



# **Writing Celebrity: Stein, Fitzgerald, and the Modern(ist) Art of Self-Fashioning (American Literature Readings in the Twenty-First Century)**

*Timothy W. Galow*

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Writing Celebrity is divided into three major sections. The first part traces the rise of a national celebrity culture in the United States and examines the impact that this culture had on "literary" writing in the decades before World War II. The second two sections of the book demonstrate the relevance of celebrity for literary scholarship by re-evaluating the careers of two major American authors, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein. I have chosen these two writers because they represent, by contemporary standards, "oppositional" modes of authorship. Fitzgerald received national renown with the publication of his first novel and was considered by many critics to be little more than a talented "popular" writer. In contrast, journalists depicted Stein as an inaccessible avant-garde author and they regularly mocked her obscure writing style in the press. These two figures allow me to explore the impact that celebrity media had on both 'elite' and 'popular' authors. They also provide me with a foundation for explaining how the development of categories like "highbrow" and "lowbrow," terms which remain central to much twentieth century literary scholarship, are intimately bound up with the expansion of star culture.

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