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Women in Cinema

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Texas Guinan: Feminism through the Progressive era

### **Feminism During the Silent Era**

Dorothy and Carl J. Schneider in their book researching American women in the Progressive Era discuss how the working-class female struggled to find work out of the domestic space in the early 20th century as “their very status in the hierarchy of money-earning women inflicted hardship on them” (74). They were mostly confined to the domestic space if they wanted to work, as Schneider states, “almost all American women in the Progressive Era, as now, did housework” (23). At the beginning of the 1900s, a time run by patriarchal control and gender norms, when “left alone without male protection, women moved outside the moral order” (Hallett 32), women were constantly being stereotyped by the patriarchy into a domestic space. Gender norms defined by what was accepted in the public space versus the private space governed the women that wanted to enter the workplace. However, there was one working space they were able to find some type of refuge in. Film, in its origins, was a media predominantly marketed to the female viewer. The film industry gave a small, albeit existent, upper hand to some white, middle-class women in the early 20th century if they chose to take advantage of their opportunity in the public space.

Patriarchy is a social system where biologically born men dominantly hold power over women in most aspects of life, primarily in the public space. In it lays the policing ideologies of sexism and misogyny that in the modern age many take at face value as the naïve conception that misogyny should be understood as a hatred of women, but that doesn't truly represent the strength and power of true misogyny and, therefore, patriarchy. Philosopher Kate Manne argues, "[The naïve conception of misogyny] becomes a matter of psychological ill health, or perhaps irrationality, rather than a systematic facet of social power relations and a predictable manifestation of the ideology that governs them: patriarchy" (15-16). The deeper conception of misogyny and therefore patriarchy doesn't fully represent irrationality, instead the patriarchy stands as a normative system that governs women using naturally given social power to give worth. Misogynists who see themselves as above women (whether unconsciously or not) aren't of psychological ill health, but instead are applying the patriarchal systematic advantage they are given as birthright. The woman then, is the victim of the patriarchy primarily because she's seen as a different (weaker) sex and because of this is subjugated to be denied jobs, personas, and even ways of thought that represent social, masculine, power.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century results of the patriarchy can be seen throughout the entire social world: women struggling for the vote, being denied work, and overall being forced into a confined domestic image. But in certain spaces, most particularly in a study of Texas Guinan, the entertainment industry, many women were able to defy these stereotypes by performing. Something that allowed them to express their own voices through their fight for feminism on screen or stage. Feminism in modern times is a term that speaks for the rights and equality of women, but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the term had a different meaning; Film scholar Hillary

Hallett's study of women in 1920s Hollywood argues, "Feminism throughout the silent era was overall a 'concept signaling a radical reenvisioning of women's place within society'" (91).

Moving to overcome the systematic patriarchy, woman took steps to move from the private space they were being stereotyped into, to the public space of the man-driven working world. Feminism then spoke for the continuously changing image of the liberated woman, the steps that women were making to slowly change how they perceived themselves in a public sphere, all constructed and represented by the working women of the entertainment industry. By tracking her career as an entertainer, the publicity she received because of it, and the star image crafted from both, I'll be analyzing how silent film actress and New York night club hostess, Texas Guinan, followed these stages that feminism took in the Progressive era.

### **Steps Away from The Domesticated Phase; The Extra Girl**

"Mary Louise [Guinan], was a crossbreed of a strict upbringing and frontier ingenuity" (Berliner 11). Guinan, according to Louise Berliner's biography, grew up an Irish immigrant in the small town of Waco, Texas as a Roman Catholic schoolgirl. However, Berliner saw her as unhappy with this lifestyle as she was known to play pranks on the townspeople as well as her superior nuns and romped around her hometown developing a small liking for tomboy imagined antics. "She had a wild imagination and wanted to be a heroine" (Berliner, 19), dreaming of a life away from her current Catholic home life. Because of this, by the time she was 25 in 1909 she had moved out of Texas and was already a vaudeville actress appearing in the New York papers. Her first break starring in *The Gay Musician* (1909) saw her being described on more than one occasion as a "young prima donna", quickly and successfully entering the public eye albeit on a smaller scale. Guinan made her living as a vaudeville toe

dancer and singing comedian from 1909 up until 1917 where she then, as the headlines put it, “Deserted Stage for Studio”, going from New York to the west; Hollywood. Doing this, she fled not only to a female dominated working space, but also to a place that was quickly progressing its feminine norms because of said fact. Her beginnings as a New York actress cleared an obsolete path for her to easily enter and progress quickly in this “field of commercial entertainment” that “had already promised so-called stage-struck girls a unique avenue to individual success” (Hallett 15).

These stage struck girls, or extra girls, as Hilary Hallett puts it, wanted in on this new field of entertainment for the simple reason that women already in experienced Hollywood were urging them to take the golden opportunity. According to Hallett, prolific actresses and female writers and directors like Mary Pickford were giving women the chance for a career in the superior field of film acting that was an easy-in to the working world for women during the Progression era: “film plays offered greater artistic, financial, and personal rewards, thereby providing the best opportunity for ambitious working girls” (Hallett 53). Encouraged by writers like Louella Parsons, extra girls read and intently learned from her articles like *How to Become a Movie Actress*. In these pieces she advocated women to enter the current world of the man’s working space with antics and attributes described as manly. While also being confident in their appearance, she wanted them to be assertive and aggressive in gaining directors, studios, and the public eye. Pickford was describing this new change in the female’s place in society as the “woman’s woman” (Hallett 70); basically, seen by her as a girl who earns her own living. In order to be this ‘masculine’-valued woman’s woman, all these extra girls had to do was enter the world of the working through the entertainment industry, successfully making a new step

towards feminism. Texas Guinan herself wasn't inherently an extra girl as she had already entered the star world through vaudeville before her moving to Hollywood, but her journey into vaudeville itself paralleled the trajectory of an extra girl. Berliner mentions in her childhood, Texas loved to read books of heroic adventures and she herself wanted to emulate those protagonists she read about. Her drive to be a heroine brought her out of her rural origins to the urban man's world of New York and Hollywood. Guinan and these extra girls individually escaped their domestic oriented origins, urged by the already successful women of Hollywood, marked a stage of feminism that brought girls out of the domestic space and into the public, primarily, working space.

### **Gender Norms Broken; The Tomboy**

This new calling to the west was backed not just by the call of feminism (work), but by the west itself, its rugged image and beautiful rural landscapes. With Theodore Roosevelt in office promoting the importance of surviving life in the rural West to uphold the American values of the nation's potency as a masculine figure (Hallett 7), Hollywood was the mirror to reflect and enhance this. The women in film began boasting an all new persona in the imagery of the "cross-dressing cowboy girl," as Laura Horak terms it, and the actions of the serial queen by stepping away from the Victorianist view of femininity while at the same time adhering to the new virile standard (citation). To show off a new popularized genre of female heroism, on-screen girls donned 'feminized' men's-style dress and performed great active feats. This new relationship between the actress' feminism and her role is a give and take one however, as setting up these talented women in a masculinized image led to a more conservative outcome of non-feminism that could read as women only being able to do these feats when styled as

'becoming men'. Or that these women are only set up to be unfeminine so they can inherently be 'tamed' by a man. While at the same time that these views are inducing patriarchal norms, the imagery and ability for a woman to be shown on the popular screen as an inherently unfeminine icon also could be viewed as a step toward a new reimagining of women, a new feminism essentially, and a step away from the stereotypically domesticated womanly lady.

This new image of "strengthened" femininity moved to break away from the gender norms of the time. The hallmark masculinity normally reserved for western heroes like William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, was adopted by female stars. Guinan herself was quoted various times as a female Bill Hart. Recounted from a 1920 *Photoplay* remark Hallett quotes, "What the expansion of the West and the great organization of industry opened up to many a young man, the motion picture spread before such young girls as were alert enough, and husky enough, and apt enough to take advantage of it" (Hallett 67). For women, this calling of the frontier and ability to now showcase themselves in the public eye as something different than the systematic gender norm was a step that took inherently unfeminine masculinity to achieve. Public allowance to embrace their tomboyishness revealed a new masculine femininity that separated a woman from a stereotype in front of, as well as behind, the screen.

Texas Guinan came to the west already a "favorite of the public", one magazine wrote, through her comedic vaudeville career and got picked up fairly quickly by the Triangle Productions Studio. Here she starred in her first film, a Western called *The Gunwoman* in 1918. In it she played a sultry and assertive bar owner titled as the 'Tigress'. She soon breaks character, falling in love with a mysterious, new cowboy in town, quickly abandoning her Tigress origins, donning more domestic dress and hanging off his shoulder doing everything he

says, including giving him money to buy a house for them. Guinan's character's sudden naïve domesticity here is marked by her grounding love for a man as it completely changes not simply her image, but her performance into something much more exaggerated falling into the imagery of a played up 'clinging vine' similar to Latrice Joy with her dressed up femininity in *The Clinging Vine*, 1926 (Horak 140). Even the *Motion Picture News* magazine states "Miss Guinan is not the cringing clinging-ivy type of woman. Such a type would make her appear her miscast." (Nov-Dec 1921, 2598). This is a style of acting that seems to continue in Guinan's portrayals of the individualist cowgirl verses the girl in love. Marking something that might propose an affinity for the tomboy over the feminine. The portrayals of tomboy and mannish feat are much more naturalistic for Guinan as an actress. Most of Guinan's feats of daredevilry (shooting guns, riding horses), made for an on-screen female appearance that was distinctly unfeminine, yet enthralling to watch, breaking (acting-wise) from the patriarchal norm of femininity as the natural for women.

After coming back from 'finding and buying their house', the cowboy reveals to the Tigress, he instead started his own dance hall across town, refusing his promise of marriage. The Tigress then pulls her gun on him in a rage but, for love, lets him go, giving him a month to pay her back. A month later she enters his bar asking for the cash, he refuses and she proceeds to shoot the oil lights in his bar with pinpoint accuracy, demonstrating her skill as a gunwoman while at the same time marking her revenge as the place begins burning down and she shoots her former lover dead. *The Gunwoman* introduces Guinan's character as a working woman but has her resort to naivety after falling in love. The domestic, marital life in this case, can be read as a more heteronormative place for women to be but, also one that holds them back from

embracing more masculine aggressive tendencies. The Tigress rides outside to escape her certain death and meets the Sheriff who had been pining after her while the cowboy was gone. He professes his love to her, but she refuses him with an intertitle saying, "I do love you as friend, but my heart's back there", alluding to the cowboy she just murdered. The film ends with her riding off completely alone with the black burning fire smoke as a background. Here we see one of the few instances that a heteronormative ending wasn't instilled in Guinan's films (as well as the entirety of the cowgirl phase in cinema). Although in many, she plays a Westward raised tomboy cowgirl who has mastered the skills of riding, shooting, and even crossdressing (*The Moonshine Feud*, 1920), she usually either preforms a great task to get the man (*The Stampede*, 1921) or saves someone, possibly the man himself, and wins over the man (*The Girl of the Rancho*, 1919). Laura Horak describes how the typical cowboy girl film "displays characteristics typical of the cross-dressed chase: a young woman steps in for an incapacitated man, navigates a series of outdoor spaces faster than any men who pursue her, and shows off her riding skills" (Horak 61). *The Gunwoman* is alike in the way that she performs virile feats for a man but differs as she is performing these feats against him, ending the film the way it began, she stands alone as she has proven herself to be an assertive woman, completely breaking from the normative romance that classified early melodramatic cinema.

*The Gunwoman* was merely the beginning of her four-year long venture as a gun-toting cowgirl on screen, but it marks the value, themes, and the new wave of feminism that all of her cowgirl films seem to reflect. In a 1919 *Film Fun* magazine writer, H.R., has a less than enthusiastic review of Guinan's gun wielding persona, "but it is to be hoped the screen doesn't become congested with more [performances] like [Guinan's]. Disporting herself frolicsomenly in



trousers, she presents a hybrid phenomenon without feminine charms or masculine beauty” (*Film Fun*, Dec-Jan 1919, 17). This is one of the only negative responses to Guinan as a trouser-donned cowgirl I found, for the most part writers in these 1918-1921 magazines hailed her performances. A 1918 *Photoplay* page laments the last time Guinan came to visit. Completely enamored by Guinan the writer, Delight Evans, gushes over her by claiming Guinan has never been done before, stated “[Guinan’s] going back to California – Where she’ll do some more Gun-woman. She’s going to be the Gun Woman of the movies – Come to think of it, we do need a Gun-woman.” (Apr-Sep 1918, 217). With these two reviews we see a cross between the acceptance of the tomboy character and the resistance to the non-feminine charms of the tomboy. The nationalist love of the rural and the resulting emergence of the cowgirl, crossdressing girl, and serial queen again marks a new change in the image inhabited by women. Female stars, like Guinan, chasing the boyish adventures of the frontier began crossing, through the working space, into a reimagining of (or a resistance towards) what can be classified as feminine.

### **The Star Persona**

By asserting themselves as new women with a new place and image behind the screen, many of these female stars also spawned individual star images off screen that further boosted their appearances, popularity, as well as possibly their credibility on screen. Guinan did grow up more tomboy than not, but her screen persona as a rough and tough cowgirl was practically a great exaggeration of her actual childhood in Texas. She, whether because of her already great love for rambling (*Photoplay*, Apr-Sep 1918, 217) or because of her awareness of the love she was receiving for these roles, began to boast publicly of a childhood and current lifestyle that

much more aligned with her on-screen persona than the documented truths of her reality. The American public wanted to see truths in actresses' performances, they wanted to link Guinan's constant tomboy portrayals to a reason behind them, and Guinan seemingly knew how to play to the public as she successfully reimagined her childhood as a real life Western.

The new landscape Guinan was inhabiting was one that could easily poke and prod her public image as, much like all female stars at the time, she was vulnerable to the public's perceptions of her and how her film company was selling her. She, however, seemingly rolled along with both, creating a star image that was finely sculpted by all three mediums and widely accepted by the public. Louise Berliner, in her extensive research on Guinan and her authenticity went in hoping to discover full truths in Guinan's childhood claims "But I often found what looked more like part-facts, or accounts built around one or two verifiable truths and many dubious details" (19). One magazine recounts confidently, while promoting her Western two-reelers, that Texas Guinan "was born on a ranch fifteen miles from Waco, Texas, and spent her childhood in that vicinity, during which time she mastered the lariat, the holster and the saddle, and at the age of sixteen won contests in rough riding, rifle shooting, and revolver shooting at state fairs and rodeos" (*Moving Picture World*, March 1919, 1694). Her living in Waco was truth but she lived in the town in a house rather than fifteen miles away on a ranch. She was also known to be a tough girl, but as Berliner mentioned, lies were found in these truths; the reimagining of her past wasn't entirely baseless, but still exaggerated, fitting the public's need for a virile, nationalistic 'backstory'. No accounts can back up her being able to shoot a revolver by sixteen, but one story she fed shows falsehoods in claims like this. She boasted she'd ran off with Hank Miller's 101 Ranch Wild West show in 1906. Although she may

have rode in Rodeos (owning her first horse at 11), Berliner's research shows Hank Miller didn't exist, nor did the 101 Ranch Wild West show, at least not until 8 years after her claim.

Clouded in slight truths, these falsehoods seemed to be believable enough to her fans as she would continue telling tales similar well into her following career as a New York City hostess and they seemingly gained her popularity as an inherently unfeminine female during the new image change of feminism. "Serials featured young women, who's western toughness and virility shaped their allure with both sexes" (Hallett 57). These on-screen roles shaped a new image of her broken from feminine norms that boosted her popularity with forward thinking women and nationalistic, virility-favored men, so, through the public, the production, and herself, her star persona began bleeding into her 'real' life. She, herself, clearly held a hand in the making of her image as a star, something that could be vaguely seen in her performances as well. As "Dyer argues that even while stars have a 'real' individual 'existence' in the world," they navigate between that reality and their stardom" (Chávez 523), the idea that one can see the actors true self in their performance isn't far off, but is hard to legitimately identify.

On comedic actress Marie Dressler, Victoria Sturtevant writes "The singularity of her body and performance style influenced the narrative and generic qualities of her films" (14). In the same way that Dressler brought herself into her films through her smart improv and her unique appearance, Texas Guinan was a performer that was clearly one of the 'voices' participating in the making and distributing of her on-screen appearance and in turn her star image. She stands as a stouter, more strong-jawed female who had a leaning toward more cinematic displays of tomboyishness, than the normalized, generic actresses of the time who, through their performances, maintained a natural air of femininity. Meanwhile Guinan holds

this seemingly natural composition of tomboyishness that I can only suggest may be a bit of Guinan herself. The way she holds her body in relation to others on screen and on stage remains confident, never overshadowed. The subtlety of not shying away is distinctly a display of femininity leaning toward the anti-patriarchal. Richard DeCordova argues, "One is no more than one expresses on film" as a definition "fairly accurate to the tautological existence of the picture personalities" (137); subtleties of truth will bleed through a performance as, no matter what character they play, the actor is still a themselves in some way. Whether she was simply an actress not as talented as her peers and her habitual, genuine self peeked through her performances or she distinctly chose to portray her tomboyish characters as a more comfortable position for her, she's essentially naturalistic when she stands as a tomboy. More comfortable than her portrayals of a maiden in love that continuously demonstrate the aforementioned overenthusiastic clinging vine display. Rather than stereotyping her seemingly natural stance as masculine or tomboyish, it's better to explain it as straying from the stereotype of Victorian femininity. The way her arms hang with weight, her black slouches, her sly smirks peek through, and her clear comfort in trousers, these are displays classified as unfit for a well-mannered, well-kept woman in a man's world.

When comparing her acting performance to the few clips we have of her off the screen and instead on the stage as a hostess (another persona that will be discussed next) the naturalness in her character as a tomboy matches much more to her appearance as a hostess than her more feminine performances on the screen. Furthermore, a clip of her acting out her persona as a hostess in one of her few talkies, *Broadway Through a Keyhole* (1933) distinctly shows her, albeit glamorized, still holding a similarly powerful aura that has her continuing this

way of act even dressed up in feathers and sequins. It greatly mirrors the actual footage surviving of her as a hostess in her many clubs. She stands on stage with authority, with strong jaw set belting out her announcements. These spaces of the frontier and the command of New York night life are ones that formerly would've been places for men; the rough and tough west was too dangerous for a girl. And the position of great power in a working space, a space that would be defined as sleazy not to mention illegal was a life seen as more sinful for a woman than a man. One can conclude from this that Guinan's more natural stance leaned more toward the inherently non feminine in spaces that were also distinctly unfeminine. Whether this was done by her knowingly to further invoke her boasted image as a cowgirl tomboy or simply the natural way she was born to stand, the way she more naturally held herself in seemingly more natural spaces for her (spaces primarily meant for men) was clearly a distinctly Guinan-crafted attribute. An attribute that greatly contributed to her star persona no doubt as magazines throughout her time in the limelight continued to praise her as a woman constantly "radiating good cheer as its her nature to do so" (*Photoplay*, Apr-Sep 1918, 325). She was loved not only for the tales she would tell, but the personable personality and image that went along with said tales, proving her a woman (maybe not intentionally but somehow) naturally in control of her image.

### **Glamorized Self-Reliance; The Flapper**

In 1921, still making her check as a cowgirl actress, Guinan began making bigger steps into a more independent frame of mind as a worker. A magazine section covering up and coming independent actors openly states her newest venture to her now grown fanbase; "Another independent company just be- ginning is the Texas Guinan company who expect to

film a series of twelve Westerns” (Exhibitor's Trade Review Sep-Nov 1921, 355). The films she produced with the Texas Guinan Company were all products of a series she signed on to make. They were received quite well by the public; one review for her film, *The Stampede* quotes it to be “as good as a Western picture can be made”, claiming, “patrons went wild over it” (Exhibitors Herald Jul-Sep 1922, 604). This business venture, then, was a profitable one for her, but good things couldn’t always last and her two-reeler series was never finished. The craze for actress-driven companies was quickly thwarted by their standing in “opposition to ever more vertically integrated studios” (Stamp 159) that, rather than allowing control for the individual female star, began controlling said stars. Author, Shelley Stamp, refers to this as the “remasculinization” of Hollywood, a “new brand of female influence rooted in the lure of youthful feminine glamour exuded by stars” (Stamp 159). Entering this new phase, woman had opposing views on the morality in commodifying themselves. Some saw it as a sexual revolution for the New Woman that elevated woman’s place in the structure of the social space by opening up a new, more profitable workspace for basically any of them to take advantage of it. While others looked at it as a liberated act that scandalized the image of the woman, allowing the patriarchy to take advantage of their already vulnerable position in the workspace. Both views are legitimate stances that represented the changing views of women and in turn feminism at the time, but as Texas Guinan entered this space as a businesswoman, the former was the state of mind she was adopting, so the focus on this final part will analyze the flapper as a profitable and independent image of feminism.

The 1920s saw a reexamining of women’s ideas about their place in the public space through the sexual sphere. With battles for woman’s suffrage won, their cause for economic

and therein sexual independence were validated. Married women, mothers, working women, and single women, with their new political individualism, were learning what their place in the political sphere could do to enhance and maintain this female control. Through campaigns like the “voluntary motherhood campaign and the birth control campaign” Women in the Progressive era “insisted on control: control over whether or not to have sex with their husbands, control over whether or not to bear children – in short, control over their own bodies” (Schneider 159). They were advocating for further power over their sexual image in the social and domestic spaces. And one of the main ways to preach and flaunt this sought-after control was through the entertainment industry. With a grasp on their images as stars, swayed by the public and the industry, female actresses garnered a new, more sexual image, driven by the individuality and power given by control and money. Women were making cash and in turn they were becoming the face of an industry, glamorized and done up in a new sensual phase of self-reliant feminism as the flapper. The flapper “defied the conservative strictures that still held sway over the vast majority of American women” (Orgeron 82). Guinan entered this phase not as an actress but as a businesswoman, to be more precise, as a successful New York city night club underground speakeasy hostess.

Guinan made her move quickly and by the time she quit film in 1921, by 1924 she had taken advantage of her renown and found her place in the world of New York city as a celebrity. During this time of Prohibition, through her cunning capabilities as an entertainer, Guinan had started her own club, the Texas Guinan 300 club, a career that kept her successfully in the working place for the rest of her life. Part of a reel called *Story of the Year 1929* states, “If Jimmy Walker runs the city by day, Texas Guinan surely runs it by night writes one reporter. At

Guinan's place it's 25\$ for a bottle of scotch, 2\$ for a pitcher of water. Says Tex, 'never give a Sucker an even break'" (MyFootage.com). She was running her club smart, where paying men were in need of alcohol, she was there to provide, for a price. And where paying men were in need of some entertainment, she was there to provide her Guinan girls, safely.

This new era of profited glamour held not only a price on alcohol, but just as profitably, a price on the female body and women knew this, using their newly embraced sexualities to take advantage. Sara Ross, in her analysis of actress Clara Bow states her flapper roles were "characters that [had] control over the revelation and concealment of the inner emotional states, making them more successfully manipulative. They used this self-control to their own advantage" (Ross 420). As an indication of 'flapperism' Ross suggests the rejection of self-consciousness, to be profitable, flappers had to be confident in a new way that removed their modesty. Something Guinan adopted in her new mode of dress and her loose tongue on stage. As this is still a working place though, and her career, she did have to hold some professionalism crossed with confidence, resulting in displays of awareness of her position. Even though she and her girls were commodities, it was their conscious right to do so and because of this Guinan provided a safe female-driven environment suitable for this economic exchange. It wasn't enough for woman to be simply aware of the advantage they held, they also had to be smart about in a way that demonstrated sultriness but also kept them safe. Guinan seemed to be aware of this as she was supporting not just herself, but other woman in the field of work that they chose to profit off. Guinan's little girls, or her cabaret troupe, that ranged from girls of 13 to 16, "became the children she never had. She taught them right from wrong in the world of show business, gave them such memorable advice as, 'Remember he



may be all the world to his mother, but he is just a cover charge to you” (Berliner 102). She didn’t let them mingle with her guests and allowed their mothers to come to work with them. She allowed them the opportunity to be seen by producers that were out to make their careers. She protected them while also working to guarantee them a profitable future. As Berliner states, many of these girls came from poor backgrounds and becoming a commodity was possibly the only way for them to help provide for their families. Guinan stepped into to provide a place where they could be confident in their body as a woman, profiting off of it, while also staying safe in an entertainment industry that was now being ‘remasculinized’.

Similar to how women began using their femaleness to profit off of “Hollywoods investment in stardom” (Stamp 165), Guinan and her girls were profiting off patrons through smart business tactics and the untouchable image of their femaleness. Being a flapper “participated in the construction of a public femininity that depended on women’s active satisfaction of their desires, an ideal that encouraged women to participate in the public space as consumers as well as commodities” (Orgeron 88). Women had the choice of what they wanted their bodies to represent and by turning themselves into commodities they allowed themselves to hold a powerful place in the economic exchange as consumer and consumed, opening the feminist mindset to be something profitable. By embracing her sexuality and glamorizing her career, Guinan, like the flappers on and off screen, ended her contribution to the workspace as a businesswoman that changed her image for the last time as a liberated woman, passing the new feminism to the next generation of women..

### **Guinan and her Feminism**

Creating an accurate map of the changing values of feminism from early 1900 to the late 1920s, whether intentional or not Guinan appeared to find herself changing careers along with the progressing change of feminism throughout the early 20th century. As this was a venture that proved her continuously profitable, it can't be assumed she directly saw herself as a feminist. But, while she may have simply donned the guise of feminism for profit, this exploitation did prove her to be a capable woman upholding a seemingly naturally personable and confident quality to herself, leaning distinctly toward the stereotypically unfeminine. A woman that not only earned her own paycheck, but started her own businesses as well, a definition in the eyes of Mary Pickford that would've seen Texas Guinan as a woman's woman, an achievement of her sex (Hallett, 70). Feminists in the Progressive era asked that "women realize their individual ambitions, admit the importance of their sexuality, and experience – like men but as women – the pleasures and challenges that went along with both" (Hallett, 92). By not relying on men in a patriarchy, stepping up instead to take the spaces that men formerly governed distinctly as a woman, by definition of Hallett through the words of feminist proclaimed actress Olga Petrova and journalist Margaret Fuller, Texas Guinan could successfully be labeled a feminist during the changing times of the Progressive era.

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