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Eva Hemmungs Wirtén
Making Marie Curie: Intellectual Property and Celebrity Culture in an Age of Information. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

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Making Marie Curie reveals the dynamic cultural processes that created a celebrity Nobel laureate. The scientist born in Warsaw in 1867 as Maria Skłodowska won her first Nobel in 1903, sharing the physics prize with her French husband Pierre Curie and Henri Becquerel for their work on radioactivity. The Nobel catalysed her celebrity. French periodicals presented news about science's glamour couple to a wider readership, facilitated by the Curies themselves, who recognised the mass media as a vehicle to affirm their scientific and cultural status. As media and culture scholar Eva Hemmungs Wirtén argues in this insightful book, it was the rise of mass media and the creation of a celebrity culture that forged the public image of Curie.

Curie was careful and calculated in her self-presentation. She and Pierre are esteemed for their refusal to patent radium, their altruistic decision motivated by their belief that patenting ran counter to the scientific ethos. But Hemmungs Wirtén persuasively presents a more subtle analysis of this decision, grounded in historical knowledge of gender and intellectual property. Curie as a wife in early twentieth-century France was legally a non-person who could not own property. She, therefore, could not protect her work through intellectual property rights. But she could fashion a public image that fused her, in popular memory, with radium and radioactivity. A persona, not a patent, was a way for Curie to ensure her scientific legacy.

The laureate experienced the double-edged nature of fame. Curie experienced the effects of the Parisian press, which was a powerful force in the creation and destruction of reputations. Years after her husband's premature death in 1906, she had an affair with married scientist Paul Langevin, a liaison that made Curie a focal point in debates over national identity. She was portrayed as an immigrant who undermined a French marriage and sullied the good name bestowed on her through marriage to an esteemed Frenchman. Curie had her supporters, too, notably American journalist Missy Brown Meloney, who tirelessly promoted and fundraised for the scientist in the United States. Curie proclaimed that science should be about things, not people. But as Hemmungs Wirtén write, Curie 'knew full well that science was just as much about persons as things, that the separation of private and public was an illusion, and that it had been so ever since 1903'.

The image-making around Curie continued after her second Nobel, in chemistry, in 1911 and her death in 1934. Her daughter Eve Curie's hagiographic 1937 biography *Madame Curie* anchored Curie's image as emblem of the scientific ideal, an image commodified by the European Union to promote its funding schemes. *Making Marie Curie*, in contrast, presents a complex portrait of how a brilliant scientist – the first woman awarded a Nobel and the only person awarded the prize in two scientific fields – came to be represented as a global symbol of science. In doing so, the book is much-needed addition to scholarship on scientific celebrity, female scientific celebrity and the Nobel's public image.