

This study originated in the author's fascination with the literary "afterlives" of canonical authors in recent, primarily British, but also American fiction, as well as her need to grasp not only what would be involved in narrating such lives but also why contemporary writers might be drawn to their illustrious predecessors. Save for a few notable exceptions, little has been done on "the death" and "the return of the author" in and through discursive mediation and fictional fashioning. The genre of the "author-as-character" (Franssen and Hoenselaars)—or the discourse of "author fictions" (Fokkema)—comprises narratives in which "the mighty dead" (Harold Bloom) are brought back to life, reanimated and bodied forth in new textual bodies. Dr. Savu argues that late twentieth-century fiction "postmodernizes" romantic and modern authors, from Novalis and Chatterton, to Dickens and Wilde, Woolf and Lawrence, so as to understand them better, but also to understand itself in relation to a past—literary tradition, aesthetic paradigms, cultural formations—that has not really passed.

To develop this argument, Dr. Savu scrutinized the set of images, tropes, and projections by which previous paradigms of authorship (romantic, realist, and mod-

ernist) have been reconfigured within postmodernism, primarily through the critical practice of rewriting. The author notes that fictions play upon the possibility of re-reading their subjects' writings in relation to the pressures and particulars of their life stories, which thus become part of, and then in their turn problematize the representation of authorship. The "rewritings" the author examines cut to the heart of what authorship means at the dawn of the new millennium: over and against both the romantic myth of the individual genius and the modernist notion of the impersonal author, they pit the historically and culturally contingent subjectivity constructed along the lines of gender, sexual orientation, class, and nationality. Taking a comparative approach that cuts across a range of critical and cultural perspectives, Dr. Savu shows how, by fictionalizing celebrated biographies, contemporary writers create an intriguing genealogy for themselves and their own cultural moment.