



# Being Rita Hayworth

## Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom

by Adrienne L. McLean

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### DESCRIPTION

Who was Rita Hayworth? Born Margarita Carmen Cansino, she spent her life subjected to others' definitions of her, no matter how hard she worked to claim her own identity. Although there have been many "revelations" about her life and career, Adrienne McLean's book is the first to show that such disclosures were part of a constructed image from the outset.

McLean explores Hayworth's participation in the creation of her star persona, particularly through her work as a dancer—a subject ignored by most film scholars. The passive love goddess, as it turns out, had a unique appeal to other women who, like her, found it extraordinarily difficult to negotiate the competing demands of family, domesticity, and professional work outside the home. *Being Rita Hayworth* also considers the ways in which the actress has been treated by film scholarship over the years to accomplish its own goals, sometimes at her expense. Several of Hayworth's best-known star vehicles—among them *Gilda* (1946), *Down to Earth* (1947), *The Lady from Shanghai* (1948), and *Affair in Trinidad* (1952)—are discussed in depth.

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ADRIENNE L. MCLEAN is Professor of Film Studies at the University of Texas at Dallas. She is also the author of *Dying Swans* and *Madmen* and the co-editor of *Headline Hollywood: A Century of Film Scandal*.

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