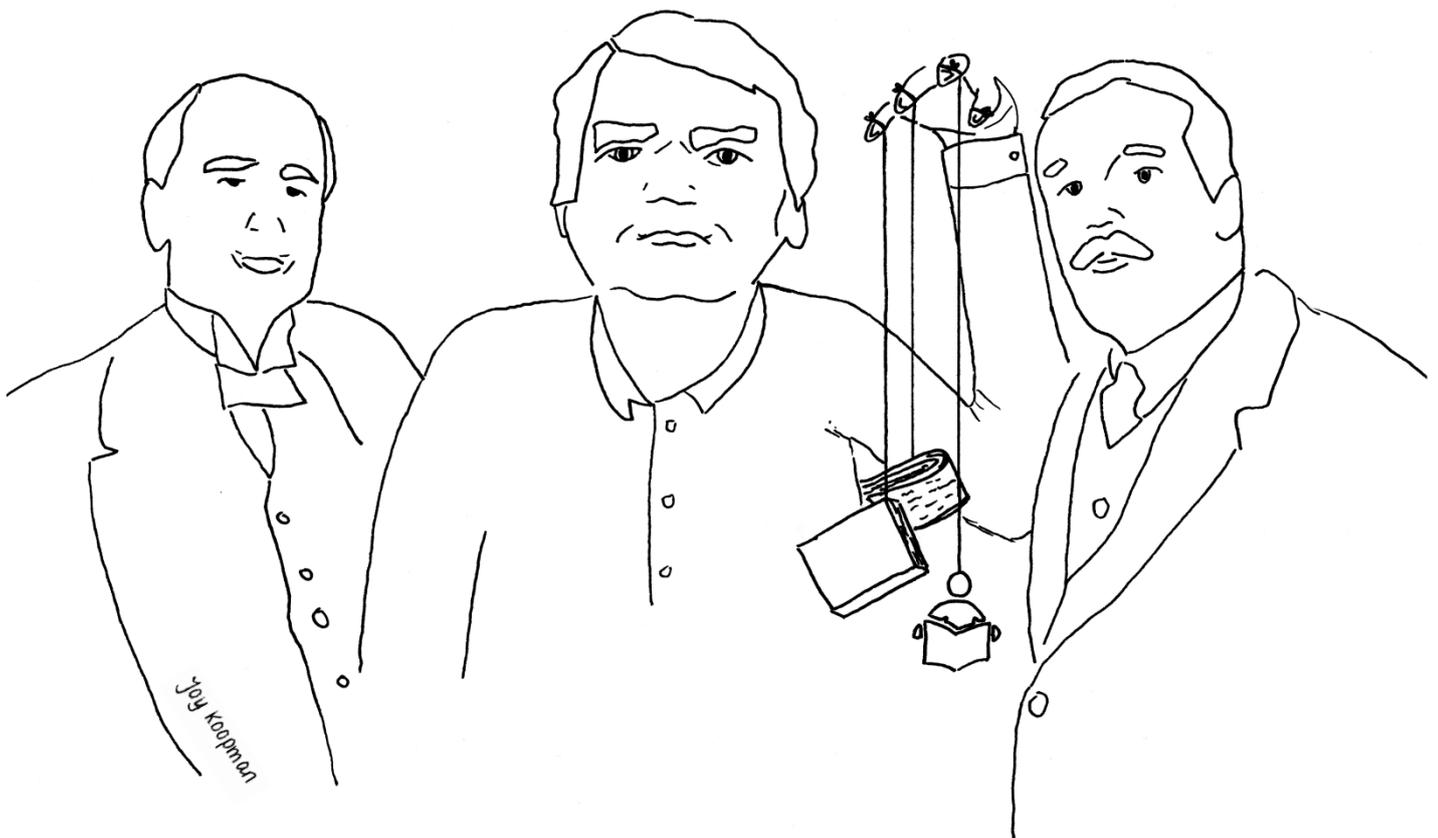


David Lodge and Authorial Control

(Self-)Positioning and Anxiety of Reception in the Field of Biographical Fiction



Name: Joy Koopman

Student number: 4093992

Subject: Thesis MA Engelstalige Letterkunde

Supervisor: Prof. Odin Dekkers

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Radboud University Nijmegen, Faculty of Arts

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Introduction

“The person best qualified to give an account of a novel’s genesis and composition is the author. He or she is also the person most affected by its reception” (xi)

- David Lodge, *The Year of Henry James* (2006)

This remark introduces Lodge’s thoughts on his novel *Author, Author* after its reception had been disappointing. In the text that follows Lodge discusses the genesis of his novel and responds to its reception. The three stages of a novel - genesis, composition and reception - are in Lodge’s opinion inextricably connected to the author and therefore the author is completely entitled to comment on his own work and interfere in the discussion of it at all times. Lodge, in fact, feels that the author is the most important figure in these three stages. The statement leaves no question as to whether Lodge subscribes to the idea of the reader as the only entity to be in full control of the interpretation of a novel. As an experienced novelist, Lodge is well aware of his anxieties concerning authorship. His desire to remain in control over these three stages of novel writing is what I will explore in this study. And what better way to explore contemporary authorial control than through two twenty-first century novels that give pride of place to questions of authorship?

Professor, author, and literary critic David Lodge was born in 1935 in Brockley South London (Hubble et al. 258). In 1960 he obtained a PhD position in Birmingham and published his first novel *The Picturegoers* (“Professor David Lodge,” pars. 2-3). Lodge is most famous for his novels that satirise academic life, such as the “Campus Trilogy,” comprising *Changing Places*, *Small World* and *Nice Work* (Hubble et al. 258). The campus novels are set in the fictional University of Rummidge, which is based on the University of Birmingham at which Lodge taught English Literature at the time (Smith, par. 4). These academic novels engage with literary theory by satirising it, and thereby show knowledge of recent theory. In *The Novel after Theory* (2011) Judith Ryan says that the comic academic novel is a prime example of literature that “knows about” theory, and that “[t]he academic novel often satirises theory, appealing at once to an inner and an outer circle of readers” (2). Lodge notes that his novels always “[correspond] to a particular phase or aspect of [his] own life” (qtd. in “Professor David Lodge,” par. 19), which means that he has a personal connection to the content of his novels. For example, his academic novels are written during the time he was employed as a professor and his novel *Deaf Sentence* (2008) is written after he began struggling with deafness. Two of the “Campus Trilogy” novels were shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, in

1984 and 1988 (Hubble et al. 258). In addition, Lodge won the Hawthorne Prize and the Yorkshire Post Fiction Prize for *Changing Places*, Whitbread Book of the Year for *How Far Can You Go?*, and the Sunday Express Book of the Year award for *Nice Work* (“Professor David Lodge,” par. 18). Lodge has been a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature since 1976 and was awarded Commander of the British Empire in 1998 (“Professor David Lodge,” par. 18). After his first book of literary criticism was published in 1966, he has published literary criticism and novels alternately (“Professor David Lodge,” par. 17). From 1960 until 1987 Lodge was a professor of English Literature at the University of Birmingham and from 1969 until 1978 he was associate professor at the University of Berkeley in California (“Professor David Lodge,” par. 2). Two of Lodge’s novels were adapted for television, for which Lodge wrote the screenplay himself, and he wrote a total of three plays during his career (“Professor David Lodge,” par. 6). He also wrote the screenplay for the BBC series of Charles Dickens’s *Martin Chuzzlewit* and adapted his own play *The Writing Game* for television (“Professor David Lodge,” par. 6).

After decades of writing satirical novels, Lodge turned a new leaf in 2004, with *Author, Author*, a novel on the life of Henry James. In his critical essay collection *Lives in Writing* (2011), Lodge says that, “as I get older I find myself becoming more and more interested in, and attracted to, fact-based writing” (ix). While he believes this “to be a common tendency in readers as they age” (ix), he also believes it to be a trend in contemporary literature (ix). And he is right; in the last decades, not just the growing number of books about lives is staggering, but also the forms of life-writing are becoming more and more diverse. Cora Kaplan even argues that “[s]o much has it encroached on fiction that it has become a commonplace to say that biography has become the new novel” (37). David Ellis notices that “the popularity of biography shows no sign of abating. In the *Time Literary Supplement* more space is occupied by reviews of new biographies than of new fiction” (1). What can be concluded from these observations about Lodge’s new interest in fact-based writing and the emerged popularity of it in contemporary literature is that his timing could not have been better. His choice of subject, however, was unfortunate, as he was not the only author to publish a novel about Henry James that year.

Lodge’s first biographical novel, *Author, Author*, was published in 2004 by Secker & Warburg. The novel tells the story of Henry James’s middle years in London. Through an account of James’s friendship with *Punch* artist George Du Maurier and American novelist Constance Fenimore Woolson, and a disappointing theatrical attempt, the play *Guy Domville*, the reader encounters a Henry James who is coping with authorial disappointment and literary

jealousy. The story is framed by James's deathbed scene in 1915. Lodge's second biographical novel, *A Man of Parts*, was published five years later in 2011, by Harvill Secker. This time Lodge narrates the life of H. G. Wells. While Wells is most famous for his science fiction novels, Lodge's novel testifies to the fact that Wells was more than that. He was also a member of the Fabian Society, a notable Free Love practitioner, a father and a husband. The subject matter of Wells's life is extensive and exciting, as he was, allegedly, a notorious adulterer and sexual predator with outspoken opinions when it came to politics. By using a dialogue structure, which is entwined with the narrative, the reader sees the frequently controversial events of Wells's life through Wells's eyes. As well as *Author, Author*, this novel is framed by a scene that shows Wells on his deathbed.

Although the two authors were acquainted with each other, they led completely different lives – resulting in two distinctly different biographical novels. Unlike James, Wells had great commercial success within his lifetime, but his outspoken political and sexual views slowly moved him away from the limelight. James has only been placed into the limelight recently, as the interest in his work and life has been increasing in the last decades. However, these two novels about the lives of two significant Victorian and Edwardian authors are concerned with more than just historical writing. They are concerned with reputation, legacy and the fear of losing control over it. Through these themes the reader sees a glimpse of Lodge in these novels; because authorial control and agency are not just issues that the fictional main characters, Henry James and H. G. Wells, struggle with. There are also indications of Lodge's attempts to remain in control over the novels and their interpretation within the novels.

Authorial control and agency are problems that a number of authors have struggled with in the course of literary history. However, these issues have recently become particularly important in contemporary literature, especially since the status of authorship has been diminished greatly in the second half of the last century. As the author has a less important role in some poststructuralist and even postmodernist ideas, it has even been argued that the author had been decentralised and destabilised. It seems, however, that current developments in the field of life-writing are attempting to reinstate the author. Recent novels and biographies portray the author as a multidimensional person, with weaknesses as well as strengths, which allows the reader to relate to him. In addition, they show the author at work and the author as the origin of the novel. In this way, the author is reconnected to his work and (re)gains authority.

Theory and importance of the research

Relatively little research has been carried out on the topic of authorial control in combination with fiction that concerns authorship. After decades of literary theory, in particular poststructuralist theory on the subject of authorship, dominating literature, theory seems to have gained a new position *within* the novel. By bringing attention to authorship by means of the biographical novel, the novelist responds to the declaration that the author is ‘dead’.

Influential essays such as Roland Barthes’s “The Death of the Author” (1967) and Michel Foucault’s lecture “What Is an Author?” (1969) questioned the importance of authorship and the agency authors have over their work. Especially “The Death of the Author” has left critics confused, as it provided more uncertainties than it gave answers. Nevertheless, it has offered critics enough material for discussion. Since then, there has been a general current of works that argue against these poststructuralist ideas and allow the author more authority. The most influential work on this topic is Séan Burke’s *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, first published in 1992, in which he discredits the idea of anti-authorialism through philosophical deconstruction of the ideas of these three French critics. The underlying idea is not just to dismantle the faults in their argumentation, but, as Burke puts it, to argue “against an Anglo-American critical institution which has needed arguments from authority in the deconstruction of authority” (ix). While Roland Barthes’s essay is the most famous and straight-forward example of an anti-authorialist manifesto, anti-authorialism is enmeshed in a web of ideas from other movements of critical thought that came before and after. Barthes’s text has become iconic, and synonymous with the anti-authorialist position. Therefore, it is the ideal text for determining the arguments within this reasoning. Barthes coined the term ‘Death of the Author,’ ‘la morte de l’auteur,’ which, as a label, has come to transcend the actual essay itself.

Terry Eagleton notes in *After Theory* (2003) that “[t]he golden age of cultural theory is long past” (1). The “golden age of cultural theory” was defined by ideas of French theorist such as Barthes, Derrida and Foucault and had a significant impact on literature. However, since then, the academic value of theory has been the subject of heated debate, mainly in the 80s, which has been referred to as “the theory wars” (Ryan 2). In the aftermath of “the theory wars,” we have now embarked on a period that some critics have labelled “posttheory”¹ (Ryan 10). Eagleton argues that even though we are past literary theory’s peak, it does not mean that

¹ Examples of works discussing ‘posttheory’ include *Post-theory: New Directions in Criticism* (1999) by Martin McQuillan and *Post-theory, Culture, Criticism* (2004) edited by Ivan Callus and Stefan Herbrechter

we can return to a “pre-theoretical innocence” (1). Judith Ryan’s *The Novel After Theory* (2011) explores how contemporary novelists engage with theory. She doubts whether theory is truly ‘dead’, as some claim, or that this proclamation is merely a way of stating that literary theory is past its peak. She adds that it “may also be an expression of theory’s failure to attain some of its more idealistic goals” (10). For this specific thesis concerning biographical novels, I would like to use ‘posttheory’ as a term indicating that we are indeed past the “golden age of cultural theory,” but that its influence is still prevalent in novels that touch upon authorship by attempting to reinstate the author.

The biographical novel is a perfect medium for reacting to theory, and, indeed, has been arguing against anti-authorialist ideas about authorship. In *Literary Lives* (2000) David Ellis states that “[a]t a time when the triumph of ‘Theory’ in the universities has widened the gap between the academic world and the rest of society, biographies represent one of the few remaining points of interaction” (1). Even though Ellis observes this in relation to biography in general, the biographical novel has the same function. The biographical novels respond to theory alongside the responses of critics and theorists, together forming a more comprehensive argument. However, as much has been written about the influence theory has on the contemporary novel, less research has been carried out on the influence of theory on the author of that novel in question. Lodge’s work is often named in connection to literary theory, as his academic novels satirise theory and respond to it. Lodge is well-informed when it comes to literary theory. Additionally, he actively engages in the theoretical debate as both author and critic. But, being well-informed also means that Lodge knows the influence theory can have on the author’s agency over his work. As a result, the awareness of the effects of theory can lead to authorial anxieties.

In chapter one I will apply theory by Jérôme Meizoz and Pierre Bourdieu to demonstrate Lodge’s position within the literary field. I will not use these theories comprehensively, as Bourdieu’s theory in its entirety is elaborate and deserves a study on its own, but I will apply them on a global level, to create a framework. Occasionally, I will refer to these ideas in other chapters to connect Lodge’s relation to authorial control to his position within the literary field.

In Lodge’s work - fiction, non-fiction and interviews - I have observed an anxiety that is connected to the loss of control: an ‘anxiety of reception’. Anxiety of reception is an authorial fear of losing control over one’s work after it has been published, especially in regard to the interpretation of that work. Lucy Newlyn explores this term in her book *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (2000). This book is concerned

with the Romantic era, but I believe that this term, with some slight alterations, is also applicable to recent times. So, I will borrow the term ‘anxiety of reception’ from this work, and the basic definition, but I will not be able to use all of the theory comprehensively as it is placed in a eighteenth and nineteenth century context. Reception, in this sense, does not just refer to the critical reviews, but also to the interpretation of the individual reader.

I have selected a number of works on the subject of biographical fiction, of which the following are the most useful ones for my research. *The Author as Character: Representing Historical Writers in Western Literature* (1999), edited by Paul Franssen and Ton Hoenselaars, is comprised of essays on the author as a character in literature. I will use the term ‘author-as-character’ from the introduction of this book, as I believe it to be the most qualified for this research. The first chapter of this essay collection, “The Author: Postmodernism’s Stock Character” by Aleid Fokkema, has a rather abstract approach to establishing the representation of the author in postmodern works. Fokkema concludes that “[t]he story of an author is told again and again in postmodern texts. That story is all about representation, querying its (im-) possibilities, its relation to knowledge, language and power” (49). This essay is mostly concerned with “the postmodern crisis of representation” (41) of the author. My research is also concerned with representing the author. However, it is not so much concerned with the question how or if the author is represented, but to what purpose. This essay is useful for establishing a foundation of theory on the portrayal of authors in postmodern literature. By using this theory on how the author has become the stock-character of postmodern literature, I can explore how the representation of authors in postmodern novels is related to authorial control.

Cora Kaplan’s *Victoriana. Histories, Fictions, Criticism* (2007) gives a general overview of Victorian author as characters in contemporary literature. It discusses David Lodge’s *Author, Author* and explores the allure of the Victorians in modern times. Even though H. G. Wells is more of an Edwardian than a Victorian, the general theory and observations about life-writing are useful for this research. Kaplan explores the role life-writing has within the changing nature and status of authorship. She notes that “[i]ndeed biographies – of the wise or the wicked, the genius or the criminal, the canonical and the forgotten – have, in some accounts, been seen as a key element in the rightful restoration of a temporarily mislaid humanism and a wronged, dethroned historicism” (40). With the portrayal of Henry James and H. G. Wells, Lodge’s focus is on the wise as well as the wicked, the genius, and the canonical as well as the forgotten.

Dennis Kersten's *Travels with Fiction in the Field of Biography* (2011) discusses the relation between scholarly biography and biographical fiction in relation to "the construction of life stories" (35). This study provides in-depth background information on biographical fiction in general, but also discusses *Author, Author*. Kersten holds that "[b]iographical fiction is not an invention of postmodern culture, but it has been transformed over the past thirty years, for a large part in response to poststructuralist theory about the subject and the author and its impact on the 'representation' of historical lives" (224), which is in line with my reasoning about the influence of poststructuralist theory on the recent developments in the field of biographical fiction.

Finally, Max Saunders's *Self-Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction & the Forms of Modern Literature* (2010) is a very useful book when discussing David Lodge's self-positioning within his novels. Saunders has coined the term 'auto/biografiction', which explores the relationship between autobiography, biography and fiction. Especially the connection between autobiography and biography is useful in chapter three, in which I discuss the presence of Lodge within the two novels.

As the concept of authorship is slowly changing and as authorship gains more attention, it is important to explore how authorship is regaining its prominence within literature. Already, a great number of books have been published on the subject of the changing status of authorship and the consequences this has for literature itself. I believe that David Lodge is an excellent case study, because he elaborately describes his thought process and is very explicit about his wishes and struggles as an author. David Lodge is an interesting example of an author who is, very publicly, struggling with authorial control and agency. Moreover, while his earlier fiction has been thoroughly researched, his most recent fiction has not yet been discussed to any major extent; this goes especially for *A Man of Parts*, being his most recently published novel. Combining these two recent novels with the general ideas of authorial control can hopefully lead to insights into modern-day authorship.

Terminology

I will start with an overview of the terminology used in this research. In addition I will specify, when needed, in the separate chapters what terminology is used. My case study includes two novels which may be said to have a hybrid nature, combining fact and fiction. The complicating factor with defining these novels is that there is a wealth of possibilities in the spectrum between fact and fiction. Some authors strive for an authentic account of a life, and only imagine the parts of a life for which there are no factual sources. Others, however,

fictionalise the story to a greater extent. They, for example, imagine the historical figure in situations and settings that have a relatively small relation to reality. This results in very different novels, which are hard to label in the same category. An additional complicating factor in the terminology of this genre is that postmodern novels about the lives of real historical people are a relatively new development in the field of life-writing, which means that the terminology is still in development. The terms that are used to describe these novels include, among others, ‘fictional biography,’ ‘biographical fiction’² and ‘the biographical novel.’ I have opted for ‘biographical novel’ as this is the term used by David Lodge. While there are different definitions for this term, Lodge himself explains it as:

The biographical novel, being a hybrid form, brings both kinds of selections and exclusion into play. As the writer of such a book you are constrained by the known facts of your historical characters, but free to invent and imagine in the interstices between these facts. How free is a matter of individual choice. (*The Year* 31)

While this explanation includes both Lodge’s novels *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*, it also excludes novels that incline more towards fiction. For example, novels that use biographical facts from a life while placing the protagonist in a different setting, or novels that use historical characters to tell an imaginary tale. Andrew Motion’s *The Invention of Dr Cake* (2003) and Paula Marantz Cohen’s *What Alice Knew: A Most Curious Tale of Henry James & Jack the Ripper* (2010), for instance, draw on biographical facts from the lives of John Keats and the James family, respectively, but are in no way “constrained by the known facts of [their] historical characters.” Motion’s character Dr Cake bears a resemblance to Romantic poet John Keats, but Motion gave himself more imaginative freedom. This novel can still be placed on the scale between biographical factuality and fiction, but it exceeds the purpose of telling an authentic life story, or parts of it, as the most important trait of the novel. *What Alice Knew: A Most Curious Tale of Henry James & Jack the Ripper* combines different historical persons: Alice James, William James, Henry James and Jack the Ripper. While this story could have occurred, time-wise, there is no record of Alice, James and William solving the mystery of Jack the Ripper. Since there are no facts to prove the authenticity of this story, the novel draws more on fiction than facts. As for Lodge’s view of the term ‘biographical novel’, I understand that this excludes novels that do not rely on biographical facts to a great extent. However, as the definition fits *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* I will use this term in relation to these novels. When discussing this fictionalised form of biography on a general

² ‘Biographical fiction’: Among others used by Franssen and Hoeselaars (1999) p. 25 and ‘Fictional biography’: p. 15

level, I will use the term ‘biographical fiction’, which may include any kind of fictionalisation within the field of life-writing.

As the overarching term I am using ‘life-writing’; biographical novels belong to the genre of life-writing. Hermione Lee establishes that in addition to biography, both fictionalised and traditional, “autobiography, memoir, journal, letter, autobiographical fiction [and] poem” (3) belong to the genre of life-writing. In *Lives in Writing* Lodge refers to life-writing as “different ways in which the lives of real people are represented in the written work: biography, the biographical novel, biographical criticism, autobiography, diary, memoir, confession, and various combinations of these modes” (IX). Lodge includes criticism in the genre of life-writing, whereas Lee counts poems as life-writing. When describing Lodge’s role in his novels, I use ‘auto/biografiction.’ This term is coined by Max Saunders in his book *Self-Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction & the Forms of Modern Literature*. The term combines three traits that are relevant for my case study: autobiography, biography and fiction. When referring to the character based on the historical author, Henry James and H. G. Wells, I use Franssen and Hoenselaars’s term ‘author-as-character.’ I believe this term is most suitable to describe the characters, as it specifies that the author-as-character is more than a fictional character. The character is based on the real historical author, and therefore has a different connection to reality. The term indicates that the author, or at least the idea of the author based on source material, is transformed into a character. In addition, when referring to the author as the subject of Lodge’s writing, I will use the term ‘author-subject’. When describing Lodge’s authorial choices and opinions about his characters, the character is subordinate to Lodge as author. ‘Subject’ suggests a hierarchy, which means that Lodge has agency over his characters. Therefore, in the cases that I discuss the author-in-character in connection to Lodge as author, ‘author-subject’ seems more fitting.

In relation to the main subject of this thesis, the terms ‘authorial control,’ ‘anxiety of reception,’ and ‘(self) positioning’ are key. ‘Authorial control’ is the overarching term that is subdivided into three components. ‘Authorial control’ is the control an author has over his work. I believe this term ties in with Séan Burke’s discussion of the term ‘anti-authorialism,’ as being the poststructuralist decentring of the author. ‘Anti-authorialism’ is, in fact, a loss of authorial control, as the author is not credited for his efforts anymore and thereby loses control over his work. (Self)-positioning and anxiety of reception are components of authorial control in my argumentation. Self-positioning is the manner in which Lodge places himself in the literary field and connects himself to other authors, which will be discussed in chapter one. However, the positioning does not just concern Lodge himself. In addition, Lodge

positions Henry James and H. G. Wells, which correlates to the general theme of authorial control; this will be discussed in chapter two. The loss of authorial control and anxiety of reception relate to each other, as the author loses control over the reception of his work when he loses control over his work. This can result in an anxiety of reception, the fear of what happens to his work after the author publishes his novel. This will be discussed in chapter four.

Research questions

Poststructuralism argues that text has more interpretative freedom when it is liberated from authorial control. Such poststructuralist ideas problematise the status of authorship and the agency authors have over their work. We are now in the ‘posttheory’ phase, in which literary theory no longer dominates literary interpretation. However, theoretical ideas, especially poststructuralist ones about the author, still have an influence on the novel and authorship today. This influence can occur in different forms; for instance, as a response to theory, as complementing theory, or as resisting theory. *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* are both written under the influence of poststructuralist ideas concerning authorship.

This study explores David Lodge’s relationship with authorial control, in the posttheory phase, after the author had been declared dead, and how this relationship emerges from his work. I have formulated one main research question and two subquestions. My main research question is: How does David Lodge, as an author writing ‘posttheory’, attempt to exercise authorial control over his two biographical novels *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* and, subsequently, over their reception?

The two subquestions both relate to aspects of authorial control:

1. How does Lodge position himself in the literary field with and through these novels in relation to his subjects Henry James and H. G. Wells?
2. How does David Lodge’s anxiety of reception emerge from these two novels and what consequences does it have for the novel and its reception?

I have subdivided authorial control into three parts, which are consecutive steps in my research: positioning of the authors, Henry James and H. G. Wells, in the novels; Lodge’s self-positioning within these novels; and Lodge’s anxiety of reception. The first two subjects relate to subquestion 1, and the last subject relates to subquestion 2.

Chapter outline

In order to answer the research questions I will apply general theory on life-writing and authorship to Lodge's work on a general level as well as on a detailed level. In agreement with Lodge's discussion of the three stages of novel writing – genesis, composition and reception – in *The Year of Henry James*, this thesis will discuss these three stages of the novels *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* in relation to authorial control. This study starts with a general overview of Lodge's critical works in relation to authorial control, and works towards a more detailed analysis in which I explore the two novels. I will occasionally illustrate my arguments through close readings of both novels. To conclude I will discuss the critical reception as the final stage in the discussion of these novels.

While the main focus of my research is on *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* I want to place them in context; because authorial control and agency are not just limited to the content of these novels alone. The first chapter, "Authorial Control and David Lodge's Literary Criticism," is largely introductory and creates a foundation on the basis of which the research can be carried out. The chapter explores Lodge's position in the literary field and how Lodge's recent critical works relate to authorial control. Once I have established Lodge position and authorial posture, I can explore how this relates to the two novels and their reception. Especially when a certain pattern has been retraced, I can establish whether this pattern extends to the novels. Chapter two, three and four discuss the case study: the novels *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*. Every chapter explores and discusses a topic relating to authorial control, either as a theme within the novel or as Lodge's attempt to gain authorial control over his novels and their reception. Chapter two, "Foregrounding the Author as Character," discusses how Lodge portrays Henry James and H. G. Wells as characters and how he thematises authorial control within the novels. Chapter three "Connecting Authors: Self-positioning within the Biographical Novel" explores how Lodge connects himself to Henry James and H. G. Wells within the novels. Chapter four "Anxiety of Reception" explores how Lodge's anxiety of reception is noticeable within the novels and how it relates to the context of these novels. Chapter five "Encoding the Novel: Critical Reception of *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*" explores how the actual critical reception of these novels relates to the subjects I discuss in the previous chapters. This chapter rounds off the research. I believe that when an author's anxiety of reception is discussed, the research would not be complete without an overview of the actual reception. In this chapter I mainly want to answer the question whether Lodge's attempts to authorial control have influenced the reception and whether the critics draw the same conclusions. I chose to discuss both novels together in

chapter two up and including five, so I can properly compare and contrast them in relation to the three aspects of authorial control.

Chapter 1

Authorial Control and David Lodge's Literary Criticism

David Lodge's recently published memoir opens with the publisher's note "*Quite a Good Time to be Born* gives a fascinating picture of a period of transition in British society and the evolution of a writer who has become a classic in his own lifetime." This is a rare position to be in, as most renowned authors do not live to see themselves crowned "a classic." However, this means that Lodge needs to uphold a certain standard, which brings pressure. If the position of an author is re-evaluated with every publication, Lodge has to endure a great deal of criticism within his lifetime – being a widely published author. However, he almost never neglects an opportunity to defend himself or to provide background information on his authorial choices, in his critical works or in interviews. To uphold this standard as an author he has to remain in control over his position in the literary field.

In this chapter I will explore Lodge's position within the literary field and his self-presentation as an author through posture. In addition, I will touch upon the manner in which Lodge deals with critique in his critical works. By doing so, I will demonstrate the role of Lodge's critical works in his presentation as an author, which includes Lodge's self-positioning amongst other authors and his critical work as a medium for self-explication. Once I have established his representation and the manner in which he attempts to control his authorial position, I will be able to analyse how this relates to his biographical novels and the role he takes within these novels.

As the framework for this chapter I draw on Jérôme Meizoz's theory on authorial posture and Pierre Bourdieu's theory on the structure of the literary field and capital acquired by different agents within the field. Bourdieu makes a distinction between "'pure' art," driven by symbolic capital, and "'commercial' art," driven by economic capital (166). Gaining recognition for one's work is hereby opposed to creating art to make money. At the same time are these two oppositions strengthened by each other (166), as most symbolic capital will lead to commercial success, and commercial success will make art more visible to be nominated for prizes. Jérôme Meizoz's term 'posture' was built on the theory developed and discussed by Alain Viala, and touched upon by Pierre Bourdieu. Meizoz broadened the definition and created a theoretical framework. Viala defines posture as being an essential part of an author's ethos, or "the (general) way of being (of a) writer" (qtd. in Meizoz 83). Meizoz has amended this definition by defining ethos as a part of posture. For Meizoz, posture "encompasses one or several discursive ethos(es) which participate in its construction" (84). Posture, in Meizoz's

terms, is inextricably connected to the author's position within the literary field. He argues that "an author re-plays or negotiates his 'position' in the literary field through different modes of self-representation" (96); which means that an author's position within the literary field is never stable. Meizoz's posture therefore involves both the behaviour and discourse of the author – the latter including "the textual self-image" (85). A posture is communicated through a range of signals; from the genre the author writes in, to the way the author looks, the way the author is perceived by his audience and the manner the author presents itself in the media (85). These postures are composed from existing postures from other authors in history, which are engraved in the memory of the literary field. I will mainly focus on Lodge's discursive self-reflections, either explicit or implicit, to construct an analysis that demonstrates Lodge's attempt to control the manner in which he is perceived.

Lodge is very active in negotiating his position within the literary field. He does not just follow ruling literary trends throughout the years, but is also a leading figure in literary theory. In the sixties he started working with New Criticism, which resulted in *The Language of Fiction* (1966), the seventies and eighties made Lodge an active participant in the structuralist movement, on which he wrote *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977) and *Working with Structuralism* (1981); while in his later career he took to more fact-based writing. In *After Bakhtin* (1990) Lodge explains the effect of structuralism and post-structuralism on traditional theory as follows: "both undermined the idea . . . of the author as a substantial historic entity, the unique and authenticating origin of the text, whose communicative intention, conscious or unconscious, intrinsic or extrinsic to the text itself, it was the business of the critic to elucidate" (88). Lodge never went along with the destabilisation of the author, as made famous by Roland Barthes's "Death of the Author," and, as a critic, has credited the author accordingly. His biographical novels, *Author, Author* (2004) and *A Man of Parts* (2011), are built on the idea that the author is a human being in whose mind the text forms, whose hands write the novel and whose hearts have to endure the hardships of criticism. With these novels Lodge attempts to reconnect the author to his text.

David Lodge is a suitable choice for carrying out this project, because he has an interactive position in the literary field. He functions as a literary critic and novelist while at the same time he was employed as a professor in the academic field until the nineties. In sociological terms, following Bourdieu, he owns academic capital through his education and work as a prominent professor. When redefining this in terms of Meizoz's posture theory, Lodge functions as both a mediator and an author within the field of literature. Because all of his positions within the literary field make up his posture, he has more opportunities to define

and re-define this authorial posture. His work as a critic allows him to associate himself with certain authors by writing about them, to be placed within a school of thought and literary movement, and to connect to certain authors by developing a specialisation. Moreover, Lodge re-published a number of his essays in newly composed essay collections. These collections have helped him to both maintain his connection to certain authors, especially by carefully positioning them in the collection and thereby connecting them to other essays, and to maintain his relevance within the literary field.

Anxiety of reception

For decades authorship has had a diminished status in literary criticism, as the result of poststructuralist anti-authorialism. This has resulted in a residual fear of the author not having agency over his own work after it has been published. Roland Barthes's essay "The Death of the Author," which was originally published in 1967 as "La mort de l'auteur," is the most influential work when it comes to these anti-authorialist ideas. In this essay Barthes states a clear manner in which a text is to be read: the text should speak for itself and the reader is in full control of its interpretation. The author is reduced to being merely the "scriptor"³ of the text, which means that agency is taken away from the author (146). In "The Death of the Author" Barthes argues that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (148). So, when the author is pronounced 'dead' he has to give away his control and agency over the text. After the publication of a novel the author cannot influence the interpretation anymore, which results in a text that is now autonomous and stripped from any (presumed) authorial intention.

However, this seems to be changing, as literary criticism is slowly re-centring the author. Publications as *The Author* (2004) by Andrew Bennett, which explores these changing ideas of authorship through time and the effect these had on authors, and Séan Burke's *The Ethics of Writing: Authorship and Legacy in Plato and Nietzsche* (2008) focus on the author and the origins of authorship, with which the author is re-gaining prominence. Yet, in spite of the fact that scholars who oppose the idea of anti-authorialism have introduced substantial material to re-centre the author and provided new insights into the current status of authorship, as for example Séan Burke has, the feeling that the author has lost control of his work is still prevalent.

³ 'Scriptor'; introduced by Barthes to re-define the modern author: *Image, Music, Text* (1977) p. 146

This after-effect is noticeable in the writings of David Lodge. Lodge has written extensively on the subject of reception, and in *The Year of Henry James* he noted that: “One tries to make one’s novel as strong, as satisfying, as immune to criticism as one can, a task that usually involves a great deal of rereading and rewriting.” However, this is not always possible. He adds that “when the novel is published and passes into the hands of other readers it has an independent life which the writer can never fully anticipate or control (though he may of course seek to influence it by commenting publicly on the work or taking issue with his critics)” (x). In this passage he outlines two approaches for an author to control the reception of his novel: internally and externally. Firstly, the author can try to make its novel “as immune to criticism as one can,” which is still within the stage of composing the novel. In this stage the author is in full control of the novel, as the author is the novel’s only reader and critic. Of course, the author can only predict criticism of the novel, so it is not an assured defence. Chapters two and three will discuss and analyse the methods at the author’s disposal to control the novel’s reception during the composition stage of the novel. Secondly, the author can attempt to influence the reception “by commenting publicly on the work or taking issue with his critics.” Lodge frequently comments on his own work, provides context, explains his intentions and demonstrates his efforts in his critical works. However, that is exactly what Barthes was trying to eliminate, as context and intention are ever-changing and the interpretation should be in the hands and minds of the reader, not the author.

Lodge’s position within the literary field is liminal, as he frequently combines his positions as critic and author. As mentioned before, both as critic and author, Lodge never went along with the poststructuralist idea of eliminating the author. In his article “Structural Defects,” published in *The Observer* on 23 March 1980, Lodge explains his view on the decentralisation of the author:

I can’t go along with this radical decentring the literary text. It simply doesn’t answer to my experience of writing a novel, the hard work of imagining and describing and interweaving a network of human fortunes in time and space in a way which makes simultaneous sense on a number of different levels – generic, rhetorical, moral, psychological, social, historical and so on. Writing, especially the writing of narrative, is a process of constant choice and decision-making. . . . How can one decide such questions except in terms of some overall design – which is in some sense a design upon one’s putative readers? . . . [C]omedy is perhaps the genre that offers most resistance to post-structuralist aesthetics. Things that make us laugh in books rarely

happen by accident, nor are they produced by readers; they are constructed by authors.
(11)

This passage shows the friction between the notions of Barthes's 'scriptor' and author. To Lodge, a text is indeed a network, of which the components are perhaps not completely self-invented and original, but also conveys an effect "constructed by authors."

In the Preface of *The Year of Henry James* (2006) Lodge explores the several stages in the composition of a novel. He compares a novel to three stages in life, corresponding to a child growing up to be an adolescent. The first stage is conception, which is "getting an idea for a novel" (ix); at this stage the yet to be composed novel is still very fragile, as much can go wrong. After that stage comes "the parents nurturing and education of their offspring" (x), which corresponds to creating the novel. Finally, when the child is grown, the parents have to give up control and let it develop on its own, which may be seen as relating to the reception of the novel. I believe that the last stage makes the author most vulnerable, as the novel is now sent into the world and into the hands of readers and critics. As *The Year of Henry James* describes the disappointment Lodge had to deal with when his novel did not receive the praise he hoped it would, it may be said to demonstrate the hardship of being at the receiving end of criticism as an author.

When the author is seen as 'dead', only the critic and reader can give a text importance. By writing about an author within literary discourse, the author regains significance as he now exists within the novelistic framework of the text – and he can now be discussed by the novelist and re-evaluated by the critic. Fictional biographies are eminently suitable for this, as they give an author and his work prominence, and revive him in the shape of a character.

Literary criticism as self-explication

Lodge notes, in "Structural Defects" (1980), that he acknowledges that an author could impose his authorial interpretation upon the reader:

I would not claim that, because I could explicate my own novel line by line, that is not *all* it could mean; and I am well aware of the danger of inhibiting the interpretive freedom of the reader by a premature display of my own, as it were, 'authorized' interpretation. . . . I hope I haven't already been guilty of spoiling anyone's sport in this way. (11)

He might not have been guilty then, but he certainly did succumb in the decades that followed. Thirty-six years later, in 2006, he remarked that the author "may of course seek to

influence it [the reception of the novel] by commenting publicly on the work” (*The Year x*); a remark that is contradictory to the one he makes in “Structural Defects.” In recent years, Lodge has been commenting on his work more and more, and provides his readers regularly with insights into the genesis of his novels. Lodge frequently uses extracts from his own novels in his critical work and has directly linked a number of books to either the composition of his novels or the reception of them. *Consciousness and the Novel* (2003) demonstrates the research he carried out for *Thinks...* (2001) and part of *Lives in Writing* (2014) has a direct bearing upon his most recent biographical novel *A Man of Parts* (2011); whereas *The Year of Henry James: The Story of a Novel* (2006) deals with the disappointment that followed the publication of *Author, Author* (2004).

For example, in the title essay “The Year of Henry James; or, Timing Is All: The Story of a Novel,” Lodge gives an all-encompassing account of the process of creating the novel *Author, Author*. He covers the topics of his initial research on the life of Henry James, the process of writing the novel, and the reception of the novel. An important theme throughout this essay is the fact that Colm Tóibín’s novel *The Master*, also about Henry James, was published six months before *Author, Author*. Lodge describes this as a traumatic event, which had severe consequences for the reception of his own novel. When analysing this predicament according to Bourdieu’s theory on the field of cultural production, it could be perceived as a book on the loss of symbolic capital. Lodge describes the disappointment he felt when he was not nominated for the Man Booker Prize, the award for which Colm Tóibín and Alan Hollinghurst did get nominated. As *The Master* received more favourable reviews, and subsequently received more prestige, Tóibín gained more prominence within the field. Lodge feels that his novel has fallen in the shadow of Tóibín’s novel, which presumes that if the novel had stood on his own it would have been more positively received. He notes that the reviews of his novel compare his novel to Tóibín’s, which does not occur the other way around. This observation results in the conclusion that Lodge has lost symbolic capital to Tóibín, mainly within the domain of reception. By publishing an additional book that shows Lodge’s perspective and feelings, he gains more attention and possibly sympathy.

In his explanation of the choices he made for this novel, he explains that the two novels, *Author, Author* and *The Master*, are comparable in approach:

Both are long, extensively researched books, sympathetic to James, which attempt to represent known facts of his life from inside his consciousness, using a novelist’s licence to imagine thoughts, feelings and spoken words which can never be reliably documented by a biographer. (13)

Inevitably, Lodge's defence of his novel has to include a defence of the biographical novel. While there are concerns about the relation between fact and fiction in this genre, Lodge states that "[t]he biographical novel makes no attempt to disguise its hybrid nature, though each writer sets himself or herself different rules about the relationship between fact and fiction" (9). So, even though there is, at times, no clear boundary or distinction between fact and fiction and every author distributes the two entities to different degrees, the biographical novel never pretends to be something it is not.

Lodge's *Lives in Writing* (2014) gives an additional overview of the genre of life-writing; while he builds on his defence of the grey areas of life-writing. The collection exists of extensive previously published essays with an overlapping theme, for which Lodge tries to prepare the reader with great care in the foreword. Lodge wrote the essays in this collection with an autobiographical undertone, as these essays are always connected to some personal experience or encounter with the author in question. In his essay "Writing H. G. Wells" Lodge explains why he was careful to narrate *A Man of Parts* solely from Wells' point of view. I previously mentioned that *Lives in Writing* reads like a defence of life-writing, with this essay as the prime example. Lodge attempts to make a case for the merging of fact and fiction in biographical novels, and why he felt like he needed to portray Wells the way he did. He ponders difficulties he encountered while composing this novel and the choices he had to make. He notes that in the fictional biography the author tries to complement the facts with fiction, which is interpreted by the novelist who tries to imagine a consciousness for his subject (249) – a recurring subject in Lodge's writing.

Lodge's critical works are also highly self-reflective, as they show his process of writing and his poetics. He does not only justify his choices for narrative and stylistic devices, but he also explains them in a theoretical manner. Lodge never ignores past theory and literature he has written about; if he changed his perspective over the years he will gladly comment on that in his work, either in postscripts or forewords. Even though his critical work contains much overlap, he always acknowledges this and tries to justify his actions when composing the collections.

Lodge's self-explication in his critical works is closely connected to the creation of his self-image. According to Jérôme Meizoz, posture consists of non-verbal behaviour and discourse, "the textual self-image offered by the enunciator" (85). The author can exclusively influence his posture by conveying his self-image. This means that when Lodge provides discourse with his critical work from which the textual self-image can be extracted, he will gain more authorial control. And he attempts to gain and keep authorial control by self-

consciously making autobiographical connections, explaining his intentions, and defending his choices. In addition, he provides the most explicit self-image in his memoir *Quite a Good Time to Be Born: a Memoir, 1935-75*, published in 2015.

Self-positioning

As writers do not function in isolation within the literary field, connections and relationships can influence their position to a major extent. I noted before that Lodge frequently writes about his personal life and elaborates on the context of his novels. By doing so, he gives the reader a glimpse of the literary circles he moves in, and subsequently also an idea of his position within the literary field. A number of Lodge's books have been dedicated to or are in memory of novelists from his literary and social circles and he published several essay collections with essays about the writers he admired. He also discusses authors within the textual discourse of his fiction, *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Lodge notes in *The British Museum is Falling Down* (1965) that Malcolm Bradbury was his main influence for writing comedy (171-2). He dedicated this novel to Bradbury, and later published *The Year of Henry James* (2006) in his memory. *Lives in Writing* (2014) includes the essay "Malcolm Bradbury: Writer and Friend," to commemorate their friendship and the influence Bradbury has had on his career and life. Bradbury had been an important figure in Lodge's literary circle, and the two have been linked together as writers, and even mistaken for each other, numerous times. The essay discusses the importance of the "writer-friend" (166) in a literary career. Lodge states the importance of this friendship for their careers: "Our careers were so closely entwined, especially in the early years, that without that relationship my own would have been significantly different – much less interesting and possibly less successful" (166). When analysing this in terms of Meizoz's theory on the subject of authorial posture, I believe that Bradbury and Lodge's writer-friendship has helped shape Lodge's posture and authorial identity. Perhaps they both have a stronger position within the literary field, because they helped one another and shared their resources.

There have been more instances of Lodge paying a tribute to colleagues with whom he was personally acquainted. *The Year of Henry James* was dedicated to Tom Rosenthal, writer and publisher, who published *Changing Places* after it had been turned down by three other publishers (*Lives in Writing* 184); also, *Lives in Writing* was published in his memory after Rosenthal's death. *A Man of Parts* was dedicated to novelist Jim Crace, "who guessed the subject of this book before I [Lodge] had written a word of it." Graham Greene, a fellow

Catholic writer and noted influence on Lodge's work, is a recurring subject as well. Both *The British Museum is Falling Down*; and *Therapy* open with a quote from Greene and Lodge wrote several essays on his live and work.

In 2000, at a memorial service for Bradbury, Lodge said: "It always seemed to me that writing is a kind of defiance of death, because our books live on after we have gone" (*Lives* 192). To make sure that the author is not just preserved in books and the "memory of the literary field," as Korthals Altes calls it (53), but also continues to be read, readers have to be reminded of the author's name. Lodge states that he wrote *Lives in Writing* for a "general reader" (x), to make sure that the writing about authors does not just remain within the academic field, but will be more accessible. Life-writing also serves that purpose, because if writers are preserved in their books, they can also live on in other books. As a writer in the field of life-writing – written in whatever form – Lodge assures that his "writer-friends" and the authors he admires remain relevant within the literary field. In addition, Lodge connects his name to the name of his subject by writing about them, through which he will gain more relevance within the field himself. In addition, by showing appreciation for the other agents within the field, Lodge strengthens his own position. Subsequent chapters will explain how Lodge also attempts to attain this goal in *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*.

However, Lodge does not just write about his own personal connection to writers he is acquainted with, he also writes about the writers he admires or finds interesting; their literary endeavours as well as their personal lives. His academic novels reference a number of authors – like Henry James, T. S. Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell – as several of Lodge's characters are academics in the field of English literature and therefore often discuss authors. These novels satirised academic life, but at the same time included and alluded to theory and criticism within the frame of narrative. In later years, Lodge took his author-centred writing a step further and devoted entire books to one person. In fiction, *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* are prime examples of this type of book. In the field of literary criticism he wrote *After Bakhtin* (1990), and both *Consciousness and the Novel* (2003) and *The Year of Henry James* (2006) had a bearing upon Henry James. These three books all connect Lodge to his subject as it describes the research he carried out relating to the subjects. In the Preface of *Consciousness and the Novel* Lodge states:

My quest for a poetics of fiction was at every stage furthered by exposure to some new, or new-to-me, source of literary theory. But the journey ended with my discovery of Bakhtin, partly because he seemed to answer satisfactorily all the remaining questions I had posed myself. (x)

This position makes him a specialist in the field of Bakhtin's theory, especially because he devoted an entire book to Bakhtin. In *Consciousness and the Novel* Lodge plunges into the subject of consciousness in literature; a theme closely related to Henry James's writing. This book provides an inside view of the practice of writing *Thinks...*, in which Lodge explicitly discusses consciousness in James's *The Wings of the Dove*. He later published the essay collection *The Year of Henry James: or, Timing is All: the Story of a Novel* in 2004. While the title seems to suggest that this novel is mainly about the year in which both he and Colm Tóibín published a novel about Henry James, this is not the case. Nearly one-third of the book, the chapter "The Year of Henry James; or, Timing Is All: The Story of a Novel," comprises this subject. I believe the title is well-chosen, as it will now attract a different audience than when the title were to have covered all of the subjects mentioned in the collection. The content section of the book suggests an alternative title "Timing Is All: The Story of a Novel," but without the allusion to Henry James the title is less appealing to a wider audience.

Chapter 2

Foregrounding the Author as Character

“Life-writing’s renaissance has a special relevance to literary biography” (40), Cora Kaplan notes in *Victoriana: Histories, Fictions, Criticism* (2007). The interest in life-writing has proven to be stable over the last few decades⁴, even though the author has been declared ‘dead’ by theory. Now, once more, the author has a more established role within the literary field. Kaplan adds that “[i]n an alternative narrative, life-writing can be seen to respond to new ways of thinking about subjectivity, agency and history” (40). As agency had been taken from authors by poststructuralist theory, Kaplan believes that life-writing can create new insights into authorship. As I argued in chapter one, the reputation of the author has been negatively affected by anti-authorialist ideas. The last two decades have shown a slowly increasing interest in reinstating the author, reconsidering the status of authorship and reimagining the author as more than merely ‘scriptor’. The increased interest in authors has led to new approaches to portraying their lives, as, for instance, the biographical novel. The popularity of this, as Lodge calls it, “flourishing sub-genre” (*Lives* 232) has sparked controversy in literary criticism – especially in terms of ethical representation. David Lodge notes that the biographical novels vary greatly in their fact-fiction ratio. However, Lodge notes that “[t]hese books vary in literary merit, but few readers are likely to be misled about their relation to reality” (*Lives* 237). Lodge is an active participant in not only the creation of biographical novel, but also in writing about this genre.

I demonstrated in the first chapter that Lodge attempts to take authorial control over the reception of his novels by defending his choices and explaining his methods, and *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* are no exception. Both the essays “The Year of Henry James,” published in *The Year of Henry James*, and “Writing H. G. Wells,” published in *Lives in Writing*, read as a defence of the biographical novel in general and Lodge’s use of sources. In a way he had already covered these topics in the introductory note and appendix of his novels. According to Lodge, “[t]he biographer’s voice remains inevitably dominant, while the novelist can present such speculative material in the inner voice of the character,” as biography cannot recreate a human consciousness in the way that novels can; “[t]o make this distinction is not to denigrate biography, but to argue that there is something to be gained by

⁴ See “Introduction,” David Ellis states: “the popularity of biography shows no sign of abating. In the *Time Literary Supplement* more space is occupied by reviews of new biographies than of new fiction” (1) and Cora Kaplan states: “[s]o much has it encroached on fiction that it has become a commonplace to say that biography has become the new novel” (37)

representing the lives of real, historical figures with the techniques of the novel” (*Lives* 241). To Lodge, the biographical novel is an enrichment of the genre of life-writing, not an assault on the integrity of the field. It complements the literary biography, instead of replacing it. This chapter explores how Henry James and H. G. Wells are transformed into characters and how fictionalisation relates to general developments concerning the author-as-character within the field of biographical fiction. However, before I can analyse Lodge’s author-as-characters, Henry James and H. G. Wells, I have to establish the grounds on which the characters are built and the importance of the author-as-character. The main question for this chapter is: how does Lodge present his author-as-character as authors with agency and authorial control? Following Paul Franssen and Ton Hoenselaars *The Author as Character: Representing Historical Writers in Western Literature*, I use the term “author-as-character” to describe the historical author subject.

Return of the author within literary discourse

Lodge notes in *Lives in Writing* that he finds himself more interested in fact-based stories as he ages (ix). While he could have chosen any historical figure, he chose a subject he could relate to most: the author. An additional advantage of that choice is the fact that Lodge is now able to bring attention to authorship, and attribute to the changing status of the author. Séan Burke suggests that “every theory will be haunted to some extent by what it seeks to methodologically exclude” (165); the notion of the death of the author has only brought more attention to the subject of authorship. Andrew Bennett draws a similar conclusion as he argues: “Far from ridding the world of an authoritarian despot, the critique of authorship launched in the late 1960s by Barthes and Foucault may in fact be understood to have more securely fixed in place the question of the author in the interpretation of literary and other cultural texts” (108). Burke attempts to demonstrate the faults in the argumentation of poststructuralist anti-authorialism. He argues this as the return of the author, which includes different aspects of authorship. The return of the author is not merely a matter of reinstating the author, but also reimagining the author. Burke suggests that the return of the author includes a return to intention (179). Aleid Fokkema notes that literary criticism is not the medium through which this should be carried out, as “postmodernism may, in its final stages, return to resurrecting a workable and theoretically sound author concept – a destiny to be fulfilled in pages other than these” (40). Fokkema builds on Linda Hutcheon’s argument that “[the] *position* of discursive authority still lives on, because it is encoded in the enunciative act itself” (qtd. in Fokkema 40). According to Fokkema, “[i]nstead of single and unique

authorship, we appear to have an encoded subject position situated in discourse. With this substitution, however, the humanist predecessor cannot altogether be reasoned away; he sticks on as a residue that resists being swallowed up” (40). With this “workable and theoretically sound author concept” to which we return, the author will be resurrected.

The presence of the “humanist predecessor” is noticeable in the reception of life-writing. Reviewers tend to add information about the historical author and connect it to the author-as-character. For example, some reviews open with an introductory note about the historical author, mostly factual basic information. It can also occur in a fact-check manner. The reviewer then connects the information in the novel concerning the author-as-character with the factual information about the historical author, mostly to see if the portrayal in the novel corresponds with the existing impression of this author. Mostly, these insertions of ‘real’ biographical information function as context for the review⁵. Because the theme of authorship is located within the textual discourse of the novel and therefore is subject to the reviews, critics have to touch upon the subject of rehumanising the author. In this way, authors are reconsidered through these texts, which enables a return to author-centred criticism. However, the historical author has taken a different position within these reviews, as he is not discussed as the *author* of the reviewed work, but as the *subject* of the reviewed work.

An additional issue of the loss of agency authors have to endure is the fact that late authors cannot influence their status as an author anymore. Living authors are able to defend themselves, but late authors are not given that luxury. Cora Kaplan notes in *Victoriana: Histories, Fictions, Criticism*, that

[t]he loss of authorial privilege has been represented in both affective and intellectual terms as a massive cultural insult, one especially damaging to the self-image of writers from the late eighteenth century forward, for whom the right to independent, individual authority was the creed through which ‘liberty’ and ‘identity’ were understood. (40)

The historical authors have, in a way, been robbed of their identity and authority. The field of life-writing creates a space where authors can regain their prominence in literary history. Biography reconnects the author to his work, and in some cases biography is able to bring the attention back to somewhat forgotten authors. Kaplan argues that “[i]f biography now has a prophylactic role as an antidote to theory’s provocative death sentence on both subjects and

⁵ This will be demonstrated in chapter 5 “Encoding the Novels: Critical Reception of *Author*, *Author* and *A Man of Parts*”

authors, . . . its new prominence may also be as a symptom and effect of an argument *within* rather than simply *with* contemporary theory or postmodernity” (37-8); as the literary biography repositions both author and subject, and has a bearing on the nature of authorship. In the chapter “Lives without Theory” from *Literary Lives: Biography and the Search for Understanding* (2000) David Ellis states that “[i]n some cases only a literary biography can send readers back to the subject’s writings with renewed interest and curiosity even if, in others, it can also make them feel that, knowing so much about the life, they are dispensed from further or indeed any acquaintance with their work” (1). This completely defies the notion of death of the author, as the reader now evaluates a work in light of the author’s life story. In the same manner it can unite admirers and non-admirers of the historic subject in the sense that these novels can transcend the reader’s opinion about the historical subject.

Moreover, the author-as-character creates a space for both criticism and fiction within the novel, especially in the case of authors who are also critics. Lodge is a prime example of an author and critic who combines his two professions: “The fact that for much of my life I pursued a dual career, split between writing fiction and literary scholarship . . . , may have delayed my perception of the possibility of combining both kinds of interest and expertise in a biographical novel” (*The Year* 11). In fact, this merging of criticism and fiction is something poststructuralism had already noted as inevitable. Séan Burke explores this idea using Barthes, Derrida and Foucault as examples; “[h]aving rewritten the canonical text, the critic goes on to produce texts of his own” (170), criticism itself has become a primary discourse (170). Burke uses this idea to dismantle the faults within poststructuralist reasoning. He concludes that “[t]he boundary is no longer operative; the secondary becomes primary, the supplement is at the origin; criticism finds itself within literature” (170). Which means that “whilst acknowledging the force and enticements of such an idea, when turned against the author this line of argument becomes entirely self-defeating” (170-1). In novels that include criticism, both criticism and fiction meet at primary level. Therefore the critic and the novelist meet at a primary level as well; criticism is no longer secondary to fiction, but they complement each other within the textual discourse of the novel. Indeed, Lodge uses both his positions as critic and novelist very consciously. In his essay “Literary Criticism & Literary Creation” he shows the way in which he believes criticism and fiction can interact with each other. His novels can be described, as what Lodge calls “[c]riticism as *a part of* creative writing” (93).

The author-as-character: Henry James and H. G. Wells

There has been a significant revival of interest in Henry James this century. 2003 and 2004 alone saw the production of four novels portraying or alluding to Henry James; Emma Tenant's *Felony* (2003), Alan Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty* (2004), Colm Tóibín's *The Master* (2004), and of course Lodge's *Author, Author* (2004). These were followed by Michiel Heyns's *The Typewriter's Tale* (2005), allegedly Wendy Lesser's *The Pagoda in the Garden* (2005), A. N. Wilson's *A Jealous Ghost* (2005), Edwin Yoder's *Lions at Lamb House* (2007), Cynthia Ozick's *Dictation: A Quartet* (2008), Richard Liebmann-Smith's *The James Boys* (2008), and Paula Marantz Cohen's *What Alice Knew* (2010) – with probably more to come. Critics are puzzled by the sudden interest and allure that surrounds Henry James. In *The Year of Henry James* Lodge poses the same question and suggests that the emergence of feminist and queer theory may have sparked the interest. Henry James's sexuality is a central theme in Tóibín's *The Master* and is alluded to in *The Line of Beauty*. Tóibín's recent article "Colm Tóibín: how Henry James's family tried to keep him in the closet," published in *The Guardian* on 20 February 2016, argues James's queer side and why this has been hidden all this time. Tóibín's argument explores the emergence of discussion about James's sexuality after restrictions on James's personal letters in possession of Harvard were lifted. Tóibín notes that James is perhaps closer to us in the present than we might have thought, and that there is much more to learn from him (par. 16). He suggests that new times open up new areas for discussion that might have been a taboo in the past. There seems to be an appeal in connecting historic authors to our present.

It might just be that the return of the author subsequently brought about the return of Henry James. However, it is not merely a novelistic interest, given that both David Lodge and Colm Tóibín have written critical essays on Henry James, that have been published in essay collections dedicated to Henry James – Lodge's *The Year of Henry James* (2006) and Tóibín's *The Master* (2010). With this renewed interest by novelists, biographers and critics Henry James's oeuvre is not only being re-evaluated and re-imagined, but maybe even re-canonised.

However, Lodge's interest in transforming H. G. Wells into a fictional character stems from a different authorial motive. In "Writing H. G. Wells" Lodge notes that he very much enjoyed researching and writing *Author, Author* and desired to write another biographical novel. Lodge chose a more original author subject than Henry James had been, and by doing so he made sure that there was no competition. The sole exception is A. S. Byatt's *The Children's Book* (2009), in which Wells is a minor character. To Lodge, H. G. Wells seems an

interestingly complex man, whose life was an overall tumultuous one. Indeed, Wells's life includes all the ingredients for a compelling story: sex, politics and a fascinating and extensive repertoire of books and essays. However, Wells has a complex reputation. He is seen as a sexual predator and an adulterer, and accused of anti-Zionism. In *A Man of Parts* Lodge shows a different perspective. He demonstrates Wells's loving side, and includes Wells's apologies for his attitude towards the Jews and his general regrets at the end of his life. Lodge opens a textual space for Wells to explain himself, and perhaps even to restore his reputation. Lodge acknowledges in "Writing H. G. Wells" that he altered or ignored some of the 'facts' to make his argument seem more plausible (252-3). He notes in an interview in *The Guardian* on 14 February 2012 that it was hard "finding a novel-shaped story in Wells's long life, which encompassed so many varied interests, changes of fortune, literary productions, political interventions, and sexual relationships" (par. 2). Moreover, as the novelist needs to create some sort of understandable narrative, he also found it difficult "how to handle the many flaws and contradictions in his character and behaviour" (par. 2). While this novel helps to bring back some attention to H. G. Wells, both as an author and a person in general, it also attempts to provide Wells with a voice with which he can defend himself.

Lodge provides the reader with a more nuanced view of Wells and comes to his aid whenever needed. Wells is often found on the wrong side of history when it concerns politics, especially during the two World Wars. Wells's controversial statements in which he voiced his opinions about Jewish identity and their place in society, with which he ardently opposed Zionism, had not made him very popular at the time. As present-day readers might still feel uneasy about Wells's anti-Zionistic remarks, Lodge builds a carefully crafted defence. He first quotes the letter of apology that Wells had written to the leader of the Zionist movement, Chaim Weizmann (521-2). He then acknowledges that this letter probably still would not have made a difference: "And even if it were to be published he does not suppose it will excuse him in the eyes of posterity," which is followed by potential extenuating circumstances: "If you have written as much as he has written in his lifetime, and as hastily, you are bound to make some mistakes of judgment at times" (522). But however long it took, he eventually came to his senses: "It took him a long time, for instance, to recognise how completely Stalin's police state had betrayed the ideals of the Russian Revolution." And finally, Lodge reminds his readers that, placed in perspective, Wells's opinions could have been more atrocious: "But at least he was never taken in by Mussolini and Hitler, as many British pundits and politicians were" (522). In steps, Lodge provides the reader with a clearer perspective, in which he stipulates circumstances that might change the reader's opinion about Wells.

However, Lodge does not merely desire a resurrection of these authors, he ventures to immortalise them. Both *A Man of Parts* and *Author, Author* are concerned with a dying author and end on a similar note. With celestial metaphors Lodge verbalises the wish that James and Wells live on through their work. With this, Lodge attempts to ensure that these two authors remain relevant within the literary field. While the denouements of these novels are both concerned with reinstating the author, they differ in purpose. The ending of *Author, Author* makes clear that Lodge wishes that James could have witnessed the renewed interest in his work and life, so he finally receives the praise he deserves. As a reaction to a quoted passage with James's thoughts on afterlife, Lodge concludes *Author, Author* with the following words:

it encourages a different and more pleasing fantasy than the one I indulged in earlier: the spirit of Henry James existing out there somewhere in the cosmos, knowing everything I wished he could know before he died, observing with justifiable satisfaction the way his reputation developed after his death, totting up the sales figures, reading the critiques, watching the films and the television serials on some celestial video player or DVD laptop, and listening to the babble of our conversation about him and his work, swelling through the ether like a prolonged ovation. Henry, wherever you are – take a bow. (382)

In addition, Lodge could have added the great number of biographical novels that have fictionalised his life.

However, for Wells there is no significant increase in interest outside this novel. Therefore, Lodge hopes that the public will see Wells's worth again soon, with this novel as a start:

As time went on his imagination and intellect dwindled in brightness, gradually people ceased to look up and stare in wonder, and now he has passed out of sight. But there are eccentric orbits in literary history. Perhaps one day he will glow in the firmament once again. (559)

Perhaps Wells did not receive the attention Henry James's work has received the past decades, but there are still a significant number of films based on his novels. However, his work unfortunately has not gained any significant attention lately. Lodge notes in "Writing H. G. Wells" that writing an introduction to Wells's *Kipps* led him to Wells (223); perhaps this novel will ignite the reader's curiosity in the same manner.

Chapter 3

Connecting Authors: Self-positioning within the Biographical Novel

The end of every human life has inexhaustible pathos, poignancy, irony, if we know the person well enough. . . . Whereas [imagining] the last illness and death of a novelist, one whose work I am reasonably familiar with, whose life is recorded and recoverable in some detail, is a subject that stirs my sympathies, invites my speculations, no doubt in part because I am a novelist myself, not so far away from the age of Henry James when he died. . . . The next note reads: . . . On reflection I think it would be a mistake to draw attention myself as the 'real' author in this way. (51-2)

- David Lodge, *The Year of Henry James* (2006)

These, somewhat incoherent, notebook scribbles illustrate Lodge's personal connection to Henry James. Lodge feels like he knows James and has the urge to therefore "*draw attention to [himself] as the 'real' author.*" In the end, he did, indeed, include himself in the novel as the author. By making himself visible in these novels as the author, Lodge positions himself next to two famous authors. Both of these authors have (had) an influence on literary history. In this chapter I will explore how Lodge connects himself to these authors through authorial self-insertion. This authorial self-awareness functions as self-positioning within the textual framework of the novel.

In *Self-Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction & the Forms of Modern Literature* Max Saunders coins the term "auto/biografiction," meaning "fiction which draws on biography and/or autobiography" (7). The theory which is represented by this term is applicable to Lodge's two biographical novels, *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*. Saunders notes that "[w]e need the term to hold the varieties of life-writing forms together because individual works tend to combine them anyway; and readers can move across the generic borders as writers can" (5). Saunders suggests a combination of these "varieties of life-writing," instead of segregating forms that are inevitably interconnected: "Our postmodern ways of thinking about biography is much more aware of, and open to, these elements of autobiography and fiction in all life-writing" (5). He merges three types of life-writing; autobiography, biography and biographical fiction, into one term: "Auto/biografiction." While I have already established that *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* combine fiction and biography, this term adds an additional element of these novels that I have not mentioned yet. Therefore, I would like to argue that *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* fit this term, as both

these novels are explicitly fictionalised and are biographical texts in which the author, David Lodge, is present. Even though Lodge's authorial self-insertion is not essentially autobiographical, it does create a sense of conscious exposing of the authorial 'self'. Through authorial self-insertion, he claims authority over his work and positions himself in connection to both Henry James and H. G. Wells.

In *The Year of Henry James* David Lodge mentions his fear of *Author, Author* not reading like a biography, therefore he paradoxically⁶ “[foregrounded] the machinery of narration itself, through abrupt time-shifts, switches of point of view and ‘postmodernist’ authorial interpolations” (50). The “‘postmodernist’ authorial interpolations” are an interesting phenomenon in this novel, as well as in *A Man of Parts*. I will henceforth refer to the – what Lodge calls – “‘postmodernist’ authorial interpolations” as authorial self-insertion. This chapter will work towards answering the following question: How is Lodge visible in these novels as the author, and how does this relate to self-positioning in connection to Henry James and H. G. Wells?

Metafictionality and self-insertion of the author in *Author, Author*

For *Author, Author* this authorial self-insertion is an extra layer that lays bare the constructed nature of the novel. Lodge had already discussed this postmodern device in *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (1990): “Novelists are and always have been split between, on the one hand, the desire to claim an imaginative and representative truth for their stories, and on the other the wish to guarantee and defend that truth-claim by reference to empirical facts” (18). While empirical evidence cannot be situated within a textual framework the novelist conceal this contradiction “by elaborate mystifications and metafictional ploys such as framing narratives, parody and other kinds of intertextuality and self-reflexivity or what the Russian formalists called ‘baring the device’” (18). In the case of *Author, Author* these “metafictional ploys” include an explicit mentioning of the narrative's changes in perspective and an additional layer in which Lodge introduces himself as the author and discusses Henry James's afterlife.

The first metafictional ploy occurs during the narration of the opening night of James's play *Guy Domville*. In this scene James is not present, as he was watching Oscar Wilde's play that opened on the same night. Therefore, Lodge interrupts the storyline to change narrative perspectives. As this scene cannot be narrated from James's absent point of

⁶ Chapter four “Anxiety of Reception” will expand on Lodge's paradoxical and ambiguous authorial statements on the nature of his novels

view, Lodge had to resort to a different narrative technique. Evidently, he thought it necessary to show these perspectives in order to tell the story ‘correctly’. Before this change of perspective transpires, it is introduced quite explicitly: “While this story, his [James’s] story, with its drastically limited point of view, was proceeding, other connected stories were in progress, other points of view were in play, at the same time, in parallel, in brackets as it were” (231). After this disguised authorial statement, the alternative perspectives are, indeed, presented in square brackets. By means of this statement on the stylistic choices of this story, Lodge brings attention to the fictionality of the narration. On a different narratological level, he reveals himself as the author – as an authority – of this novel, and is thereby more in control of its narration.

However, the most notable metafictional device is Lodge’s self-insertion in the last part of the novel. The last section of the book introduces David Lodge as the author to discuss James’s afterlife, which, of course, cannot be narrated from James’s consciousness. In addition, this metalayer reveals a characteristic of historical storytelling. Linda Hutcheon notes that “[o]ne of the key narratological functions of historiographic metafiction⁷ is to foreground the subjectivity of historical novels” (qtd. in Currie 66). In this metafictional layer the reader very explicitly sees the author, Lodge, in action – composing, interpreting and imagining the life and thoughts of another author. The reader is made fully aware that this is the Henry James David Lodge wants to present. Lodge is portrayed as an author with agency within the novelistic framework; he is in complete control over the way in which the reader perceives Henry James in this novel.

The metalayer in which Lodge inserted himself only covers a small part of the novel: no more than ten out of 382 pages⁸. The transition from the preceding section into this last one is significant, because it connects Lodge to James: “But the author’s fingerhold on life is extraordinary tenacious. He will not let go until he has to. . . . *while for me, as I conjure up this deathbed scene, looking at it as through the curved transparency of a crystal ball. . . .*” (373). This small extract holds a wealth of information, not only about the nature of this novel but also about its purpose. It foregrounds the author as a head-strong and magical figure who possesses a strong will to live and defies death. But, most interestingly, it introduces a metalayer in which the author of this novel presents himself within the text. The italicised text of the narrator that presents itself as David Lodge, the author of this novel, is separated from

⁷ *Author, Author* falls under historiographic metafiction as it is a biographical novel, about a historical author, with a metafictional layer.

⁸ Of the hardback version published by Secker & Warburg in 2004 (first edition)

the main text. At the same time the two parts are joined by the ellipses. He implicitly positions himself next to Henry James. The ellipses indicate that the story is not yet finished even though James has passed away. Now that the character James is no longer able to narrate, Lodge inserts himself as narrator. Lodge portrays the author as a sort of magician who conjures up scenes from the past and looks through “the curved transparency of a crystal ball.” This statement claims an author for this text, by showing the author at work. Additionally, the statement shows the subjectivity of historiographic narrative, as there is a single person looking through a “curved transparency.”

In this last part Lodge expresses his wish for James to have been able to witness how his work would influence future literature after his death. He longs to tell the author that did not have the success he wanted within his life, that it was yet to come, and that the world needed time to value his writing. The reader now knows that Lodge also values a positive reputation and reception of his work, as he wrote extensively about his own literary disappointments in the title-essay of *The Year of Henry James*. In this essay he compares his failure to James's, which suggests that he understands James's disappointment like no one else. Perhaps he even did when he wrote *Author, Author*, in which Lodge narrates James's failed theatrical endeavours. In the last section of *Author, Author* Lodge writes that

[i]t's tempting therefore to indulge in a fantasy of somehow time-travelling back to that afternoon of late February 1916, creeping into the master bedroom of Flat 21, Carlyle Mansions, casting a spell on the little group of weary watchers at the bedside, pulling up a chair oneself, and saying a few reassuring words to HJ, before he departs this world, about his literary future. (375)

Here Lodge touches upon a fear of not having a successful literary career; a fear Lodge presumes not to be something of this century, but a timeless fear that unites authors.

Mark Currie explores the subject of fiction as criticism, in *Postmodern Narrative Theory* (1998), as he asks: “Why would an author, for example, subscribe to the idea of the death of the author? Or disinvest the novel of its power to refer to the real world? In the poststructuralist world, the novelist who assimilates critical perspective is subscribing to self-critique or signing his own death warrant” (62). The author indeed poses a limit upon the text by this self-inclusion and forces the reader to acknowledge the constructed nature of story. However, in the case of *Author, Author*, this metalayer also repositions and rehumanises authorship. David Lodge connects himself, as an author, to both his own work and to Henry James, both within and outside the novel. Lodge has very explicitly positioned himself alongside James in this manner. But, most importantly, the novel celebrates the author. The

novel shows two authors, decades apart, at work and (re)connects the two authors to their work at the same time. In addition, this last section comprises not only James's lifetime and our present, but also the time in between. It is not an all-encompassing account of Jamesian studies after his death up until 2004, but it touches upon some highlights. He mentions subjects such as queer-theory, TV adaptations of James's work and Leon Edel -- "the world's greatest authority on the life and work of Henry James" (380). The reader then also sees the literary critic at work, quoting and subsequently interpreting these passages very explicitly.

Lodge made it impossible to be excluded from the text and to avoid his very explicitly declared authorial intention. He added a metalayer that resists Barthes' theory and problematises the role of the author. Barthes stated in "The Death of the Author" that, "[o]nce the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" (qtd. in Burke 23). Lodge has made it impossible to be removed from the text, as he has written himself into the narrative. He makes himself present as the author by revealing his research, his train of thought and his connection to the author subject. However, in a way, at the same time he proves Barthes right. Lodge gives the reader his interpretation, and with that interpretation he also poses a limit upon the text. The only difference is that now the closed interpretation is not a 'fault' on the reader's end, the reader has no other choice than to acknowledge the author. Lodge challenges the idea of separating the text from its author.

Even though the metafictional element is only present at the end of the novel, it shows a critical self-awareness that says more about the nature of this novel than would appear initially. Also, Lodge has different motives for self-inclusion than other authors of metafictional narratives. Linda Hutcheon explains this fictional device in her book *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (1980). When following her argument on the purpose of metafiction, her argument is a two-fold. First, she argues that "[a]s creator, the writer has always had only limited control over the particular responses of his reader. Phenomenological awareness has perhaps increased authorial consciousness of the fact that the work of art has no existence in and of itself;" as is the case with *Author, Author*, "only through the imagination and understanding of the reader it is made to live" (150). So far, this coincides with Lodge's approach to this novel. However, she adds that "[i]n narcissistic fiction, the problems and joys in the act of shaping language and experience are part of the content. The reader can somehow participate in the novelistic heterocosm and still share in the personal struggle of its creation" (150). However, Lodge's self-inclusion shows no sign of wanting the reader to participate in shaping the fictional world of this novel. He merely

demonstrates his wishes for the afterlife of Henry James and his role within that project. While this metalayer also functions as a critical self-awareness of the fictionality of this story, it primarily connects Lodge, as an author, to Henry James.

Fictional editing in *A Man of Parts*

For *A Man of Parts* the experimental aspect is harder to categorise. Saunders notes that an auto/biography appears fictionalised because of “machineries of displacement.” In the case of David Lodge’s novels the reader knows that the novels are fictionalised because he claims so in his external authorial statements. Saunders states:

That is, the plethora of pseudonyms, prefaces, fictional editors and annotators, the presentation of putative diaries, journals, autobiographies, letters framed and interrupted by other textual matter produces an awareness of the auto/biographic as inescapably textual, mediated by such textual traces; and of the self as legible only in such partial and displaced textualized forms. (502)

A Man of Parts includes a fictional editor and is constantly interrupted by quoted passages. These passages are stylistically dissimilar to the rest of the text and therefore draw attention to themselves. Lodge includes a second narrating voice, which is in dialogue with the character H. G. Wells on his deathbed. The voice is introduced as an imaginary voice inside Wells’s head: “He has heard this voice frequently of late, but when he looks round there is nobody else in the room, so it must be in his head” (14-5). At the end of this novel, Lodge discusses Wells’s afterlife – just as he did with James in *Author, Author*. However, this time he chose one of the characters, Rebecca West, to introduce this subject. This novel is not narrated from Wells’s perspective, thus making it less problematic to use the narrative perspective of other characters after his passing away. With James this was not a possibility, because *Author, Author* is narrated from James’s perspective. In *A Man of Parts*, the only time the reader sees a glimpse of Wells’s thoughts is through the words in the dialogues.

The last paragraph is narrated in an omniscient voice; seemingly and less explicitly Lodge inserts himself into the narrative for one last statement to strengthen his attempt to immortalise Wells. Where the reader could see the constructed nature of the novel, “baring the device,” in *Author, Author*, Lodge has covered his tracks more carefully. Nevertheless, there are traces of Lodge as the author to be found in the novel. As for the fictional editor; the voice in Wells’s head is structuring the text and the subjects that are discussed by steering the conversation. Through this voice Lodge can subtly guide the reader through Wells’s life. At the same time the voice gives Wells a chance to explain his controversial statements.

As mentioned earlier, there are different narrative voices at play in this novel. Firstly, there is an omniscient narrator, with text printed in normal font, who provides context and shows the reader the people in Wells's life. Secondly, there is Wells's voice in dialogue which defends, narrates, and explains. Thirdly, also part of the dialogue is a voice "that must be in his head," printed in bold; who converses with Wells, challenges Wells and enables him to explain himself. In addition there are extracts of 'real' sources, printed in italics. The text that interrupts the main text, the imaginary voice and the extracts from 'real' sources, are outside of the reality of the novel. The voice in bold is the editor of the text, who steers the narrative and highlights certain events and (mis)conceptions within Wells's life. These important events all have an air of scandal and controversy, and are highlighted to redefine the existing twenty-first-century conceptions about Wells's life.

John F. Keener writes about biographic identification in *Biography and the Postmodern Historical Novel*, in which he explores Richard Holmes's definition of the "pre-biographic" (qtd. in Keener 168). Holmes calls the connection between biographer and subject a "a continuous living dialogue between the two as they move over the same historical ground, the same trail of events" (qtd. in Keener 168). Keener adds that this stage is mostly not written into the narrative. However, I would like to argue that Lodge has included this pre-biographic stage in his book. The inner voice is consciously retracing the events in Wells's life. In the novel he acts out this dialogue between biographer and subject, presented as a sort of interview. When a biographer, in this pre-biographic stage, has this conversation with his subject, he structures the text, like an editor would. By including this conversation in the novel, Lodge edits and structures the text. He does so by putting the interior voice in bold and Wells's voice in regular font, making a clear distinction between the two narrative voices. By presenting the text in this manner it appears as an interview, as the voice displayed in bold is separated from the main voice in the novel—Wells's voice. Lodge justifies this narratological device in *Lives in Writing*, where he links it to Wells's own writing:

there is a similar dialogic in several of his books, notably *The Anatomy of Frustration* (1936), where the controversial views of the principal character, plainly voicing H. G.'s opinions, are questioned sceptically by another character supposed to be the editor of the main text. (229-30)

It now appears as something Wells would do himself, as if Lodge has Wells's approval. This voice has a number of functions: it is the editor of the text, an enabling voice that challenges Wells's character and a critic who discusses Wells's work and life. As an editor the voice guides the 'conversation' and subsequently the narrative in a certain direction. The function of

enabler deserves more explanation. The voice in Wells's head, Lodge's self-inclusion, enables Wells to either defend himself or explain himself. Sometimes the voice just agrees with Wells, in an undoubtedly critical manner: "Indeed. Including Amber" (370)—commenting on Wells's remark that he has hurt a lot of people. At times the voice is helping Wells sympathise with people in his life: "Perhaps she didn't want to embarrass Blanco White" (370). Sometimes it is exclusively critical: "Well, you brought it on yourself" (137). On occasion it is angry: "Fool! Did you seriously imagine that you could have private conversations with this girl without emotional consequences?" (410). And, sometimes the voice is interrupted by Wells. None of the participants are inferior to the other; it is a conversation of author to author, and critic to critic. However, the dialogue is not just concerned with Wells's private life, it also addresses authorship. In this manner, Lodge provides Wells with a platform to comment on his writing.

Chapter 4

Anxiety of Reception

In her interview with David Lodge, published in *The Telegraph* on 23 August 2004, Julia Llewellyn wonders: “Does Lodge think he will be remembered in posterity?” To which Lodge responds:

I can't think about it. That way madness lies. I've certainly had far greater commercial success in my lifetime than [Henry] James, but it matters more to me to have good reviews and to be thought a writer of some importance. . . . Sometimes I don't feel I've received the recognition I should, but then who does? Kingsley Amis said a bad review spoiled your breakfast, but it shouldn't spoil lunch. I think it spoils quite a few lunches. (par. 41-2)

As becomes evident from this statement, Lodge primarily desires to be perceived as a writer of importance. This indicates that Lodge chooses prestige over commercial success when it comes to his work as an author. Or, in Bourdieusian terms, he chooses symbolic capital over economic capital. Symbolic capital, in this sense, concerns the reception of Lodge's work.

Lodge has already noted that authors keep the reception of their work in mind when they write⁹. According to Lodge, influencing the reception of a novel can be achieved within the novelistic discourse and by commenting on reviews afterwards. This chapter focuses on the internal influencing: making the novel as resistant to criticism as possible. In chapter one I showed how Lodge attempts to exert influence externally, outside of the text, by commenting on his novels and reacting to reviews in his critical works. I will also take these into account in this chapter, as it gives a better contextual view. Furthermore, I will discuss the novel's paratextual authorial statements, and place them in the broader context of Lodge's discussion of the novels in other books and interviews. The main question I attempt to answer is: what are the effects of Lodge's authorial anxiety of reception and how are these effects evident in Lodge's novels?

⁹ This comment is quoted in chapter one: “One tries to make one's novel as strong, as satisfying, as immune to criticism as one can, a task that usually involves a great deal of rereading and rewriting; but when the novel is published and passes into the hands of other readers it has an independent life which the writer can never fully anticipate or control (though he may of course seek to influence it by commenting publicly on the work or taking issue with his critics)” (x)

Anxiety of reception and intentionalism

I argued that *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* are concerned with authorial control, as Lodge attempts to (re)instate both Henry James and H. G. Wells as writers of importance. For Lodge himself, and for his status as an author, this also seems to be a concern. After *Author, Author*'s disappointing reception in 2004, Lodge wrote *The Year of Henry James: The Story of a Novel*. In the title essay Lodge describes the process of coming to terms with the disappointment that followed the publication of his novel. He blames this predicament on bad timing – the essay is titled “The Year of Henry James or, Timing is All: The Story of a Novel.” It becomes clear from this essay how much he values the reception of his novels, and how much it affects him as an author. I believe that the effects of the fear for misinterpretation, which I will henceforth argue as an anxiety of reception, are also noticeable within the textual framework of his novels. In this case, the anxiety of reception leads to Lodge attempting to make the novel as resistant to misinterpretation as possible. I do not want to assert that Lodge deploys this immunising of the novel against criticism as a conscious strategy, but I want to argue it as a consequence of anxiety of reception.

The term ‘anxiety of reception’ is most often used in relation to the Romantics, but I believe that it is also applicable to other time periods. Lucy Newlyn explains this term in her book *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (2000). Newlyn’s theory draws on Harold Bloom’s “anxiety of influence,” or rather, complements Bloom’s theory (x). Bloom’s term ‘anxiety of influence’¹⁰ is a theory based on the observation that poets are obstructed in their writing by the “intra-poetic relationships” they feel (Bloom 5); a fear of being influenced by what came before. Newlyn’s anxiety of reception “involves not only the rivalry between individual writers and their readers, as they attempt to maintain purchase on their joint and several identities, but the symbiotic development of creativity and criticism” (xii). Succinctly put, the anxiety of influence is an authorial fear of what came before the genesis of a novel; the fear of reception is an authorial fear of what comes after it has been published. Anxiety of reception is used in relation to the Romantic period, in which the circumstances of authorship were very different from what they are now. At the time, professional criticism was developing and the rise of criticism brought a number of authorial anxieties. Anxiety of reception, regardless of the circumstances of authorship within a certain

¹⁰ ‘Anxiety of influence’ as explained in Harold Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973)

literary period, is always characterised by the loss of agency and authorial control an author feels after he published his work.

Anxiety of reception, as a concept, is closely connected to authorial intent. The author fears being misinterpreted and disvalued, which is what lies at the heart of anxiety of reception, as the author fears not conveying the text as he had intended. Authorial intent, or intentionalism, has become a complicated subject in the course of the twentieth century. Intentionalism is the idea that author's intended meaning, which is encoded in the textual discourse of a novel, is a primary factor in understanding a text. This notion was deemed irrelevant and unknowable by critical movements such as New Criticism, and to a certain degree by poststructuralism. In 1946 W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley published an essay named "The Intentional Fallacy," a significant moment for the New Criticism movement. In this essay they divided the evidence used to interpret texts in three sections: internal, external and intermediate evidence (477-8). Internal evidence can be found in the text within the novelistic discourse and external evidence is the statements the author makes about his text. Located in between those two types of evidence is the intermediate evidence: the meaning that is attached to the usage of certain words and subjects by an author, knowing the author's biographical details. This means that: "The meaning of words is the history of words, and the biography of an author, his use of a word, and the associations which the word had for him, are part of the word's history and meaning" (478). The fact that Lodge consciously provides external evidence and intermediate evidence indicates that he values conveying his intentions. He wants the reader to decode the meaning of his texts as he has encoded it.

Ambiguous authorial statements

Author, Author and *A Man of Parts* both merge fact with fiction within one story. Lodge is very determined to make sure that the reader can separate fact from fiction. This way, Lodge does not take responsibility for every detail of the novel – only the parts he invented. He makes this clear from the start of the novel, as he says: "*Sometimes it seems advisable to preface a novel with a note saying that the story and the characters are entirely fictitious, or words to that effect. On this occasion a different authorial statement seems called for.*" This authorial statement is merely a summary of the "Acknowledgements, etc." at the end, in which he maps out every source he used and explains the characters:

Nearly everything that happens in this story is based on factual sources. With one insignificant exception, all the named characters were real people. Quotations from

their books, plays, articles, letters, journals, etc., were their own words. But I have used a novelist's licence in representing what they thought, felt, and said to each other; and I have imagined some events and personal details which history omitted to record.

By including this statement on the first pages of the novel, the reader is assured of the authenticity of the characters and events, before reading the novel.

However, his statements are also contradictory. On the one hand, in *The Year of Henry James* Lodge says that when preparing to write this novel, he felt an “anxiety that the novel should not read like a biography” (50). On the other hand, in the authorial statement preceding *Author, Author* Lodge notes: “*So this book is a novel, structured like a novel*”. While both the authorial statement and the “Acknowledgements, etc.” implicitly suggest that Lodge wants the reader to read this book as a biography, the book is still labelled a novel – the cover of the book says *Author, Author: A Novel*. He could admittedly never have named this book a biography, as that would definitely have misled readers. Before the novel was published, *The Guardian* published an extract from the novel, but changed “Henry” to “James.” In an email to the editor Lodge explained: “It makes the discourse sound like biography, which was the effect I was trying to avoid” (qtd. in *The Year* 82). In *The Year of Henry James* he added that “[i]t undid with a single unthinking stroke the delicate balance I had striven to attain between fidelity to fact and imaginative empathy” (83). In the overall discussion of the novel in *The Year of Henry James*, Lodge refers to the novel as a “biographical novel.” Clearly, Lodge is worried about the novel not coming across as he intended. These ambiguous, even contradictory, authorial comments hint at the need Lodge possibly feels to interpret the nature of this novel – especially because the biographical novel has sparked some controversy and critique¹¹. While he does not want this novel to be read as a biography, which would create a distance instead of intimacy, he also does not want to be responsible for altering historical facts.

As a number of reviews of *Author, Author* criticise Lodge’s tendency to defend the choices he made in the novel¹², his approach to *A Man of Parts* is less careful. The authorial note that precedes the story in *A Man of Parts* is similar to the one he included in *Author, Author*. However, he seems more self-confident about his portrayal in this novel. He notes that “[a]ll the characters are portrayals of real people, and the relationship between them were as described in these pages,” claiming truth in a particular aspect of his novel. In contrast with

¹¹ Also discussed in *The Year of Henry James*

¹² This observation will be discussed in chapter 5

Author, Author, he does not venture to label this generically, leaving it up to the reader to decide. Lodge continues by quoting a dictionary reference: “Parts PLURAL NOUN 1. Personal abilities or talents: *a man of many parts*. 2. short for **private parts**. Collins English Dictionary.” Instantaneously, before the start of the narrative, Lodge provides us with the definition of the title as intended. By putting the phrase “**private parts**” in bold the reader is immediately introduced to two themes in the novel: Wells’ sexuality and his multifaceted personality.

Even though Lodge seems less defensive and explanatory, the “Acknowledgements” – note that for this novel it is simply “Acknowledgements,” not “Acknowledgements, etc.” – still include an explanatory note: “Quotations of letters are very useful in a novel of this kind because, as well as revealing the personality and motivation of the characters, they provide evidence to the reader of the factual authenticity of the narrative” (564). Again, Lodge feels that “a novel of this kind” needs authorial comments on the sources the author consulted and the research he carried out. This suggests that the reader needs this information to completely understand the novel and its connection to reality, which makes the author relevant. These source references are built on the assumption that his audience wants to trace authenticity in this novel, and is reading for truthful telling of a life story. This, additionally, means that Lodge wants to portray his characters as authentic as achievable, and he feels that he owes his readers an apology for the parts where he strays from the facts.

Guiding the reader

Within the textual discourse of the novel, Lodge attempts to make these novels as resistant to criticism as possible. This means that wherever he can, Lodge leaves as little as possible open to interpretation. The texts are primarily readerly texts, in which the reader is guided through the meaning as intended by the author and is able to locate it by simply reading the text. He does this by explicitly elucidating the text; he opens a textual space in which speculation is possible, but immediately after he closes it again by articulating his authorial intention.

The term ‘readerly,’ was introduced by Roland Barthes in his essay *S/Z*. He defines the readerly text as a text in which the author has already spelled out the intended meaning, which merely requires a passive reader. The opposite of a readerly text is a writerly text, for which text the reader has to be actively involved in deriving meaning, which makes the reader productive. The writerly text coincides with Barthes “Death of the Author,” as the text’s meaning lies with the reader instead of the author – making the author irrelevant. As the interpretation of a novel is evaluated in the reception, an author who suffers from anxiety of

reception would prefer a readerly text with a fairly closed interpretation. This way he is assured that the text is read as intended.

From the very start of *Author, Author* the reader is provided with every detail of information, and will not have to imagine considerably. The first sentence runs as follows:

LONDON, December 1915. In the master bedroom (never was the estate agent's epithet more appropriate) of Flat 21, Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, the distinguished author is dying. . . . The author is seventy-two. He has had an interesting and varied life, written many books, travelled widely, enjoyed the arts, moved in society. . . . He has had deeply rewarding friendships with both men and women. If he has never experienced sexual intercourse, it was by his own choice. (3)

On this first page, the reader is introduced to the main character. Even though the story starts in medias res, and is not told chronologically, the reader is never deprived of crucial information. The reader now knows about his occupation, his hobbies, his whereabouts, his age, his health, and even about his sexuality. Whereas, for instance, in Colm Tóibín's *The Master* James's sexuality is a major theme, built up throughout the story, Lodge refers to it immediately, leaving no space for mystery. Also, the wordplay in "master bedroom" is explained between brackets, so the reader will not miss it. In *A Man of Parts* Lodge takes the first three pages to provide the basic information; the reader even knows the name of the main character by then. The first paragraph of this novel is a very traditional setting of the scene, in which Lodge describes the atmosphere in great detail in a style that is best described as Realism. So, both novels start in a traditional manner, with an omniscient narrator describing the main characters and setting the scenes.

The voice in Wells's head, which I discussed in the previous chapter, is also guiding the reader through Wells's life story. *A Man of Parts'* narrative composition is less explicit in explaining actual scenes from a life and more explicit in discussing a life on a different narratological level. The explanatory element is rooted in the conversations that have been woven through the story. These passages are extremely reflective, which makes it unnecessary for the reader to reflect on the interpretation of Wells's life. However, the voice asks the questions that might also arise in the reader's mind when reading the novel. The voice is a replacement of the reader at most times; making observations, wondering and imagining. A comparable situation is described in *Author, Author* where Lodge reveals himself as the author in a metalayer. In this layer he functions as a guide, leading the reader through his ideas and thoughts about Henry James. He quotes passages from external sources, directly followed by his own thoughts. In this way, he offers an instant interpretation, barely

allowing the reader space to build his own thoughts. As established previously; with his performance as author and critic within the textual framework of the novel Lodge closes the interpretation.

Yet, there are more instances where the reader is very consciously guided through the story. When, for example, looking at the significant scene in *Author, Author*, in which Henry James and Florence Alexander are booed off the stage, the reader is once more provided with all of the information he requires. To create a well-rounded scene, Lodge included different narrative perspectives. Together, these views provide a complete understanding of an otherwise subjective scene. Before the actor and author are jeered and booed at, Lodge warns the reader by noting that “Elizabeth Robins immediately saw the danger” (256). While the scene is unfolding, Emma Du Maurier, one of the narrative perspectives at play, asks her husband questions the reader might have while reading this scene: ““Why are they making that noise, Kiki?” and Florence Bell asks: “What’s the matter with Alexander? Why doesn’t he take Henry off?” (256-257). In their conversations the characters ask questions, which guide the reader through the narrative: preparing him for the consequences and discussing different aspects of the scene. After the scene is finished, the reader has acquired the answers. After the incident James asks Alexander again directly about his motives for welcoming him on stage, to which Alexander answers that he had not expected the audience to respond in this manner (257). The key question to this scene, which the story revolves around, is: why did James not receive the recognition he hoped for? Lodge assures that the reader is aware of this, by allowing the characters to wonder, in company of the reader. Most importantly, this passage demonstrates that there is hardly a question left unanswered, or even left unasked, in this novel. In this manner, even the most passive reader will be able to follow Lodge’s authorial intention.

Chapter 5

Encoding the Novel: Critical Reception of *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*

Different writers have different strategies for dealing with reviews. Some read them avidly as they appear, others wait for their publishers to send them; some don't read them at all, and others claim not to but covertly learn what they contain. (84)

- David Lodge, *The Year of Henry James* (2006)

By his own testimony Lodge chooses to browse through them and read them later in a clearer state of mind (84). Being both a critic and a writer, Lodge is used to functioning on either side of a review. He is familiar with the way in which reviewing works and the present status of criticism, which he can utilise to his advantage. As I argue that Lodge attempts to remain in control over the reception of his novels by incorporating a narrative strategy that pre-empts the reception and interpretation, I would like to explore how the actual reception relates to Lodge's exertion of authorial control. The most important questions in this chapter are the following: how are the three themes – the author as character, the connection between Lodge and his author subjects, and anxiety of reception – present in the reviews? Also, does Lodge's inclination to keep control over the interpretation of his novels influence the reception? When in both *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* reception takes in such a significant position, on a thematic level as well as on an interpretative and narratological level, the actual reception of the novel needs to be taken into account to create a complete analysis.

For *Author, Author*, I will discuss Alan Hollinghurst's review "The middle fears" in *The Guardian*, "Drama, Drama" by Oliver Herford in *The Times Literary Supplement*, Anita Brookner's review "Rising far above failure" in *The Spectator*, Sophie Harrison's review "'Author, Author': The Portrait of a Layabout" published in *The New York Times*, and Adam Mars-Jones's review "James the second" in *The Observer*.

The reception of *A Man of Parts* involves more complex issues than *Author, Author*'s reception. As this novel was not overshadowed by similar novels that were published around the same time, it functions in almost completely in isolation. For this novel I will discuss Christopher Benfey's review "H.G. Wells, the Man Who Invented Tomorrow" in *The New York Times*, Jerome Boyd Maunsell's review "Alive and kicking" in *The Times Literary Supplement*, "Sex and Prophecy" by Sarah Fay in *The New Republic*, Claudia Fitzherbert's review in *The Daily Telegraph*, Adam Mars-Jones's review in *The Observer*, Leslie McDowell's in *The Independent*, and Blake Morrison's review in *The Guardian*.

For both these novels I will compare and contrast the reviews in connection to the three overarching themes corresponding to chapter two, three and four of this thesis: portraying the author, connecting Lodge with Henry James and H. G. Wells, and anxiety of reception. To present the analysis more orderly, the discussions of these two novels are separated by a blank line. I chose reviews from British and American established and well-known newspapers and magazines, all of whom have a minimum of a 750 words and make an observation relating to authorial control, or refer to it. Novelist Adam Mars-Jones reviewed both novels for *The Observer*. Noticeably, *Author, Author* is often compared to Alan Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty* and Colm Tóibín *The Master*.

Portraying the author in fictionalised biography

Alan Hollinghurst's review of *Author, Author*, published in *The Guardian* on 4 September 2004, opens with: "*Author, Author*, David Lodge's novelised life of Henry James, manages to remain unique and rewarding in a crowded field, says Alan Hollinghurst." An interesting remark, given that Hollinghurst is considered part of the group of authors that entered this "crowded field" of fictionalising the life of Henry James. Hollinghurst's novel *The Line of Beauty* (2004) follows main character Nick Guest in 1983, 1986 and 1987 and explores the theme of homosexuality amidst the AIDS crisis. Henry James is not a character in this novel, but the novel references the life and works of Henry James. Both *The Line of Beauty* and *The Master* were shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2004, for which Lodge did not get nominated. Hollinghurst won the prize, leaving Tóibín behind. Moreover, Hollinghurst wrote the introduction for the 2004 publication of Henry James's *The Ivory Tower* and his novel *The Line of Beauty* was adapted into a BBC TV series in 2006. As fellow Henry James specialist and novelist Hollinghurst is aware of the difficulties of writing about Henry James; he remarks in his review of Lodge's novel that "there might be a larger impropriety, or at least rashness, in writing a novel about a great novelist and attempting to describe the inner life of a supreme analyst of consciousness, is something of which Lodge, in his closing salutation to James, seems modestly aware" (par. 8). Lodge's carefulness in remaining close to the facts and defending his choices cautiously, to stay in control over them, might have cost him the novelistic aspect of this biographical novel. Hollinghurst argues that "[a]ll this is interesting and enjoyable, but one comes to feel more and more that *Author, Author* is limited, as a novel, by its artless closeness to biography" (par. 6). As a consecutive argument he touches upon the long list of acknowledgements that concludes the novel—a carefully composed bibliography that is more appropriate to a biographer than a novelist. According to Hollinghurst Lodge

remained close to the factual material, which disrupts the balance between biography and novel in his opinion. However, he is very positive about the selection Lodge made: “From time to time he riskily quotes bits of actual James, and in each of them . . . James's brilliance and singularity are humbly evident” (par. 8). In Hollinghurst’s opinion, Lodge did manage to create an excellent portrayal of Henry James, highlighting James’s positive qualities.

The Times Literary Supplement was far more negative about the novel, or as Lodge calls it in *The Year of Henry James* “sniffy” (84). The review titled “Drama, Drama” was written by Oliver Herford and mainly focuses on the potential this novel could have had. Herford feels that in the spirit of Henry James, Lodge could have created a more compelling story, as it is now merely a biography. Herford adds to this point that “[b]iographers would tell all if they only knew it, but are forced into reticence by the incompleteness of the factual record; and novelists will occasionally go so far as to withhold representation from certain areas of their invented subjects” (par. 7). However, as Lodge claims that this novel is predominantly a novel, he “allows himself to imagine, . . . but does not dramatize these in such a way as to confer on them an independent fictional life” (par. 7). As I argued earlier, taking risks can make an author more vulnerable. However, as is evident from these reviews, playing it safe can, unfortunately, also lead to criticism.

Anita Brookner’s enthusiastic review in *The Spectator* is the praise that Lodge hoped for. In *The Year of Henry James* Lodge pays special attention to this review. He notes that this review gave him “great pleasure” (85), as opposed to the negative reviews that preceded and succeeded it. Brookner does not go into detail about the nature of this novel or how it was written; but she concludes her review with the words: “This is a compelling book, which reads seamlessly, organically, as a novel. Never has a character — Henry James himself — been so well served by an author, paying his dues to a writer who scarcely believed in immortality but who was granted it none the less.” Contrary to the other reviews of *Author, Author*, this review, perhaps significantly, does not mention *The Master* or Colm Tóibín.

Christopher Hitchens, author, critic and journalist, reviewed *Author, Author* for the *Washington Post* on 7 November 2004. Hitchens praises Lodge for making the climactic scene in the theatre “something more shattering than I had anticipated” (par. 2). While Hitchens mostly focuses on the effect that Lodge’s portrayal of James has, he notes that Lodge shows us a different James, who is “distinctly stout and more than a little pompous” (par. 1). He does not provide much context for the novel or discuss it in much detail. However, his final remark draws attention to a new issue: “This is the third novel this year (anticipated by both Colm Tóibín’s *The Master* and Emma Tennant’s *Felony*) to have James

as its virtual sex object, so it would appear that the ‘wrong’ sort of fame and immortality lies still within his posthumous grasp” (par. 3). If the interest in James is merely an interest in his sexuality and not in his work, it might not offer him the sort of attention he had desired.

The reviews of *A Man of Parts* also demonstrate Lodge’s closeness to the factual sources. Leslie McDowell makes a subdivision in the genre of life-writing, the “novelised biography” (par. 3); a subject that occurs regularly in these reviews. By choosing to label this novel a “biographical novel” instead of a “novelised biography,” she suggests that the extent of fiction in this novel is greater than in a “novelised biography.” Claudia Fitzherbert’s review in *The Telegraph* also focuses on this subject, as she starts by asking “does it fail as fiction?” She states that the inquiring voice is neutral and professional in tone, “conveniently conversant with books about Wells at that time unwritten” (par. 7); to which she adds that Wells replies to these questions with good humour: “[t]he good humour is one of Lodge’s few departures from his source material – Wells’s often described irascibility is nowhere in evidence” (par. 8). Again, Lodge is noted to remain close to the biographical facts, as with *Author, Author*. As Fitzherbert argues “[y]et in many ways the fact that Wells, unlike Henry James, has gone from being the prophet of his age to an Edwardian curiosity, makes him the more suitable case for Lodge’s highly readable, if two-dimensional, treatment” (par. 18). While Lodge has chosen a more experimental approach to this novel, by adding the dialogue, the novel still is not a complete multi-dimensional portrait of Wells.

Adam Mars-Jones makes a similar argument in his review in *The Observer*; in his view, the hybrid nature of this novel does not work well for Lodge. He says that

David Lodge has imagined some details and manufactured some correspondence, detailed in an acknowledgements section, but the novelistic element is kept within bounds. It’s true he has invented interviews . . . to supplement his narrative, but this modest liberty is hardly more than some biographers claim as a matter of course. (par. 1)

The difficulty with the biographical novel is that the fact-fiction scale is fluid. Lodge wanted to stay close to the biographical records, as he notes repeatedly in his essays on the process of writing this novel and in his introductory note to the novel, which results, according to a number of critics, in a rather clogged narration of Wells’s life.

The review in *The Times Literary Supplement* by Jerome Boyd Maunsell agrees with the observation that Lodge adheres to the factual records to a large extent. He acknowledges that there is such rich material to be found on the subject of Wells, and that Wells is a

complex and interesting subject (par. 5). He still feels that Lodge could have granted himself more freedom in employing these factual sources; the instances where he did try to move away from biography are artificial, according to Boyd Maunsell, and the novel only comes to life after his invented narrative device is not used anymore (par. 10). However, Lodge did make sure that “the novel can stand alone as pure fiction” (par. 10), which is after all how Lodge wanted the book to be read.

Furthermore, there is much emphasis on the role of Lodge as author in the reception, as different reviews refer to Lodge as the creator of this character. Fitzherbert mentions that “[i]n Lodge’s hands Wells is a champion birth controller” (par. 17), which according to her is not the current predominant view of Wells. Lesley McDowell states that “Lodge has given us his Wells” (par. 8) and Sarah Fay says that “[i]n Lodge’s hands, Wells is so fully fleshed out that *A Man of Parts* is one of the best biographical novels in quite some time” (par. 1). In a way, this proves that the portrayal of Wells by Lodge is subjective, which would mean that there is something of Lodge to be found in the character of Wells after all. Lesley McDowell also notes that the authorial voice changes in tone, which approaches Wells in different ways: “All of this is relayed by an authorial voice which ranges from the formally biographical . . . to the novelistic . . . while also managing to be the voice of Wells’s conscience and subjecting him to questions about his past behaviour and attitudes” (par. 5). McDowell notes that this voice relates to the subject of authorial control, as, “[c]rucially, this voice gives Wells a chance to answer critics of his books and his morals” (par. 5). Through this voice, Lodge symbolically gives Wells control over the negative critique on his work and life.

According to McDowell, there are several narratological voices at play, which together form a more complete portrait of Wells. She adds that Lodge’s portrayal of Wells’s sexual endeavours is “a little optimistic” (par. 4), as Lodge leaves out his later rejected approaches to women and his predator image is minimised. However, even though the dialogue is created to give the narration more depth, the reader is still not given the inner life of Wells – as McDowell argues: “As with James, this is the public Wells. All the sexual detail in the world won’t give us the private man” (par. 8). Perhaps she longs for a glance inside the brain of a man who had such vivid imagination and talent.

Connecting the authors

As Lodge has already mentioned in *The Year of Henry James*, *Author, Author* was greatly overshadowed by the more successful *The Master*. *Author, Author* was inevitably discussed in

the context of Toibín's novel, whereas the reception of the latter was able to stand completely on its own. There are hardly any references to Lodge's novels in the reviews of this novel, but *The Master* is mentioned in almost every review of the Lodge's novel. Therefore, *Author, Author* will henceforth be connected to *The Master* in the literary field, but in a subordinate position. However, as Adam Mars-Jones notes in the opening line of his review: "It's not that David Lodge has written a weak novel about Henry James. It's just that *Author, Author* suffers in comparison to a brilliant one." Would the novel have stood on its own, it would have been better received.

Novelist Blake Morrison reviewed *A Man of Parts* in April 2011 for *The Guardian*. He opens his review with: "David Lodge's novel is an intimate portrait of HG Wells." In his introduction to *A Man of Parts* Lodge demonstrates that he wants to show the private Wells. According to Morrison, he has achieved this goal. While Morrison understands that some readers might think that Lodge was not firm enough with Wells, he does demonstrate why he was such an appealing person. Then, Morrison suggests that Lodge and Wells share a common ground, as they have the same background: "It helps that there are affinities between author and subject – a lower-middle-class south London childhood, for instance – that were absent from Lodge's earlier novel about Henry James" (par. 10). This observation would imply that a novelist is better able to embody and empathise with his subject if the novelist lives in similar environment as his author-subject.

In reviewing Lodge's novel there seems to be a natural tendency to continuously compare the subject to the author – critics are trying to locate autobiographical elements in this novel. A comparable argument is set up in *The Independent*, where Leslie McDowell – author of *Between the Sheets: The Literary Liaisons of Nine 20th-Century Women Writers*, which discusses the relationship between Rebecca West and H. G. Wells – offers observations that correspond with the other reviews:

It is too much to suggest a historical pattern of male literary behaviour, both private and public, but David Lodge's biographical novel about Wells (as opposed to novelised biography . . .) is very much concerned with legacy. Just as in Lodge's novel about Henry James, *Author! Author!*, here we meet a great writer at the end of his life – a focus that must point to Lodge's concern about his own legacy, surely. (par. 3)

McDowell assumes that because Lodge centred his novel on Wells at the end of his life he must have incorporated his own concerns being at the end of his life as well.

Critic Claudia Fitzherbert's has, in her review in the *The Telegraph*, dissected the voice inside Wells's head and attributed different characteristics to it. She argues that later sections in the novel include "the voice of a novelist 'both like and unlike himself in earlier years when he wrote quasi-autobiographical novels.' A case of author-identification perhaps?" (par. 10). Like Morrison, she tries to create a connection between Lodge and Wells. This suggests that author-subject identification is necessary to create a well-rounded character, as they are both authors afraid of their legacy. Christopher Benfey writes in his review of the novel in *The New York Times* that the voice in the dialogues is "a probing internal 'second voice' that could be Lodge or might be a stand-in for the skeptical [sic] reader" (par. 9). This would either mean that Lodge himself is steering the interpretation, or he is functioning as a stand-in for the reader's interpretation and thereby also steering the interpretation.

Anxiety of reception: explanatory tendencies and avoidance of risk

The reviews of *Author, Author* in *The New York Times*, *The Believer* and *The Observer* all note the subject of authorial anxiety. Lodge's all-encompassing explanation of the nature of this novel has overshadowed the actual narrative. In "'Author, Author': The Portrait of a Layabout" in "The Sunday Book Review" section of *The New York Times* Sophie Harrison notes that:

Yet in a postscript that has unhappy overtones of a mea culpa, Lodge goes on to supply a list of exactly what he has invented. . . . It's O.K.! we want to reassure him. We expect these flights of fancy! It's a novel! But then perhaps a novel shouldn't have to tell you it's a novel before it's even begun. (par. 4)

Again, it should be evident from the text itself to what genre it belongs. The author has to gain authority over his subject to be able to fictionalise its life. As Lodge continues to defend his choices and apologises for the imagined parts, he loses authority. In *The Observer* Adam Mars-Jones makes an additional point on this subject. He observes that Lodge's explanatory style does his subject no justice, as, "[s]ensibly, Lodge avoids any approach to pastiche of an oceanic style which keeps possibilities suspended rather than resolved" (par. 15). However, he does not regard this as a negative issue, which seems contradictory in the manner he formulates it: "In fact, his directness can seem positively bald in this context. . . . all these formulations seem unJamesian, even counterJamesian, when applied to someone who so far preferred suggestion to spelling out" (par. 15). Lodge visibly attempts to honour James's ideas on consciousness, but this is overshadowed by his own anxiety of his novel being

misunderstood. In a way he also loses authority over his subject by focusing more on his readership than on his subject.

The reviews I used for *A Man of Parts* shows less commentary on Lodge's careful approach to these novels. While Blake Morrison's review in *The Guardian* mentions Lodge's extensive sourcing: "Still, just as HG was tireless in his philandering, so Lodge has been tireless in his research, and nothing here has been casually inserted" (par. 8)—hinting at Lodge's carefulness regarding this novel. However, he feels where Wells's life is concerned Lodge this detailed sourcing is not a problem, as he notes: "Less grounded novelists would let their imagination run away with them but Lodge remains scrupulous and scholarly. With some subjects that would be a failing, but Wells's life is so extraordinary that it needs no embroidery" (par. 8). So, Lodge style fits a novel about Wells, but maybe not a less exciting life, such as James's.

Conclusion

Like James I must suffer the professional envy and jealousy while struggling to conceal them. The correspondences were not, of course, exact – Colm was not a close friend of mine, his novel was in a different class than Du Maurier's and not a bestseller (yet, but if it won the Booker, it would bury mine under an avalanche of publicity and sales), and *Author, Author* was not a flop – but they were close enough to cause me some discomfort and dismay. (94)

- David Lodge, *The Year of Henry James* (2006)

Two components of this research – anxiety of reception and Lodge's position in the literary field - are combined in the remark Lodge makes in *The Year of Henry James*. Lodge lost control over his novel when it had been overshadowed by Tóibín's. This study has explored Lodge's authorial anxieties and his tendencies to craft a defence for both himself and his author-in-characters Henry James and H. G. Wells. Lodge identifies with his two author-subjects, and engaged with theory within his novels *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*. However, in addition to his engagement with theory, he also demonstrates a resistance to theory. By inserting himself in the textual discourse of the novel as the author, Lodge problematises the poststructuralist idea of eliminating the author. Lodge is connected to his author-as-characters, which makes it impossible to separate him from his work.

In chapter one I established that most of Lodge's latest critical works are either re-publications of earlier essays or to provide background on the genesis and interpretation of his novels. The critical essays on other authors occasionally include an autobiographical element, in which Lodge explains his connection to these authors. By writing extensively about these authors, their work and his relation to them, Lodge places himself in a tradition of British writers. By doing so he does not only remain relevant as an author himself, but also preserves the memory of this group of writers. The essays that have a direct bearing upon his novels *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* prove that Lodge is affected by the reception of his novels and that he finds literary disappointment hard to bear. Lodge longs for recognition and praise, which he admits publicly, especially because he has had literary success before.

Over the years, Lodge was actively involved in the theoretical debate and guided his own search for answers to his theoretical questions. Over time he has re-evaluated his opinions and was never afraid to admit his faults, misinterpretations or change of mind: he quite elaborately provides his readers with background information about his endeavours and

motives as a writer. While all of these clarifications create vulnerability, he also gains control over his life story and the manner in which he is perceived. David Lodge is not a man of mystery, which I believe defines the author in the internet-controlled twenty-first century. In the end, authorial control is concerned with gaining authority over the information that exists about one's work and life.

In chapter two I illustrated that the author-as-character is eminently suitable for reinstating the author, because the author-as-character works on different levels. Firstly, the author is portrayed as a human subject, including flaws, with a life that provides a context to the literary work. For *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts* this means that the reader sees the interaction between the private life and their reputation as an author. Lodge shows the reader that these authors struggled with their reputation, as they had to endure a fair amount of criticism. Secondly, the biographical novel is a highly suitable space for criticism and fiction to interact with each other. Also, Henry James and H. G. Wells's work and life will be re-evaluated in the reviews of the biographical novel, which works as a second layer of indirect literary criticism. Thirdly, the author will be given a chance to explain himself - through another author, but mostly with the use of their own words. This applies in particular to H. G. Wells, as he had made himself unpopular with the public, mostly by means of his controversial political statements. Lodge provides Wells with a platform to defend himself and provides the reader with a more nuanced view of events. Finally, the author will reach a measure of immortality, even if it is only within the heterocosm of the novel. Through his two author-as-characters Lodge attempts to reinstate the author on a symbolic level and thereby engages with literary theory. *A Man of Parts* is a more complex novel, through which Lodge attempts to awaken the interest in Wells and his work. Ultimately, this novel shows that the residual view of an author's life, decades after his death, does not define this author. But, most importantly, Lodge shows the reader a literal death of the author, alluding to Barthes's 'Death of the Author'. He thereby focuses on the afterlife of the author, showing his reader that the poststructuralist notion of the 'Death of the Author' is not as final as it may appear.

In chapter three I explored the manner in which Lodge makes himself visible, as the author, in *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*. For *Author, Author* he included a metalayer that shows a critical awareness. While most metafictional inclusions are used for emphasising the fictionality of the novel, and inviting the reader to join the author in giving meaning to the story, Lodge used it for a different purpose. He places himself next to Henry James, but decades apart, with a longing to reassure the dying author that he will be far more successful after his death. While authorial self-insertion might leave less space for the reader's own

interpretation, it connects the author-subject to his work, connects the author to his author-subject and celebrates authorship. Although, for *A Man of Parts* the authorial self-insertion is less obvious than in *Author, Author*. Lodge included a dialogue between Wells and a voice in his head that runs through the entire novel. The voice in Wells's head is stylistically different from the rest of the text, making it stand out. Moreover, this conversation is very similar to the conversation a biographer has with his subject in the pre-biographic stage, in which he retraces the life of the subject. For these reasons this voice can be perceived as Lodge's authorial voice.

However, there is one significant difference between these two novels. These discussed elements, which Lodge calls baring "the machinery of narration itself," do not run through the entirety of *Author, Author*; Lodge's self-insertion at the end might even come as a shock for some readers; in *A Man of Parts*, however, the element of authorial self-insertion is woven through the novel.

Chapter four demonstrated that Lodge suffers from an anxiety of reception. I have established these arguments in relation to his two novels concerning authorship, reputation and the afterlife of authors. Lodge feels the weight of maintaining a good reputation as author now more than ever, also being in the later stages of his career, which he shows in connection with these authors. I demonstrated that within the novelistic discourse Lodge has a tendency to explain the narrative to such an extent that the interpretation is closed. This results in a readerly text which does not require much action on the reader's side. In the front of the novels, Lodge included authorial statements, which are mostly ambiguous and contradictory with statements he makes in his critical work. However, all of these statements always concern Lodge's wishes of how the novel should be read, to avoid the reader missing out on symbolism and intent. Lodge sometimes tries to avoid criticism in advance by defending his choices and explaining his motives. These two aspects combined result in a cautious author, who reveals himself to be sensitive when it comes to criticism.

In the final chapter I explored the influence of Lodge's want for authorial control on the reviews of his novels. The reviews of *A Man of Parts* are predominantly more positive than the reviews of *Author, Author*. Therefore, it is safe to say that Lodge took the risk that critics asked for with his second biographical novel, *A Man of Parts*. This resulted in a much more detailed portrait of a man with many sides. Sarah Fay notes that "Lodge learned from the mistakes he made in his previous biographical novel, *Author! Author!*, which was an approving look at Henry James's prolific literary career" (par. 9). Clearly, Lodge has taken *Author, Author*'s critical reception to heart and has allowed himself to take more risks. He

included an experimental narrative device that gives him more control within the narrative, but might simultaneously completely ruin its appeal – as Lodge also noted in his essay on this novel in *Lives in Writing*. While Lodge attempted to portray Wells as a man with many different parts, his sexuality is what attracts most attention. The reviews I discussed are mostly concerned with author-subject identification, the portrayal of Wells from Lodge's perspective and life-writing in general. The novel is mostly seen as a celebration and a justification of an author's life, seen through the eyes of the novelist. This results in a more important role for the novelist within the narrative. The connection between author, Lodge, and subject, Wells, is explored, and in some cases observed to be more present than in *Author, Author*.

For *Author, Author* there are some overarching themes to be found in the reviews. Firstly, Lodge's defensive attitude is remarked multiple times, mostly discussed in the broader context of the biographical novel in general. Secondly, a number of critics feel that Lodge has remained too close to the facts, at the expense of the novelistic share of this biographical novel. Therefore, the fact that Lodge remains close to the authentic facts and historical sources agitates a number of critics. This is a problem that lies within the spectrum of possibilities between fact and fiction, or biography and novel.

Because these novels concern persons that actually existed, there is a recurring tendency of reviewers to provide background information about the author. This information could either be the critic's knowledge or facts of the life that are presented in the novel, the first taking the overhand. The historical author is hereby confused with the author-as-character within the novel. Or, as Aleid Fokkema puts it: the historical author is the "humanist predecessor . . . [that] sticks on as a residue" (40). I established earlier that the biographical novel redirects the reader, with a renewed interest, to the primary work written by the historical author. These reviews prove this to be true, as the critics also return to the authors and their work.

When writing this thesis I found that there is a wealth of subjects that have yet to be researched in the field of authorial control and biography. In retrospect I believe that every chapter has the potential to become a complete study on its own, perhaps it needs more novels to create a more extensive and complete research. In addition, it would be interesting to see how Lodge's earlier fiction explores theory and how this view differs from the engagement with theory in *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*. In addition, Lodge stated that he hoped to write a second memoir, to complement *Quite a Good Time to Be Born: a Memoir, 1935-75*. These two memoirs combined could be interesting subject-matter for an exploration of

Lodge's position in the literary field, and the evolution of it. My research explored the interaction between biographical fiction, authorial control, author-subject connections and the repositioning of authorship. These topics could, in fact, be applied to every biographical novel, especially the manner in which the author connects himself to his author-as-character. For instance, Damon Galgut's *Arctic Summer* (2014), about E. M. Forster, would be a suitable choice for this subject. This novel is concerned with sexuality, a theme that is also present in Galgut's autobiographical work *In a Strange Room* (2010). This relates to authorial control in the way that Galgut's description of Forster's life story is thematically connected to his own. I discussed these novels according to Lodge's three stages of novel writing: genesis, composition and reception. Further research can be carried out to explore how the author's control over his work relates to these three stages. Finally, instead of focusing on a single author, the research could also combine novels by different authors – aiming for a more character-based research. My research has shed light on the more recent works of David Lodge, which have not been researched extensively. It may contribute to the existing studies on the works of Lodge to form a more complete overview of the oeuvre of Lodge.

Samenvatting

De status van auteurschap is sinds de jaren zestig flink afgenomen onder de invloed van poststructuralistische ideeën over the auteur, zoals onder andere beschreven in Roland Barthes' essay "The Death of the Author," wat resulteerde in een verlies van controle voor de auteur. Echter, auteurschap heeft recentelijk zijn plaats teruggewonnen in de evaluatie van literatuur. Auteurschap heeft bijvoorbeeld aandacht gekregen door de auteur op de voorgrond te positioneren als personage in romans. Deze gefictionaliseerde verslagen van het leven van een auteur zijn recentelijk in toenemende mate populair geworden, zoals David Lodge's *Author, Author* (2004), over Henry James, en *A Man of Parts* (2011), over H. G. Wells. Deze twee romans (her)verbinden de auteur aan zijn werk, waarbij ze de auteur opnieuw centraliseren. Daarnaast laten ze zien dat de auteur van deze romans, David Lodge, ook worstelt met het behouden van controle over zijn werk als auteur. David Lodge heeft de neiging om zijn lezer te voorzien van uitgebreide achtergrondinformatie over het ontstaan, de compositie en de ontvangst van zijn romans in zijn kritische werken en om 'readerly' teksten te creëren zodat de lezer zijn werk precies interpreteert als hij het bedoeld heeft. Hij leidt de lezer door zijn romans en legt duidelijk uit wat hij bedoelt met deze werken, zowel in de romans als daarbuiten. Deze thesis onderzoekt and bespreekt drie thema's in relatie tot David Lodge, zijn romans *Author, Author* en *A Man of Parts* en de controle die hij heeft over zijn werk: de terugkomst van de auteur als personage in een roman, zelfpositionering van de auteur en de angst voor misinterpretatie van zijn werk. Het onderzoek begint met het algemeen vaststellen van Lodge's positie in het literaire veld en hoe zijn kritische werken zich verhouden tot de drie thema's. Daarna worden de romans besproken volgens de drie thema's, om uiteindelijk tot een afsluitende evaluatie van deze romans te komen doormiddel van recensieonderzoek.

Keywords: David Lodge, authorial control, *Author, Author*, *A Man of Parts*, self-positioning, anxiety of reception, author-as-character, Henry James, H. G. Wells, anti-authorialism

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