

Annotated bibliography: new definitions of stardom and the celebrity



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Essay Topic: *Present a case for how film and television studies approaches enable an understanding of stardom. Define and defend your position in relation to two or more approaches outlined in the unit. Choose one star to support your case.*

1. Laura Grindstaff. " Reality Celebrity: Branded Affect and the Emotion Economy." *Public Culture* , vol. 27, no. 1 75, 2015, pp. 109-135, *Duke University Press* , [https://read-dukeupress-edu.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/public-culture/article/27/1%20\(75\)/109-135/31066](https://read-dukeupress-edu.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/public-culture/article/27/1%20(75)/109-135/31066)

Grindstaff focuses on the specific forms of celebrity created within the reality television context. It suggests that there is an interest in the ' unique' characteristics of reality TV celebrity as it traverses the screen and bodies that operates both ' inside and outside what we call the " emotion economy" of contemporary television. It also argues that in recent times, there has been more interest and credibility on television celebrity/stardom which has proliferated and moved past medium-specific debates and into a diverse range of approaches and interests. The article is interesting as it has a focus on celebrity and stardom in the field of reality television. This could be a limitation of the text as the focus I want to explore is more related to film stars, especially in Chinese cinema and culture. However, upon reading the article it goes into depth about the centrality of emotion that is created onto stars and how the form of television promotes this image. It utilises different ways we view celebrities on television such as talk show hosts and explains that the body and emotions become raw materials available to all in the pursuit of performative competence; they are almost a democratic template. She states this allows the audience to witness qualities that are not just '

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ordinary'. Grindstaff's article will be useful for my essay in terms of examining the discourse of emotional representation of stars and also looking at the way television challenges traditional cultural hierarchies in the 21st century.

2. Bennett, James. "The Television Personality System: Televisual Stardom Revisited After Film Theory." *Screen*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2008, pp. 32-50. *ProQuest*, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/docview/1808518?accountid=12528>.

This article discusses how stardom in film and television has largely been conceived in stark binary terms and argues that this dichotomy comes from the importance of cinema's 'photo effect' in constructing stars. Bennett's piece contrasts Grindstaff's article as he mentions, through the photo effect that cinema is able to imbue a 'present absence' which the audiences experiences. It ultimately presents a central role in star's simultaneous extraordinariness and ordinariness. This article is important for my essay as it compares and identifies the differences between television personalities and cinematic stars. As I am focusing on specifically a film star, Bennett articulates they have an aura of mystery, sexual desirability and other worldliness that is enhanced by the environment of darkness and size of the screen you experience their performance within. The article further uses the actress Sarah Jessica Parker and her character Carrie Bradshaw in *Sex and the City* as an example of the way television circulates and extends the paradoxical, ordinary/extraordinary image of stardom to certain performers. Overall, Bennett's piece will help with the understanding of the importance of television versus film stars and assist in building my argument around the <https://assignbuster.com/annotated-bibliography-new-definitions-of-stardom-and-the-celebrity/>

construction of stardom and how it is different on screen in cinema and television.

3. Hellmueller, Lea C. and Aeschbacher, Nina. "Media and Celebrity: Production and Consumption of "Well-Knownness." *Communication Research Trends*, vol. 29, no. 4, Dec. 2010, pp. 3-34. EBSCOhost, ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=56470467&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

The article examines the manufacturing of 'celebrities' and identifies that within the last century this process has been established. It also defines the term 'celebrity' and mentions it is multifaceted and has changed meaning over time. It can either refer to the tradable commodity that a celebrity generates or to the theoretical concept. Furthermore, it analyses media and how it plays a crucial role in the creation of celebrities, being able to provide visibility and contributing to their 'well-knownness' in society. The research methods used are interesting as it begins by analysing stardom in a historical context. It uses Alexander the Great as an example as the 'first famous person' and goes into depth about the origins of 'celebrity' stating its roots are found in the language of the ancient Roman civilisation. It compares this to the modern use of social media and how the view of fame has changed. The article will be important as it describes the rise of new technologies of communication which has gradually detached fame and public prominence from an aristocratic social status and has turned it into a product accessible to the masses. In terms of evaluating the article and how it aids in an understanding of gendered viewing positions, it discusses the

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idea of celebrity from both views and incorporates examples of both female and male stars. Overall, the article will provide a good basis for my understanding of stardom and creation of ‘celebrities’.

4. Zuo, Mila. “Sensing ‘Performance Anxiety’: Zhang Ziyi, Tang Wei, and Female Film Stardom in the People’s Republic of China.” *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2015, pp. 1–19. *Taylor & Francis Journals*, <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/doi/citedby/10.1080/19392397.2014.1001416?scroll=top&edAccess=true>

Zuo explores the intersection of affective-sensorial and politico-cultural dimensions involved in female film star-gazing in present-day China. It focuses specifically on the actress Zhang Ziyi who I want to place my focus to support my essay. The article specifies that she is a controversial female film star that the actress’s on-screen and off-screen sexual performances created expressions of public ‘performance anxiety’. In approaching the analysis Zuo looked at interviews, newspaper articles and online user comments to produce the view and discussion about Zhang Ziyi and her stardom status. She specifically looks at the social constructions within Chinese culture and mentioned the shifting stigma of gender which has culminated a sense of great anxiety about the female body and sexual desire. The article will provide me with information about stardom in the context of Chinese cinema. It looks at the way female bodies have become a narrative site for the projection of national trauma and collective memory thorough the history of Chinese cinema.

5. Zhen, Zhang. "An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: The Actress As Vernacular Embodiment in Early Chinese Film Culture." *Camera Obscura*, vol. 16 no. 3, 2001, pp. 228-263. Project MUSE, muse.jhu.edu/article/7981.

Zhen's article is a gender-specific examination of the relationship between body and film technology and suggests the presence of females in cinema and fan culture allows us to conceive early Chinese cinema as a mass-mediated yet culturally inflected modern experience. It also considers the relationship between cinema and the vernacular movement as well as the interaction of verbal and visual culture. Just like the Hellmueller and Aeschbacher article, the historical textual analysis is discussed and used as a comparison to contemporary cinema. While reading the article, I realised it was important to distinctly examine the production of Chinese femininity within cinema and Zhen explains the figure of the actress embodies not so much the glamour of stardom as the multiple and concrete social role available to women at the time, both in the public or domestic sphere. It will be another layer of exploration by arguing that the cinema created not only a new vocation for women but also a significant social position and public imagine. This article will serve as a good reference in examining female stars in Chinese cinema.