



Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America

By Joe Moran

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In America, authors are as likely to be seen on television talk shows or magazine covers as in the more traditional settings of literary festivals or book signings. Is this literary celebrity just another result of ‘dumbing down’? Yet another example of the mass media turning everything into entertainment? Or is it a much more unstable, complex phenomenon? And what does the American experience tell us about the future of British literary celebrity? In *Star Authors*, Joe Moran shows how publishers, the media and authors themselves create and disseminate literary celebrity. He looks at such famous contemporary authors as Toni Morrison, J.D. Salinger, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, John Updike, Philip Roth, Kathy Acker, Nicholson Baker, Paul Auster and Jay McInerney. Through an examination of their own work, biographical information, media representations and promotional material, Moran illustrates the nature of modern literary celebrity. He argues that authors actively negotiate their own celebrity rather than simply having it imposed upon them – from reclusive authors such as Salinger and Pynchon, famed for their very lack of public engagement, to media-friendly authors such as Updike and McInerney. *Star Authors* analyses literary celebrity in the context of the historical links between literature, advertising and publicity in America; the economics of literary production; and the cultural capital involved in the marketing and consumption of books and authors.

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Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America By Joe Moran Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #3194258 in Books
- Published on: 2000-03-01
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.57" h x .56" w x 5.43" l, .60 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 192 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Moran (English and American studies, Liverpool John Moores Univ., England) has written an interesting account of the nature of author celebrity. Exploring literary fame in the United States since the turn of the 19th century, he charts how authors have learned to use the media in its various and changing forms in order to create personae that sell books. Moran argues that these writers are not simply reacting to the culture around them but are consciously manipulating it. He concentrates on John Updike, Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, and Kathy Acker and furnishes much detail to back his thesis, drawing from the authors' fiction and nonfiction works, their promotional materials, and their appearances, or lack thereof, in the media. The author also raises questions of class and literature (e.g., where and how this self-promotion takes place and whether the author is seen as literary or not). This thought-provoking and timely book is highly recommended for academic libraries."Kelley Gove, Kennebunk Free Lib., ME
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Review

"Joe Moran's book is a long overdue study of the way that cultures of celebrity and authorship interact to sell books in the United States. His subjects are not best-selling authors, but the so-called literary ones - that is the serious authors who win prizes and are taught in universities (but who also happen to sell a lot of books). His aim is to" challenge the way the emergence of literary celebrity is most commonly explained - in terms of the vulgarisation of literary life by commercial mass media in America...." Star Authors" provides a much needed framework in which to study recent American fiction." Times Literary Supplement

About the Author

Joe Moran is Lecturer in English and American Studies at Liverpool John Moores University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elaine Kistler:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive right now, people have to do something to make themselves survive, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Yes, by reading a guide your ability to survive enhance then having chance to stand up than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading any book, we give you that Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America book as beginner and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

Adrian Kester:

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