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Annette Kuhn. *Queen of the 'B's': Ida Lupino Behind the Camera.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995. 202 pp. $19.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-313-29732-8.

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Sound Analysis

Recently, both feminist historians and feminist film critics have put much effort into rereading Hollywood through their interpretive models. While this project has resulted in the reexamination of some women working behind the scenes in early Hollywood, one of the most prolific female film and television directors has been neglected until recently. Last year, William Danat published Ida Lupino: A Biography (UP of Kentucky). In the book here reviewed, Annette Kuhn–author of numerous volumes examining women in film–has edited a fascinating collection of essays reassessing Ida Lupino's directorial work in film and television. In *Queen of the 'B's': Ida Lupino Behind the Camera*, Kuhn compiles articles that answer those critics who have, as Kuhn asserts in her introduction, "found it hard to look at Lupino's work on its own terms" (p. 5).

Each chapter in this collection examines one of the seven titles credited to Lupino's direction, and includes a plot summary of the screenplay under review so even those readers unfamiliar with a particular movie can easily follow. Augmenting the text, Kuhn has compiled an extensive filmography that includes pictures directed, scripted, and produced by Lupino.

Besides the treatment of the individual films, Mary Celeste Kearney and James M. Moran reexamine Lupino's extensive work as a television director. Although the authors acknowledge that "Lupino's scattered work in television must, by the very nature of the industry, resist any auteurist approach" (p. 139), they manage to pull together an engaging portrait of Lupino as a fine television director nonetheless. Kearney and Moran also offer a chronological list of television programs and series episodes directed by Lupino. They stress that their research has been compiled using only documented sources, a difficult project at best due to scattered records and unavailability of individual episodes. Such a comprehensive listing will prove invaluable to cultural historians and film buffs alike.

Although all of the essays offer sound analysis of the Lupino films, two are of particular note. Lauren Rabinovitz's examination of *The Hitch-Hiker* (1953) contextualizes the true story of William Edward Cook Jr., a serial killer on whom the photoplay was based. In exposing the cinematic changes Lupino makes from the original story, Rabinovitz offers insight into the mind of a director attempting to "remake Cook's highly publicized crime against the family into an investigation into the tensions of masculinity in postwar America" (p. 96). Although *The Hitch-Hiker* was one of Lupino's most commercially successful titles, it has also been, as Rabinovitz points out, one of the more problematic for feminists because of Lupino's focus on the male story. Rabinovitz' implication, however, is that Lupino's critique of the masculine culture is not beyond the province of feminism at all but rather in support of it as the storyline dismantles the idea of a "manly way out" (p. 101).

In Mary Beth Haralovich, Janet Jakobsen and Susan White's entry, "Lupino's The Trouble With Angels (1966)" is viewed through the lens of queer theory and held to be "a film about woman-woman identification and the attractions of a community of women" (p. 119). Given the opportunity to reread a film starring Disney-darling Hayley Mills, the authors seem almost gleefully subversive, and their laughter is contagious. Amidst this humor, Haralovich, Jakobsen, and White present a compelling argument in which the dominant culture tendency to read films through a "straight" lens is critiqued and dismissed.

Ultimately, in *Queen of the 'B's': Ida Lupino Behind the Camera*, Annette Kuhn has compiled essays that effectively argues for a greater recognition of Lupino as auteur and film and television director. Presented with enough background information to be accessible and enough insight to be engaging, this volume will appeal to scholar and lay person alike. Well worth seeking out, this collection is eminently readable and offers a clear picture of

Hollywood's most neglected female director.

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