way people consumed media products and the impact they had on their lives. Sampling from high and low culture, and from past and present, became commonplace as choice widened. Designers including Versace and the Frenchmen Jean-Paul Gaultier and Thierry Mugler developed vibrant personal elaborations of glamorous themes that matched the demand for ever new eye-catching and dream-inducing visual experiences. They took advantage of the way the contemporary media tended to disassociate high social status from social prominence and wealth and instead bind it up with fame and with the fashion world itself. The master in this respect was Karl Lagerfeld, who single-handedly turned the Chanel label into a vibrant contemporary brand while also producing collections under his own name. He had always worked in ready-to-wear and was therefore a key player in its expansion. Constant renewal was his credo and 'vampirizing' trends and the ideas of young collaborators his method.[132]

Glamour became in the 1970s a paradigm of distinction that was more widely available than ever before. Rock performers and innovators like Warhol showed that dressing up and constructing a fabulous self with elements of media heritage, cosmetics, and coloured costumes was available to all, regardless of whether they lived in New York or Wolverhampton. Discotheques offered a stage for everyone to escape from everyday hum-drum and present their glamorous persona at least once a week. The huge emphasis on physical beauty and sex appeal in the formula of contemporary glamour was testimony to this. Glamour has always had an appeal to the marginal and the oppressed, who have seen in its techniques of self-improvement and self-invention a way out of their situation, or a fuel to dreams of escape. At the same time, it has also been a fabulous platform for the new rich. It was the fashion designers who brilliantly bridged the gap between these two social strata and wove magical spells of seduction and self-transformation that enchanted the world.

CHAPTER 11

CONTEMPORARY GLAMOUR

When Lady Diana Spencer became engaged to Prince Charles in February 1981, she was a young woman from an aristocratic family whose modest education and limited experience of life were reflected in her demure appearance. A pretty and naïve 19-year-old, she seemed the archetypal English Rose. Thrust unknowingly into the media spotlight, she quickly became the nation's darling. Her wedding to Prince Charles in St Paul's Cathedral in July 1981 was given blanket press coverage and was watched by an estimated worldwide television audience of one billion people. The marriage was presented as a fairy-tale union of an eligible prince and a beautiful commoner, the aristocratic standing and royal ancestors of Diana's family receiving less emphasis than her more commonplace status as a young working woman. A decade later, Diana's public image was quite different. Her marriage to Charles bore two sons, but by the late 1980s it was on the rocks. The Prince and Princess of Wales formally separated in December 1992 and were divorced in 1996. Throughout this period, the press scrutinized every aspect of their body language and public appearances, separately and together, for indications of the state of their

relationship. Both the prince and Diana briefed the press through friends and blamed each other for the breakdown of the marriage. Public sympathy was firmly with Diana and the affection for her was amply demonstrated in the emotional public reaction to her death following a car accident in Paris in August 1997. As she emerged from the shadow of her husband, Diana invested ever more energy in charitable works. Having herself suffered from the acrimonious divorce of her parents, and living the breakdown of her own marriage, she was in a position to offer comfort to others. Subsequently, she helped publicize the international campaign against landmines and to overcome discrimination against AIDS sufferers. Like a secular Mother Teresa of Calcutta, with whom she established a connection, she became identified with selfless devotion to the causes of the ill and suffering.

Diana was not originally associated with glamour. Mainly, she was presented within the framework of royalty. In the course of the twentieth century, the British royal family had had a complex relationship with glamour. It had flirted with the press, the movies, and publicity, but fundamentally it remained a thing apart, an institution that was theatrical, certainly, but respectable and not a little stodgy. Its capacity to enchant was founded on history and tradition, and was more ceremonial than personal. Thus Diana's spectacular wedding endowed her with a conventional aura, that of the fairy-tale princess. With its puffed sleeves, nipped waist, embroidered pearls and sequins, and 25-foot taffeta train, the bride's creamy silk dress contributed to the fantasy. The pomp of the wedding impressed not only the thousands who lined the streets leading to St Paul's, but the millions who watched the ceremony on television or read about it in the press. Over time, Diana's image evolved as she became more womanly and the press found that use of her image never failed to boost sales beyond measure. Designers competed to dress her and magazines ran features on her wardrobe, knowing that women regarded her as an inspiration. In subsequent years, as she acquired an independent profile and began to detach herself from the royal family, her conventional aura was displaced by glamour. She became a figure of beauty and style whose photogenic qualities turned her into the most photographed person of the age. Speculation about her love life in the final stages of her marriage and in the period

prior to her death intensified interest in her to the point that almost her every move was tracked by paparazzi.[1]

Diana's beauty was central to the transition she made from demure and virginal princess to woman of glamour. Her girlish good looks at the time of her courtship and engagement drew some favourable comment but no one in those early days saw her as a great beauty. Rather, Diana grew into her body, which she turned by sheer dint of effort into one of her main tools of communication. A tall and well-proportioned woman, her appearance became splendid; she was toned, tanned, slim, blonde, and radiant and at no time more so than in the five years between her separation and her death. 'Providence gave her beauty, but it was she who contrived to project it until it radiated to every quarter of the globe,' noted the historian Paul Johnson in the days after her death.[2] The most important thing about her in this regard was that she was superbly photogenic. 'This was not merely beauty,' commented another senior male observer; 'this was beauty that lept through the lenses. She seemed chemically bonded to film and video.'[3]

The most remarkable series of photographic portraits appeared too late to shape responses to her, although they may have had some small influence on the reaction to her death. In 1997 *Vanity Fair* published in its July issue a series of pictures under the title 'Princess Di's New Look by Mario Testino'. The Peruvian photographer's work ensured that she exited the world at the height of her splendour. More than any of his colleagues, Testino had a gift for giving his subjects an electric charge of fabulousness. They positively glowed and glistened and always looked like euphoric, yet not unnatural, versions of themselves. In Testino's lens, Diana looked relaxed, rich (her rumoured £80,000 per annum grooming budget was evident in her beautiful skin, cropped and highlighted hair, and movie-star smile), and totally confident. The spectator could not but be mesmerized by her relaxed air and sleek surface.

It took Diana some time to understand how she could use fashion to establish a public identity and communicate messages but, once she did, she harnessed its power to maximum effect. Her glamour was inextricably bound up with her dazzling use of fashion. In 1994 one newspaper estimated that her wardrobe had a value of around one million pounds.[4] In fact, the charity auction of seventy-nine of her dresses in New York in June 1997 (for which the

Testino photographs were a promotional pitch) raised a total of $3.25 million. As the Prince of Wales's wife, her choice of designers was limited to the British or British-based, with exceptions being made only on royal visits for designers from the host countries. The London designers Catherine Walker and Bruce Oldfield were perhaps the first to see her glamour potential. They helped her forge a fashion identity that was varied but generally discreetly eye-catching during the day and fabulous for evening occasions. Diana dressed at first to please—to please above all her distracted husband by showing she could win the adoration of the gallery—but then increasingly for effect.[5] Demure dresses gave way to striking red and black gowns, chic pastel combinations, and toned-down looks for everyday charity work. By the mid-1990s, she had turned into a toned, tanned, and designer-clad blonde vision of incomparable allure. She wore international labels and showed a particular predilection for the creations of Gianni Versace, the Italian designer who was hailed after his murder in Miami Beach in July 1997 as the 'king of glitz'. Versace showered her with suits and dresses and she became a regular customer at the label's Bond Street store. She did not wear his starlet numbers but rather opted for the simple, sexy outfits that suited her fashion persona. One of the last memorable pictures of Diana is of her comforting a disconsolate Elton John at Versace's funeral in the Duomo in Milan.

Diana's glamour also derived from the spectacle of her personal transformation. At one level, this was composed of the narrative of her life, which dramatically shifted genre from fairy tale to soap opera. Diana's personal story and her great gift for empathy created a favourable predisposition towards her. But no less important were her obvious breaks with royal custom and determination to establish an original public presence in her own right. Her popularity destabilized the conventional relationship between monarchy and the mass media. From being the icing sugar doll on the cake of monarchy, she turned into the sexy covergirl who found her peers in the worlds of fashion and celebrity. This transformation occurred quite literally before the eyes of everyone, as her body took on the glossy, honed appearance of the professional publicity-seeker. The more she suffered in private, the more she looked fabulous to those who met or saw pictures of her. The whole process was a visual phenomenon acted out largely as a mime

show, without the benefit of words save for the confessional television interview she released to BBC reporter Martin Bashir in 1994.

Initially gauche and inexperienced, Diana learned to shape and manage her own image. At first, she studied her own press coverage and learned what sort of effects she could provoke by a choice of dress or gesture. Later, she enlisted the assistance of fashion advisers and designers, and grooming experts. These people provided her with a support system that was geared to maintaining and enhancing the value of her image. In this way, she created a world around her that maximized her ability to shine. She became the director and leading cast member of her own one-woman stage-show.[6] There was no shortage of people willing to testify to the effect that seeing or meeting her had on them. 'It's funny but when I met her I could swear I could tell she had come into the room even though my back was turned. The first thing that struck me was her glamour,' one charity lunch guest declared in the days after her death; adding, 'she had the most beautiful skin. The other thing was that she seemed genuinely interested.'[7] 'She had glamour in spades and, more than that, she reached out to the people in a way that none of the rest of the family did or could. Even the Queen Mother, who has had star quality (if not physical glamour) all her life, never received the same adulation as Diana,' observed biographer Sarah Bradford.[8] Testimonies like these suggest that Diana's glamour was a personal quality that was related to, but not entirely reducible to, her beauty. The references to her skin and physical being imply a bodily magnetism that amounted to an 'instant radiance' that lit up rooms and generated a rush of excitement.[9] Male observers often described this as sex appeal. In fact, such effects were the result of a predictable structure of relations between subject and audience.

Diana was not the first British royal to be fashionable or to be explicitly described as glamorous, since Edward, Prince of Wales had often been referred to in that way in the 1930s,[10] as had Princess Margaret in the 1960s. But since their time, both mass communications and the social scene had undergone major changes. Above all, entertainment had evolved into a lingua franca. Whereas she had at the outset been the perfect embodiment of virginal innocence, by the 1990s Diana had acquired a powerful allure that led her to be compared to stars like Grace Kelly and Marilyn

Monroe. Comparisons between Diana and other figures from the firmament of mass culture served to underline her iconic stature. The testimonies of her collaborators reveal that this was not accidental.[11] Movie stars provided her with a template for capturing public attention. She liked to camp it up like Marilyn Monroe in *Some Like It Hot*, and she carried over some of Marilyn's seductive demeanour into her public persona. Pictures of her imitating Audrey Hepburn in outfits taken from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* were kept on display in her private quarters at Kensington Palace.[12] Diana was an avid consumer of popular television and, it is said, never missed an episode of *Dallas* or *Dynasty*.[13] Joan Collins's strong femme fatale persona in the latter show appealed to her and taught her how to be strong and radiant in the face of personal adversity.

In the final years of her life, Diana became much more a figure of the celebrity realm. She found friends in show business, the fashion world, and among the international rich. Separation and divorce led to her being deprived of the prerogatives of royalty and she turned into a 'Jackie Onassis Diana who lolled sensuously on rich men's yachts',[14] a potential 'Diana Fayed of St Tropez and Knightsbridge'.[15] She was at once a princess, a celebrity, a clothes horse, a supermodel, a pin-up, a diva, a role model, a jet-setter, a super-consumer, and a movie star. Like all people for whom publicity is oxygen, she was as much a symbol and a signifier as a person. After the princess's death, these comparisons abounded. She became the rock'n'roll princess, the latter-day Eva Peron, the saintly supermodel who died at the same age as Monroe.

Diana's significance was by no means limited to glamour.[16] But it is around the theme of glamour that a significant number of the reflections on her life and meaning revolved. In her later years, she was either part of, or acted as a vehicle for, a series of phenomena that were concerned with image and appearance and with the effect of these on individuals, institutions, commercial practices, and communication. In the 1990s glamour became a social and cultural lubricant on an unprecedented scale. As a readily comprehensible visual repertoire that aroused responses of desire, envy, and emulation, it found more applications than ever before in a world in which people increasingly defined themselves by what they consumed. Its

creation depended on a highly organized structure. Glossy images, sleek surfaces, and groomed exteriors were cultivated by swathes of professionals, including fashion producers, beauty consultants, hairdressers, stylists, photographers, and publicists, who were ready to turn every personality into a glistening object of desire, a walking cover shot.

The ubiquity of images of glamour was related to two things: the multiplication of media and the increasing interaction between them, and the huge development of fashion and luxury industries which these new media opportunities made possible. Synergies between cinema and television, popular music and television, the press and television combined to enhance the role of celebrity and image. Upbeat, consumer-oriented television shows featured good-looking, well-groomed people and ever more numerous magazines produced glossy, uncritical editorial content. When the Spanish magazine *!Hola!*, which had published in Spain since 1944 and also had a wide circulation in Latin America, launched a British edition in 1988 and named it *Hello!* the event was greeted with amusement. Fawning pictorial features on celebrities lavishly paid to open their luxurious pads to the prying eyes of the photographers or to have their wedding snaps taken exclusively by them did not seem like a recipe for success. In fact *Hello!* was the precursor of a wave of what the journalist Tina Brown calls 'fabloids', that is magazines that 'combine the tabloid hunger for sensation with the requirement to always look fabulous'.[17] These extended the personality formula developed in the 1970s by weeklies like the American magazine *People* and were soon contaminating the mainstream press with their style of presentation. Magazines of this type worked on the assumption that famous people could be bought and that their acquisition would in turn sell magazines. They quickly bloomed and multiplied, even spawning raunchy and ironical competitors that offered a less enchanted view of celebrity lives.

The second development was the transformation of the consumer economy. In the 1970s, as we saw in Chapter 10, fashion designers emerged as lifestyle mediators and architects of glamour. In the course of the following two decades, they consolidated this position. They pursued a strategy of 'capture' towards public events and personalities in a concerted effort to gain publicity and establish their labels as indicators of status, style, and sex

appeal. In this they were joined by producers of luxury goods of every type. On account of a trend towards corporate ownership of both fashion houses and producers of luxury goods, there was a general trend towards market expansion and the democratization of luxury. This term had first been used by department stores in the nineteenth century as industrialization made possible the production at low prices of goods that had once been reserved for the well-off. In the late twentieth century, consumers were, by contrast, given the impression that mass-produced goods were rare and desirable. Leather goods, jewellery, watches, and fashion were wrapped with the mystique of style and luxury and sold as superior indicators of taste and status. Companies that previously had been solely concerned with supplying elite customers sought to maximize profits by reaching the middle market.

Both these developments were facilitated and encouraged by a demand to accede to the higher realms of consumption on the part of middle-class and some working-class people in Western countries, as well as in the expanding economies of the far East and Asia. The far-reaching economic changes of the Reagan and Thatcher era saw a rise of the service sector and a historic decline of conventional primary activities like fishing and mining as well as manufacturing. Tax cuts fuelled consumer spending and produced a new demand for status symbols. Also important were cultural changes relating to the shift that occurred in the West towards secondary goals and aspirations once the satisfaction of primary needs of food, shelter, and clothing had been achieved. In addition, the loosening of social ties and of the institutions of civil society, as well as connections to place, through economic change, mobility, the diversification of family life, and the multiplication of the mass media broke old class and regional-specific cultural boundaries.[18] Social mobility in this context ceased to be a matter of moving between established classes and more a matter of moving away from them. An important consequence of this was an increased focus on consumption not only as a measure of success but as a vehicle of personal expression and of emotional satisfaction.[19] This produced pressure for the 'democratization of formerly exclusive types of consumption and styles of living'.[20] There was an established curiosity for wealthy or privileged lifestyles that dated back at least to the eighteenth century and which, more recently, had been institutionalized

in the American TV show *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, that broadcast from 1984 until 1995, and the British *Through the Keyhole*. Wealth, especially of the new variety, engendered not resentment but envy and admiration because it was given an appealing and accessible face by celebrities who seemed just like everyone else except that they were more successful.

Diana was a crucial factor in the development of a new buzz in a social scene that was stylish, fashionable, and money-oriented. Far more than any pop stars, models, or dashing entrepreneurs, it has been claimed, she single-handedly made Britain glamorous.[21] Like Jacqueline Kennedy in the 1960s, she did much to raise public interest in fashion. She was no mere local personality but something akin to a worldwide brand. Tina Brown, who was editor of the *Tatler* between 1979 and 1983, noted that a new synergy came into place between commerce, society, and philanthropy.[22] Companies that were seeking to take advantage of the booming economy of the mid-1980s were desperate to attract some of the stardust that was associated with Diana's glamorous presence. As the Princess of Wales, she could not get involved in anything nakedly commercial, but if a charitable veneer was added to a launch or a trade show, then she could attend and bring much-desired media attention. Her appeal was such that car and fragrance companies, jewellers, and luxury goods labels all rushed to sponsor events at which advertising would neatly combine with support for a worthy cause. *Tatler* itself hugely increased its circulation as the formerly stuffy society magazine experienced its own synergy with commerce and celebrity.[23] By the same token, virtually every cultural and sporting event, from pop concerts and football matches to polo tournaments, was sustained by sponsors who pumped in money and injected razzamatazz. Scarcely a single appointment in the once exclusive English social season, including Ascot, Henley Royal Regatta, Wimbledon, and Cowes week, was not branded and packaged by a producer of champagne, a chain of luxury hotels, or a travel company. The social pictures that once used to record the balls and dinners of high society, providing its members with a warm glow of superiority, were replaced by party pictures recording the presence of miscellaneous celebrity invitees and decorative aristos at a bash to mark the opening of a new

restaurant, fashion store, or the premiere of a film.[24] Their presence was a guarantee that the event would be covered by news organizations.[25]

The visual language of glamour had not significantly altered for several decades nor had the functions it performed. As in the past, it was flashy, eye-catching, sexy, and sometimes outrageous. Covered with the veil of glamour, people and places took on a special sparkle that dazzled and bewitched those who cast their eyes on it. What changed in the 1980s and 1990s was the *quantity* of glamorous images, the sheer number of people that to different degrees conveyed them and the wide variety of places, media, and media outlets that transmitted them. This meant that a new tension emerged between, on the one hand, a visual repertoire of glamour that was increasingly familiar, standardized, and quotidian, and an ever-wider desire to grasp the magical, exclusive, and exceptional qualities of glamour. Thus a distinct hierarchy emerged in which, on the one hand, certain individuals, categories, and contexts were seen to stand for relatively pure glamour, while others offered partial and temporary glamorous effects geared to given moments. In these circumstances three responses flourished: irony and pastiche; revival of the gestures and visual clichés of the Hollywood glamour of the past; invention and deployment of new vehicles of visual seduction by adapting old codes to contemporary conditions. All these strategies were employed by media, companies, and personalities who had a vested interest in manufacturing mass desire.

In Western Europe and North America, societies which had a high level of media development and media penetration of social relations, glamour's core appeal of magical transformation of the individual through the manufacture of a new self had the widest impact. It formed a collective discourse that did not merely complement social relations formed in primary contexts such as the family or the workplace. Rather it functioned in social settings that had been reorganized by the media and in which conventional ties such as the once strong relationship between physical place and social position had been weakened.[26] Glamour privileged fame, fashion, beauty, and feminine life narratives. These commanded widespread attention, but especially they touched those who found themselves on the margins of society on account of their economic position, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. This

explains, to some extent at least, the public fixation with Diana. 'Diana's appeal as a postmodern icon resides solely in her ability to renew and transform herself—and by racing just slightly ahead of our imagination, to hold us in constant thrall,' wrote *Vanity Fair* one month before her death.[27] The princess's 'postmodernity' stemmed precisely from the changes that resulted in her role following the collapse of her 'fairy-tale' marriage and the efforts she made to establish and renew an identity in relation to the public sphere.

Diana's ascendancy occurred at precisely the time that ready-to-wear was being revolutionized and the public was showing signs of enthusiasm for designer labels. The attributes of a glamorous lifestyle were communicated widely by companies which promised that ownership of desirable goods would bring status and transform the consumer's life by making it enviable and exclusive. A key player in the field was Bernard Arnault, the French businessman who acquired Christian Dior in 1984 and went on to construct a major luxury group by creating the Christian Lacroix couture house, buying Céline, and aggressively taking over LVMH (Louis-Vuitton-Moët-Hennessy), which owned Louis Vuitton, Givenchy, and the Moët-Hennessy drink company. He consolidated his leading position by adding the smaller fashion houses of Michael Kors and Marc Jacobs. Other group players included Richemont, the Swiss-based firm that owned Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Dunhill, Mont Blanc, and Chloe, and the Italian Gucci group, which warded off takeover by joining in 1999 with the French PPR (Pinault-Printemps-Redoute) company that also acquired Yves Saint Laurent ready-to-wear and cosmetics. PPR went on to acquire the historic label Balenciaga (originally founded by the Spanish couturier Cristobal Balenciaga in 1937), the Italian leather goods manufacturer Bottega Veneta, and the jeweller Boucheron, as well as launching the new labels of Stella McCartney and Alexander McQueen.[28]

Brand-building was the key strategy of luxury goods companies which first sought to consolidate their basic identity and then aimed to diffuse an image by advertising, sponsorship, and lifestyle endorsements.[29] All the luxury groups and many companies operating in the sector pursued a similar strategy. Old-established luxury companies had often existed for a century or more and had acquired over time reputations for excellence in craftsmanship and quality.

They advertised little or not at all and catered to a narrow clientele of wealthy people. More recently founded houses, like Dior and Givenchy, had similar reputations but had developed strategies to reach the middle market through licensed fragrances and other products. They seduced middle-class customers with atmospheres of refinement deriving from the cachet of couture. In the course of the 1980s, the enormous expansion of ready-to-wear clothing led established couture houses to follow the example of newcomers like Ralph Lauren and Giorgio Armani by producing diffusion lines and by expanding product ranges. The formation of conglomerates consolidated and rationalized this process along predictable business lines and heralded the end of old niche market practices.[30] Each individual company stressed its culture and heritage, its traditions and custom of excellence. It claimed its goods were manufactured to the highest standards of quality and it established a semblance of rarity by charging premium prices even for basic goods like jeans and T-shirts. Low quality licences were eliminated to preserve the image of exclusivity. Young designers were appointed to bring verve and controversy to once stuffy, if fine, products and to attract attention. Massive advertising campaigns were launched to arouse public awareness, that were consolidated through endorsements of events and associations with famous men and women. Finally, sales environments were carefully organized on a pyramid pattern. Flagship stores on key roads in major capitals were sumptuous, prestige outlets that were opened with much fanfare and publicity. Diffusion products were sold through branded second-level stores or prestigious department stores in large cities. Excess product was sold off through special outlet complexes.

One of the most striking developments was the expansion of luxury shopping in non-traditional locations. Companies backed up their desire to capture the global middle market by creating new sales outlets that lacked the intimidating atmosphere of the flagship stores or leading department stores. Carefully avoiding opening stores in unglamorous cities or shopping malls, they established outposts in second-tier large cities and high-profile tourist locations like Las Vegas and Miami Beach, as well as European airports. Las Vegas became a leading luxury resort and one of the principal shopping destinations in the United States. The one-time 'sin city' was a fabulous place of invention that lavished glitz and glamour on its visitors. The hotels and casinos on the famous

strip were designed in the most eclectic and fantastic manner imaginable and they were continually being knocked down and rebuilt. From 1982, when the Mirage hotel opened, a shift occurred away from the emphasis on gambling towards entertainment and hospitality.[31] Fantasy and escape were always present—the Mirage featured a fake volcano while dolphins swam in a pool—but it was the total experience that counted. The gambler's paradise was the perfect location for designer brand stores because the entire city was founded on the dream of wealth and the possibility for self-transformation. Moreover, most of the 35 million people who visited each year only stayed a few days and, during that time, they were keen to pursue pleasure and move themselves temporarily upscale. Flashy and glitzy goods caught their eye in stores that were easy to enter and browse in and whose staff, unlike the notoriously offhand salespeople in stores in capital cities, were relaxed and welcoming.[32]

Glamour was the motor of sales and it was carefully created and perpetuated by producers who knew that popular perceptions of a brand were what counted most. More important than the sheer quality of a garment or accessory in such a context was the recognition factor supplied by visible labels and logos, exterior signifiers of opulence in the form of gold or brillante touches, and the narrative forged by advertising and celebrity links. Unless genuine artisan work was involved, for example in the haute couture of Chanel or Saint Laurent or the luggage of Hermès, manufacturing methods were concealed to facilitate the creation of a neo-artisan mystique. It was not the products that were emphasised so much as what they *represented* in terms of cachet, status, fashionableness, novelty, and celebrity.[33]

While the brands in the Arnault stable sought to shake off staid images and win popular recognition by embracing sex appeal and celebrity, no designer more than Versace made these values his own. Versace was seen as the master of contemporary glamour. In contrast to most of his Italian contemporaries, who embraced bourgeois notions of taste and measure, he provided spectacle, luxury, colour, and sex appeal. He understood that to have an impact on the mass imagination, luxury could not be understated. A southerner from the city of Reggio Calabria, Versace launched his own label in Milan in 1978 and quickly opened a series of boutiques in prestigious locations around

the world.[34] By the mid-1990s, these sumptuous emporia bore witness to the designer's trademark lavish, luxurious, and overtly sexual style. The explosion of colour, the sharply revealing cuts, and luxurious fabrics that characterized the Versace range were geared to those who wanted to be noticed, to assert their wealth and sexuality, to feel they were at the cutting edge of a rock'n'roll lifestyle. Versace offered customers the promise of standing-out, being noticed, and, almost, of wearing a price tag. His designs shouted wealth and status through a megaphone. This ostentation was enhanced by lavish advertising that ensured label recognition and public identification of the style. It was further charged by an insistent link with movie and rock stars in a reciprocal effect that added drama and value. His idea of glamour worked on the long-established combination of wealth and sex. Many noticed the sex first. Indeed he was often accused of dressing women like whores. In particular, his use of lurex and rubber, sometimes together with studs, safety pins, and rhinestones, recalled fetish wear. Versace, it was said, 'sold sex and glamour and he sold it with the gusto of the most garrulous second-hand car dealer'.[35] This did not undermine the appeal of the label. 'A strappy Versace evening dress which curves around the body before flaring out into a flirtatious kick, slashed to the thigh and with the deepest neckline in the business, is quite the most sensual garment any woman can hope to wear,' commented one woman journalist.[36] The designer always claimed that his supersexy clothes were inspired by the exaggerated finery of the prostitutes that came into his mother's dressmaker's shop in Reggio Calabria. He disliked modesty and promoted an 'if-you've-got-it-flaunt-it' outlook that cultivated a show-off attitude in his customers. Wealth took the form of eye-watering prices but also a photogenic lifestyle that was unashamedly materialistic.

Versace became a household name in Britain in 1994 when Hugh Grant's then little-known girlfriend Elizabeth Hurley wore one of his creations to the London premiere of the British comedy *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. The extraordinarily low-cut and revealing black gown was split down the side and held together with safety pins featuring the designer's Medusa's head logo. Front-page pictures in the tabloid and broadsheet press massively increased the curvaceous Hurley's profile and made Versace into a byword for show-stopping sexy clothes.[37] In the wake of this event, every publicity-hungry

starlet in Britain aimed to grab the front page by turning up for a premiere or launch in a garment that showed off her figure to effect. Many of these were created by the London designer Julien Macdonald, who specialized in ultra-revealing evening wear.

Versace did not rely solely on show-business glitz. He liked to construct noble pedigrees and establish cultural kudos for his brand of glamour. In keeping with his eclecticism, themes, motifs, objects, and styles drawn from a wide variety of sources including ancient Greece and Rome, Byzantium, the Italian Renaissance, and the Baroque period marked Versace's home furnishings, fragrances, stores, advertising, and numerous coffee-table books. His books, including *Men Without Ties* and *Rock & Royalty*, were sumptuous productions. In his search for recognition, Versace sponsored exhibitions of his work in such august institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Like his rival Giorgio Armani, who also opened his archive for high profile exhibitions, he believed that such forays into the cultural sphere lifted his creations on to the plane of art and guaranteed them a place in posterity. However, it was the catwalk that was the scene of Versace's greatest innovations. Collections had once been presented in-house by fashion companies for clients and foreign buyers. The press was allowed in but publicity was carefully restricted to avoid pirating. Versace and his fellow Italians turned the catwalk into a stage and the show into pure theatre. They became large-scale productions, complete with music and lighting, that were aimed at gathering maximum coverage.[38] As such they were 'pseudo-events', to use the sociologist Daniel Boorstin's term for activities whose sole purpose was to garner publicity.[39] For seasoned fashion journalist Colin McDowell, catwalk shows were at the core of 'the deception which embroils the fashion industry in its attempts to keep us thinking "designer" and buying the clothes that bear the label'.[40] They were fashion's theatrical blockbusters that seduced commentators and critics 'into accepting anything and lauding it to the skies provided it is on a runway and the music is right'. In the high voltage setting of the Versace catwalk shows, models strutted their stuff with the confident sassiness of the dressed-up but none-too-respectable starlet. The shows were spectacular events with huge press appeal that were bathed in laser light and accompanied by

pulsating beats; his front rows were stuffed with rock stars and actors whom he treated as friends and often hosted lavishly at his gorgeous homes, including the Casa Casuarina villa on Miami's South Beach where he would be killed.

Versace is often credited with having created the phenomenon of the 'supermodels'. While several models had individually and collectively achieved high exposure in the 1980s, and *Time* magazine devoted a cover to them in September 1991,[41] Versace enhanced their profile. He signed models exclusively for his shows and then used them collectively in his 1994–5 advertising campaign, shot by Richard Avedon.[42] Other fashion houses followed suit and soon no show was complete without them. Christy Turlington, Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista, Cindy Crawford, and Claudia Schiffer, plus a handful of variable others,[43] became as well known in the 1990s as the Hollywood stars of the golden age. They appeared on innumerable covers of the leading fashion magazines; they wowed the public through press coverage of spectacular catwalk shows; the top few became known by their first names only. In addition, they reached beyond fashion to undertake calendar, pin-up, and general magazine and advertising work. They became all-purpose celebrities who wrote books, made films, hosted television shows, made records and fitness videos, and whose lives were the stuff of dreams. Their rise was the product of three distinct trends: the globalization of the model industry, which occurred in the 1970s; the ready-to-wear revolution that took fashion to the masses; the absence of other figures capable of generating sufficient attention and interest to harness collective dreams. The supermodels were different from their predecessors in the sense that they were not drawn from a relatively narrow social environment; rather they were girls who had been spotted as teenagers in diverse local settings, mostly far-removed from conventional fashion strongholds. Schiffer was a lawyer's daughter discovered in a Düsseldorf discotheque; Turlington was noticed by a photographer at a local gymkhana in San Francisco; Campbell was spotted on the street in London's Covent Garden; Crawford was raised in the Illinois countryside and did not even seem physically suited to modelling; the Canadian Evangelista was the only one who admitted to always having wanted to be a model and was already on

the books of an agency by the age of 12.[44] Each of them had a quality that distinguished her and rendered her iconic: Crawford's beauty spot, Evangelista's penchant for chameleon-like changes, and Turlington's pout were traits that were endlessly debated. Only the wholesome and strapping Schiffer was a conventional blonde, while Campbell was the first black model to reach the peak of the profession.

These women became the idols of an era.[45] More people were aware of them on a global level than any previous fashion models. The supermodels were the product of a period obsessed by image and glamour. They epitomized contemporary ideas of beauty and inhabited a world of dreams and fantasies. They began in the world of image as recruits of model agencies, who were packaged and shaped by photographers. In the 1970s and 1980s, a star-like approach to the grooming and presentation of models had emerged. According to fashion editor Polly Mellon, the founder of the Elite model agency—John Casablancas—was chiefly responsible for bringing sex appeal and sensuality to the business and making it much more profitable. 'He took a sleepy backwater business run by a dowager empress [i.e. Eileen Ford, who had founded the Ford agency in 1946] and turned it into Hollywood,' she declared.[46] Photographers including Patrick Demarchelier, Peter Lindbergh, and Steven Meisel shot the models for magazines and turned them into icons, while magazines across the globe clamoured for them. Even before they won general recognition, they were undertaking work outside the fashion field. They won lucrative contracts with cosmetics companies and undertook pin-up work for *Sports Illustrated*'s annual swimsuit issue and the Pirelli calendar. The shapely all-American Crawford even posed for *Playboy* magazine in 1988. Agencies were marketing them globally for ever-increasing fees and began insisting that they be given name credits by magazines. As their fame increased, *Vogue* and other publications began to appreciate the impact they had on sales and featured them heavily. In January 1990 British *Vogue* dedicated its cover to Turlington, Evangelista, Crawford, Campbell, and Tatiana Patitz, impressing pop singer George Michael so much that he cast them all in the video of his song 'Freedom'.[47] Paris-based agency boss Gérald Marie, who at the time was Evangelista's husband, persuaded Versace that it would work to his

advantage to pay photographic models way over the usual rates and send them out on the catwalk in groups.[48]

Crawford, Schiffer, and company had glamour because of the special place they occupied in the dreams of society. They could persuade people to buy even at a time when spending was down by investing salesmanship with class and seductiveness. 'They have replaced the Hollywood stars in the hearts of a public starved for glamour,' proclaimed the first issue of a magazine from the *Elle* stable that was wholly devoted to them: 'They are real trend setters of our time; everything they do and say is talked about and imitated. They bring us beauty and the illusion of eternal youth. They are neither American nor Swedish nor Italian, but rather come from an imaginary land that knows no border. They speak without words, their faces and bodies spell the meaning of grace in a universal language that needs no translation.'[49] They were about selling. As novelist Jay McInerney expressed it in his *Model Behaviour*, they were women 'whose photographic image is expensively employed to arouse desire in conjunction with certain consumer goods'.[50] The supermodels were one-dimensional—no one heard them speak, but they none the less dazzled as protagonists of a world that had all the features of glamour. Their lives appeared to unfold between the catwalk, first-class cabins on planes, five-star hotels, photo shoots, millionaire or rockstar boyfriends, and extensive grooming. The distancing mechanisms that helped keep them remote were their silence, their cosmopolitanism, their physical beauty, and their belonging to a realm of dreams. Their accessibility derived from their visibility in the press, their ordinary origins, and their apparent lack of any real talent.

The supermodels were promoted because movie stars, once the prime bearers of glamour, were no longer able or willing to project the kind of enthusiasm and emotional involvement of their predecessors. Contemporary cinema had global reach but it allotted only a small place to glamour and stars like Meryl Streep, Jodie Foster, Sigourney Weaver, or Winona Ryder were unlike the goddesses of the past for whom it was a duty to look sensational at all times. Rejecting glamour in favour of an idea of acting as art, they did not mind being snapped looking less than bandbox perfect. At the same time, various industries needed dreams of allure and perfection to

sustain business. The materialistic dream of beauty, success, luxury, fame, and sex was the lubricant of modern capitalism, a seductive magic that tied people to consumption by colonizing their aspirations and wowing them with visual effects. In the past, cosmetics, lingerie, fashion, photography, television, and popular spectacle had all based part of their appeal on the special allure of Hollywood. In consequence, the old glamour that, in its time, was seen as seductive and even vulgar in its desire to please, took on the air of the classic and the artistic.

The ready-to-wear designers all loved classic Hollywood cinema and often spoke of it. They knew that it was an unrivalled template and that its fabulous images were part of a repertoire of allure that was available for appropriation. Although no longer recent, the glamorous legacy of the major Hollywood studios of the past remained available to be imitated and reconfigured. Versace talked about drawing inspiration from ancient and early modern civilizations but what he served up was a 'raunchy and ersatz version of the ancient past'.[51] His 'Roman inspirations seem to stem from nothing more ancient than Fifties gladiator films starring Victor Mature and Gina Lollobrigida in the romanticised Technicolor world of Hollywood', observed Colin McDowell.[52] To convey the sort of women Versace might have dressed, one commentator suggested that Cleopatra, Jezebel, Delilah, Madame de Pompadour, Jean Harlow, Jane Russell, Lana Turner, Gina Lollobrigida, Marilyn Monroe, Brigitte Bardot, Claudia Cardinale, Cher were all 'Versace girls', 'glitter queens to a woman'.[53] Versace's models resembled fifties' film stars and they wore the make-up to match. Their faces were powdered pale and their lips pouted with brilliant, shiny red. Their appearance was exceptionally pliable. Schiffer and Crawford emerged because of their resemblance to films stars of the past—Brigitte Bardot and Marilyn Monroe respectively—while Evangelista was renowned for her chameleon-like changeability and Campbell reprised the looks of twenties' music-hall star Josephine Baker and other icons of colour. In 1996, French *Vogue* photographed leading models disguised as Marlene Dietrich and Ava Gardner. The supermodels were blank canvases of perfect but depersonalized femininity on which dream identities could be painted. Schiffer even posed as Barbie for more than one photo shoot.

The yearning for old-style glamour manifested itself throughout the cultural system. Volumes such as Len Prince's *About Glamour* or Serge Normant's *Femme Fatale*, that featured contemporary stars photographed in the manner of the old, covered their subjects in an aura of shadows, light, glistening surfaces, and seductive materials.[54] In this way, they recalled George Hurrell or Clarence Sinclair Bell's stills of Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, and Jean Harlow. At a time when celebrity was widely thought to have become irredeemably cheapened, the images of a handful of stars who enjoyed almost universal admiration in the 1930s and 1940s stood as a paradigm, or at least as a possible cloak, for the hundreds of television and film actors who sought to hold the attention of the public for more than the blink of an eye. The deaths of numerous old stars in the early 1990s projected their unrivalled allure once more into public consciousness. In 1990 the greatest star of the interwar years, Greta Garbo, died and so did Ava Gardner, one of the sultriest actresses of the 1940s and 1950s; in 1992 it was the turn of Garbo's one-time Paramount rival, Marlene Dietrich, in 1993 of Audrey Hepburn, and in 1996 of one of the most popular romantic heroines of the 1930s, Claudette Colbert. Each received fulsome obituaries and reverent evocations in the illustrated press.

In the heyday of Hollywood, stars were remote and fabulous beings who were none the less connected to the public by means of various devices dreamed up by the studios. Now the old idea of the star system was replaced by a wider category of celebrity whose members were omnipresent and produced by a variety of entertainment media. The 'blatant shallowness' of the celebrity arena was frequently deplored,[55] along with the personalities who inhabited it, but precisely this made it useful to cultural industries and to the sphere of consumption. It was a parallel world that was both superficial and alluring, amusing and enviably free of routine oppression. It appealed because it seemed accessible, especially to the young. Versace was well aware of the modern public's thirst for celebrity and often used references to it in advertising spreads. For example, in 1996 Bruce Weber shot for the Versace diffusion label Versus a series of black-and-white photographs that used the idea of young stars arriving somewhere, dressed up for an event and surrounded by paparazzi.[56] None of the faces in the photographs,

however, was well known. Like Andy Warhol, from whom he occasionally drew inspiration (one gown featured a design based on Warhol's silk screen 'Marilyn'), Versace played with the language of fame. He was aware that it was detachable from famous people and could be fragmented into accessible parts. It could be appropriated, reproduced, and turned back on itself. It could be made to seem at once remote and magical and yet be made available to all.

Like film companies in the 1920s and 1930s, the leading model agencies organized worldwide competitions for new faces, while scouts of varying degrees of reputability were constantly on the lookout for the next Cindy or Claudia. The promise of model glamour was in fact that any girl could suddenly be propelled to the stratosphere. If a girl of West Indian origin from the backstreets of South London like Naomi Campbell could become a fashion superstar (working, in the process, 'on every inch of herself, from her accent to her taste in champagne'),[57] then in theory there was hope for everyone. Even those lacking height or classical features might appeal to a photographer or benefit from an unexpected turn towards the quirky. In a typical blurring of front- and backstage, magazines that specialized in revealing the 'real lives' of models ran features on the everyday lives of freshly recruited 'mini-tops' and promised readers the chance to join them.[58] The depiction of young models' lives in such publications was highly selective and focused mainly on its most attractive or commonplace aspects.

In his exploration of the world of modelling, *Model*, subtitled *The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women*, Michael Gross highlighted the risks that faced teenage models in the world's fashion cities. Although the old-established New York-based Ford agency was known for its chaperoning approach to young models, often they were unprotected and unguarded. In foreign cities—notably Milan, that was the leading forcing ground of models—they fell prey to local playboys offering them dinners, country weekends, parties, and drugs. It was not merely the sleazy milieu that formed around the girls that entrapped the weak and the guileless. Rather it was the agents themselves who often refused to promote models who declined to perform sexual favours. Some were quite simply 'glorified pimps' who realized that 'beautiful girls could be fucked in every way'.[59] In the case of one model

agency boss, whose alleged weakness for teenage girls was legendary, naïve teenagers reportedly required sexual burnishing before they were ready to be promoted as the bearers of sexual fantasies. The boss in question had apparently 'long been a proponent of the theory that models were raw stones that needed work to become glittering diamonds'.[60] 'European men are important abrasives in the finishing process; they tend to be male chauvinists,' he had said; 'that attitude . . . gives the model an awareness of her femininity, which is an indispensable quality'.[61] Playboys or agents were ideally placed to perform the task.

Sex appeal in the fashion world may have been largely an artificial allure that was manufactured by designers, make-up artists, hairdressers, and photographers, but sexual exploitation was rife. The glamour of the model elite was dependent indirectly on the existence of a sub-world of debauchery and misery. Male models no less than female ones were liable to find themselves faced with demands for sexual favours in return for work. As in the nineteenth century, the world of prostitution was but a few rungs down the ladder from the glittering surface of famous men, fine restaurants, and elegant resorts.[62] Contrary to its dominant myths, the fashion industry was a dangerous game of snakes and ladders. In the dialectic of class and sleaze that is crucial to glamour, it positioned itself as a switching station, finding them both equally suggestive and remunerative. Consequently, it drew on them alternately. Versace was the leading designer to take inspiration explicitly from the worlds of prostitution and fetishwear in creating his more daring designs, but many others took cues from the brash flaunt-it and flog-it world of the street. Even Princess Diana's speech coach suggested that she could enhance her delivery by thinking of herself as a hooker.[63] The occasional model overdose and periodic revelations of sexual exploitation were scandals that the fashion world preferred to keep at arm's length, but they also endowed it with a frisson of danger that somehow made it more intriguing and desirable. Diana's sexed-up image was informed by the contact she had with this environment.

As with the courtesans of the nineteenth century, and the film stars of the middle decades of the twentieth, the models were bearers of the sexual fantasy of their age. Their notoriety rested on their desirability and their sexuality, their

beauty being bound up with both. Just as a Parisian *viveur* might have courted a courtesan for the kudos it brought, so an ambitious late twentieth-century man-about-town like writer Toby Young could confess: 'Like most heterosexual men, I'd grown up fantasizing about sleeping with models. It wasn't the act of having sex with them I found so appealing . . . but the bragging rights afterwards. To be able to walk past a newsstand, point at the cover of a glossy magazine, and say, "been there, done that"—that was my idea of heaven.'[64] The magnetic allure that the models had for some men—who were infamously dubbed 'modelizers' by *Sex and the City* author Carrie Bradshaw—was the contemporary equivalent of the glamorous aura that golden age film stars had transmitted ('Men go to bed with Gilda and wake up with me,' forties' actress Rita Hayworth used to lament).

The allure of the models was shallower since they were not fully fledged public personalities and the narratives that were woven around them were flimsy. For teenage girls though, the dreams were powerful and they were fuelled by a para-literature sometimes sponsored by the agencies. Ford Models lent its imprimatur to a series of teenage novels published by an offshoot of Random House. With titles like *The New Me* and *Party Girl*, they appealed to the fantasies of pubescent readers keen to escape humdrum lives. *Party Girl* features a girl who fails to win the real model contest Supermodel of the World but is selected anyway by Ford. 'I was heading to New York, the modelling center of the world! I'd shop at fashionable boutiques, go to exciting parties, and entertain glamorous friends in my own chic little apartment. I had it all planned out,' she muses.[65] The sleazy underside of modelling was absent from such works, but it was highlighted in more adult novels set in the fashion milieu. Former model Judi James's *Supermodel* ('The looks of an angel, a heart of glass' warned the cover blurb) explored the secret hard-core past of a Russian model. A model who objects to nude work is bluntly told: 'It's porno darling, do you understand what I mean? Did we cover that term in our language education classes? Porn, porno, pornography. I fuck—you fuck—they fuck—we all fuck, get it? Every model's done it some time or other—it's part of the rites of passage.'[66]

The supermodel elite exploited its unique position and diversified into acting, singing, writing, photography, TV presenting, and even fast-food

sponsorship (Fashion Café). They also became fodder for the gossip press. Cindy Crawford's engagement and marriage to Richard Gere, Stephanie Seymour's relationship with singer Axl Rose of Guns and Roses, Claudia Schiffer's curious pairing with magician David Copperfield, and Naomi Campbell's string of affairs with boxer Mike Tyson, musician Adam Clayton of U2, actor Robert De Niro, Formula One team boss Flavio Briatore, and others were as talked about as any movie star liaisons of the past. Having extended their reach from the world of fashion to the realm of pin-ups and men's magazines, the supermodels found that they were in demand from a wide range of manufacturers that wanted to reposition their products by adding some of their gloss. Although even some top models experienced drug addiction and other serious personal problems, the huge increase in their earnings in the 1980s was accompanied by a high degree of professionalism. They fulfilled fashion's need for a star system and contributed significantly to the rise of image and celebrity culture. But the models who followed the original five or six supermodels only in one or two instances achieved the same level of global recognition. Michael Gross believes that a backlash began after Linda Evangelista was quoted in *Vogue* magazine saying, 'We have this expression, Christy and I: we don't wake up for less than $10,000 a day.'[67] By putting a price tag on themselves, the models dissolved their own mystique. The comments were labelled greedy and tactless and the models denounced as over-priced packaged commodities. In fact, while some resentment was undoubtedly caused, the real problem was what underlay the remark, namely that they had become expensive and ubiquitous. Crawford was simultaneously advertising Pepsi, being the face of Revlon, and fronting her own fashion show on MTV, while also doing editorial work for magazines and catwalk shows. Schiffer became Chanel's favourite model while doing Citroën ads on television. By 1994, she had her own waxwork at the Musée Grévin in Paris, while all the supermodels had personalized Barbie-style dolls.

The derivative nature of the supermodel personae as they were forged and presented to the public may be explained in relation to the fact that contemporary glamour is itself derivative. It is not only an aspect of the particular drives of consumer society but of the sleek surfaces of an image

culture that is often self-generating and self-referential. Up until the 1960s, magazines and photographers worked off real social environments or they imitated and elaborated on them. After the collapse of formal high society, and the demise of the well-bred or debutante model, it was the photographic styles and iconic images of the past that provided the most potent source of inspiration.[68] The globalization of fashion and its supporting structures in publishing, marketing, and advertising produced a certain standardization similar to that experienced by the Hollywood studios in the 1950s. Despite a wider ethnic and physical variety than at one time, the imagery surrounding models was repetitive. Photographers, in conjunction with editors and stylists, were the crucial players here. Contemporary fashion professionals are highly knowledgeable about the past of their profession and explicitly evoke the styles, iconic moments, and people that have defined the collective imagination. Indeed, the main role of photographers is to achieve this evocation in a contemporary way that dovetails with the requirements of advertisers and magazine editors.

The Canadian Steven Meisel, who became the most regular Italian *Vogue* photographer of the late 1980s and 1990s, was renowned for his postmodern appropriations and reworkings of the masters. He consciously mimicked the styles of every major photographer from the 1930s to the recent past, posing his models in the manner of the actresses and mannequins of earlier eras.[69] Lacking a distinctive style of his own, he was regarded by some as a 're-photographer' and dubbed 'Xerox' by one unimpressed gallery-owner.[70] Herb Ritts, who was responsible for some of the best-known group pictures of the supermodels also owed much to older photographers including Richard Avedon and Irving Penn. His fashion shots glorified gym-toned bodies while his mannered celebrity photographs relied heavily on masquerade and revival. Model-turned-photographer Ellen von Unwerth's fuzzy and aggressive black-and-white shots also had a strong retro aspect to them, although this was blended with upfront sexuality. Best-known for casting an unknown Claudia Schiffer in a campaign for the Californian denim company Guess, she specialized in assertive but provocatively sexualized pictures of women that replaced composure with immediacy. 'She deals with a 90s version of glamour: the shiny, neon-lit attractions of pretend

sleaze,' commented one observer.[71] In this way, she remained within the idiom of male fantasy even if she supplied ironic twists on standard scenarios.[72] Surface visual effects—shiny plastic, glass, lipstick, and cosmetics—triumphed in her images.

In general, photographers did not object that their work was the subject of homage and appropriations on the part of younger colleagues.[73] Portrait photographers like George Hurrell and even *Vogue* master Horst had been out of favour for decades and the revival of interest in their work led to reappraisals, books, and exhibitions. A crucial supporting role here was played by John Kobal, who rescued many Hollywood studio stills from oblivion and placed them in his collection, from which several books were drawn.[74] When Hurrell and Horst died, respectively in 1992 and 1999, they received fulsome obituaries of a type that would have been unlikely two decades previously. Helmut Newton was less keen on the sort of tributes that he was paid by the fashion world's self-conscious revivalism. In their editorial work, Michael Roberts, Inez Van, and others created pastiche versions of Newton's trademark deluxe nudes that were sometimes indistinguishable from the real thing.[75] However, unlike the others, Newton was still at the height of his powers. He even created a new star to add to the supermodel firmament, the Teutonic Nadja Auermann, whose other-worldly appearance he connected to the classic canon of artificial sex appeal.

The fashion industry often works by proclaiming a seasonal 'look' to persuade customers of the need to renew their wardrobes. In autumn 1994 it launched 'glamour' as its seasonal watchword. 'Hard core glamour, high gloss and bright colour are back,' announced British *Vogue* in its October issue.[76] 'New glamour', another magazine declared, 'has evolved beyond the clichéd head-to-toe sequins of 50s Hollywood glitz. It has eased up from the 80s *Dynasty* suit with its galaxy of gilt buttons and flaunt-it jewellery.'[77] Instead, it was more 'pared-down, more self-assured and sexy'. This 'new glamour' took inspiration from various sources, including the sleek elegance of the 1930s and the sexy styles of the 1970s. All demanded poise, panache, and polish. The season's top lines consisted of sharply cut suits, classical evening wear, full accessories, high heels, and bold lipstick. It was striking that the interpretations of glamour that were offered at this time in women's

magazines placed the emphasis squarely on polished, refined images of formal outfits. 'The story of glamour through the century is the history of women and their strengthening self-image,' wrote *She*.[78] It added, 'Glamour is make-believe, a veneer anyone can apply with the right clothes, strongly-defined make-up, coiffed hair and red lips.' Adult sex appeal with a sophisticated spin was the season's watchword. It was one that especially suited Versace, Valentino, Dior, Chanel, Alexander McQueen, and Helmut Lang. Another beneficiary was the Italian label Gucci that, under the creative direction of Tom Ford, sexed-up its ready-to-wear and embraced a widely praised and commercially successful, but fundamentally dull, corporate glamour reminiscent of the Yves Saint Laurent of the 1970s.

The launch of the look gave rise to reflections on the meaning of glamour and the range of its applications in fashion. 'Is glamour glitter—or a graceful line?', asked Brenda Polan in the *Financial Times*.[79] Was it in short the sort of flamboyant, eye-catching, colourful, and sexy look associated with Versace and his flashy clients, or the subtlety, harmony, and simplicity of the more restrained and classy creations of a designer like Giorgio Armani. This was matched by another tension, that between the lady and the tart, or between the dressed-up and the undressed. In this case the dichotomy was not within the world of fashion but between fashion as a whole and the sphere of male entertainment. Writing in *Vogue*, Sarah Mower powerfully asserted the female prerogative. 'For too many years glamour has been a joke—repudiated by feminists, used, tackily, by the pop industry from glam rock onwards, hijacked by the sleaze merchants of "glamour photography",' she argued, before lauding its reappropriation by models who were reconnecting it with 'a glorious, noble, stirring sense of womanhood'.[80] The history of glamour shows in fact that the unresolved dichotomy between class and sleaze lies at its core. Glamour is never so subtle that it is not eye-catching at some level, and the 'sex appeal of the inorganic' that Walter Benjamin identified as a core feature of modern fashion is always present. Even when there was a clearly defined high society, the language of glamour was defined by contributions from popular entertainment and the street. Ostensibly, there may be nothing in common between, say, Jacqueline Onassis and Madonna or between Princess Diana and Pamela Anderson. In fact all four women invested heavily in their physical

appearance and were considered sex symbols. Their clothes and their bodies were key aspects of their public personae. All of them were part of the realm of the visual image and the magazine community. All of them, moreover, transgressed social and sexual norms and brushed with scandal. One of Princess Diana's defining moments came in 1994 when she confessed her infidelity on television.

Glamour was part of a complex and variegated media scene. The sampling of old Hollywood that became a trademark of fashion advertising and promotion gave rise to further derivations such as the 1993 success of drag artist Ru Paul's dance record 'Supermodel (You Better Work)'. He went on to score a top ten hit in a duet with Elton John. Paul became the first drag queen supermodel when MAC cosmetics signed him to a modelling contract. Proving that cosmetics really could transform their wearers, billboards of the 6-foot-plus African-American performer were adorned with the slogan 'I am the MAC girl'. His look, he claimed, was 'total glamour, total excess, total Vegas, total total'.[81]

The birth of the pop video and of MTV introduced a marked emphasis on the visual within popular music. Perhaps no one more than Madonna turned twentieth-century glamour into a repertoire to be harnessed and manipulated at will. After winning recognition as a New York City drifter in Susan Seidelman's *Desperately Seeking Susan* in 1985, she scored a worldwide hit with 'Like A Virgin' and went on to become the most successful female recording artist ever, selling an estimated 175 million albums and 75 million singles in a career lasting, to date, 28 years. She polarized public opinion by acting the part of the rebel and outsider, marginal and disruptive, above all by rejecting established female roles. Although Madonna's music was derivative, if catchy and often danceable, her visual style was an original concoction of virgin and whore, Catholic and pagan, high fashion and Hollywood parody. In a series of high-production music videos, she embraced a variety of gold-digger, showgirl, and bad girl personae and even cast herself as Marilyn and Marlene Dietrich, as well as Mexican painter Frida Kahlo.[82] In some respects, she used the strategies of a female impersonator by donning a series of guises. She received a high degree of attention not merely from the establishment and the press but also from academics fascinated by her impact on mainstream culture and subcultural domains.[83]

A barometer of cultural moods and conflicts, she attracted more publicity than most heads of state. Madonna was at one level a sex star. 'A certain sleaze factor was undoubtedly an important element of Madonna's initial rise to fame,' noted one keen observer of her career,[84] and in 1985 *Penthouse* and *Playboy* magazines published black-and-white nude photographs for which she had posed several years earlier.[85] She responded in 1992 by publishing her own coffee-table book of nudes by Steven Meisel, entitled *Sex*. This overt display of shiny, confectioned sexuality placed her in direct line from the soft-pornography of 1950s burlesque.[86]

Madonna's success has been traced to the high degree of personal autonomy she exercised. In contrast to many pop stars, she was a powerful player who was defiantly independent of labels and media corporations. Moreover, she cheerfully engaged in self-commodification, transforming herself at will and pushing an inauthentic identity in contrast to rock's dominant, if often false, ideology of artistic integrity. She moulded her body with diet and exercise, turning it into a powerful tool of her various personae. Her tour titles, Blond Ambition, Girlie Show, and Re-Invention testified to her showgirl-inspired stage presentations. Curiously, for such a visually aware star, Madonna's numerous forays into the movies, including the big budget productions *Dick Tracy* and *Evita*, fell flat. Rather, it was still photographs and videos that best captured her allure. Meisel photographed her many times, while Helmut Newton revealed that, save for Elizabeth Taylor, she was the only subject to whom he had granted a right of veto.[87] Madonna's glamour was of a ruthlessly eclectic kind. She fashioned a persona across several media and bridged several glamorous contexts. She forged a collaboration with designers including the Italian duo Dolce & Gabbana and appeared in a Versace advertising campaign. However, it was the idea of glamour that she derived from childhood memories of watching old movies that was her biggest influence. The video for her song 'Vogue' recreated the atmospheric style of the studio photographers and witnessed the singer disguise herself as the stars who inspired her, while the lyrics provided name checks to Dietrich, Monroe, Harlow, Grace Kelly, Katherine Hepburn, Bette Davis, Sophia Loren, Lana Turner, and Ginger Rogers as well as Brando, Dean, Astaire, and Gene Kelly.

The collaboration of Madonna with fashion designers inspired a whole series of developments in popular music and entertainment. New synergies occurred between different sectors. In pop, the showgirl-dance music pairing that Madonna pioneered was taken up by many artists, including Kylie Minogue, who exchanged her girl-next-door image for that of a feathers-and-sequins showgirl with a sexy image forged through relationships with INXS singer Michael Hutchence (who boasted that he had corrupted her) and French actor Olivier Martinez. First as singer of No Doubt and then as a solo performer, Gwen Stefani operated her own knowing blend of street style, movie glamour, and high fashion, while Christina Aguilera's overtly sexual image mixed old Hollywood and grunge with a mastery of soul, jazz, and blues music.

The appropriation of glamour by the music industry brought pressure to bear on Hollywood. This applied less to film production than to the public moments when the industry was on show. Many stars were no longer accustomed to dressing up as a matter of course and were clueless when required to do so. One of the most prestigious and valuable platforms in this sense was the Academy Awards ceremony in Hollywood every spring. Giorgio Armani established an office to lend dresses and outfits to the stars as early as 1983, while Valentino retained favour, especially but not only, with older stars. Fashion designers won a strategic place in the preparations for Oscar night because a successful and admired choice of gown could add glamour to a star as well as increasing the cachet of a designer. In the 1990s, just a handful of stars were willing to join veterans like Joan Collins and Sophia Loren in reminding the public of Hollywood's heritage of fabulous grooming and drop-dead queenly good looks. While Joan was happy ironically to dispense lessons in old-time big hair, big jewels, and big personality glamour, and join her sister Jackie in peddling pop literary doses of it in genre fiction,[88] only Kim Basinger, the star of *L.A. Confidential*, and an Oscar winner in 1997, and *Basic Instinct's* and *Casino*'s Sharon Stone were willing to follow them. 'Sharon Stone is not in the Winona Ryder, Jodie Foster style. She's an old-fashioned star, the way they used to be,' noted one newspaper.[89]

This changed in the late 1990s and the early years of the new century. Luxury companies followed the fashion designers in targeting celebrities. The publicity to be derived from seeing a leading actor or personality wear a watch,

jewellery, or shoes, was so valuable that goods were offered on loan or more often given as gifts. In the companies' strategies, celebrities took the place of models as they were deemed to be more effective at promoting goods. They were not shallow ciphers but realistic individuals whom consumers felt familiar with and could relate to.[90] This more than anything else brought ostentation and material goods squarely to public attention and popularized labels that had previously not been widely known. It complemented the strategy of establishing sales outposts in airports, second-tier large cities, and high-profile tourist locations like Las Vegas and Miami Beach.

Advertising, celebrity linkages, and visible logos made prestige goods desirable for all and brought the glamour of luxury within the purview of groups which had no previous contact with it. Such strategies turned them into aspects of popular culture. The appropriation of signature products by fast-money and downmarket celebrities, and even working-class subcultures, soon followed. This could not readily be prevented even though the potential damage for labels could be considerable.[91] The flamboyant styles popular in the Afro-American community in the 1970s created the precedent for 'bling' in the 1990s. Born within the urban musical community of hip hop, bling was all about the wearing of expensive gold and diamond jewellery and the ostentation of a highly materialistic lifestyle of cars, yachts, beautiful girls, designer clothes, and furs. Related to the 'ghetto fabulous' fashions of earlier decades,[92] it was a product of the ghetto rather than a denial of it. Rap artists vaunted gold and diamonds as rewards for success on a par with crime, that was itself often romanticized in hip hop lyrics. While Jay-Z and others launched fashion labels and spent fortunes making jet-set music videos, only producer and singer P. Diddy (Puff Daddy, aka Sean Combs) embraced every aspect of the movie-star lifestyle from the enormous entourage and summer encampment at St Tropez to Savile Row suits and outsize cigars. As with Beyoncé Knowles, the former member of the girl group Destiny's Child who established herself as a modern urban music performer in the showgirl tradition, his links to a predominantly poor black community withered over time. The glamour of bling was a powerful counter to the corporate control of luxury. But the new money of black entertainment inevitably found designers who were willing to cater to it and

the sector also spawned artists who designed their own ranges of clothes and accessories. Far from being critical, bling was soon absorbed into a trash glamour aesthetic that celebrated the most brash, nouveau riche, and sleazy of styles and accessories. After the death of Versace, the Roman designer Roberto Cavalli emerged as the champion of the latter-day jet-set look. His beautifully made garments featured the boldest of animal prints and were covered with gold motifs.[93] Bling was even cautiously embraced by Armani's youth-oriented Emporio Armani line and especially by the Emporio fragrance Diamonds (which featured an image of Beyoncé on the presentation box).

Glamour at the turn of the century was a complex enchantment that was primarily connected to commercial milieux. The tight linkages between the press, television, merchandising, and fashion produced a striking glamorization of sectors once largely immune to its magic. A sport like Formula One had always attracted a high degree of glamour. Not only were races held around the world in alluring locations but the concentration of money, risk, speed, and possible death rendered the spectacle compelling. The racing community, moreover, was populated by young drivers who often enjoyed the fast life away from the track. In contrast to the interwar years, when there were a number of women drivers, Formula One drivers were uniformly male. The presence of models and beauty queens at races and on their arms confirmed a gender hierarchy and made ample use of ornamental femininity to enhance the sexual buzz of the occasion. However, the same could not be said of football which lacked the romantic appeal of individual sports and was strongly rooted to community and place. In the course of the 1990s, this changed as the sport's upper reaches became globalized and footballers' earnings spiralled. An elite of rich, stylish footballers made lucrative sponsorship deals, were recruited by fashion companies and were turned into all-round celebrities. David Beckham, the England captain from 2000 to 2006, was the most prominent of these. A certain feminization accompanied glamorization, provoking a rift with the unvarnished masculine values that in Britain had long dominated the game.[94] The glamorization of tennis followed conventional feminine lines. It produced a flurry of sponsorship deals and heavy coverage of a minor player, the blonde Russian Anna Kournikova, whose achievements on the court were outweighed by her

good looks. Glamour was a distorting factor in the distribution of rewards that could not be entirely resisted because of the advantages it brought in terms of publicity and income to sport.

More than any other medium, it was the press that provided the key platform to make events and personalities glamorous. Glossy illustrated monthlies and weeklies possessed a unique capacity to distil lives and lifestyles into desirable capsules. They produced narratives of transformation that connected the ordinary and the extraordinary, the unlikely and the possible. As a heroine of the press, Princess Diana was a constant feature of readers' lives, her saga a mega-narrative that provided a screen on to which dreams were projected. But it was not only personalities of her elevated status that received this treatment. Magazines existed at every level and in several varieties to cater for the specific needs of readers of different ages, interests, and income brackets. At the apex of the press pyramid were magazines belonging to the Condé Nast stable. Nearly one hundred years after the Midwesterner Nast had turned *Vogue* into the bible of the American rich, the magazine and its foreign editions occupied a different but not unrelated position in the creation and diffusion of desirable lifestyles. Never merely a fashion magazine, *Vogue* was always a style guide, trend-former, and cultural weathervane. The classic glossy magazine, under the Briton Anna Wintour's direction American *Vogue* maintained a sharp focus on high fashion while not disdaining popular culture. She applied the group editor-in-chief Alexander Liberman's injunction that what was needed was a glitzy mix of celebrity and sensation inspired by the supermarket tabloids.[95]

A similar mix characterized the content of another Condé Nast publication, *Vanity Fair*. With a title taken from Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* was edited in the interwar years by Nast's colleague Frank Crowinshield. It was revived in the 1980s under the editorship of another Briton, Tina Brown, who would later author a gossipy biography of Diana, Princess of Wales. Before ceding the editorship to Graydon Carter in 1992, Brown moulded it as a magazine dedicated to worship at the altar of celebrity, while championing quality writing, investigative journalism, and provocative photography. A typical issue at any time between the 1990s and the present might include a feature on a current celebrity, a reportage on a gruesome crime of the recent past, a picture sequence of groups of media industry professionals, a comment on

politics, and an essay on some semi-forgotten glamour figure. In its pages, criminals, film stars, artists, politicians, heiresses, and tycoons all mingled without discrimination, while gossip took the place of reflection. By the early 1990s, it had become an upmarket version of the *National Inquirer*.[96] Even in its foreign editions, *Vanity Fair* breathed the high-pressure atmosphere of Manhattan, of which it became a social bible, and positioned itself as a guide to the zeitgeist. Although it retained editorial control of content, the magazine was utterly in thrall to show-business celebrity and the industries that sustained it. Its tie to Hollywood was demonstrated by its annual hosting of an exclusive after-Oscar party in Los Angeles. When he briefly worked for the magazine, British journalist Toby Young found that the shine and sparkle of Manhattan social life depended on a public realm in which notoriety had led to 'the disintegration of the self, or, at least, the transformation of the self into something less recognisably human'.[97]

Mario Testino, whose iconic portraits of Princess Diana graced *Vanity Fair* in 1997, was one of the preferred photographers of this age of celebratory celebrity. Like his professional colleagues, he had a keen awareness of heritage. However, only some of his work bore a resemblance to that of other photographers, such as his shots for the 2001 Pirelli calendar, which featured Newtonesque portraits of semi-naked supermodels in luxurious indoor and outdoor settings. In general, he did not explore the darker reaches of the imagination or resort to bizarre personal fantasies like Newton. Nor even did he use light and shade to create pure artistic effects. Rather he developed a sun-drenched style of celebratory photography and, in his many celebrity portraits, he always produced a result that flattered. Every one of them seemed to have been sprinkled with the distilled euphoria of a carnival in Rio. Not by chance, he discovered and (despite the initial scepticism of some fashion editors) launched the big-haired and moderately curvaceous Brazilian model, Gisele Bündchen. He created in his photographs a world that always looked glamorous, sexy, and fun and Gisele, with her expensive and unapproachable air, perfectly encapsulated this.

Testino was disdained by some photographers, such as Lord Snowdon, who snootily referred to 'that ghastly Peruvian'. 'All he does is: "Lovey, lovey, lovey, come on, smile,"' he grumbled.[98] His preoccupation with surfaces led to

accusations that he 'sprinkled fairydust over eveything' and saw the world 'through a haze of Prozac'.[99] He belonged, it was said, to a tradition of sycophantic portraiture that went back to Sargent and to Gainsborough. When an exhibition of his work was held in London, the Communist *Morning Star* newspaper accused him of representing 'an unappealing and superficial world' and of providing 'an overly flattering and wholly dishonest view of what London is like for the majority of its inhabitants'.[100] Without doubt, his work was unmarked by the taint of harsh realism. Testino was a jet-setter who worked all over the globe and his world was one in which everyone was beautiful. One of his famous subjects once said that he brought out people's lightest side. His ostensibly natural pictures made their subjects look beautiful and happy, and situated them in a realm far removed from the mundane. Yet Testino was no simple snapper of beautiful people. To arrive at the euphoric results for which he was famous, he worked hard on his subjects, relaxing them with humour and creating an atmosphere of intimacy. They were made to feel safe and sexy through charm and flattery. Models were 'worked' at length, with a stylist, make-up artist, and hairdresser experimenting with numerous different looks to reach the clearest expression of their beauty.[101] On an assignment, an entire troupe would be present, including, other than the above, three assistants, a hair assistant, a prop stylist and his or her assistant, plus several production people and sometimes art directors and clients.[102]

No less than in the past, glamour was often a matter of men producing idealized or manipulated images of women. However, it would not be correct to conclude that female appearances were simply controlled and dictated by men. In an era in which sensibilities and attitudes had been shaped by feminism and the women's movement's message of empowerment and self-determination, things were more complex. In the so-called post-feminist era, women took over a range of female roles and images that had initially been produced for male pleasure and turned them to their own ends. Madonna was the pioneer here, a powerful entertainment innovator who selected roles from a wide repertoire thus highlighting her capacity for choice and her distance from each. But revivalism was complicated, particularly in a culture in which the perfection not only of the visual image but also of the physical body was highly prized. While some women saw personal

and professional potential in it, the manufacture and distribution of superbly glossed female images had complex implications. These had elements of irony but they were sometimes outweighed by the persistence of the conventional functions of female spectacle. One example was the reinvention of the pin-up, not as a marginal commercial form solely for male consumption, but as a crucial vehicle for the formation and diffusion of ideals of contemporary femininity. The focus on the female body that had always been the key feature of the pin-up was now complemented by a pronounced standardization that was shaped more by the work of 1940s' illustrators such as Varga and Gil Evgren than by creative contemporary photographers. The female flesh of the contemporary pin-up was firm and pneumatic, her appearance perfected, and her curves improbably rounded. The most high-profile exponent of this modern take on retro glamour was Pamela Anderson. The Canadian model and actress first came to prominence in *Baywatch*, the popular television series about Los Angeles county lifeguards that ran from 1989 to 2001. With its slow-motion shots of Anderson, Yasmine Bleeth, and other female lifeguards running in swimsuits, the show won a reputation for its voyeuristic moving pin-ups ('Baywatch Babes'). Its male guards were tanned and muscular, while female ones were mostly slim-hipped and large-breasted. Anderson had appeared in *Playboy* prior to being cast in the series and her public personality would remain that of a centrefold. Hailed in the press as a 'living doll', she played cartoonish characters in several movies. Her surgically enhanced figure, bleached hair, and porn-star lips were admired and attacked in equal measure as signs of a femininity that was a pure projection of male dreams. She was an uncomplicated object of desire who had turned herself into a modern American icon.[103] Other women found that moulding themselves into figures of male desire was remunerative and a sure way to attract publicity. But tragedies also ensued. The early deaths of the French porn star Lolo Ferrari, whose body had been transformed beyond all recognition to resemble an inflatable doll, and former Playmate and millionaire widow Anna Nicole Smith revealed that behind their Barbie-fied facades lay messy lives and serious personal problems.

Other forms of female spectacle flourished in the 1990s as retro entertainments which were embraced by their practitioners as forms of empowerment. Burlesque was one of these. Retro-striptease began in upscale

nightclubs in New York and Los Angeles and then spread more widely. The burlesque museum in Helendale, California also promoted it. The post-feminist mood witnessed a reflowering in new and old guises of a variety of entertainment forms that had been thought defunct. Pole-dancing, lap-dancing, and striptease were the tip of a recrudescent phenomenon of female spectacle that also saw the return not only of pin-ups, but of television hostesses and service industry beauties.[104] The allure of upscale settings was, as so often in the past, employed to disguise a direct or indirect commercialization of sex. The revival of burlesque was, however, an exception that was more or less single-handedly thrust into the mainstream by Dita von Teese, an artiste who aimed at an authentic reinvention of a show-business idiom that had died in the 1950s. Born Heather Sweet in Michigan, she reinvented herself as a persona with a unique retro allure. With her trademark acts, such as bathing in a Martini glass or emerging from a giant gold compact, she created a magical world of dreams and illusion. With her straight black hair, creamy white skin, blood-red lips, and shapely body, she was as much a photographic icon as a stage performer and in fact her fame derived largely from coverage in *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, *Playboy*, and other magazines as well as her picture book *Burlesque and the Art of the Teese*.[105] Always exquisitely attired, whether in a sheer evening gown, pretty lingerie, fetish wear, or feathers and sequins, her perfection was that of a plasticated mannequin. She was sex appeal without sex, an icy composition of material goods and dead dreams. Von Teese's mortuary sheen was programmatic. 'I live out my most glamorous fantasies by bringing nostalgic imagery to life,' she declared; adding that she advocated glamour 'Every day. Every minute'.[106] Precisely this lack of warmth and refusal to drop her stage mask gave her act a stunning artificiality. Whereas the theatrical excess of the original burlesque artists was demeaned by the harsh eye of photography, which revealed their physical imperfections, von Teese deployed the medium as a crucial prop to fantasy. She also revived the kinky style of pin-up art of the 1950s, posing as one of the leading models of that era, Bettie Page.[107]

Contemporary glamour is often a mix of ideas and themes drawn from the past and rendered contemporary by some skilful blending and fashioning.

Although men may sometimes enter the realm of glamour, it is still predominantly feminine—and it is often assumed to be naturally so. The most contemporary forms of glamour are supplied by young starlets like Lindsay Lohan, Nicole Richie, Mischa Barton, and Jessica Simpson. For a whole generation, they are idols who have enviable, if sometimes turbulent, lifestyles. In contrast to the studio-formed and studio-protected stars of the Hollywood golden age, they are continually forced to make choices about their own presentation. It is the task of publicists and other image-makers to 'gift wrap' such personalities and insert them in semi-fictional narratives comprised of simulated events and partially revealed lives.[108] Lohan and company are the sort of people whose wardrobes and red-carpet outfits are masterminded by the leading celebrity stylists. One of these, Rachel Zoe, developed a trademark style suited to younger female stars that was a clever mixture of street style and stage costume, with elements of early Bardot. Tousled hair, cropped jeans, little jackets, gold chains, and stilettos marked her signature day looks while designer wear and occasionally vintage wear was preferred for the evening.[109] Classic bags and jewellery were vital attention-grabbing extras (or 'excessories', as she termed them). She also addressed the issue of weight and was accused of encouraging the stick-thin 'size zero' look among her clients.[110] Like a handful of other stylists, Zoe became a public figure, who appeared on television, commented in magazines and authored a book entitled *Style A to Zoe: The Art of Fashion, Beauty and Everything Glamour.*[111] 'I've always been obsessed with style and glamour,' she told one interviewer,[112] while declaring in her book that 'My kind of glamour combines California ease with New York high life. It favors modern, even if it's vintage. It's browned to a deep Bain de Soleil tan and best served up with a crisp glass of champagne.'[113] She claimed that the key factor in achieving a glamorous identity was to create oneself: 'build, shape, construct, deconstruct, form—all terms conveying a work in process and one that's open to experiment'.[114] 'And it all begins with dreaming,' she added. Zoe saw herself as a fairy godmother, not just to her young stars, but to any woman who dreamed that she could 'create a better reality' for herself and who applied the lessons set out in her book.[115] Glamour was about trying harder and wanting a better life and then enjoying the rewards of designer clothes and a

flashy car. 'There *is* something magical about glamour, but it doesn't just happen with a twitch of the nose or snap of the fingers,' she warned her readers.[116]

The marketed dream of a better life has always required role models, people who illustrated enviable lifestyles and gave them concrete form. In October 2005, *Vanity Fair* featured on its cover a young woman who was neither a movie star, nor a recording artist, nor even a model or a sportswoman, although she would have liked to have been most if not all of these things. Yet she was indisputably glamorous. By late 2005, the 24-year-old Paris Hilton had become 'The Inescapable Paris',[117] an ubiquitous presence on the American party circuit and the latest incarnation of the phenomenon of the heiress that had transfixed the United States from the middle decades of the nineteenth century.[118] Like Barbara Hutton and Doris Duke before her, Hilton was a product of an established commercial dynasty, in her case the Hilton hotel chain founded by her great-grandfather in 1919. Strictly speaking, Paris was not an heiress at all; with both parents living, she had no immediate prospect of inheriting a fortune. What is more, her father Rick was only the sixth child of the second son of Conrad Hilton. Nevertheless, with its base in Beverly Hills, the hotel chain was one of the largest in the world, with over 220 hotels in the United States and worldwide belonging to the group. Rick and his wife Kathy controlled a $70 million fortune and lived between a $6.5 million home in Bel Air, California, a $4 million house in The Hamptons, the Long Island summer playground of America's super-rich for over a century, and a permanent suite at New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel. The family was rich and self-assured, almost American royalty.[119]

The Hilton family had always courted publicity and no one more than founder Conrad, who died in 1979 at the age of 92. He invited celebrities to hotel openings and mingled with the stars, marrying Zsa Zsa Gabor in 1946. His first son Nick, who died in 1969, was briefly married to Elizabeth Taylor. From an early age Paris featured in magazines, along with her younger sister Nicky. Her teenage years were spent not at any regular school but hopping between hotel suites. For a period, home was the Beverly Hills Hotel. She quickly learned that media interest could be turned to her advantage and she became a professional party girl, appearing in the tabloids at numerous events and learning that she could charge merely for turning up.

Her public personality is that of the carefree and not very bright girl having fun, trying her hand at whatever takes her fancy. Unlike heiresses of other eras, she does not appear to be the product of an inaccessible realm of privilege but rather to be imbued with pop culture. She has appeared in several movies, made a pop record, appeared on the catwalk, and authored a handful of books. 'I love junk food,' she proclaimed in her best-selling *Confessions of an Heiress*,[120] while simultaneously saying, 'I always try to travel first class or private' and turning up her nose at the New York subway ('It literally smells like pee').[121] She offers herself as an ideal for the lazy and unambitious, a young woman whose main interest is herself and her lifestyle. 'My life is a party,' she announced, while responding to those who had described her as 'Paris Barbie' by asserting that she regarded such a designation as a compliment. 'My total fashion icon!' was how she described the celebrated doll.[122]

Paris Hilton's glamour is bound up with the image of Beverly Hills, that is of a residential district that is both impossibly rich and privileged but also brash and ostentatious.[123] Paris is the pink-clad, super-tanned spoilt child who has a customized Ferrari and a chihuahua named Tinkerbell. Like the Californian 'Valley girls' of the 1980s, whose self-obsession and materialism was satirized in the teen movie *Clueless*, she is vitally concerned with self-fashioning, regularly changing her hair colour and style to suit her mood. She is never very serious and is constantly photographed smiling. Like glamorous figures of the past, she is an astute merchandiser of herself. She has a profitable line of jewellery that bears her name, and also a line of fragrances. Her fame was boosted when she appeared in two series of a television reality show entitled *The Simple Life*, which saw her and her friend Nicole Richie abandon their golden lives for a period on a farm. Like Marie Antoinette at the Petit Trianon, Paris revelled in the artificial simplicity, sure in the knowledge that her real realm was the privileged one she knew best.

Hilton owes much of her fame to the internet and in this sense her glamour is mediated in a way that is original. She became a household name after a former lover released a sex tape on the net that was seen by millions. Indeed, thanks to this, 'Paris Hilton' became one of the most Googled terms. Far from damaging her reputation irretrievably, this scandal

put her on the cover of tabloids and made her into a transgressive figure. As had previously occurred with revelations about Princess Diana's lovers, or the distribution of a similar sex-tape featuring Pamela Anderson and her then husband Tommy Lee, the brush of sleaze added spice to the cocktail of fame. She became a 'bad girl' in the eyes of the popular press, even if her boyfriend had betrayed her trust to release the film. It is noteworthy that her jewellery line is sold mainly through the internet. Hilton straddles celebrity and notoriety, switching between a lifestyle that is a fantasy for millions and real-life falls from grace. In 2007, her imprisonment following driving offences achieved front-page coverage around the world. She was described as 'oozing glamour' even in her jail pictures, while British tabloid the *Sun* described her transfer from a movie awards ceremony to a public penitentiary on the evening her sentence was to begin as a slide 'from glamour to slammer'.[124] After her release, she underwent a brief period of public repentance before resuming her party lifestyle as though nothing had happened.

Paris Hilton is the current embodiment of society's fascination with rich, beautiful, exhibitionist women. Her saleable self corresponds to a widespread desire for self-transformation and vicarious living that continues to fuel dreams of glamour. The modern media work to render everything immediately visible and blend the private with the public. This undercuts the distance usually held to be necessary to cultivate mystery and arouse envy. Yet, in a culture in which consumerism remains a central experience and in which media images are ubiquitous, glamour has not disappeared. The very plurality of enticing images, produced by magazines, the fashion industry, film and television producers, advertisers and public relations companies, fosters an idea of glamour as an accessible ideal, a touch of sparkle that can add something to every life. It is this idea that continues to work its magic even in the niche forums of new media.