



Katharine Hepburn: Star as Feminist (Film and Culture Series)

Andrew Britton

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Of all the major Hollywood stars, Katharine Hepburn was the least conventional, conforming to none of the stereotypes of female superstardom. She was not an exotic outsider in Hollywood like Greta Garbo or Marlene Dietrich; nor was she a victim of the studios like Judy Garland or Marilyn Monroe; and she was certainly not a creature of the system like Joan Crawford and Lana Turner. Instead, she always appeared intelligent, willful and independent, able to develop her own persona within the confines of the studio system.

Andrew Britton proposes a feminist reading of Hepburn's films, arguing that her persona raises problems about class, female sexuality, and women's oppression that strain to the limits the conventions of a cinema ultimately committed to the reassertion of bourgeois gender roles. Hepburn's work is also used to explore more general issues, such as the functioning of the star system. This is one of the very few analyses of American cinema to focus on a film star rather than a director or a genre and as such is essential reading for anyone interested in the movies.

First published in the United Kingdom twenty years ago, this lavishly illustrated new edition features a foreword by the noted film critic Robin Wood.

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