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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Fine Art; Painting

A Study of the Female Hollywood Pin-up; From 1941 to 1945

BY

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*Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and
Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of Fine Art.*

1992

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my tutor Niamh O'Sullivan, for her constant critical advice, encouragement and guidance. Many thanks also to Anthony Hobbs and Tony Fitzmaurice for their help and information on both photography and film, relating to my research on the female Hollywood Pin-up.

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INTRODUCTION

In reviewing the female Hollywood pin-up, it is important to understand its origins and its history. I will attempt to prove that although the pin-up image, as we know it today, flourished during the war years it did actually exist in the late Nineteenth Century, albeit in the artist rendered representation of the sexually attractive woman.

My forthcoming exploration of the female Hollywood pin-up involves researching the development of the pin-up image over the years. From the 1920's onwards we can see the technical developments in photography which consequently affected the pin-up. These technical developments allowed a black and white photograph to transform to colour by means of hand tinting. This also explores the way in which the colour photograph was relayed onto ordinary paper for the printing of pin-up images in magazines.

As the pin-up is a by-product of the film industry, I will also explore it's relationship with film. This includes the change in the pin-up image in accordance with the social and economic changes taking place in America at the time.

My aim is to show how the war time pin-up affected the people of America, especially the women. The female Hollywood pin-up was divided into two categories. There was the 'morale' type pin-up which evidently was produced to boost the soldier's morale. There was also the 'propagandist' type pin-up which coerced women into 'fighting for the cause'. Thus resulting in their escape from the home and their introduction to the life of a working, wage earning woman.

I intend to explore the beauty ethic represented in the image of the female Hollywood pin-up. To investigate it's effects on the women of war time America, and consequently it's effects on women in the present day.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PIN-UP IMAGE

A Brief Historical Background

The Image of The Sexually Evocative Woman is Established

A Brief Historical Background

A pin-up can represent whatever we love, want to love or want to possess. Any printed image which may be hung up on a wall or locker could conceivably be regarded as a pin-up. It can range from an image of "huggable" kittens to movie stars or rock stars. In more recent times, the image extends to pin-up type representations on playing cards, key rings or other ephemera.

In World War II pin-ups very often adorned the side of tanks and aircraft as good luck charms and mascots. So, despite the literal meaning of the term, it is clear that the essence of the pin-up is not so much it's form but more it's quality of image, the most common image being that of a celebrity or sexually attractive person. As the scale of both male and female pin-ups is so immense, I have chosen to restrict my study to the Hollywood pin-up of women, 1941 - 1945.

Collins Dictionary of the English Language 1979, gives various definitions of the term pin-up. They are as follows;

1. Informal

'(a); a picture of a sexually attractive girl, esp. when partially or totally undressed' An example of this would be Marilyn Monroe in her many poses of swim wear or negligees.

'(b); (as modifier) as pin-up magazine', ie. a magazine containing images of sexually attractive women. the most obvious example of this would be "Playboy" magazine.

2. '(Slang) a girl who has appeared in such a picture', referring to the model herself as a "pin-up girl".

3. 'A photograph of a famous personality'. Examples of these can range from photographs of Elvis Presley, Patsy Cline to Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth or even the President of America.
4. '(As modifier) U.S. designed to be hung on the wall', a product or image designed especially to be hung on the wall.

It is important to remember that the term pin-up can relate equally to a person, to the image and to the form.

For the purpose of this thesis, the pin-up will be defined as :

'a sexually evocative image reproduced in multiple copies, in which either the expression or the attitude of the subject invites the viewer to participate vicariously in or fantasize about a personal involvement with the subject' (15,P17).

There are various terms used to describe the pin-up type image. "Cheesecake" is one such term. This is used when describing 'photography displaying especially female comeliness and shapeliness'. According to Eric Partridge's Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English it denotes, : '*A display, especially pictorial, of feminine beauty and charm : adopted (.1944, ex. U.S.)' in which the display 'is of as much anatomy as the law will allow' (15, p17).*

There are a number of different versions of the origins of the term. In September 1915, a newspaper photographer by the name of Miller asked the Russia Opera singer Elviria Amazor to '**hike up her skirt for the sake of his photograph**' She willingly obliged and when Miller's editor saw the photograph he is supposed to have said - revealing his love of gourmet food - "**Why this is better than cheesecake**" (15 ibid P17).

Alternatively it has been suggested that the origins of the term 'cheesecake' is derived from 'the ultimate source in the "girlie" photographers injunction of his subject, "Say cheese", which produces an attractive if not spurious smile'⁶.

Partridge also extracts a couplet from a collection of songs and poems. These relate to the 'Late Times' c.1662, when Oliver Cromwell "rusticates" the ladies of the town. It reads as follows :

*"But, oh, it goes against our hearts,
to loose our cheesecake and our tarts"*⁶.

It is interesting to note that American slang directed at women uses terms of affection such as sweetheart, sugar, honey, suggestive to the myth that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach!

The international mania for the prototype of the pin-up, in the form of cigarette cards, started in the 1880's and lasted through World War I. The original function of the cigarette card was as a stiffening to protect the cigarettes. It contained no text or decoration at this early stage. The earliest known illustrated cigarette card which was issued in the United States in the late 1870's and is said to have been of an actress.

Once the cigarette manufacturers saw the promotional possibilities of illustrated cards, the idea took hold. They started issuing series based on themes ranging from royalty and weaponry to pretty girls. By 1890 cigarette cards with their pin-up type image could be found in abundance in America and Europe, and even as far as the West Indies and South Africa¹⁵.

Another precursor of the pin-up image can be found in the form of late Nineteenth Century French poster illustrations which were usually displayed outside theatres. While the poster format has evolved over the years it is still a strong medium by

which to communicate with the viewer. Posters are still in mass production and are used to promote Hollywood celebrities, rock stars and film stars. More often than not it will be the female star who will be represented, evocatively posed or half dressed.

In the 1890's, various artists encouraged by the success of their posters began to reproduce postcards of beautiful women.

The earliest postcards of the 'Bathing Beauty' series was rendered in France c. 1900. England was quick to follow this trend. These original postcards were artist rendered but eventually, with the introduction of photography, they were mechanically processed. The model was placed against a hand painted backdrop, usually of a beach scene and the photograph was taken.

The picture postcard seems to have reached a peak during World War I. By this time a large quantity of pin-ups and pin-up related images had appeared on postcards, such as, "Bathing Beauties", "Cheesecake" and "Peek-a-boo" poses. Collecting was a major hobby in those years in England, France and especially in America.

Also very popular with the American publishers was the calendar pin-up. This form of representation provided another outlet for the distribution of 'girlie' images. On some calendars there was a subject for each month and on others one subject would feature throughout the year in varying poses. At the end of the Nineteenth Century, when the earliest pin-up calendars were published, they were mainly used as advertising tools, either as a business gift or as an added extra in a magazine. It was only relatively recently in the late Forties and Fifties, that the pin-up calendar was made freely available to the American public via retail stores.

The Image of the Sexually Evocative Woman is Established

As has been suggested the source of the female Hollywood pin-up can be traced back to the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. Two French artists in particular were

responsible for the innovation of the pin-up type image in poster form. These two artists were Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Jules Chéret.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) was influenced by Chéret, but unlike him, Lautrec showed strong influences of Japanese wood engravings in his work. He usually concentrated on drawing individual faces and invented a style which did not permit the accompanying words to overpower the image as was sometimes the case with Chéret's posters.

Lautrec's characteristically flat colours and foreshortening are dominant features in his art and his loosely sketched in backgrounds give his posters a fresh and exciting feel. An example of Lautrec's unique style can be seen in the poster of Jane Avril (Fig:1). She seems to recoil from the snake which is wrapped around her. And yet, the 'arc of her body and her sinuous entrapment inexplicably fascinate the viewer' (15,P178).

Jules Chéret (1836-1932) made two major contributions to the art of his time : he established the basic principles of the successful art poster and he created some outstanding individual posters during his lifetime.

Chéret drew his theatre posters directly onto the lithographic stone and although he showed strong academic tendencies in his work, he developed a unique style of relating text to image in a new and innovative way. Detail and background were minimized as figures and letters were the dominant features of his posters. He used large blocks of brilliantly juxtaposed colour and his images often conveyed a frenzied energy. 'Olympia' for example, demonstrates a predominance of bright, vibrant colours and immense vitality conveyed by the strong sense of movement. This energy seemed to thrust his subject forward into a three dimensional plane making the image all the more realistic. According to Max Calo, Chéret was '**inspired at the outset by the tradition of the circus poster**' (15,P299). His women were represented portraying the vivaciousness of the entertainers in the acting world, closely linked to the world of the circus. (Fig:2).



Fig: 1 'Jane Avril' - (1899) - Henri de Toulouse Lautrec

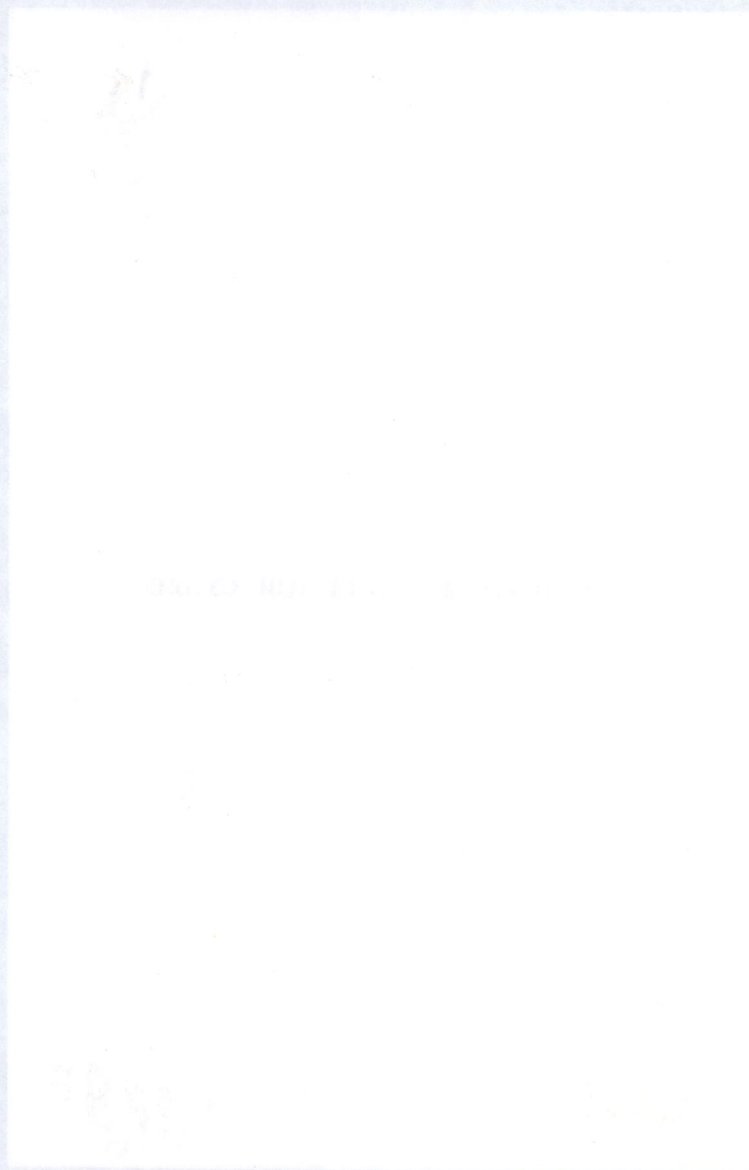
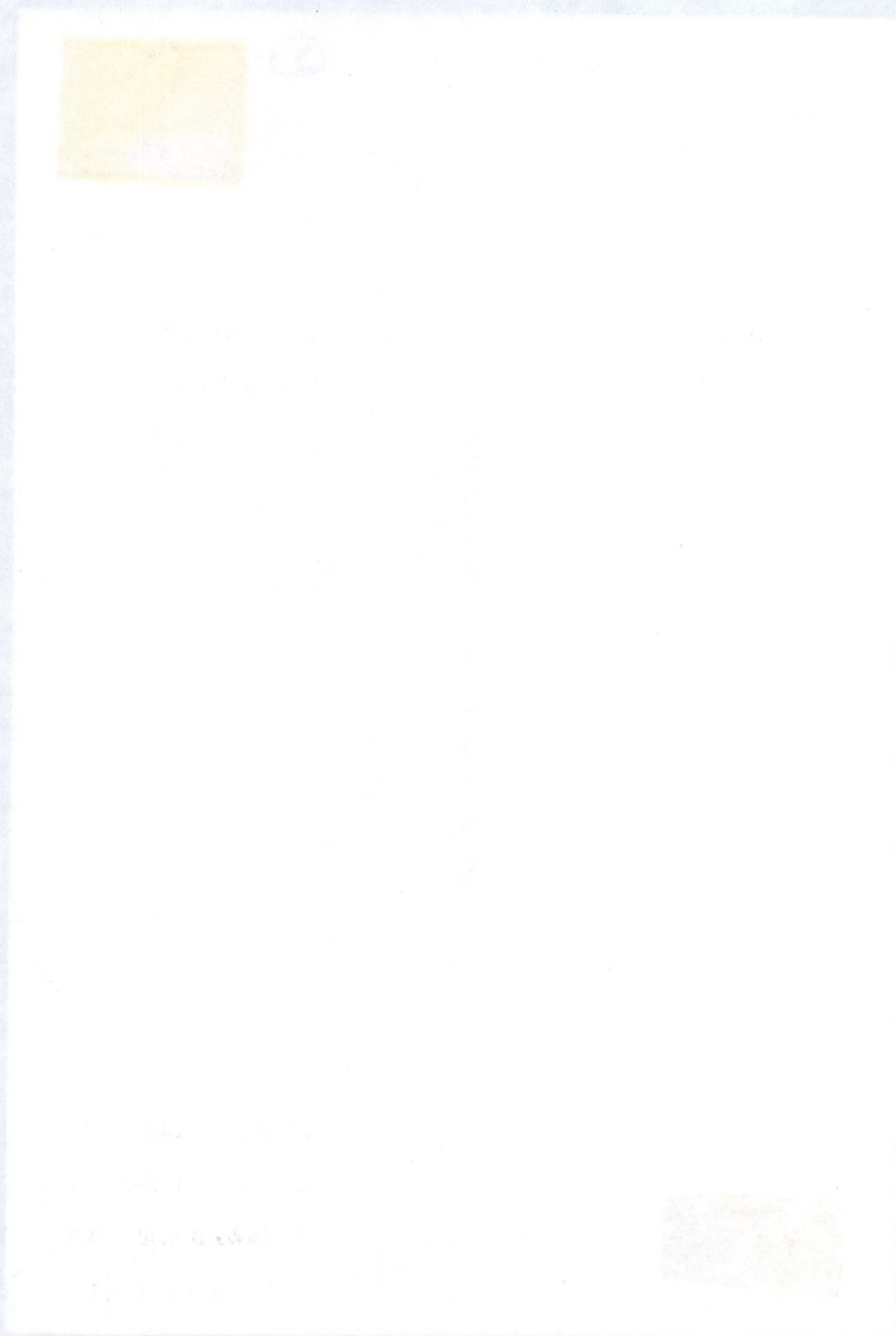




Fig: 2 'Olympia' - (1892) - Jules Chéret



The key to Chéret's vivacious poster art is curiously like that of the pin-up. It draws on the viewers as participants and allows their imagination to supply the missing elements. In Chéret's posters women were always sensuous, provocative forerunners of the pin-up image. Another example of this is Chéret's poster of Loie Fuller, an American born actress who made her debut at the 'Folie Berger' 1983, the most widely celebrated poster subject of that time.

This is an excellent example of Chéret's use of bold, almost psychedelic, colour. 'Chéret delicately delineates the contours of the Loie Fuller's swirling body; (15,ibid 178), which is typical of his portrayal of women who seem to tease, provoke and entice the viewer (Fig:3).

The 1919 still of Gloria Swanson achieves similar effects. It is a black and white photograph taken by the American photographer Karl Struss (1886-1983). He photographed Gloria Swanson peeping out from behind leopard skin curtains revealing bare arms and a section of her shoulders. Insinuating that she is scantily dressed, if at all. (Fig:4).

The most famous pin-ups of the late 1920's, were the stunning beautiful Louise Brooks (Fig:5), the 'oriental' Anna May Wong, and Greta Garbo. (Fig:6 and 7, respectively).

Louise Brooks was described by Paramount as 'cinemas timeless female icon' (18,P18). Anna May Wong while of oriental descent was in fact born in Los Angeles' Chinatown. She made her debut in the late 1920's and became world famous for her beauty and elegance. Previous to this, most pin-up stills were black and white photographs although these could be tinted by hand with colour pigment.



Fig: 3 'Loie Fuller' - 1893 - Jules Chéret





Fig: 4 Gloria Swanson (1919) - Photographer Karl Struss





Fig: 5 Louise Brooks, (1929)





Fig: 6 Anna May Wong, (1929)





Fig: 7 Greta Garbo, Poster for 'The Kiss', (1929)

CHAPTER TWO

THE PIN-UP IN RELATION TO PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

**Technical Developments in Photography which Enhanced
the Impact of the Pin-up**

The Pin-up Image as a By-Product of the Movie Industry

Technical Development in Photography which Enhanced the Impact of the Pin-Up

As the style of the Hollywood pin-up developed so too did the photographic techniques used to produce the pin-up image.

The rigidity of composition and the stylization of early photographic pin-ups is undoubtedly due to the fact that a long exposure time was required to produce a photograph in the early years of photography.

With the passage of a mere twenty years photographers became more confident with their new and exciting medium. They rejected the already static poses of the early 1920's as they strived for more adventurous results in their photography. With the introduction of lights, they could either highlight or subdue features or poses. An example of this can be seen in the still photograph of Mary Pickford, (Fig:8) who was one of the first Hollywood stars 'to recognize the value of stills for nurturing a screen image'.

A 'still' is a photograph taken with a hand held camera as a scene is being filmed. The long exposure time required by the early cameras meant that everyone had to stay perfectly motionless while the photograph was being taken; hence the term 'still' (2,P65).

In this 1915 version Mary Pickford aged twenty-two years, projects the 'good-hearted, golden-tressed little girl of her films' (2,ibid P35). This photograph is a silver gelatin black and white photograph, otherwise known as the standard 'black and white'.

It is interesting to note the costume and pose of the early pin-ups in comparison to later ones. In this still, Pickford is dressed in "Alice-in-Wonderland" type clothes. She is posed innocently, gazing into the sky as if wishing on a star. The development of photography resulted in shorter exposure times which allowed for more daring and provocative poses, such as balancing on one leg or lying with an arched back.



Fig: 8 Mary Pickford, (1915)



The technical developments of black and white photography also allowed for experimentation with hand tinting. Hand tinting came into effect in 1923. Photographers would colour a photograph totally in one colour, for example, blue was used on this photography (Fig:9), which was originally black and white. alternatively, areas of the pigment could be washed away, producing various tones of light and dark colour and subsequently resulting in a more realistic photograph.

This particular technique of hand tinting involves the application of pigment by hand painting selected colours onto a black and white photograph. Water colours and inks were mostly used and because of their waterbase, the colours could be as weak or as strong as the photographer wished.

The hand tinted photograph of Anna May Wong (Fig:10), shows the almost surreal effect of hand tinting on a black and white photograph. She is standing, dressed in a stunning red robe, forming a strong contrast with the cold blue hues of the background wall, her robe is decorated with multi-coloured flowers. The two large yellow flowers on the front of her robe lift the somewhat sombre aesthetic of the photograph.

Although hand tinting was recognized as a form of introducing colour into photography, the technical possibilities of 'real' colour photography were not common practice until approximately twenty years later. Before this time, the expense of colour photography and the crudeness of it's effects in it's primitive stages meant that it was not a satisfactory medium at this particular time¹³.

Good quality colour photographs for exhibiting or printing had to be made using the 'Dye transfer' method. This was a complicated, expensive and time consuming process, but produced excellent colour quality in the finished photograph. The effect of this process was not only true to life but had an inbuilt drama and vividness which "suited the depiction of the slightly unreal world of the Hollywood star" (13,ibid P28). An excellent example of this can be seen in the photograph of Rita Hayworth for her film "Cover Girl" 1944. (Fig:11).



Fig: 9

'The Ten Commandments', (1923) Photographer Edward Sheriff Curtis



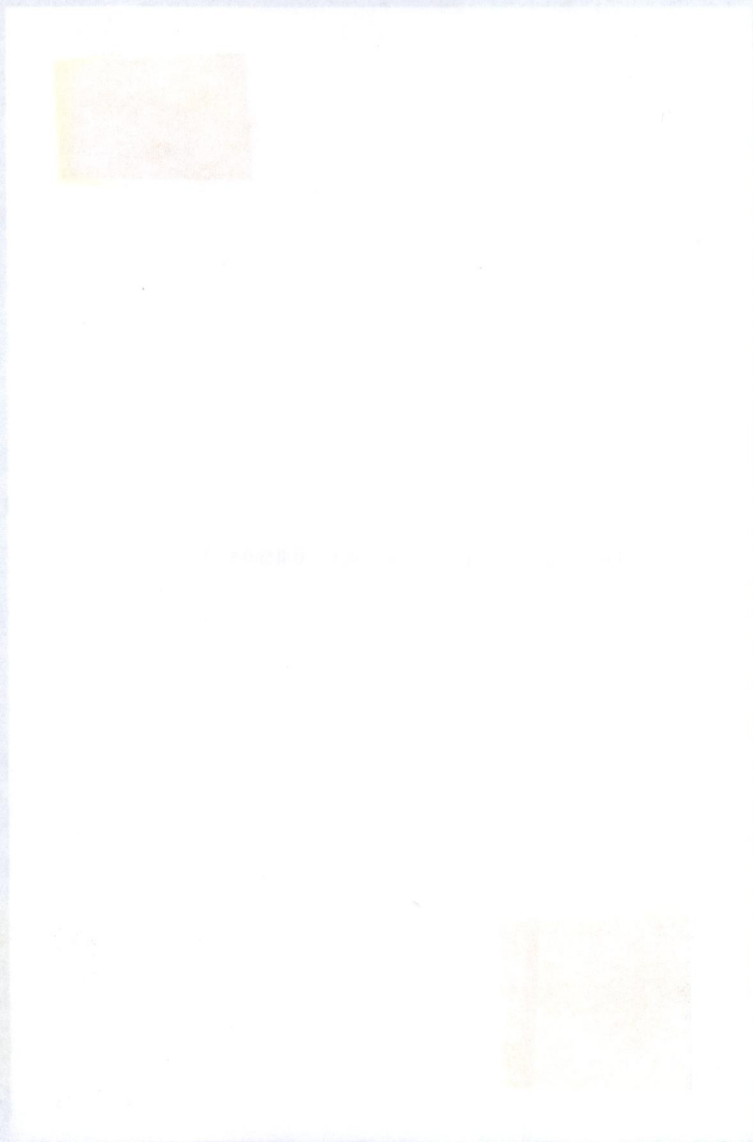


Fig: 10 Anna May Wong (1925) Edward Sheriff Curtis





Fig: 11 Rita Hayworth (1944) for her film 'Cover Girl'



The dye transfer technique permits the highest standard of retouching and colour control because it uses pure dyes. Dye transfer is a three colour system. The original, which is usually a transparency, is copied three times using red, green and blue filters, resulting in a set of three black and white negatives each of which records a separate colour. These negatives are then used to expose three separate sheets of special gelatin - image film. These are finally dyed to resemble the three main components of one print, cyan, magenta and yellow⁵.

The main factor which influenced the development of the pin-up was the ever growing popularity of the movies. Therefore a new way of producing a colour pin-up image, other than a photograph, needed to be used to satisfy the demands of the mass media.

Colour photographs needed to be printed onto ordinary paper for the purpose of newspapers and magazines. These would be the successful medium required for the mass production of the pin-up image. The printing method of 'lithography' or 'offset' printing was used to achieve a colour photographic reproduction on ordinary paper.

Similar to the dye transfer method, offset printing works on a three colour separation process also resulting once again in a set of three black and white negatives, each of which represents the blue, green and red of the colour photograph. Three metal plates are photo-sensitized using diachromated colloid, and the image is contact printed onto the three separate plates. The colloid protected from light under the darker tones of the negatives image are soft and can be washed away. Subsequently, the hardened colloid will repel water but will accept greasy ink.

The blue, green and red plates are inked up with yellow, magenta and cyan ink respectively. When placed together in register they combine to form a perfectly accurate colour reproduction on paper¹, easily accessible by the general public.

In more recent times, the size of the colour reproduction of the pin-up on paper has been helped by technical equipment. Modern computers and electronic machinery greatly aid the printing process. Electronic scanners and printers speed up printing,

thus allowing multiple numbers of one image to be simply 'run-off' the machine.

Bodies have never been so inviting to the eye, never more desirable or sexually appealing as when the image is blown up to poster size. This new development shows the elimination of the smaller "glossies", usually the 8" x 10" colour gloss photograph. And although the poster is a step forward for the reproduction of a colour photographic image, the 8" x 10" or postcard size images (6" x 4") are nonetheless more intimate, personal and portable because of their size.

The adaptability of the pin-up will undoubtedly continue to change in accordance with the technical developments of our society, as it has done in the past.

The Pin-Up Image as a By-Product of the Movie Industry

With the ever increasing popularity of the movies, the various film companies needed to ensure widespread recognition of the stars by the general public. If this was achieved it would hopefully result in box office success. Photographic images in magazines were the means by which this star recognition by the public was achieved. The close up of the face alone became the standard format of the Hollywood photographic portrait.

The technique of Clarence Sinclair Bull's produced images of Greta Garbo of dual effectiveness. 'To men she was fascinating, mysterious and desirable. To women she appealed through her beauty and intelligence, her strength and self reliance' (13,P22).

In 1929, Garbo starred in 'The Kiss'. Her best features were her eyes, with their unusually long lashes. Bull wanted to enhance them further so he placed her in front of a dark background and aimed soft lighting on her face (Fig:12). Although facing the camera, her eyes were slightly diverted, which gives a 'rapt and engaging expression which communicates directly with the viewer' (13,ibid P23). The effect of this particular photograph was so potent that it was used as film posters and pin-ups. Such was the case with many other photographs of the time.

In the thirties the Depression hit America. With the collapse of the stock exchange the country regressed into a deep economic depression. It was during these years that the stage 'musical' developed. The promotional photographs for these musicals showed the pin-ups of the thirties smiling broadly, often in mid-dance.

Lillian Roth, for example, is 'caught' in the middle of her dance routine. Eugene Robert Richee was the photographer responsible for both promotional stills of Roth for the aptly titled movie, 'Checker Board Girl' 1930. Likewise in this still (Fig:13) her costume is designed as a checker board, and reinforces the theme of the board game by the use of the strategically placed checkers of her costume. The negative spaces of her costume simulate the white square on a checker board, and with the use of spot lights, this creates a visually stunning and dramatic effect on the background.

Less successful, however was the next pin-up still (Fig:14), which shows how in 1933 the 'funky fashions of Paramount's International House' (18,P97) were stretched to the limits. Mae West was renowned for her bizarre hats and costumes and while there were some conservative poses and pin-up stills produced during this time, the thirties pin-up developed a daring and extrovert image. There were outrageous head-dresses and plumes as much as two foot long.

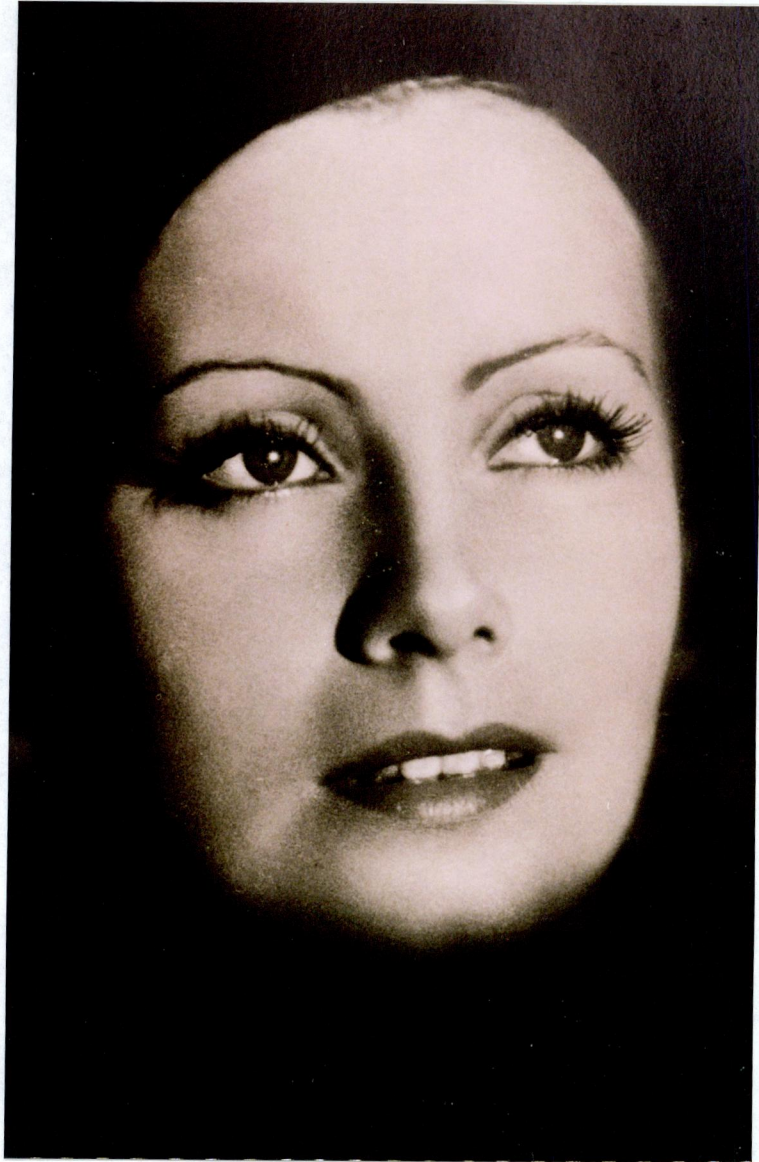


Fig: 12 Greta Garbo - Portrait for 'The Kiss'.

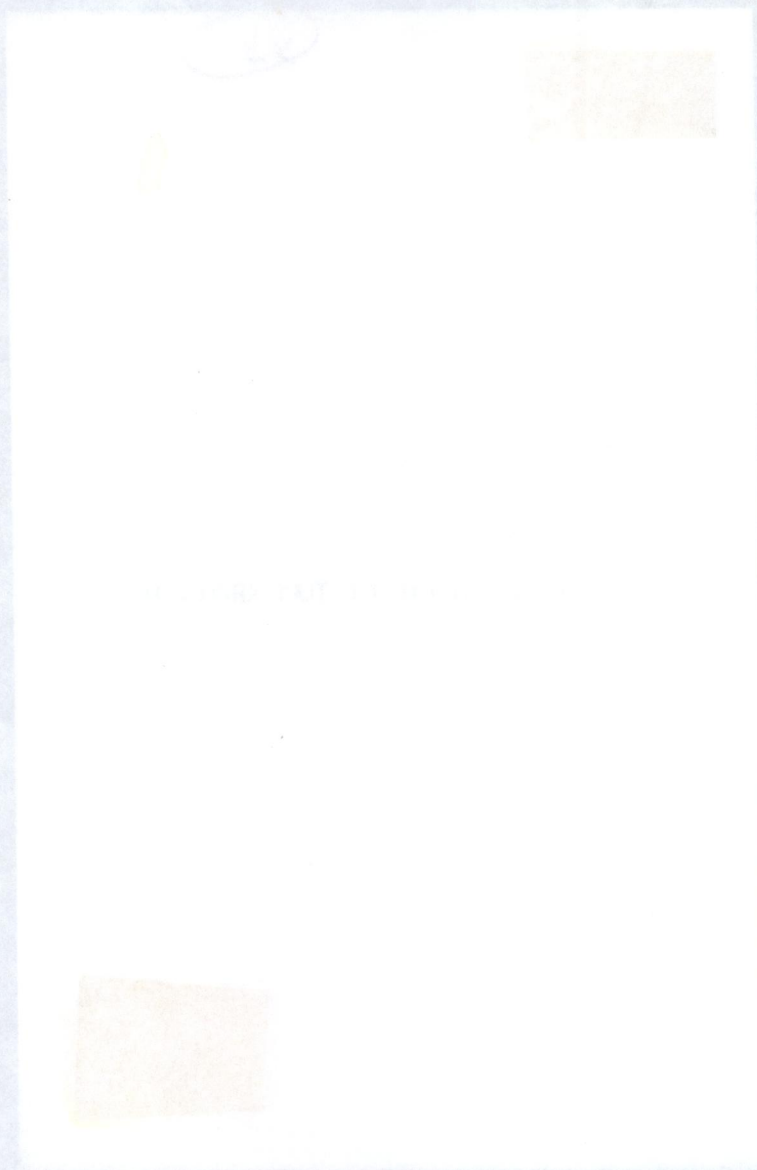




Fig: 13 Lillian Roth - 'The Checker Board Girl'





Fig: 14 'Two Chorines' Paramount, 1930's

(24)



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Glitter and glamour are the hall marks of these pin-ups. The dresses were of luxurious materials, often embroidered with gold thread or sequins. Sparkling elements were entwined in sensuous translucent materials as can be seen in the promotion still for 'Blonde Venus' 1932, (Fig:15). Dietrich is the elusive pin-up model, clad in a diamonté - studded dress, 'lit to create the illusion of near nudity' (9,P167). The luxury and expense of costumes and sets in these musicals was deeply ironic and escapist in a time of such poverty.

After the thirties, came what John Kobal calls the 'two cheery and ultimately empty' pin-ups of the forties (2,P32). They lacked excitement and were 'sprayed with advertising poster colours' with 'pillar box red lips and blue horizon eyes' (2,ibid P32). Turing something that had been intensely powerful into something that was too bright for times of war. Kobal was referring to the beautiful images of Greta Garbo and similar stills when he refers to 'something that had been intensely powerful'. But such images would not have helped boost soldiers' morale. They needed the bright, cheerful qualities of the forties' pin-up to serve their purpose during the war. The public voiced no objection to these 'too cheery' and 'too bright' pin-ups because obviously they would support any effort made to help the 'Boys' who were fighting for America.

To the general masses, soldiers were their heroes and the likes of Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth and Ava Gardner became their idols. The lady in the negligée became the lady in the military uniform photographed against battleships, bomber planes and of course the 'stars and strips'. The movies of the time portrayed the soldiers' need for the pin-up model such as the Grable film 'Pin-up Girl' and Hayworth's 'Cover Girl' 1944.

The fifties saw more enticing pin-up photographs. Leopard skin costumes and bikinis became very popular. In the Jane Mansfield pin-up the two elements are combined. We see the presence of the bikini juxtaposed with the leopard skin background. The theme of animal skins is reinforced by the zebra-skinned bikini. Mansfield playfully faces the camera and smiles (Fig:16).



Fig: 15 Marlene Dietrich (1932) 'Blonde Venus'.

(5)





Fig: 16 Jane Mansfield - Leopard Skin Pin-up.



The very beautiful Sophia Loren promotes her 1954 film 'Gold of Naples', in a pin-up in which her alluring eyes tease and entice the viewer. She looks as though she would be naked but the strategically placed beachball saves her reputation.

The pin-ups were aimed especially at the youth of the day as part of the youth culture which started to take shape in the late fifties, and was, by the sixties in full swing.

As a result of the post war industrial boom, people found themselves with more disposable income, evidently resulting in more freedom, freedom to become more creative and imaginative in their behaviour, attitudes and dress.

Many copied the style of the Hollywood stars of the time. Doris Day for example, had a pretty and feminine image that appealed to women of various ages. She successfully merged a glamorous film star image with that of the 'girl-next-door' look. Day became the most talked about star of the sixties with hits like 'Move Over Darling' and 'The Thrill of it all'.

Although the youth of America was changing rapidly, Hollywood remained glamorous, opting for the sultry, seductive look rather than portraying the 'happy-go-lucky', 'love-rules' theme which was dominant in this time. Hollywood seldom reflected the radical 'flower power' ideals of the sixties era, it's pin-ups were the James Bond '007 type' girls like Ann Margaret (Fig:17). Although it does demonstrate the influence of the sixties on Hollywood, as seen in the psychedelic pink fur wrapped around her body. Even her eye make-up is characteristic of this era, and her hair falls down around her face and kinks out in that unmistakable sixties style, and even though she is evocative she is not explicit.

This pin-up photograph was a promotion stunt for Margaret's film in which she played Bobbie in 'Carnal Knowledge'. So, the pin-ups were both a means of advertising the movie and stars as well as setting trends in fashion which provided the public with new and exciting role models to imitate.



Fig: 17 Ann Margaret - 'Sixties' Pin-up.



CHAPTER THREE

THE FEMALE HOLLYWOOD PIN-UP IN WAR YEARS (1941-1945)

The Pin-Up Image as a Vehicle for Propaganda

'Launching a Million Dreams', The 'Morale' Type Pin-up

The Pin-up Image as a Vehicle for Propaganda

While wartime pin-ups initiated the idea of women getting physically involved in the war, the campaign posters and advertisements in magazines told them exactly where their help was needed. It is important however, not to confuse the two types of media.

War time scenes and war-related images were naturally prevalent in advertising during this time. In 'Forties in Vogue'⁷ we can see the effect of the campaign posters. When advertising their 'famous, fine, long-wearing "Trousseau Sheets of America", (Fig:18). Wamsutta Mills are sponsoring the U.S. Marine Corps. They are told that 'never before have the women of America had such a real opportunity to serve their country' (7,P148).

The advertisement for the Woman's Army Corps 1944 (Fig:19), displays the caption, 'New World - New Woman'. Yes! It was a new world and women had great opportunities to work and earn a living. Thousands of women responded to the cause. They abandoned their domestic lifestyles to join up as nurses, pilots or rivetors in ammunition factories.

The documentary on wartime working women in America made in 1978, 'Rosie The Rivetor' explains that the incentive to get women to fill men's work places was the fact that they would receive men's wages. Women could now earn more in one hours work in the factory than they could in a week's work as 'domestic help' and if they worked overtime they were paid for their overtime.

The American women not only gained a skill and earned good money, but they also gained a new status in society, a sense of independence. However temporary it was to be and as the song says,

*'The Girl whose putting them to shame,
She's making history, working for victory...'*¹⁶

the American woman.



Fig: 18 'Be a Marine', Campaign Poster, Wamsutta Mills





Fig: 19 'New World, - New Woman' 1944 Campaign Poster



In her new role as a working woman, outside of the home, was inspired by these campaign posters and war time pin-up images which made no apologies for their propagandist tendencies.

With regard to the 'propagandist-type' pin-up some understanding of the term is necessary. Clayton R Koppes and Gregory D Black define propaganda as an individual or group with intention to influence the opinion of others for a 'predetermined ends through psychological manipulations'. And as the French critic Jacques Ellul notes, propaganda often has ...

A factual, rational base, but the steady pervasive repetition of this type of information creates a field from which the individual finds it hard to stand back and form an independent judgement (11,P49).

So, with reference to the war, propaganda was the expression of fixed ideas by the American Government. Their intent was to influence it's people to think along predetermined lines by using psychological manipulations. These psychological manipulations are clearly evident in the propagandist-type pin-up of 1941-1945.

If we take for example this image of a wartime pin-up (Fig:20) and compare it to the other wartime pin-ups we can see immediately it's blatant propagandist tendencies. In this Universal Picture's photograph, an unknown pin-up hopes for the end to hostilities. She stands on top of a model battleship, wielding the numbers '4' and '3' for that particular year. A fighter plane looms in the background. The message is clear, the war is waging, and everyone has a part to play. And if pin-up models like Rita Hayworth, Lana Turner or Betty Grable were getting actively involved in the war effort, then so too, would the majority of the American women.



Fig: 20 '43 Wartime Pin-up'



Here, we see Betty Grable performing the 'Manual of Arms' (Fig:21). Its caption reads; 'Arms by U.S. Army, legs by Betty Grable', showing how beauty and feminine sexuality were used to promote propagandist ideas during the war. Her costume is not typically representative of the military uniform, although it does give the effect of the tailored look of the uniform. This pin-up is a collaboration of fourteen smaller pin-ups of Grable in various poses as she enacts the 'Manual of Arms'. Everything from standing "alert" and "at ease" to resting the rifle on her shoulder, is demonstrated with the cheerfulness of the female Hollywood pin-up of the Second World War.

Women as Sex Object²¹, quotes numerous examples of the female Hollywood pin-up with strong propagandist tendencies. This kind of pin-up, like the 'morale-building' pin-up, however, also relied on beauty to convey its message. This is clearly evident in the photograph of Marie MacDonald, in a 'maritime' pose. (Fig:22). She poses in front of a 'life preserver'. Could this be an intended pun on behalf of the photographer?

Prior to the war, women were viewed as the passive sex' with the advent of the war they are portrayed as actively involved in society. Women, who were suppressed by a patriarchal society were now being urged by that same male dominated society to become physically involved in the war effort.

Early pin-ups depict passive reclining women, or, passive upright women. Now, the wartime pin-up is seen sitting on top of fighter planes, yelling shouts of encouragement to the 'Boys'. (Fig:23).

Anne Gwynne (1942), 'A modern valentine for the troops' is posed prettily in a giant sized love heart, dressed in military uniform. Her pilot uniform has been altered for effect. She is wearing shorts rather than full-length trousers for obvious reasons. Gwynne waves signal flags sending her love to the troops. (Fig:24). The change from passivity to activity is very noticeable in the female Hollywood pin-up of the war years, instead of holding a beachball in her hand, she now holds signal flags or rockets.



Fig: 21 Betty Grable - 'Manual of Arms'

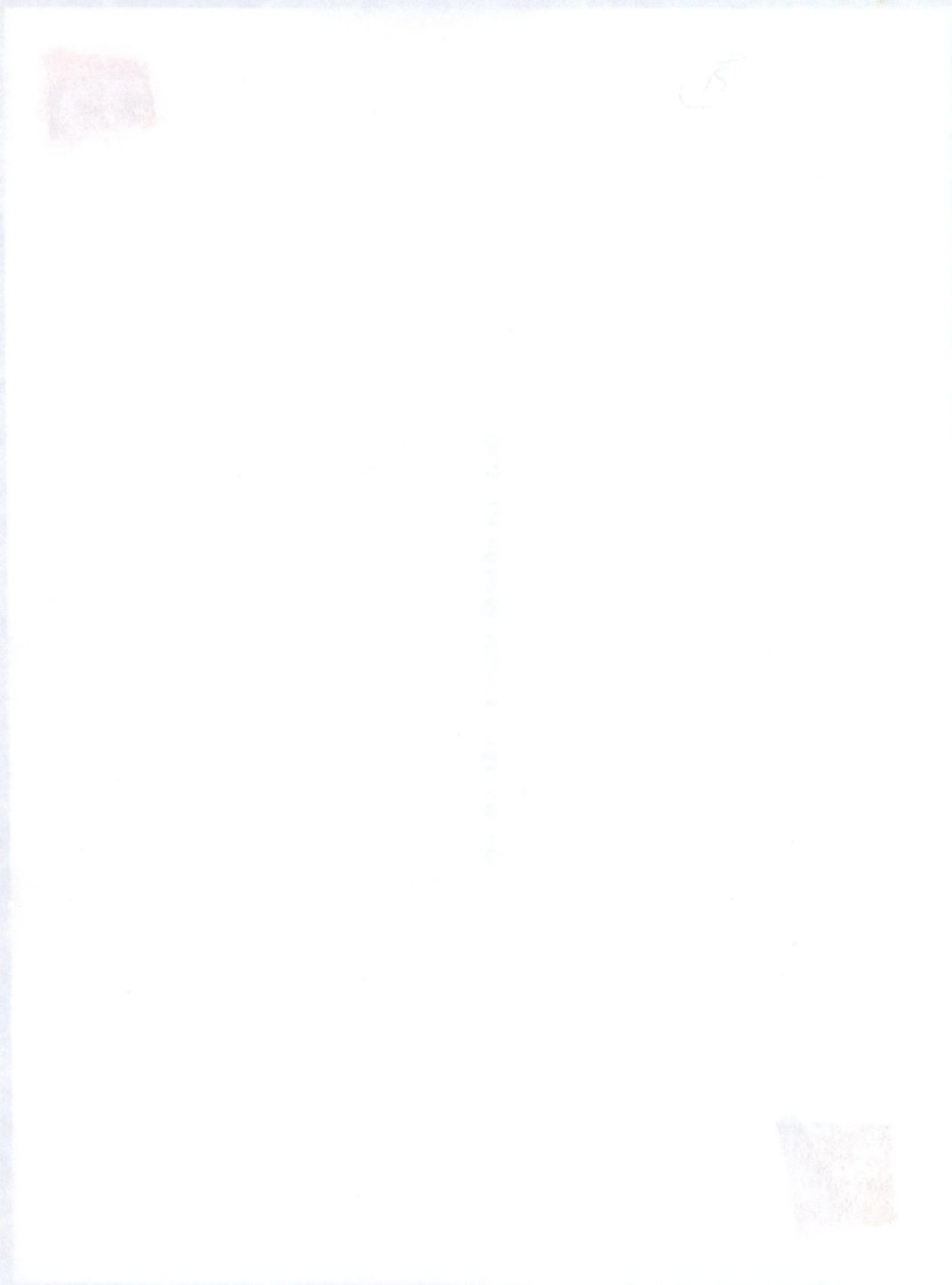




Fig: 22 Marie MacDonald, 'Maritime pose'.

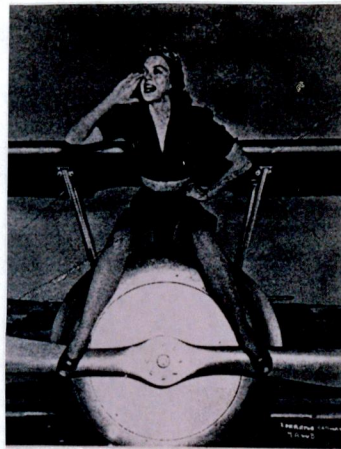
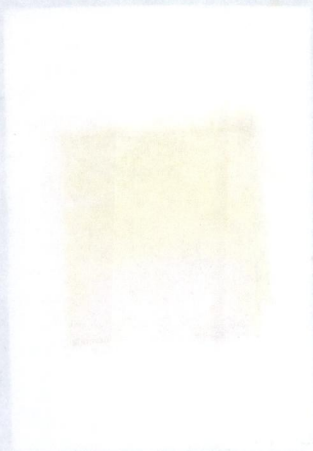


Fig: 23 Leslie Brooks - Aeroplane Pose



Fig: 24 Anne Gwynne - 'Modern Valentine for the Boys'



So, the American woman is no longer represented as the passive sex. Inspired and conditioned by the wartime female Hollywood pin-up's propagandist ideas, she contributed greatly to the Second World War.

'Launching a Million Dreams', The 'Morale' Type Pin-up

In discussing the female Hollywood pin-up of the war years 1941 - 1945, I've decided to choose one woman's contribution to the war effort above all the others. Who better to talk about only the G.I.'s favourite pin-up girl - Betty Grable. I will talk a little about the woman herself and her contribution to the Second World War.

Born in St. Louis on December 18th 1916, Grable had one sister, Marjorie. She never knew her brother, John who died of pneumonia earlier that year. By the age of four she was involved in numerous drama and dance classes and within a few years she had mastered various instruments, including the altosaxophone. There was no doubt about it, Ruth Elizabeth Grable was extremely talented and her mother Lillian Grable was to ensure the whole world knew this.

It is suggested in Doug Warrens' biography Betty Grable, The Reluctant Movie Queen³ that Lillian Grable wanted at least one member of the family to be a star. Having tried and failed with Marjorie, Betty was next to aim for the spot light. Betty's mother had a beautiful singing voice, but never admitted to any 'confessions of show business aspirations' (3,P24), recalls Marjorie. But a stiff hip had rended Lillian 'an ambulatory cripple, and possibly ruined any hopes of stardom she may have had, so she persisted in her effort to make Betty the star.

Grable managed 'bit-parts' in various movies, but it wasn't until eleven years after her first part that all her hard work was repaid. Starting with 'Down Argentine Way' 1940, she established herself as the top money-making star of that time. She was hailed as the 'girl with the million dollar legs, (ensured for that amount with Lloyds of London); 'Sweetheart of the forces' and 'Wartime pin-up Queen'.

But she was also loved for the inner happiness she emanated and her marvellous sense of humour which was much appreciated during wartime years in America. She was represented as the 'girl-back-home' to thousands of homesick soldiers. 'For some she may have been their only infatuation, the last girl they had ever lusted for, loved or adored' (3,ibid P79). She was company on a cold night, comfort at times of pain. It was more than the sexy image that enamoured them to her, it was a wholesomeness, substance and a belief that she cared for their fate which attracted so many soldiers to her.

The declaration of the American involvement in World War II on December 7th 1941, not only sobered the people of America but Hollywood too. A heavy emphasis was placed on war-related movies and pin-ups featuring war paraphernalia with little restrictions on their propagandist contents.

Stars were often asked to work overtime, in their spare time they contributed to the war effort by entertaining the troops in the U.S.O. clubs and canteens. The Hollywood canteen opened it's doors in October 1942. To this venue soldiers came to be entertained. Here, Grable, among others, would talk to and dance with the lonely G.I. soldiers.

Millions were raised for the War Bond Rallies to which Grable was a dedicated participant. This is a photograph of Grable selling Defense Saving Stamps (Fig:25). She took part in fund raising, sports, including baseball, and she played on the 'Comedians' football team at the Los Angeles Coliseum³.

The Hollywood Canteen held huge Christmas Eve parties for the servicemen, among the enthusiastic volunteers was Betty Grable as 'she felt an honest affinity to the boys in uniform' (3,P73). There was a severe shortage of materials, but the entertainment industry was declared 'essential' for the stability of the soldier's morale. As this was often the last stop for the soldiers before going overseas it was important that they left in high spirits. For many of them their last image was of the beautiful, caring, warm and humorous Betty Grable.



Fig: 25 Betty Grable - Selling Stamps



Is it any wonder, then, why she was so popular with the soldiers as she had all the qualities necessary to be a successful pin-up girl. Aesthetically, pin-up models were of a certain 'type'. According to Hess in Women as Sex Object, Studies in Erotic Art²¹, the pin-up girl was ...

The healthy American, cheerleader type, button-nosed, wide-eyed, long-legged, ample hips and breast, and above all with the open friendly smile that discloses perfect, even, white teeth (21,P227).

This is typical of the wartime pin-up. While later examples tended more towards the sultry, those of the forties, although sexually appealing, had to portray a happy disposition which would raise the spirits of their soldier consumers.

Many pin-up models actually tried to live up to these standards and failed. But not Betty Grable, she was voted winner of the soldiers popularity contest hands down, as Doug Warren reveals in her biography³. The credit for this was probable due to the world famous photograph of her taken by Twentieth Century Fox 1942. In this pin-up Grable looks impishly over her shoulder, hands on her hips, and dressed in a skin-tight swim suit (Fig:26).

This particular pin-up was a success not only because it is of Betty Grable but because of it's aesthetic content, its pose and costume. Both costume and pose must be 'inviting but not seducing'. They must be affectionate, cheery and warm but not laden with passion. Grable's costume is definitely, 'revealing in suggestion but concealing in the fact' (21,ibid P227).

There are many myths surrounding this pose as it is very unusual for a pin-up model to turn her back to the camera.



Fig: 26 Betty Grable - Famous Swim-suit pin-up



Among those speculations was the story that Betty Grable was concealing a pregnancy. Her otherwise perfectly proportioned and 'stream-lined' figure would not be as desirable if she were pregnant. There is, however, no evidence for this theory. This pin-up was circulated in early 1943, which would mean that her daughter, Victoria was born six months before Grable's marriage to Harry Jones, a fact which would probably not have escaped the media at the time.

Other spurious reasons include the rumour that Grable had put on a lot of weight, but other pin-up photographs of Grable around this time show her fully frontal with an 'hourglass figure' (Fig:27).

The true explanation is told by Frank Powoloney, the photographer responsible for this pin-up of Grable (Fig:26). In Betty Grable, The Reluctant Movie Queen³, he says that he posed Grable for a wide variety of publicity shots that day. After trying various costumes, she eventually put on a white bathing costume, which suited her best. She tried a few different poses, Powoloney says, then she started to walk away and glanced back over her shoulder.

It looked pretty good, so I asked her if she would come back and do it again. She struck the pose and said, "Is this what you want?" I shot it, and that was that. (3,P78).

It is estimated that about five million copies of this picture that 'launched a million dreams' were placed in the G.I. hands during the war (3,P78)



Fig: 27 Betty Grable - Wartime Pin-up



CHAPTER FOUR

THE PORTRAYAL OF SEXUALITY IN THE PIN-UP IMAGE

A View to Public Morality' Censorships Surrounding Pin-ups

'Be His Pin-Up Girl', The Exploitation of Women's Sexuality

A View to Public Morality; Censorships Surrounding Pin-Ups

The idea of the Hollywood pin-up was to portray women as sexually evocative. This most often worked where a woman was represented wearing enticing clothing. The use of see-through fabrics for example, where the outline of the body was clearly suggested but not blatantly obvious, were typical of the pin-up's style.

However, it wasn't a rare occurrence to see topless or nude pin-ups even in the early years of pin-up photography. The Hays Code was a rigorous censorship which came into effect in 1930. This censorship clamped down tightly on the exposure of the naked body and had strict and definite rules regarding the showing of 'cleavage and sexual contact' (18,P11). There was also a specific council established, called the 'Hollywood's Advertising Advisory Council', founded to review the pin-up stills to ensure they were not so explicit as to damage public morality.

It is interesting to view the pin-ups of both Rita Hayworth and Joan Blondell in this context (Fig:28 and 29). The censors rejected the pin-up of what Tony Crawley called the 'adorable study of Joan Blondell in perky gingham atop a steamer trunk' (18,ibid P11), taken by a.L. Schafer, on March 29th 1939, the date was incorporated into the 'Rejected' stamp. Apart from the emphasis on Blondell's beautiful, long, shapely legs, there is no other conceivable reason why this particular pin-up was rejected for printing. Her facial expression is innocent as she smiles at the camera. She doesn't appear to invite the gaze towards her legs as 'Tiger Lil' does in (Fig:30). French Lili Damita even draws back her dress for the viewer to see her legs clearly.

Even Rita Hayworth is not as provocative as 'Tiger Lil'. Five years after the start of World War II, the censors softened their views on pin-up suitability. Hayworth received the stamp of 'approval' on her pin-up still of June 3rd 1944 (Fig:28). Here we find Hayworth scantily clad in a 'stream of silk' material. This is obviously a lot more provocative and suggestive than the former mentioned, 'Rejected', Joan Blondell.



Fig: 28 Rita Hayworth, 'Stream of Silk'.





Fig: 29 Joan Blondell, Rejected by Censors

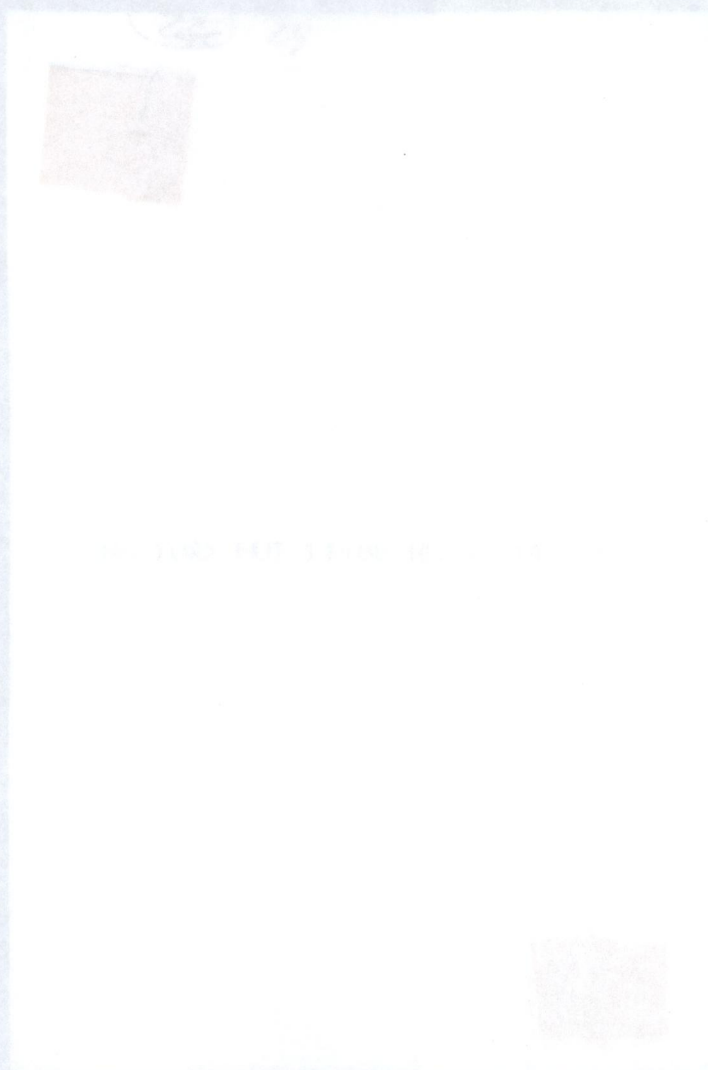




Fig: 30 'Tiger Lil', Photograph still for M.G.M.

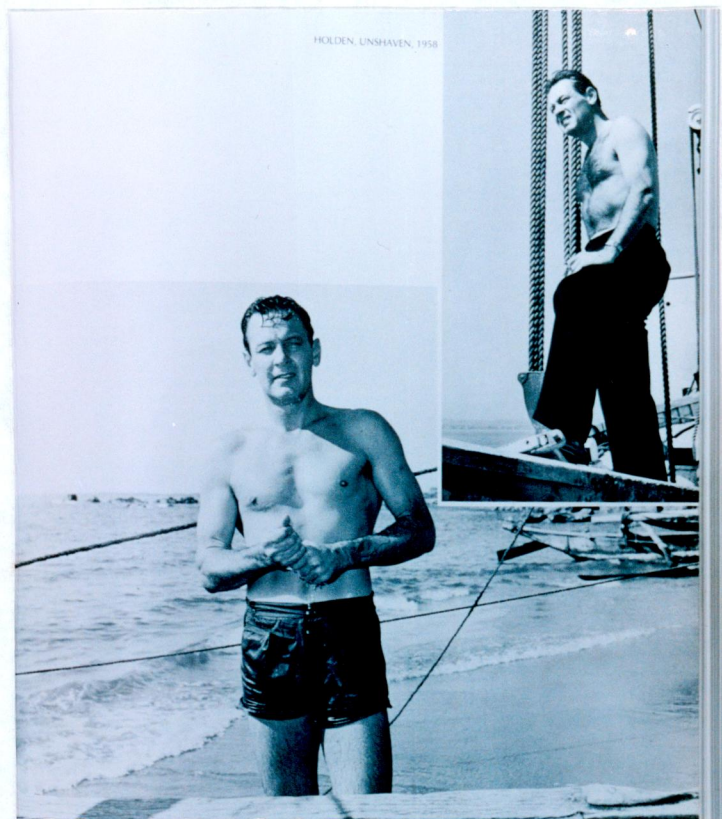


Fig: 31 William Holden, 'Shaven' and 'Unshaven'



Male stars were often portrayed as the rugged 'outdoorsman', braving the elements or handling sailboats like William Holden or Kirk Douglas in this studio still (Fig:32).

Alternatively, some male pin-ups were similar in pose to female pin-ups. In the two photographs of Rossaro Bruzzi and Errol Flynn (Fig:33 and 34) respectively, we can see that the aim of the male pin-up, like that of the female pin-up, is to entice the viewer. Both men wear swimsuits and are extremely passive in their poses, in comparison to the above mentioned physically active pin-up of Douglas.

This particular pin-up of Marlon Brando M.G.M. 1953, (Fig:35) is very interesting. The first thing one notices is that he is totally dressed, which is unusual for a pin-up. Secondly, like the pin-up of young Nastassia Kinski (Fig:36), (almost thirty years later), he seduces not only the camera lens but everyone who looks at his photograph. In both, the models are fully dressed, photographed from the thighs up, in a studio setting with no presence of designed backdrops or props. Both Brando and Kinski smile confidently knowing they hold your attention not only with their gaze, but through their sexuality.

'Be His Pin-Up Girl', The Exploitation of Women's Sexuality

If too revealing or too explicit, the pin-up borders on pornography, (Fig:37). Although Clarence Sinclair Bull's skill and craftsmanship as a portrait photographer is undeniable, the introduction of the heavy chains around the naked body of the pin-up degrades the model. It introduces a pornographic element into an otherwise 'classical' pose, created by the dramatic lighting effects.

Part of the success of the pin-up relies on the ability of the viewer to 'undress' the provocatively 'dressed' woman, so to speak. Although there is approximately a thirty year gap between Bull's photograph (Fig:37) and this pin-up of Carroll Baker (Fig:38), it is obvious that the more powerful image is that of Baker. She is more suggestive in both her expression and her dress, that the unknown, totally undressed starlet of Bull's photograph, 1928.



Fig: 32 Kirk Douglas, 'Sailor' 1947.



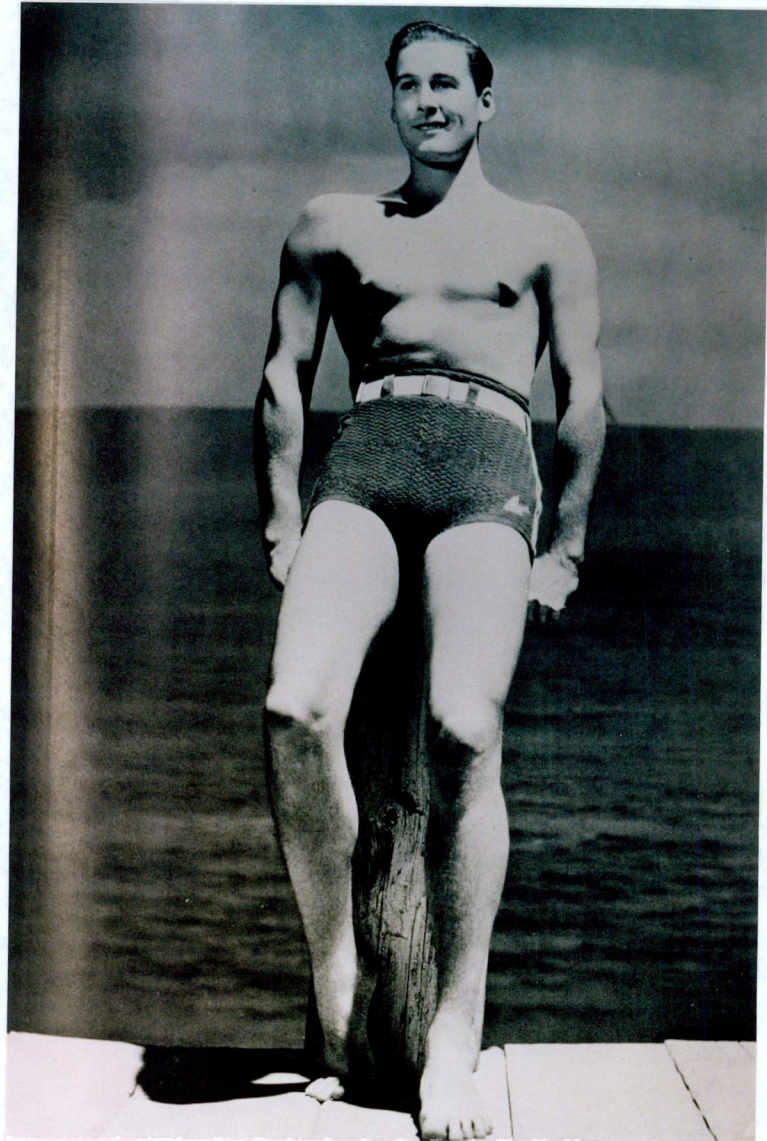


Fig: 33

Errol Flynn, 'A Magnificent specimen of rampant male' according to David Niven



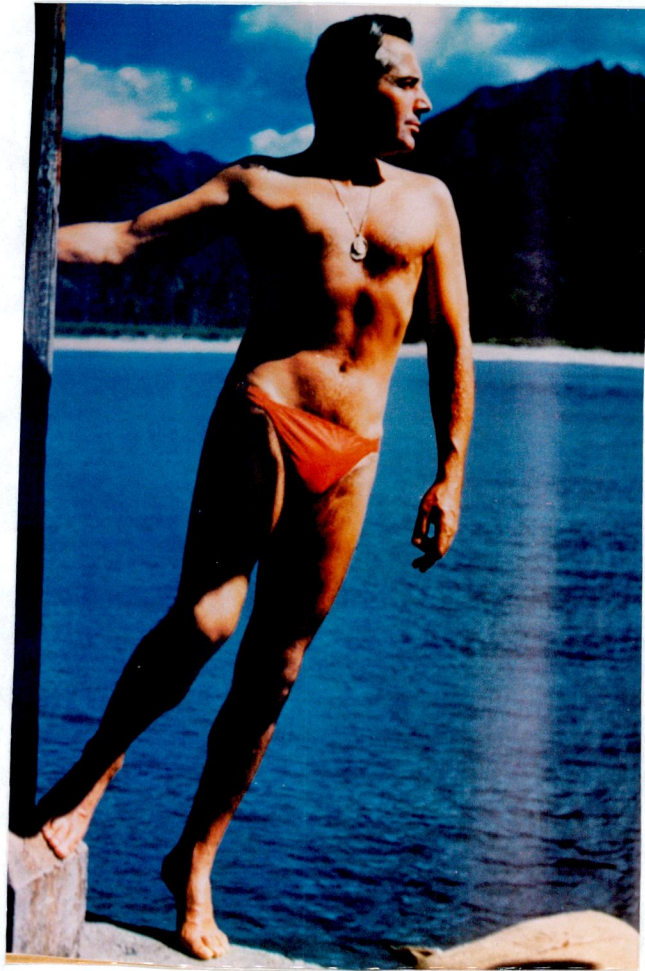


Fig: 34 Rossano Brazzi, Number one 'Continental Lover' for American Women.



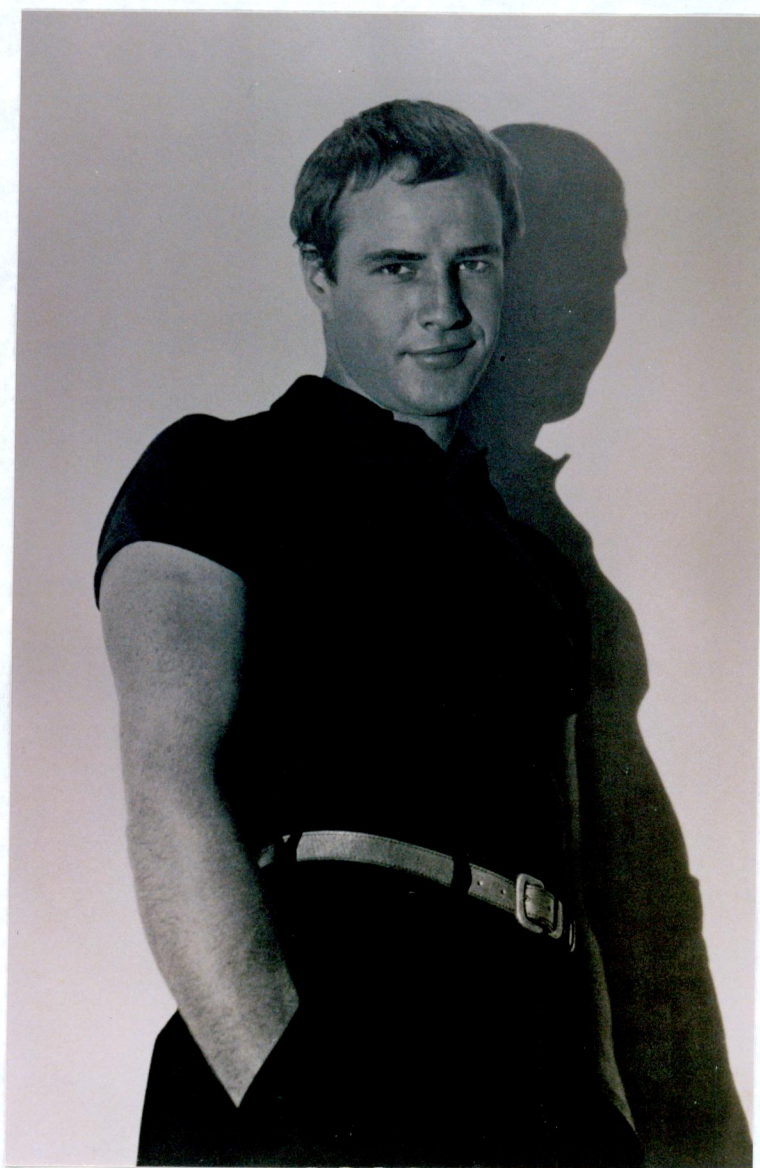


Fig: 35 Marlon Brando, 1953, poses for M.G.M.



35





Fig: 36 Nastassia Kinski, 'Star of the '80's.





Fig: 37 Model unknown, portrait by Clarence Sinclair Bull, 1928.

37





Fig: 38 Carroll Baker, first starred as a 'child bride in 'Baby Doll'.



38



Eleanor Glynn states that, 'In the animal Kingdom', sex appeal 'is embodied by tigers and cats, both animals being fascinating, mysterious and quite unbiddable' (18,P44).

Ava Gardner was another popular pin-up of the forties and fifties. We find her posing, feline-like amid a leopard skin set wearing a matching swimsuit (Fig:39). Her eyes are immensely 'cat-like' as she leers at the viewer, inviting anyone brave enough to come and play with her, if they dare. And it is sex appeal coupled with the potential dangers surrounding this dark and mysterious 'creature' which reinforces the impact of this image.

Next we see Betty Grable in the 'milkmaid' pose, with her long sexy legs emerging from the mass of frilly petticoats. The caption accompanying this pin-up says; "During World War II, the boys left the farm and joined the army". The concept behind this particular pin-up was to portray Grable as the 'prettiest milkmaid ever in high heels and lace trimmings that would make any cow nervous!' (18,ibid P50).

With thousands of men being drafted into the army, and fighting away from home, there was a constant pressure on women to exude desirability and look beautiful for 'their men'. the concept of the pin-up reinforced this as evidenced in the cosmetic advertisement, 'Be his pin-up girl', (Fig:40).

"Desirability was a quality women were urged to obtain in order to make men, (and thereby themselves) happy", according to Miller and Nowak (1977, pg 157), referred to by Richard Dyer (8, P42).

So, in order to achieve personal happiness women must first ensure the happiness of their men by ensuring that they are desirable in men's eyes.

"The smart woman will keep herself desirable, it is her duty to herself to be feminine and desirable at all times in the eyes of the opposite sex" (Miller and Nowak, 1977 pg 157) (8,ibid P42).



Fig: 39

Ava Gardner, joined M.G.M. in 1941 at eighteen years old. 'Ava Gardner was made for the screen', says George Cukar. (17.p.47)





Fig: 40 'Be his pin-up Girl', Wartime Poster



Desirability was accomplished by good grooming and the use of various accessories, such as make up and fashionable clothes.

Although the above quotations are chauvinistic in their content, it could also be argued that keeping up one's appearance for the benefit of the opposite sex works both ways. It is often said that it is women who are preoccupied with their looks, but men too have been known to indulge in acquiring accessories to improve on their image. Throughout history both men and women were concerned about their appearances, both sexes wearing make-up, elaborate wigs and flamboyant clothes to enhance their appeal. Further more, the desire to look well may be valid in itself for one's self.

Nonetheless, the escalation of the production and circulation of the female Hollywood pin-up in wartime America, emphasized the need for women to keep up their appearances. And because the ratio of women to men was so great during these years, this was given added urgency.

This leads one inevitably to the idea of woman as sex objects. She is there for the male gaze only and the fact that the female pin-up increased in production during the war years proves this point. The soldiers could now bring their women with them. They could own them. The pin-up image was in fact a man made object, made by man for man.

In Hess's psychosociological explanation of the pin-ups success, a number of authors view of the American male, engulfed in a capitalist society, 'filled with anxiety about failure' or becoming a 'weak and helpless giant' is expressed (21, P232). Thus in his sexual fantasies he prefers the passive female, one who poses no threat to him. She should be the ultimate in beauty 'whose air-brushed contours are pleasant to contemplate but never challenge' (21,ibid P232).

With this pin-up image he can push his anxieties about failing in life to one side. He need not worry about being a success with her in the flesh as the opportunity will never arise, she is a photograph, an object, designed and printed for his gaze only.

Pin-ups portrayed women as sex objects, and the various 'pet' names for the girls amplifies this point. Marie MacDonald was know as 'the Body'. Ann Sheridan was known as 'The Oomph Girl'. Betty Grable's other known titles were the 'Girl with the gorgeous games' and the 'woman with the limbs that launched a thousand sighs'.
(Fig:41)

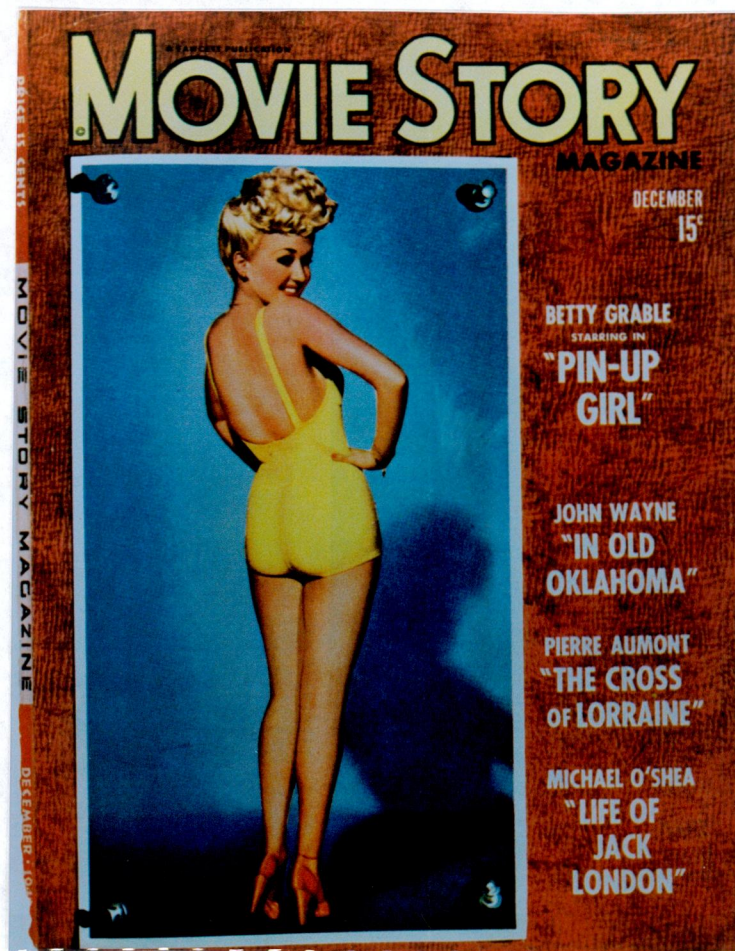


Fig: 41 Betty Grable, for Movie Story Magazine



CONCLUSION

My interest in studio photography led me to undertake this subject for my thesis. The origins of the pin-up, its developing history and the photographic techniques involved combined to relay the potency of the image to the ordinary people in a mass productive way.

The power of the female Hollywood pin-up lies in it's portrayal of the sexually evocative woman. She is ultimately beautiful and seems to have established the standard of beauty as we know it today.

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to define the influencing factors on the pin-up image. How it adapted according to the social and economic changes which occurred in America in the Twentieth Century. These are seen through the extravagant costumes of the thirties and the smiling, cheery faces of the forties wartime pin-up.

Undoubtedly, the pin-up image will adapt in accordance with other social and economic changes, as it has done in the past.

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