



Oscar Wilde and Modern Culture: The Making of a Legend

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Oscar Wilde and Modern Culture: The Making of a Legend explores the meteoric rise, sudden fall, and legendary resurgence of an immensely influential writer's reputation from his hectic 1881 American lecture tour to recent Hollywood adaptations of his dramas. Always renowned—if not notorious—for his fashionable persona, Wilde courted celebrity at an early age. Later, he came to prominence as one of the most talented essayists and fiction writers of his time.

In the years leading up to his two-year imprisonment, Wilde stood among the foremost dramatists in London. But after he was sent down for committing acts of “gross indecency” it seemed likely that social embarrassment would inflict irreparable damage to his legacy. As this volume shows, Wilde died in comparative obscurity. Little could he have realized that in five years his name would come back into popular circulation thanks to the success of Richard Strauss's opera *Salome* and Robert Ross's edition of *De Profundi*. With each succeeding decade, the twentieth century continued to honor Wilde's name by keeping his plays in repertory, producing dramas about his life, adapting his works for film, and devising countless biographical and critical studies of his writings.

This volume reveals why, more than a hundred years after his demise, Wilde's value in the academic world, the auction house, and the entertainment industry stands higher than that of any modern writer.

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