

Public Abstract

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Title:How to Write Like Tina and Mindy: Constructing Persona in Female Celebrity Memoir

The primary goal for this project was to demonstrate that celebrity memoir, specifically female comedian memoir, examines the self in a similar manner as memoirs traditionally studied in creative nonfiction. These memoirs are not part of the canon of creative nonfiction as taught to students, yet they grapple with many of the themes common in memoir.

Tina Fey's *Bossypants* and Mindy Kaling's *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?* were primary works for this project. Chelsea Handler's memoir, *My Horizontal Life*, was a foil for Fey and Kaling, as the persona presented to the reader is static and unconcerned with the public's view of the writer. Fey and Kaling each write with the intention to combat their celebrity status that informs the reader's experience of the memoirs.

The analysis of the three memoirs shows that Fey and Kaling use style as a way to combat their "celebrity" personas by crafting personas more concerned with their initial careers as writers, and *Everyday Women*. Through anecdotes, advice, and numerous visual aids in the form of personal photographs, hand drawn charts, and reprinted professional photos, Fey and Kaling crafted personas separate from the publicly imposed "celebrity" persona in order to better identify with the female reader.

Through their manipulation of persona, these women provide ample themes and writing strategies that can be used by other memoirists in the genre of creative nonfiction. The use of style and visual aids can be used by the non-celebrity memoirist in order to better control any preconceived notions the reader may bring to their reading of a given memoir.