



Gay Fandom and Crossover Stardom: James Dean, Mel Gibson, and Keanu Reeves

Michael DeAngelis

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Why and how does the appeal of certain male Hollywood stars cross over from straight to gay audiences? Do stars lose their cachet with straight audiences when they cross over? In *Gay Fandom and Crossover Stardom* Michael DeAngelis responds to these questions with a provocative analysis of three famous actors—James Dean, Mel Gibson, and Keanu Reeves. In the process, he traces a fifty-year history of audience reception that moves gay male fandom far beyond the realm of “camp” to places where culturally unauthorized fantasies are nurtured, developed, and shared.

DeAngelis examines a variety of cultural documents, including studio publicity and promotional campaigns, star biographies, scandal magazines, and film reviews, as well as gay political and fan literature that ranges from the closeted pages of *One* and *Mattachine Review* in the 1950s to the very “out” dish columns, listserv postings, and on-line star fantasy narratives of the past decade. At the heart of this close historical study are treatments of particular film narratives, including *East of Eden*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *The Road Warrior*, *Lethal Weapon*, *My Own Private Idaho*, and *Speed*. Using theories of fantasy and melodrama, *Gay Fandom and Crossover Stardom* demonstrates how studios, agents, and even stars themselves often actively facilitate an audience’s strategic blurring of the already tenuous distinction between the heterosexual mainstream and the gay margins of American popular culture.

In addition to fans of James Dean, Mel Gibson, and Keanu Reeves, those interested in film history, cultural studies, popular culture, queer theory, gender studies, sociology, psychoanalytic theory, melodrama, fantasy, and fandom will enjoy this book.

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