

Is it Over for Lady Gaga?

A few months ago in this space, I wrote a column about the cultural phenom Lady Gaga that ended with me politely telling her to save her money. That's because the treacherous world of popular culture is not usually a long-term proposition. Entertainment idols often pass through the fame obstacle course very quickly.

In showbiz, there is the term "jumping the shark" that is used to describe a project in decline. It is derived from the hit sit-com "Happy Days" which, sorely lacking for material after years on the air, featured a show wherein The Fonz went waterskiing in a leather jacket and encountered a shark. You guessed it: the Fonz jumped over the shark on the skis. After that, the days were not so happy on that program.

Now we have Lady Gaga, the ultimate edgy, anti-establishment pop star, swimming in dubious waters. Recently, she fronted a Thanksgiving special. The *New York Times* described it this way: "Lady Gaga performs before family and friends and offers a glimpse of her personal life in an interview with Katie Couric...

"She also whips up a feast of deep-fried turkey and waffles with the chef Art Smith."

Somewhere Janis Joplin is weeping. By the way, Gaga's special was trounced in the ratings by the 237th airing of the "Charlie Brown Thanksgiving Special."

And that's not all. The Associated Press reports that "Gaga's Workshop" is now open at the Barney's clothing store in Manhattan. Apparently, Gaga designed a special holiday shop featuring "a gigantic cartoon statue of the superstar herself in a pinup pose surrounded by jagged mirrors and sitting atop thousands of back plastic discs."

Forget the Rockefeller Center tree—the Gaga shop represents the true holiday spirit, does it not?

Now, some of you may think I am making this up, but it's all true. What I can't figure out is why Gaga's (Stefani Germanotta) management team seems to know nothing about history. The biggest pop icon ever, Elvis Presley, sabotaged his own career by starring in a series of movies like "Kissin' Cousins" and "Clambake." I mean, there was the once culturally dangerous Elvis, doing a dance called the "Clam" on a beach wearing black shoes and white pants. It took the King years to get back on track after those dopey flicks.

Last year, Gaga (Stefani) made \$90 million from her songs and shows. Does she really need the Thanksgiving special? Or the Barney's exposure? Really?

The answer is "of course not." Gaga has now gone middle class mainstream, and at this rate, she will be co-hosting with Kelly Ripa any day now. The Lady may be trying not to be a tramp, but she certainly has met the shark. And jumped it.