



Celibacies: American Modernism and Sexual Life

Benjamin Kahan

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In this innovative study, Benjamin Kahan traces the elusive history of modern celibacy. Arguing that celibacy is a distinct sexuality with its own practices and pleasures, Kahan shows it to be much more than the renunciation of sex or a cover for homosexuality. *Celibacies* focuses on a diverse group of authors, social activists, and artists, spanning from the suffragettes to Henry James, and from the Harlem Renaissance's Father Divine to Andy Warhol. This array of figures reveals the many varieties of celibacy that have until now escaped scholars of literary modernism and sexuality. Ultimately, this book wrests the discussion of celibacy and sexual restraint away from social and religious conservatism, resituating celibacy within a history of political protest and artistic experimentation. *Celibacies* offers an entirely new perspective on this little-understood sexual identity and initiates a profound reconsideration of the nature and constitution of sexuality.

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