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19th Century Literature/Women's Studies

## VIRGINS, VAMPS AND FLAPPERS

The American Silent Movie Heroine

*Sumiko Higashi, Ph.D.*

Virgins, vamps and flappers were female screen types who populated silent films during the teens and twenties. As Jazz Age heroines, they were mass produced by Hollywood for public emulation. This study of the silent movie heroine is based on the premise that the image of woman in vogue at any period of time reflects moral assumptions and serves as a barometer of social, economic and cultural change. Female screen types did mirror certain changes, especially in heterosexual relations, associated with the Jazz Age but also reflected the basic conservatism of the period's redefinition of woman's nature and her role. In a comprehensive discussion of numerous films, Higashi provides a perceptive analysis of the evolution of the archetypal screen heroines.

Partial list of films discussed:

*Birth of a Nation*, *Tess of the Storm Country*, *Flesh and the Devil*, *A Woman of Affairs*, *Manhandled*, *The Shiek*, *Old Wives for New*, *The Homemaker*, *The Flapper*, *Dancing Mothers*, *Why Change Your Wife?*, *Miss Lulu Bett*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Temptress*, *Stage Struck*, *Black Oxen*, *Broken Blossoms*, *Rags*, *Poor Little Rich Girl*, *Woman*, *Herts of the World*, *Irene*, *A Fool There Was*, *Little Annie Rooney*, *Salome*, *Ben Hur*, *Amarilly of Clothes Line Alley*, *Mantrap*.

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FEMINISM ON THE FRONTIER

*Joyce Avrech Berkman Ph.D.*

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Shirlene Mason Ph. D.

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