

Lone Star College Kingwood

Girlbossing from 1890-2021:

Fame and Feminism in *Sister Carrie*

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Abstract

In a time when celebrities are at the center of America's media, female celebrities need more protections than ever. This research first analyzes Theodore Dreiser's rendition of fame for the character Caroline Meeber in his 1900 novel *Sister Carrie*, and then compares her rise to fame with those of Marilyn Monroe, Diana Ross, Winona Ryder, and Amanda Bynes to study the evolution of the entertainment industry in the 20th and 21st centuries. As a celebrity herself, Carrie is treated like an object and subject through her feminine contradictions of innocence and sexuality. This process of objectification is also seen in modern-day workplaces, with women being discounted for their gender. Dreiser accurately portrays fame for women through Carrie's increasing loneliness as she acquires stardom, but the entertainment industry has not properly evolved in support of women. As girls enter the industry at exponentially younger ages, mental health and well-being decreases. Implications of this research include advancing protections for women in the entertainment industry and limiting the media's influences on teenage girls.

Keywords: entertainment industry, media, fame, feminism, celebrity, Carrie Meeber, Marilyn Monroe, Diana Ross, Winona Ryder, and Amanda Bynes.

Girlbossing from 1890-2021: Fame and Feminism in *Sister Carrie*

Sister Carrie is a naturalist work following the story of a young girl who utilizes the resources and attention she gains from others to succeed as an actress on Broadway. She receives her first successful role as a frowning Quakeress in the background of a scene. Throughout the passages explaining her performance, Dreiser provides the feelings of the audience: “The portly gentlemen in the front rows began to feel that she was a delicious little morsel. It was the kind of frown they would have loved to force away with kisses.” (Dreiser 313). With this assessment in mind, the research question for my project was: how realistic was Dreiser’s representation of fame in *Sister Carrie*, and how has treatment of women in the entertainment industry evolved over time?

When considering Carrie’s performances, many scholars discuss her on-stage to off-stage transformation. The reaction of the audience allows Carrie to revel in her feminine contradictions – innocence and sexuality - through a transformation from object to subject (Harmon). She gains omnipotence on-stage but reverts back into an object off-stage (St. Jean). As discussed by Lori Merish, Carrie’s objectivity was established through the influences of desire and commodity in the late nineteenth century. Concepts like objectification relate to the modern workplace, and the tendency for feminine contradictions to create career barriers (Deutsch).

This research plans to study *Sister Carrie*, specifically her life as an actress. The majority of the works studied for this paper included analyses on Carrie’s rise to stardom, her treatment in the theater, and her treatment as a young woman in nineteenth century society. Carrie’s story will provide insight into how women’s agency has evolved over time. In addition to the evolution of the entertainment industry, this research aimed to verify Dreiser’s representation of the entertainment industry by analyzing the stories of famous women from 1950 to present day. The

women studied in this research paper included Marilyn Monroe, Diana Ross, Winona Ryder, and Amanda Bynes. The conclusions derived from the analysis will contribute to a greater understanding of Carrie's development as an actress and the overall treatment of women in acting. Through a better knowledge of Carrie's story, we can understand the degree of change that has occurred for women in the workplace. In terms of *Sister Carrie*, the audience can further appreciate Carrie's journey to stardom and realize the influences behind her success.

Literature Review

Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is a naturalist book following Caroline Meeber and her social climb from small-town girl to Broadway star. *Sister Carrie* is praised for being one of the best works of literary naturalism, but many question its ability to be classified in the genre. Compared to Zola's strict literary naturalism, Dreiser assumes a smooth, readable position in naturalism. Yoshinobu Hakutani describes the characters in *Sister Carrie* as "not necessarily the master of forces, but not entirely the victim of forces" (Hakutani 9). The characters have the free will to fight between their own instinct and natural forces. Carrie herself is battling between "desire and understanding" (Hakutani 10). This compassion for his characters in Dreiser's writing allows the audience to empathize and relate to the inner workings of Carrie's story. With that assessment in mind, this literature review will focus on scholarly articles regarding Carrie's fame and women in the workplace. While expectations of a woman have changed drastically since the publication of *Sister Carrie*, there are still parallels between Carrie's fictional life in 1900 and real lives in modern day.

Celebrity has been an impactful factor in everyone's lives. From watching the news to scrolling through social media, celebrities have been present. Donna Rockwell and David Giles – a licensed psychologist and a media expert respectively – studied the effects of fame on human

thought processes. After surveying fifteen anonymous celebrities, the authors found a pattern. They claimed fame was experienced in “four phases: a period of love/hate towards the experience; an addiction phase where behavior is directed solely towards...remaining famous; and an acceptance phase, requiring...change in...routines; and finally an adaptation phase, where new behaviors are developed” (Rockwell & Giles 184). The authors continue the article with several negative aspects of fame: loss of privacy and mistrust. Even with the negative effects, the individuals did not wish to change their experience. The authors conclude with the idea that celebrities are the ideal in the Western world, and becoming a celebrity is a fantasy for many Americans.

The concept of the celebrity American dream is central to Carrie’s story. One could argue that Carrie goes through the same four phases throughout the narrative. She never had a love/hate phase, but this research can assert she experienced an addiction phase and an adaptation phase. The addiction phase was manifested towards her desire for commodity and finery; acting provided large sums of money, which formed her addiction. Adaptation was presented near the end of the novel, when Carrie finds herself alone in her hotel room. These common moments are not the only indications of Carrie’s relation to modern fame, while on-stage around adoring fans, she experiences an “individual uniqueness and ‘specialness’ that spurs those who seek celebrity status” (Rockwell & Giles 207). Carrie responds positively to the attention she receives on-stage. The reader is shown this positive reaction after Carrie’s performance as Pearl, where Drouet and Hurstwood praise Carrie extensively after the show. Their attention makes Carrie feel special and wanted, which is an effect of celebrity (Rockwell & Giles).

Carrie’s fascination with commodity culture contributed to her objectification. According to Lori Merish, Carrie’s transformation in the story is attributed to this commodity culture that

Carrie was so obsessed with. Merish specifically cites a scene when Carrie and Drouet are walking down the streets of Chicago. She noticed the intricacies of feminine style, she is “learning to look” (Merish 320). Through this experience, Carrie finds herself “comparison shopping,” and discovers flaws in her own mannerisms. Merish explains this effect as the male gaze, or “masculine aesthetics underwritten by male economic power” (Merish 321). In order to be the perfect object for Drouet, Carrie feels she needs to emulate the women he compliments. Merish concludes the *Sister Carrie* section of her article by claiming “class, race, sexual, and national” consumer subjectivities formed the preferences that made women into material images (Merish 321).

Carrie’s rise to fame is a topic often discussed in analyzations of *Sister Carrie*. Her position as an actress, both in Chicago and New York City, provides a power role unseen in everyday women of the 1800s. According to Charles Harmon, “male characters in the novel show themselves immediately willing to worship Carrie simply because she fulfills cultural standards for a kind of childlike...beauty commonly known as ‘cuteness’ or ‘girlishness’” (Harmon 126). Harmon explained Carrie’s career as powerful helplessness; for instance, as an actress, she gained omnipotence on stage, but was treated averagely in her real life. Harmon concluded his research by claiming this brief inversion of gender roles provided a moment for men to contemplate systemic change.

This way of worshipping Carrie’s position is strange considering nineteenth century societal expectations of women. St. Jean, a literary scholar, describes this transition from street to stage as taking Carrie from “object to subject” (St. Jean 135). As Carrie continues on-stage, she began “looking down, rather than up, at her lover” (Dreiser 193). The contradictory nature of the

actress provides a quick taste of freedom from societal expectations – a moment to experience freedom through the omnipotence of cuteness.

While Harmon notes some actresses from Carrie's time in the later nineteenth century, there are actresses from the twentieth century who have similar contradictions as Carrie: for instance, fifties star Marilyn Monroe. In their article, Agata Łuksza studies the media's version of Marilyn Monroe alongside theories of femineity and glamour. Monroe's all-American, girly, and sexual appearance created the glamorous legacy maintained today. Girly and sexual are two contrasting definitions, but Łuksza embraced this contradiction and labels it a reason behind Monroe's success. In a time when sexuality and desire were chastised, "Monroe – being untroublesome and vulnerable – offered an escape from the threat of female sexuality" (Łuksza 61). This vulnerability was similarly reflected in her acting career, with the men in the audience believing they could be in a relationship with a woman like Marilyn.

The contradictions in Marilyn Monroe are akin to the concept of cuteness explained by Harmon. Łuksza describes glamour as, "hyper-feminine visual code that marks the female body as an object of desire [and] an object of consumption and the bearer of social aspirations" (Łuksza 58). Through glamour, Monroe became an unattainable, yet attainable, figure in the eyes of the public. Surprisingly, Carrie's fame has a similar effect. Through combining Harmon's description of cuteness and Łuksza's concept of glamour, Carrie's on-stage presence communicates an unattainable, but helpless attitude to the audience. When Carrie receives one of her first acting jobs in chapter nineteen, her acting is so innocent and desirable that both Drouet and Hurstwood decide they must have her, they both felt "that she was talking to him" (Dreiser 131).

Marilyn Monroe's beauty was considered unachievable for the average woman. Like Marilyn Monroe, Carrie's girlish beauty and innocence is observed by both Hurstwood and Drouet. Beauty is a principal reason behind feminine success in the entertainment industry. Laura Bieger, a literary history scholar and professor, criticizes modern beauty standards. Bieger asserts that glorifying the modern body and striving for imagined bodies is problematic. She claims, "desired appearance is imagined by merging impressions of our own body with those of others" (Bieger 675). The amount of time spent achieving the imagined body creates a need for recognition and individuality within the intricate network of humanity.

The most applicable section of Bieger's work to this research is her discussion on *Sister Carrie* and the modern body. Bieger describes Carrie as craving and desiring the commodity surround her on Broadway. She decides her clothes are lesser-than and finds herself jealous of the women around her. In terms of Bieger's argument, she begins to combine the women on Broadway to create her imagined self. This conclusion is significant to this research through objectification. As mentioned in Lori Merish's article on Carrie's subjectivity, the need for material gain and commodity was derived from the male gaze. The "pretty girl picture" was crucial to success. Considering that actresses often have to meet this standard, objectification is a subject that comes to mind when discussing the entertainment industry: for instance, how female actresses are incapable of securing roles past a certain age or poor treatment of women behind the scenes.

While preferences and objectification are common in the entertainment industry, women in regular work environments regularly experience the same discrimination. In response to a 1980s article discussing gender constructs and how they are reformed by continued use, Francine M. Deutsch discusses the importance of undoing gender: "[r]ather than internalize a set of

behaviors...that were rewarded and modeled by parents, teachers, and other authority figures, men and women create gender within social relationships throughout their lives” (Deutsch 107). This assessment asserts that formed ideas of gender are dynamic. She concludes that gender stereotypes and gendered career barriers stagnate efforts towards equality. Similarly, Bobbitt-Zeher’s article on workplace discrimination finds that stereotypes of women as careless workers and “sexual objects” contributes to this plateaued set of behaviors (Bobbitt-Zeher 781).

Even though Carrie received her first job in the 1890s, some of the barriers and gender constructs described by Bobbitt-Zeher are present in her career. Carrie begins her journey in Chicago looking for work. When she receives a job at a shoe company, her colleagues are all flirtatious and silly with each other. Carrie shows an obvious disdain for this lifestyle and longs for more. Gender constructs were very prevalent in the nineteenth century – women barely had any agency. While this lack of agency is the unfortunate truth, the same constructs were utilized in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Famous women, like those studied in this research, were still treated with the same strict stereotypes - even with acquired agency.

This literature review deduces that Caroline Meeber has qualities of both modern celebrities and modern women. While the reader is watching Carrie rise to stardom, they also see her falling into a cycle of desire through the addition of money and influences of commodity. She is likewise treated like an object through the audience’s reaction to her performance. Similar to Marilyn Monroe, she gains this stardom through her feminine contradiction of cuteness and sexuality. This process of objectification is additionally shown in modern times, with gender roles and barriers present in the workplace. This literature review indicates that Carrie has comparable attributes to famous women in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Methodology

The four famous women studied in this research – Marilyn Monroe, Diana Ross, Winona Ryder, and Amanda Bynes – were chosen based on twenty-year increments. The women chosen were extremely popular in the given time frame. This research will study each woman individually to discover her views on the industry, how fame affected her life, and any other circumstances specific to the actress. Caroline Meeber’s experience will then be compared to these women through a feminist lens to distinguish the similarities and differences between Carrie and real-life actresses.

Analysis

Marilyn Monroe (1950)

The first woman studied in this research – and the closest in year to Carrie – was Marilyn Monroe. Marilyn Monroe was a public figure and actress popular in the 1950s and early 1960s. She was born on June 1, 1926, as Norma Jean Mortenson in Los Angeles, California. Throughout her childhood, she phased through twelve foster families while her mother was in an asylum. After the war, she signed with a modeling agency, and in 1946, she signed a contract with Twentieth Century Fox. She filmed majority of her movies, including *The Seven Year Itch* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, with the studio until she was fired in 1962 for poor behavior. Over the span of her career, she produced 200 million dollars for Fox Studios. On August 5, 1962, Marilyn Monroe passed away from a drug overdose, which was allegedly a suicide (Britannica, 2021).

One of Marilyn Monroe’s most famous quotes is: “[f]ame is like caviar, you know – it’s good to have caviar but not when you have it every meal” (Monroe 81). This quote reflects her view on fame, especially considering her 1962 *Life Magazine* article, “A Last Long Talk With A

Lonely Girl” and “The Final Interview” both by Richard Meryman. This article provides an interesting view on Marilyn’s life because the audience is shown both Marilyn’s words and the ideas of Meryman. She believed the best way “to handle fame is with honesty...and the other way to handle it when something happens – as things have happened recently...my goodness, the things they try to do to you...I handle with silence” (Monroe 32). Fox Studios was the main perpetrator behind Marilyn’s silence. They would often tell her, “[r]emember, you’re not a star” and subsequently treat her poorly (Monroe 33). As often as she fought this treatment, Fox Studios still failed to regard her as a celebrity. They would force her to work when she was sick, describing the industry as “a mother whose child has just run out in front of a car. But instead of clasping the child to them, they start punishing the child” (Monroe 33). While Monroe would try her best to fight for her position as a star, she struggled to overrule the strict demands of Fox Century Studios.

Despite the hardship from the media and Fox Studios, she overall enjoyed being loved by her fans and feeling like “she meant something to them” (Monroe). She had millions of adoring fans all around the world, and yet she had trouble finding genuine friendships. She seemed to see herself as unattainable to people, and claimed her position as a celebrity was nice, but “you also like to be accepted for your own sake” not as a side effect of celebrity (Monroe 81). Her friends, who she believed were genuine and true, would talk to the press and tell stories where every weakness is emphasized. She was a lonely person, with few friends upon whom she could rely.

The final aspect of Marilyn Monroe in this research is her position as a sex symbol. She claimed, “I don’t mind being burdened with being glamorous and sexual. But what goes with it can be a burden...that’s the trouble, a sex symbol becomes a thing. I just hate to be a thing” (Monroe 1962). By being a “thing,” the audience can only assume she means being objectified.

As a sex symbol, Marilyn is an object of fantasy. She was sexual, yet innocent, which provided a contradiction that removed the guilt in the fifties, when sexuality was considered distasteful.

Overall, Monroe appreciated her own sexuality but disliked the burden of sexuality that derived from fame.

Diana Ross (1970)

Similar to Carrie Meeber, Diana Ross grew up within a big, loving, family. This similarity allows the audience to find connections between the two entertainers. To provide a brief synopsis of Ross' life, Diana Ross is a pop singer who gained popularity in the late 1960s and 1970s. Diana Ross was born on March 26, 1944, in Detroit. She began her career by gathering friends in her neighborhood to create a singing group called the Primettes. This group was later renamed the Supremes, and included Mary Wilson, Florence Ballard, and later, Cindy Birdsong. Some of their well-known songs include "Stop! In the Name of Love" and "Someday We'll Be Together." Later in her career, Diana broke off from the group and became a single artist, creating hits such as "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." Her acting debut came in 1972 with a film biography of Billie Holiday, which got her nominated for an Oscar award. In 1988 she was granted a spot in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, received a Grammy Award in 2012, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2016 (Britannica, 2021).

In her 1993 interview with Charlie Rose discussing her memoir, *Secrets of a Sparrow*, Diana addressed some aspects and misconceptions of her fame. When Diana was a young performer in the 1960s, she felt that the industry was ingenuine: "In the early days we were just a product, you didn't realize your real worth or that you could somehow make a difference... [we were] just moving around and selling records, doing interviews and saying things that were not honest" (Ross, 19:55-20:20). As a famous person, she seemed unattainable to her audience and

found that “they don’t see your real life” (Ross, 11:41 – 11:53). In an interview with Arsenio Hall, Arsenio made the comment, “I feel like I know you, and when you think of Diana Ross sometimes you think of the kind of publicity that press might set up...you always hear about the diva” (Ross, 11:39-12:02). Arsenio Hall mentioned how she was nothing like her diva perception. Diana mentioned how being a woman in the industry who has strict standards caused the media to call her crude names. The industry was critical of Diana, and that public criticism often caused interviewers to be surprised by her graciousness.

While Diana was very proud of her accomplishments during her time in the Supremes and her solo career, she revealed a severe loneliness that arose from fame. She made the comment “I think we’re a lot alone...a lot of times, you know, you can perform for millions of people...and then you come home, and you go home by yourself” (Ross, 14:17-14:47). Diana’s perspective on family and the importance of keeping herself grounded among her children allowed her to emerge from her loneliness and thrive.

Finally, this research wished to highlight Diana’s position as an African American woman in the entertainment industry. As one of the first African American superstars, she experienced more criticism and scrutiny than white celebrities in the seventies. When asked how she handled this scrutiny, she claimed “I hold it as something positive, that you know it’s important that I am a certain way for others. Young kids looking at me thinking they can...I like the idea of taking a look at the images that make a difference to our young people” (Ross 18:11-18:37). She spoke of her children highly and gave the impression that she was proud to be an African American superstar for children all around the world.

Winona Ryder (1990)

Although Ryder began acting as a preteen, she became exceptionally famous at eighteen – the same age Carrie was when she arrived in Chicago. Their age provides an interesting basis for comparing their thought processes and actions as celebrities. Winona Ryder is an actress born on October 29, 1971, in Winona, Minnesota. She grew up on a commune in Northern California before moving to Petaluma, California, around thirteen and enrolling in an acting conservatory. Around that time is when she fell in love with acting and performed her debut role in *Lucas*. She was best known in the 1990s for her roles in *Beetlejuice*, *Little Women*, *Edward Scissorhands*, and *Age of Innocence*. More recently she has portrayed Joyce Byers in Netflix's *Stranger Things* (Biography.com Editors, n.d.).

The topic Winona Ryder most often discussed in her interviews regarding fame was her anxiety and depression. In an interview discussing her new movie *Girl, Interrupted*, Winona revealed her own struggles with mental health as a teenager. As she would film more movies, she would endure terrible anxiety attacks, feeling “terrified of letting anybody around me know” (Ryder, 1:27-1:28). Her busy schedule as an emerging actress likely emphasized her mental health struggles. She was only an adolescent when she began acting, and she claimed, “Millions of people were judging me...it is difficult to be judged, to be reviewed, as a teenager” (Ryder, 4:06-4:23). She was told early in her career that she lacked the looks of an actress, and that she would fail in the industry. Even with the judgement and mental health struggles she faced, she felt “I wasn’t allowed to complain because I was so lucky...my problems weren’t real problems” (Ryder, 2:13-2:21). This feeling was also felt by Carrie near the end of the story: she was told by her roommate Lola that she should feel happy to be famous – not lonely.

The result of Winona Ryder’s fame was her loneliness. She described one moment specifically, where “[she] was driving around and...wishing so badly that [she] had someone to

talk to – a friend, someone – and [she] didn't” (Ryder, 1:39-1:47). Winona explained how she felt alienated, and further described the loneliness as piercing.

Amanda Bynes (2010)

The final actress this research will study is Amanda Bynes. Carrie and Amanda are interesting to compare because they were both considered to have downfalls. Amanda Bynes is an actress born on April 3, 1986, in Thousand Oaks, California. She had a talent for acting at a young age, and, at seven, her parents hired an agent. She initially appeared in commercials but received her “big break” on Nickelodeon’s late 1990s comedy show, *All That*. Eventually, Amanda received her own show on Nickelodeon called, *The Amanda Show* at age thirteen. In the early 2000s, Amanda began filming movies, including: *Big Fat Liar*, *What a Girl Wants*, *She’s the Man*, *Hairspray*, and *Lovewrecked*. Amanda was considered a good-girl character compared to other figures, particularly Lindsay Lohan (Biography.com Editors, n.d.).

Amanda Bynes began acting at an extremely young age. At seven, she was already signed to an agent and finding work in commercials. She grew up in the limelight, and eventually retired at the age of twenty-four in the 2010s after undergoing confrontations with the law. In a 2018 article by *PAPER* magazine, Amanda Bynes revealed the intricacies of her experience with the entertainment industry and its effect on her life. Bynes described an example after filming *She’s the Man*, where “[she] went into a deep depression for 4-6 months because [she] didn’t like how [she] looked when [she] was a boy” (Bynes). Amanda Bynes was at the peak in her career around 2007 – when paparazzi culture was rampant and harmful. The early 2000s was a difficult time for body-conscious women; only the skinniest women were considered attractive, and magazines exploited average bodily changes. She was only sixteen at the time and lacked the tools to cope with the stress and criticism, turning instead to marijuana.

The affect of the industry on Amanda is saddening. When learning that Adderall was, “‘the new skinny pill’ and they were talking about how women were taking it to stay thin” (Bynes). Through the gateway of Adderall, Amanda began introducing more drugs into her life and furthering her addictions. After seeing herself in *Easy A* alongside Emma Stone, Amanda made the decision to retire from acting. Her retirement became difficult because, “she started ‘hanging our with a seedier crowd...and isolated a lot...[she] got really into [her] drug usage and it became a really dark, sad world for [her]” (Bynes). After working for her entire life, she was lost and lonely. It is unlikely that Amanda would be having these problems if she avoided the entertainment industry as an impressionable teenager.

Discussion

After navigating through each actress from 1950 to 2010, there is one constant seen within each woman: loneliness. As discussed in Rockwell and Giles’ article on fame, this is a common attribute seen in celebrities. An anonymous celebrity from their article claims, “[i]t’s a happy place to be when you’re in the midst of a crowd and a very lonely place to be when the lights are out and you’re left on your own” (Rockwell & Giles, 201). Many of the celebrities in their article relate to the women studied in this research.

While the women studied have similarities to each other, this research questions if they have similarities to Carrie Meeber. According to the text of *Sister Carrie*, there are several similarities between Carrie and modern celebrities. At the conclusion of Carrie’s story, the narrator tells the audience “[i]n your rocking chair, by your window dreaming, shall you long, alone. In your rocking-chair, by your window, shall you dream such happiness as you may never feel” (Dreiser 355). Even though Carrie was surrounded by adoring fans during her performances, she maintained a feeling of loneliness. She also received fan letters from

“[g]entlemen with fortunes,” highlighting her inability to form genuine relationships (Dreiser 320). While opening these letters, her friend Lola suggests that she indulges these gentlemen and accepts their offers, Carrie responded “I don’t want to meet anybody that way” (Dreiser 320). This same conversation continues, with Carrie asking Lola, “I get lonely, don’t you?” (Dreiser 322). Lola quickly dismisses this idea, claiming that Carrie was famous, and anyone would easily take her place. This silence is very similar to Winona’s conflicts with fame: the feeling that because she was famous and privileged, she had no problems.

In the last few pages of *Sister Carrie*, the narrator explains how Carrie’s dreams were fulfilled, but she still felt miserable. As she was surrounded by commodity, “these [things] she had once craved...once far-off, essential things, but now grown trivial and indifferent” (Dreiser 353). These comments indicated that Carrie’s loneliness primarily derived from her rising fame. This must be assumed because Dreiser explains little about Carrie’s past. Carrie’s inability to feel unconditionally happy is very similar to Amanda’s story. Bynes had everything she wanted but failed to find happiness despite her success.

When considering the celebrities studied in this research, Marilyn Monroe has the most similar attributes to Carrie. Both Carrie and Marilyn had feminine contradictions – innocence and sexuality - that were crucial to Marilyn’s success. When the other women were famous, expressing feminine sexuality was acceptable. This indicates that time was a stronger factor than initially considered.

Conclusion

This research had a few confounding factors. Firstly, majority of the women in this research are still alive; meaning, their thoughts on fame could have changed over time. This

research aimed to analyze their thoughts on celebrity around the time they were especially famous. Secondly, this research studied four women and found similarities between each celebrity. The results of this research are not constant across all famous women but have potential to continue the conversation on treatment of women in the industry.

Carrie Meeber does have similarities to modern female celebrities through her loneliness and craving for commodity. To answer the second segment of the research question, the entertainment industry has not evolved in support of women; in fact, one could argue a devolution has occurred. Even if women have gained more independence over the past century, the entertainment industry has failed to protect the rights of women and children. As noted by Amanda's and Winona's stories, growing up within criticism is harmful. That criticism and pressure as a developing teenager was manifested in Winona's chronic insomnia and Amanda's eventual downfall. With Ryder entering the industry at twelve and Bynes at seven, there is a decline in mental health and well-being as the age decreases. This is likely due to harassment from the media and unattainable standards for young women.

Future research on this topic could include additional interviews with famous females of all ages. It would be particularly interesting if interviews could highlight women who grew up in the industry to see if effects are similar.

As noted in this research, Carrie Meeber had similarities to Marilyn Monroe, Diana Ross, Winona Ryder, and Amanda Bynes. Dreiser did have an accurate rendition of fame in his writing. Unfortunately, the entertainment industry has not improved enough to properly support women. While there has been positive evolution, there is still a long journey for advancement of women in the entertainment industry.

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