" as it was shot in color and treated to look black and white, which he described as "phony thinking." Gavin Smith, "Jean Luc Godard," in *Jean Luc Godard Interviews*, ed. David Sterritt (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 182, originally printed in *Film Comment*, March–April 1996, 31–32, 35–41.
43. Sarah Berry, *Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 95–141.
 44. "Be Natural Is Theme Song of Designers," *Toledo (OH) Times*, January 17, 1937, Perc Westmore Scrapbooks, Perc Westmore Papers, MHL.
 45. *Ibid.* For more on the Westmores' backing of the naturalism trend, see Willis-Tropea, *Hollywood Glamour*, 287–89.
 46. Catherine Jurca, *Hollywood 1938: Motion Picture's Greatest Year* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 21. The other actresses named as "box office poison" were: Greta Garbo, Mae West, Kay Francis, Norma Shearer, Dolores del Rio, and Katherine Hepburn.
 47. *Ibid.*, 107–10.
 48. On Myrna Loy as part of a rising class of "natural girl" stars, see Jurca, *Hollywood 1938*, 109–11.
 49. Higgins, *Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow*, 19–20.
 50. Jackie Stacey, "Feminine Fascinations: Forms of Identification in Star-Audience Relations," in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991), 157.
 51. David Thompson, *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*, 4th ed. (London: Little Brown, 2008), 331; Jurca, *Hollywood 1938*, 125.
 52. Kathy Peiss traces such themes throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).
 53. Berry, *Screen Style*, 99.
 54. Ray Rennahan recounts the problem of platinum blond hair in John Huntley, *British Technicolor Films* (London: S. Robinson, 1949), 25.
 55. "Gentlemen Who Prefer Thin Blonde Will Be Disappointed," *Stockton (CA) Record*, May 4, 1936, Perc Westmore Scrapbooks, Perc Westmore Papers, MHL.
 56. Berry, *Screen Style*, 119–20.
 57. David Batchelor *Chromophobia* (London: Reaktion, 2000), 23.
 58. We find these associations cemented in the practice of using a so-called China Girl (images of a woman often wearing Oriental dress at the start of a film reel) for color correction in film processing.
 59. Berry, *Screen Style*, 95–141.
 60. "Filmdom Goes Brunet," *Screen and Radio Weekly*, Brooklyn, 10 November 1936, Perc Westmore Scrapbooks, Perc Westmore Papers, MHL.
 61. A Star Is Born—Final Shooting Script, David O. Selznick Collection, HRC.
 62. Stills 1937—Sets, Interiors, A Star Is Born, Nothing Sacred, Young in Heart, David O. Selznick Collection, HRC. This is presumably why Selznick was so adamant that "under no circumstances are bottles or other articles having trade labels on them to be used on the set." Interoffice communication, Selznick to Eddie Boyle, 2 November 1936, David O. Selznick Collection, HRC.

63. Memorandum, Selznick on a test for Menjou, 6 November 1936, A Star Is Born casting file, David O Selznick Collection, HRC.
64. "Discoveries in Beauty," 59; Mary Lee, "Photographs Demand Special Make-Up," *Silver Screen* 8, no. 7 (May 1938): 58.
65. Elizabeth Arden to Edward "Teddy" Haslam, n.d., cited in Woodhead, *War Paint*, 213.
66. Berry, *Screen Style*, 69–72.
67. Woodhead, *War Paint*, 209.
68. Bordwell and Staiger, "Technology, Style and Mode of Production," in Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 253.
69. Basten, *Max Factor's Hollywood*, 55.
70. These lyrics appear in Doris Day's 1958 re-recording of Johnny Mercer's 1937 song, in which the original lyrics are "You may be homely in your neighborhood / Be an actor, see Mr. Factor / He'll make your kisser look good / Go out and try your luck / You may be Donald Duck / Hooray For Hollywood."
71. "Party in Hollywood," *New York Times*, 8 December 1935, Perc Westmore Scrapbooks, Perc Westmore Papers, MHL.
72. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 97.
73. For example see the advertisement placed in *Photoplay*, October 1936, 81.
74. "Make-Up for the New Technicolor Process," 332.
75. Max Factor price-list brochure, 1937, PGHAC.
76. In the 1930s the beauty industry was still very much racially segregated, with brands such as Madam C. J. Walker, Lucky Brown, and Sweet Georgia Brown catering to African American consumers with hair-care products, "cleansing creams" (often with damaging skin "lightening" qualities), and face powders. For a full examination of the segregation of the beauty industry (including access to training for beauticians), see Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Styling Jim Crow: African American Beauty Training during Segregation* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003).
77. This practice is most acutely expressed in the art historical convention of pairing white sitters with black attendants (often servants and slaves) in painted portraits, a practice which Victor Stoichita describes as the "black/white binary paradigm." This trope certainly existed prior to the sixteenth century but was popularized by Titian and subsequently became a familiar format in aristocratic and swagger portraiture of the following centuries. See Stoichita, "The Image of the Black in Spanish Art: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, in collaboration with the W. E. B. DuBois Institute for African and African American Research and the Menil Collection, 2010), 200.
78. Basten, *Max Factor*, 113–14. Joe Blasco suggests that Max Factor Jr. hired Jack Dawn (head of MGM's makeup department) to develop products for Max Factor around this time and may therefore have worked on the new formula for Pan-Cake.
79. In fact, 1939 was the first time Technicolor managed to break even after operating at a loss for many years. See Layton et al., *The Dawn of Technicolor*, 293.
80. The films used to promote Pan-Cake makeup in 1939 were: *Wuthering Heights*, *Bachelor Mother*, *Invitation to Happiness*, *The Man in the Iron Mask*, *Lucky Night*, and *Lady of the Tropics*.

81. Even when the advertisements began using images of actresses in full color (the earliest I've been able to locate is *Life*, November 22, 1943), the film used for this tie-in (*No Time for Love* [1943]) was still black and white. The first Technicolor film used in full-color tie-in advertisements seems to be *The Story of Dr. Wassel* (1944). On the controversy of "nude," see, for example, the debate surrounding Michelle Obama's "champagne" colored dress described as "nude" in the fashion press. Paula Coccozza, "Nude: Is the Hot Fashion Colour Racist?" *Guardian* (Manchester), May 20, 2010.
82. "Discoveries in Beauty," *Vogue* 93, no. 6 (March 1939): 100.

Kirsty Sinclair Dootson is a doctoral candidate in history of art, film, and media studies at Yale University. Her dissertation examines the industrialization of color technologies in Britain from 1856 to 1971.