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***Glamour in Contemporary American Poetry
:Henry Wadsworth as a case study***

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BY

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DEDICATION

To the owner of the pure white heart my grandmother

To the source of strength after my father, my uncle Issa

To my heaven in life my dear mother

***To one who is the reason for my arrival at this stage to the
source of bond and safety, my dear father***

***To the one who always seeks to draw happiness on my face,
my aunt Fadila***

To my second mother, my aunt Samira

To the lost of my heart, my late uncle Musa

***I dedicate to you the fruit of my hard work and graduation,
never comes into existence without your efforts and
encouragement***

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (٣٢)

صدق الله العظيم

سوره البقره ايه (٣٢)

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INTRODUCTION

American literature is literature written or produced in the United States of America and its preceding colonies (for specific discussions of poetry and theater, see Poetry of the United States and Theater in the United States). Before the founding of the United States, the British colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States were heavily influenced by English literature. The American literary tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English literature. The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Paine. Thomas Jefferson's United States Declaration of Independence solidified his status as a key American writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1791.⁽¹⁾

Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fall in love without knowing they are related. With an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society. The political conflict surrounding abolitionism inspired the writings of William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁽²⁾

These efforts were supported by the continuation of the slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. In the mid-nineteenth century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville, who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. America's greatest poets of the nineteenth century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Mark Twain (the pen name used by Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was the first major American writer to be born away from the East Coast. Henry James put American literature on the international map with novels like *The Portrait of a Lady*. At the turn of the twentieth century a strong naturalist movement emerged that comprised writers such as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London. American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The short stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passos wrote too about the war. Ernest Hemingway became famous with *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*; in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner became one of the greatest American writers with novels like *The Sound and the Fury*. American poetry reached a peak after World War I with such writers as Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, and E. E. Cummings. American drama attained international status at the time with the works of Eugene O'Neill, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize. In the mid-twentieth century, American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the American musical.⁽³⁾

Chapter One

American Cinematic Glamour

American cinematic glamour shapes hegemonic notions of femininity, beauty, performativity, sensuality, and sexuality for both female actresses and viewers. In addition, glamour has an economic component in encouraging women to buy products, such as clothing and makeup, to help them emulate their idols from cinema. Glamour is more than beauty and notoriety: it is achieved through careful stylization of tangible aspects hair, clothes, makeup and intangible, cinematic elements performance, dialog, lighting, and camera techniques. In Classical Hollywood, traditionally white standards of beauty were often exalted as glamorous, and many leading roles were played by racialized white actresses; however, actresses of color were frequently cast into the stereotype of “Other” in the roles of servants, sexualized objects, and villains. As a result, female viewers of color experienced decades of cultural pressure to conform to the white standards of glamour and aesthetics that Hollywood disseminated, but cultural ideals of beauty are becoming more diverse within the twenty-first century as a result of actresses of color being cast in glamorous leading roles. Currently, a gap exists between glamour scholarship of the past decade and scholarship about actresses of color: glamour scholars usually concentrate on racialized white actresses from Classical Hollywood, but scholarship about contemporary actresses of color often centers on the representation of racialized identities without discussing these actresses’ glamorous depictions. The increased representation of actresses of color within twenty-first century film calls for a reassessment of American cinematic glamour. ⁽⁴⁾

Glamour is always culturally and contextually determined. Notions of glamour build on historical notions of beauty and adjust to the context of each passing decade. Cinema plays a significant role because of the Hollywood studio system during the 1920s-1960s, which is an era sometimes labeled by scholars as the Classical Age or the Golden Age. While the studio system no longer exists, contemporary stars are often stylized using similar glamorous coding. For example, the cultural association of red lipstick and glitzy dresses as glamorous has roots from Old Hollywood that has endured into contemporary American cinema. Moreover, glamour is effort made effortless: the labor of the actress and those who style her is concealed from the audience, so the average person is unaware of the work behind the construction. Since the formulation of glamour adapts from one generation to the next, glamour can only be described based on principles of aesthetics, sexuality, femininity, confidence, and numerous internal and external qualities of the time period. Thus, I analyze twenty-first century American cinema toward an understanding of how contemporary glamour is constructed and how these depictions allow for more racially diverse portrayals of beauty and femininity than the standards set in the Classical Age of the industry. The medium of film offers complex sensory dimensions to analyze glamour when compared to static texts, such as photographs. Through film, one can observe not only physical attributes but also acting, dialogue, non-diegetic sound, movement, and narrative development—all of which distinguish cinematic glamour from a picture. These elements, under the supervision of the film's director, construct images of glamour that not only reflect past notions of beauty and desire but also give blueprints for future actresses and viewers to emulate.⁽⁵⁾

Therefore, glamour is a dialogue among director, actress, and viewer. A director has his/her own concept of culture and glamour, the actress shapes the vision through her talent, and the viewers have their own interpretations. These three parties form an interactive triangle of discourse similar to the rhetorical triangle of writer/text/audience. The widespread results of these interactions can be observed within the beauty standards in magazines and advertisements marketed to mass consumer culture. Classical Age concepts of glamour once relied on rigid notions of race based on essentialism, so I employ the words “traditional” and “minority” in ways that are cognizant of how images of race are a construction. My usage of the word “traditional” aligns with the usage of “white” in the scholarships of Richard Dyer and Angela McRobbie, which describe an ideal of whiteness set as the beauty standards for both the film and beauty industry; often, the faces and bodies of white actresses had to be altered by makeup, surgical techniques, lighting, and camera angles to generate a fictitious beauty aesthetic, which was marketed to the audience as “natural” beauty. The word “white” suggests ideas of essentialism and does not fit stars like Rita Hayworth, who was coded as both white and Spanish. Therefore, “traditional” will refer to the idealism of “whiteness” that Hollywood idealizes and perpetuates today.⁽⁶⁾

The terms “minority” and “person of color” that differences in meaning exist between the terms, my usage of the term “minority” draws attention to two issues. First, the Classical Age of Hollywood’s glamour created a binary separation of white and non-white actresses within films, which leads to a flattening of ethnic differences between racialized communities, such as African American, Latinx, and Asian American. Often denied lead roles, women of color were cast into the stereotype of Other, playing roles as servants, sexualized objects, and villains who were foiled against white leads. Second, women of color are a minority within the film industry.⁽⁷⁾

Chapter Two

Henry Wadsworth

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow born February 27, 1807, March 24, 1882, the most popular American poet in the 19th century, known for such works as *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855) and “Paul Revere’s Ride” (1863). Longfellow attended private schools and the Portland Academy. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825. At college he was attracted especially to Sir Walter Scott’s romances and Washington Irving’s *Sketch Book*, and his verses appeared in national magazines. He was so fluent in translating that on graduation he was offered a professorship in modern languages provided that he would first study in Europe. On the Continent he learned French, Spanish, and Italian but refused to settle down to a regimen of scholarship at any university.⁽⁸⁾

In 1829 he returned to the United States to be a professor and librarian at Bowdoin. He wrote and edited textbooks, translated poetry and prose, and wrote essays on French, Spanish, and Italian literature, but he felt isolated. When he was offered a professorship at Harvard, with another opportunity to go abroad, he accepted and set forth for Germany in 1835. On this trip he visited England, Sweden, and the Netherlands. In 1835, saddened by the death of his first wife, whom he had married in 1831, he settled at Heidelberg, where he fell under the influence of German Romanticism.⁽⁹⁾

The Song of Hiawatha, “Paul Revere’s Ride,” and Other Poems

In 1836 Longfellow returned to Harvard and settled in the famous Craigie House, which was later given to him as a wedding present when he remarried in 1843. His travel sketches, *Outre-Mer* (1835), did not succeed. In 1839 he published *Voices of the Night*, which contained the poems “Hymn to the Night,” “The Psalm of Life,” and “The Light of the Stars” and achieved immediate popularity. That same year Longfellow published *Hyperion*, a romantic novel idealizing his European travels. In 1842 his *Ballads and Other Poems*, containing such favourites as “The Wreck of the Hesperus” and “The Village Blacksmith,” swept the nation. The antislavery sentiments he expressed in *Poems on Slavery* that same year, however, lacked the humanity and power of John Greenleaf Whittier’s denunciations on the same theme. Longfellow was more at home in *Evangeline* (1847), a narrative poem that reached almost every literate home in the United States. It is a sentimental tale of two lovers separated when British soldiers expel the Acadians (French colonists) from what is now Nova Scotia. The lovers, Evangeline and Gabriel, are reunited years later as Gabriel is dying. Longfellow presided over Harvard’s modern-language program for 18 years and then left teaching in 1854. In 1855, using Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s two books on the Indian tribes of North America as the base and the trochaic metrics of the Finnish epic *Kalevala* as his medium, he fashioned *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Its appeal to the public was immediate. Hiawatha is an Ojibwa Indian who, after various mythic feats, becomes his people’s leader and marries Minnehaha before departing for the Isles of the Blessed. Both the poem and its singsong metre have been frequent objects of parody: ⁽¹⁰⁾

Should you ask me, whence these stories?

Whence these legends and traditions,

With the odors of the forest

With the dew and damp of meadows,

With the curling smoke of wigwams,

With the rushing of great rivers,

With their frequent repetitions,

And their wild reverberations

As of thunder in the mountains?

I should answer, I should tell you,

"From the forests and the prairies,

From the great lakes of the Northland,

From the land of the Ojibways,

From the land of the Dacotahs,

From the mountains, moors, and fen-lands

Where the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,

Feeds among the reeds and rushes.

Most of the glamour elements are quite traceable here : aesthetic aspects of the poems prevail in “With the dew and damp of meadows” to attract both the sight and insight of the readership. Longfellow’s long poem *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858) was another great popular success. But the death in 1861 of his second wife, after she accidentally set her dress on fire, plunged him into melancholy. Driven by the need for spiritual relief, he translated *The Divine Comedy* by Dante, producing one of the most notable translations to that time, and wrote six sonnets on Dante that are among his finest poems.

The *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, modeled roughly on Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* and published in 1863, reveals his narrative gift. The first poem, “Paul Revere’s Ride,” became a national favourite. Written in anapestic tetrameter meant to suggest the galloping of a horse, this

folk ballad recalls a hero of the American Revolution and his famous “midnight ride” to warn the Americans about the impending British raid on Concord, Massachusetts. Though its account of Revere’s ride is historically inaccurate, the poem created an American legend:

**Then he climbed to the tower of the church,
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.**

The glamour manifestos find space in the acts of patriotism to show the brilliant history of his land . The poet exploits a historical event to apply the glamour principles to the poem . Longfellow published in 1872 what he intended to be his masterpiece, *Christus: A Mystery*, a trilogy dealing with Christianity from its beginning. He followed this work with two fragmentary dramatic poems, “Judas Maccabaeus” and “Michael Angelo.” But his genius was not dramatic, as he had demonstrated earlier in *The Spanish Student* (1843). Long after his death in 1882, however, these neglected later works were seen to contain some of his most effective writing.⁽¹¹⁾

Chapter Three

Conclusion

After all, the poet , Henry Wadsworth Longfellow , employs the glamour principles ; attractiveness of the texts, aesthetic aspects and values, historical events, heroic deeds and technical devices and poetic tropes to capture the sight and insight of the readership as found in both *The Song of Hiawatha* and “Paul Revere’s Ride .In the first the natural elements are used to take hold of the glamour devices yet in the second the patriotic acts are inserted to draw the heed of the readers.

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