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MODERNISM AND THE CULTURE OF CELEBRITY

Aaron Jaffe investigates the relationship between two phenomena that arrived on the historical stage in the first decades of the twentieth century: modernist literature and modern celebrity culture. Jaffe systematically traces and theorizes the deeper dependencies between these two influential forms of cultural value. He examines the paradox that modernist authors, while rejecting mass culture in favor of elite cultural forms, reflected the economy of celebrity culture in their strategies for creating a market for their work. Through collaboration, networking, reviewing, and editing each other's works, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Wyndham Lewis, among others, constructed their literary reputations and publicized the project of modernism. Jaffe uses substantial archival research to show how literary fame was made by exploiting the very market forces that modernists claimed to reject. This innovative study illuminates not only the way High Modernist reputations were constructed, but also the cultural impact and continued relevance of the modernist project.

AARON JAFFE is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Louisville. He has previously taught at Indiana University and the University of Illinois. This is his first book.

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For Tatjana and Elias

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