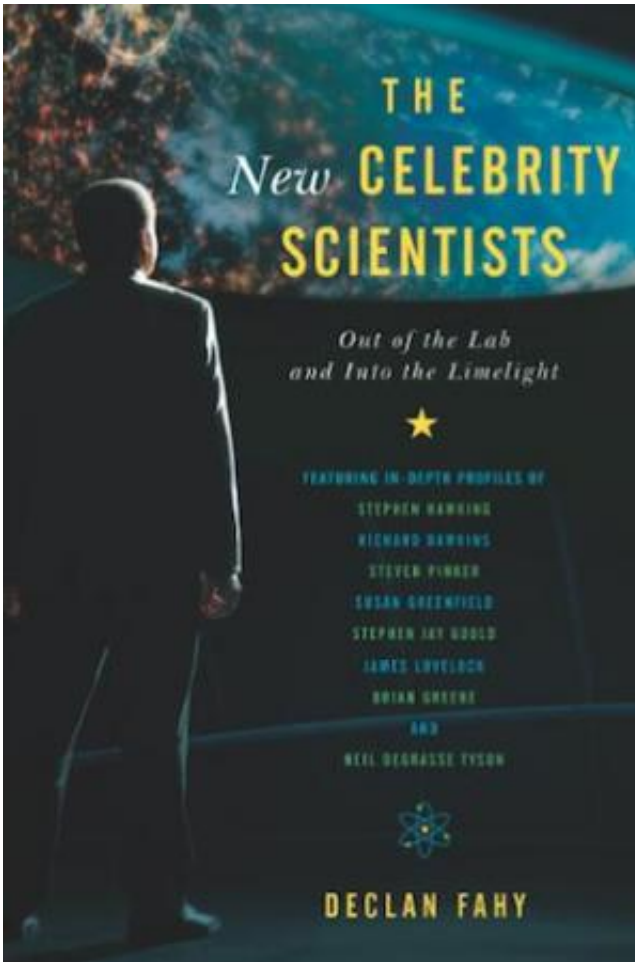


The rise of the new celebrity scientists

March 18 2015



The book profiles eight renowned scientist and investigates how they achieved celebrity status -- and explores how their ideas influence our understanding of the world. Credit: Declan Fahy

Are you wondering how a biopic about a scientist, *The Theory of*

Everything, garnered five Oscar nominations - or even got made in the first place? American University's School of Communication professor Declan Fahy explains it all in his latest book, *The New Celebrity Scientists: Out of the Lab and Into the Limelight*. Declan Fahy profiles eight celebrity scientists and investigates how they achieved celebrity in the United States and internationally.

Fahy traces the career trajectories of Richard Dawkins, Stephen Hawking, Steven Pinker, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Brian Greene, Stephen Jay Gould, Susan Greenfield, and James Lovelock. He investigates how they achieved [celebrity](#) status and explores how their ideas influence our understanding of the world. The book demonstrates how each scientist embraced the power of promotion and popularization to stimulate thinking, impact policy, influence research, drive controversies, and mobilize social movements.

For example, Fahy traced the trajectory of Hawking's career back to the early 1970s when he was first profiled in science magazines, showing how his image changed over time -often quite dramatically. "The Theory of Everything is but one of many, many portrayals of Hawking I examine that have impacted on how -often with his own input -he was molded into the most famous scientist of the modern era," said Fahy. He also notes that it was not only his science that made him a star, the media made Hawking famous.

The book shows that it is not just singers, actors, and athletes that become celebrities in our celebrity driven culture. Celebrity scientists like Neil deGrasse Tyson and Brian Greene and Richard Dawkins circulate scientific ideas and concepts through popular culture. "In the process, they shape public discussion around science-based controversies, such as evolution and intelligent design," said Fahy. "They are public faces of science and they have a vital public role." As such, the book takes on controversy and critical claims that some celebrity

scientists speak beyond their expertise and for personal gain.

The result of *The New Celebrity Scientists* is a in-depth look into how celebrity scientists help determine what it means to be human, the nature of reality, and how to prepare for society's uncertain future.

More information: www.american.edu/soc/news/declan-fahy-book.cfm

Provided by American University

Citation: The rise of the new celebrity scientists (2015, March 18) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-celebrity-scientists.html>

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