



Frankly, My Dear: "Gone with the Wind" Revisited (Icons of America)

Molly Haskell

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How and why has the saga of Scarlett O'Hara kept such a tenacious hold on our national imagination for almost three-quarters of a century? In the first book ever to deal simultaneously with Margaret Mitchell's beloved novel and David Selznick's spectacular film version of *Gone with the Wind*, film critic Molly Haskell seeks the answers. By all industry predictions, the film should never have worked. What makes it work so amazingly well are the fascinating and uncompromising personalities that Haskell dissects here: Margaret Mitchell, David Selznick, and Vivien Leigh. As a feminist and onetime Southern adolescent, Haskell understands how the story takes on different shades of meaning according to the age and eye of the beholder. She explores how it has kept its edge because of Margaret Mitchell's (and our) ambivalence about Scarlett and because of the complex racial and sexual attitudes embedded in a story that at one time or another has offended almost everyone.

Haskell imaginatively weaves together disparate strands, conducting her story as her own inner debate between enchantment and disenchantment. Sensitive to the ways in which history and cinema intersect, she reminds us why these characters, so riveting to Depression audiences, continue to fascinate 70 years later.

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