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DOI

[10.5117/9789089649638](https://doi.org/10.5117/9789089649638)

Publication date

2017

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Idolizing Authorship

License

Article 25fa Dutch Copyright Act

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Citation for published version (APA):

Franssen, G., & Honings, R. (2017). *Idolizing Authorship: An Introduction*. In G. Franssen, & R. Honings (Eds.), *Idolizing Authorship: Literary Celebrity and the Construction of Identity, 1800 to the Present* (pp. 11-27). Amsterdam University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.5117/9789089649638>

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Idolizing Authorship

An introduction

Gaston Franssen & Rick Honings

'Love it or hate it, celebrity is one of the dominant features of modern life', says Fred Inglis in *A Short History of Celebrity* (2010).¹ His statement is undoubtedly true: we are endlessly confronted with celebrities in the press, on television and on the Internet. Even animals can become celebrities. What are we to make of Keiko, the killer whale in the film *Free Willy* (1993)? Or of little Knut, the polar bear cub that was born in Berlin Zoo in 2006, around which a whole merchandising industry sprang up, replete with T-shirts and coffee mugs? But it is especially people who become celebrities, behave accordingly and who are accepted as such by the audience. Those without fame dream about becoming famous because for many people, fame is a desirable asset. Hollywood in particular has produced a well-nigh endless string of stars. Gossip magazines about celebrities are read avidly the world over. Thus, it is not too far-fetched to dub the Western world, with Robert van Krieken, a Celebrity Society: our entire economic, political and social existence has been organized around celebrities.²

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'famous' thus: 'Celebrated in fame or public report; much talked about, renowned'. This definition encompasses two aspects: to become a celebrity, one needs to be widely known, and one needs to do something that is valued positively. This definition is not satisfactory, however. Fame is a commodity that cannot be achieved independently: it requires an act of attribution, by audiences, cultural institutions or 'intermediaries'.³ In this regard the celebrity phenomenon can be understood in the light of what Pierre Bourdieu terms the attribution of 'symbolic capital'.⁴ Twentieth-century artists like Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol have demonstrated that the value of a work does not lie in the object itself but in the attention it manages to garner. Art has no intrinsic quality, as Bourdieu concludes from these and other examples: its symbolic

1 Inglis 2010, blurb.

2 Van Krieken 2012.

3 Rojek 2001, 10.

4 Cf. Driessens 2013.

value is attributed by institutions.⁵ A similar argument could be made for celebrity. Max Weber defines charisma, an important element of celebrity culture, as ‘a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities’.⁶ Bourdieu prefers the term symbolic capital over charisma, a form of value which institutions can attribute to specific writers. Whether we conceptualize celebrity as charisma or symbolic capital, however, this much is certain: it is allocated by an audience. Thus, fame does not necessarily have to do with merit, as the example of Paris Hilton shows so well. It is tempting to say that she is primarily ‘known for being well-known’, after Daniel J. Boorstin’s famous definition of celebrity.⁷ Hilton is certainly not received positively everywhere. Her exorbitant lifestyle and affaires leave many with an impression of superficiality, which evokes aversion. But even so, it is precisely this lifestyle that we somehow admire. The audience appears to enjoy any act of hers that sets the world alight: apparently, celebrities are also figures that *we love to hate*.⁸ Thus, Hilton is a celebrity on account of her acknowledgment as such by the audience and of the value placed on her, however contested that value might be. This is why Chris Rojek’s definition of celebrity is preferable to Boorstin’s: celebrity is ‘the attribution of *glamorous or notorious status* to an individual within the public sphere’.⁹

For Van Krieken, who has also attempted a definition of celebrity, the notion holds a double meaning. In the first place, he argues, it denotes a quality or status with which specific individuals attract attention, and from which they – since they are ‘well known’ and ‘highly visible’ – derive value, in at least a particular sector of the public domain. Van Krieken notes here that this attention may be positive as well as negative. Secondly, a celebrity enjoys a higher status than do ‘ordinary’ people. This status can be reinforced in the case of a ‘distinctive narrative’, which construes an attention-grabbing image, where the public and private person merge.¹⁰ There are plenty of examples of celebrities cultivating such an image. For years, Madonna has captured the attention of her audiences with her striking looks and extravagant behaviour. And Michael Jackson, too, was a master at creating an eccentric image. More recently, Lady Gaga drew

5 Bourdieu 1980.

6 Weber in Marshall (ed.) 2006, 61.

7 Van Krieken 2012, 10.

8 Van Krieken 2012, 1.

9 Rojek 2001, 10.

10 Van Krieken 2012, 10; Rojek 2001, 10-11.

attention to herself with outlandish performances. In 2010, for example, she appeared in a dress made of raw meat. Celebrities, in short, appear to be well aware of the need to distinguish themselves.

Celebrity and celebrity culture

Celebrity and celebrity culture are relatively new areas of research. Although Boorstin discussed the celebrity phenomenon as early as 1962 in his work *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, the field of celebrity studies has been developing particularly rapidly over the past decade, especially so in the English-speaking world. Monographs have appeared, there is the *Celebrity Studies Journal* and large international conferences have been devoted to the subject. It is not just sociologists but also media researchers, historians and literary scholars who are actively engaged in it. The past few years have seen a spate of studies on both the theory and the history of celebrity.¹¹ The phenomenon is often linked to ever-increasing individualization and globalization, with the argument that celebrities serve important functions within these developments.

In *Understanding Celebrity* (2004) Graeme Turner, for instance, explains that celebrity fulfils, firstly, a 'parasocial' function in the modern world. Celebrities serve to compensate for the loss of 'real' contacts due to the rise of individualism and social atomization. Famous individuals offer, Turner argues, 'the illusion of intimacy': the feeling that one 'knows' celebrities and is emotionally involved with them.¹² This parasocial connectedness is made manifest in, for example, the emotional mass reactions to the deaths of celebrities like Elvis Presley, John Lennon, Lady Di or David Bowie. Secondly, celebrities play an important role in how individuals construct their social and cultural identity. They serve as 'a source of gossip, which is itself understood as an important social process through which relationships, identity, and social and cultural norms are debated, evaluated, modified and shared'.¹³ And, thirdly, the fascination for celebrities can be related to the human need for meaning. They provide us with mattering maps and affective formats: they are, as it were, the reference points with which we can impose order on the world around us. In this sense, celebrity is akin to religion: 'The gap left by the decline in the cultural purchase of organized

11 Turner 2014; Inglis 2010; Rojek 2011; Van Krieken 2012.

12 Turner 2014, 26.

13 Turner 2014, 27.

religion has at least partly been filled by celebrity', as Turner observes, leading him to introduce the term 'post-God celebrity'.¹⁴

Celebrity culture may seem a modern phenomenon; it is by no means new. Opinions greatly differ on the question when the phenomenon actually arose. Some historians link it to processes of democratization in the early modern period, others to the advent of modernity and mass culture in the second half of the nineteenth century, while film historians see the phenomenon emerge at the start of the twentieth century.¹⁵ Film historian Richard Schickel is of the opinion that while previous centuries must have seen talented individuals who enjoyed a sort of fame, celebrity does not occur until the twentieth century.¹⁶ Turner similarly holds 'that the growth of celebrity is historically linked to the spread of the mass media (particularly the visual media)'.¹⁷

Van Krieken argues, however, that the phenomenon of celebrity was not so much invented by Hollywood and its film industry as developed during a long historical process. Here he concurs with Leo Braudy who exhaustively examines the historical roots of fame in his now classical study *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (1986).¹⁸ In Braudy's view, celebrity is timeless. It has always been about – albeit in varying forms – even in classical antiquity. Robert Garland confirmed as much in *Celebrity in Antiquity: From Media Tarts to Tabloid Queens* (2006).¹⁹ In line with Braudy, Van Krieken argues that, indeed, celebrities can also be found in the past. He outlines how the fame that Jean-Jacques Rousseau found was comparable to Princess Diana's, even if they belonged to different eras. Neither set great store by the abundant attention they received. Rousseau complained about visitors who came to look at him as if at a curiosity, not because of his ideas but because he was famous. Lady Di was hunted by paparazzi. What they shared, was 'the experience of celebrity: of being highly visible to a broader public and possessing the capacity to attract relatively large amounts of attention'.²⁰

Van Krieken here pinpoints a crucial feature of celebrity. Although many celebrities have certain merits, they owe their status first and foremost to the fact that they know how to generate attention: 'Layered on top of whatever talents, skills and moral virtues they may have – which is what

14 Turner 2014, 27, 29.

15 Mole 2007, 6-7.

16 Cf. Turner 2014, 12.

17 Turner 2014, 11.

18 Braudy 1986.

19 Garland 2006.

20 Van Krieken 2012, 4-5; cf. Braudy 1986, 372-373.

constitutes their identity as a superhuman football player, an incredibly beautiful and moving actress, or an inspiring singer – is their social function as larger or smaller bundles of attention-capital, and this is what constitutes them as a celebrity'.²¹ Obviously, this attention took different shapes in earlier centuries than in the 21st century's medialized television and Internet era – where fame can be measured by the number of friends and followers one has on Facebook or Twitter and where one can become famous overnight.

Some researchers have seized upon this historical development and intensification of celebrity culture to distinguish between fame and celebrity. Fame, they reason, may be of all times, yet it is with the advent of the mass media and a globalized culture industry that celebrity has really come into its own.²² Others argue that the difference between fame and celebrity is not so much of a historical nature as a matter of scale or a measure of intensity. Arnoud Visser, for one, distinguishes between fame and celebrity defining the former as widespread, public renown, which exceeds a person's direct social network. The latter concept, by contrast, denotes more specifically an intensive public attention to a celebrity's personality, independent of position or ability.²³ By that reasoning, the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte is well known: everyone knows who he is, but a *celebrity* he is not.

Again others link the distinction between fame and celebrity with a difference in attitude. Among these is Braudy, who in 2011, in a reconsideration of his views put forward in *The Frenzy of Renown*, couples fame with 'reticence and the sanction of neglect', while celebrity, by contrast, is allegedly attention crazy: fame, he reiterates, includes 'an element of turning away from us' whereas 'celebrity stares us straight in the face, flaunting its performance and trying desperately to keep our attention'.²⁴ Such distinctions may be very useful, yet what they ultimately illustrate, perhaps, is that fame and celebrity are and will continue to be slippery notions. It is shown below how the domain of literature also witnesses various forms of success and renown that are sometimes almost irreconcilable yet at other times inextricably interwoven.

21 Van Krieken 2012, 61.

22 Cf. Boorstin 1962; Giles 2000.

23 Visser 2013, 6.

24 Braudy 2011, 1072.

The curious case of literary celebrity

Celebrity may primarily bear on film stars, pop idols, and sports heroes, the phenomenon is by no means reserved for the world of entertainment and popular culture. Numerous celebrities are also found in literary history. A special form of celebrity is thus the *literary celebrity* – a subject that has meanwhile also become an area of study. Throughout the centuries, readers have idolized writers, be it for their extraordinary lifestyles, their shocking opinions or their enigmatic personalities. Far from being the stereotypical solitary, worldly detached geniuses, ‘star authors’ – as Joe Moran calls them²⁵ – often turn out to be professional, transnational cultural entrepreneurs, quite aware of the tastes of their target audiences and the laws of the art market in general.²⁶ Scholars have successfully explored the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources of literary celebrity,²⁷ its close yet tense relation with modernism,²⁸ and its fusion with postmodern popular culture.²⁹ Such research amply demonstrates that at issue here is a most intriguing form of renown, which seems to be as widespread as it is intangible.

It is not hard to find examples of contemporary authors who have undeniably acquired the status of international celebrity – complete with fan clubs, merchandising and constant media attention. Writers such as Bret Easton Ellis, Haruki Murakami and J.K. Rowling have been styled today’s literary celebrities. Historical examples are equally in evidence since literary stardom is not confined to the present day. Among those authors often associated with celebrity are Lord Byron, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein or Ernest Hemingway. Yet literary celebrity is by no means obvious: comparing these examples, one is confronted with a number of complex tension fields, three of which we discuss here.

Firstly, it is debatable whether the allure of a nineteenth-century author was actually comparable with the media hype that surrounded authors like Stein or Hemingway in the 1930s. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the literary market did not as yet constitute an international multibillion-euro business, literary fame had a different meaning than it has in these times of marketing and social media. William Shakespeare was famous, as much is certain, yet it is obviously difficult to maintain that he

25 Moran 2000.

26 Graw 2009.

27 Donoghue 1996; Wanko 2011; Wilson 1999; Eisner 2009; Mole 2007; Mole (ed.) 2009.

28 Rainey 1998; Rosenquist 2009; Jaffe 2005; Goldman 2011.

29 Glass 2004; Collins 2010.

was also a celebrity in the way contemporary authors are. In other words, there seems to be a difference between modern forms of renown and more traditional forms of fame.

A second tension field lies between, on the one hand, what could be termed the official culture – of the experts, the critics, and the connoisseurs – and, on the other hand, celebrity culture. One can even question whether we can actually speak of celebrity with respect to literary authors. After all, a long-established tradition, both in public perception and in academic literary scholarship, associates literary prestige with intellectual pleasures, cultural capital, and elitist refinement (high culture), while celebrity is sooner linked to popular entertainment, commerciality, and mass production (mass culture). In this view, literature and celebrity are two different, irreconcilable phenomena. This dichotomy becomes the stronger as it resounds with widespread gender views: for instance, ‘women’s literature’ is often associated with entertainment, commerce, and hypes, whereas authentic literature is often alleged to be a male domain.³⁰ Such dichotomies have been rightly criticized, but the fact remains that with literary fame, different forms of success frequently intermingle that we somehow find hard to reconcile with each other. Do we label someone a literary celebrity because of his or her sales figures and media attention or, rather, because of the official recognition they have achieved – and what about authors who owe their status in part to a solid fan base?

Closely intertwined with the two tension fields just mentioned, a third tension field where literary celebrity and the star author can be positioned concerns that between self-fashioning and public perception. An author’s stature is created within a complex tension field of power relations where different parties claim authority: the writers themselves, obviously, but also their critics, readers, fans, the media, literary agents, journalists, publishers, translators, theatres, and film studios. All these parties have a share – as well as interests – in determining the values and meaning of the work and the public image of literary authors. Within this tension field, authors themselves are forced to adopt a position: some reject their success in an endeavour to retain a certain measure of agency, whereas others embrace their popularity and all the media attention. In brief, strategies to assume and retain authority differ widely. Some authors become masters at self-celebrification, others, in contrast, shy away from the celebrity industry in an attempt to retain a form of control over their authorship. Yet whichever position authors adopt, it is certain that they have anything but the last

30 Huyssens 1986, 44-62.

word. Readers, critics, admirers, and other actors appropriate the author's work and image: they reframe, reinterpret and revisualize the author's words, looks, body, and life. In doing so, they ensure the prolonged success of the author, even long after the death of their idol, but at the same time they *re-author*, in a sense, the author's image and oeuvre.

It is in particular this interaction between authorial self-presentation and public appropriation that we focus on in *Idolizing Authorship*, whereby we have placed some special emphases. International research into literary celebrity primarily focuses on English-language literature and renowned canonical authors from Great Britain and the United States. Two periods have particularly received a great deal of international attention, as said: the nineteenth century and the modernist era. Furthermore, quite a few publications on the relation between celebrity and gender have already seen the light.³¹ Yet even though celebrity authorship has received a great deal of critical attention so far, there has been no overview of literary celebrity that combines authors from different nationalities, eras and statures. *Idolizing Authorship* provides this: it brings together insights from scholars with expertise in a variety of national literatures and offers new perspectives on the history of literary celebrity.

The volume consists of eleven chapters, in each of which a literary celebrity takes centre stage. Emphasis here is on literary celebrities from Europe, more specifically from Denmark (Holger Drachmann), Germany (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe), England (Ezra Pound), Finland (Sofi Oksanen), France (Marcel Proust), the Netherlands (Nicolaas Beets, Louis Couperus, Harry Mulisch) and Norway (Henrik Ibsen). In addition, two chapters have been included on authors from outside Europe: from Russia (Dmitrii Vodennikov) and from Japan (Haruki Murakami). The authors analysed here do not all enjoy the same status of celebrity: some are internationally famous authors who rank among the literary canon, others are merely renowned in their country of origin.

We have chosen the year 1800 to be our starting point for this history of literary celebrity. There are several reasons to choose this year: around 1800 the fascination for famous individuals increased and changed in nature. Although art remained something to be enjoyed by the elite, the social position of the artists changed: they were suddenly also recognized as such by lower classes. Furthermore, the realization grew that the artist, and this was also true of the writer, was an extraordinary person, 'a highly spiritual

31 Cf. Easley 2011; Weber 2012.

being who is completely separate from the debased everyday world'.³² And finally, this realization was tied up with changes in the artist's position in the media landscape in the second half of the eighteenth century. The author was no longer someone who led the secluded life of the saint in the desert, but became a recognizable public figure with a specific personality.³³

International studies tend to draw a parallel between the growing fascination for celebrities and the rise of the Romantic movement around 1800.³⁴ The latter brought about a fundamental change that has impacted our thinking about art and literature to this very day. The emphasis placed on reason by the Enlightenment was replaced with the dominance of feeling and imagination. Other features of Romanticism included: the artistic inspiration, the importance of originality and authenticity, a desire for freedom (combined with a rejection of hindering artistic rules), nonconformism and the genius of the artist. A shift occurred from mimesis towards expression: true art no longer meant an imitation of reality, but an outpouring of feeling. M.H. Abrams used the famous metaphor of the mirror and the lamp to characterize this shift.³⁵

From the end of the eighteenth century, then, the poet was increasingly regarded as a genius whose talents are not so much acquired as they are innate and who was capable of producing unprecedented performances.³⁶ From Germany, where Romanticism, according to Rüdiger Safranski, evolved as *eine deutsche Affäre*, the cult of the genius and stardom also spread to other countries.³⁷ In the early nineteenth century the idea became widespread that the true artist, superior to other ('ordinary') people, should also distinguish himself socially and culturally, with an unusual lifestyle and a distinctive image. As Tom Mole puts it: 'By the end of the Romantic period, one could meaningfully speak of a celebrity or a star as a special kind of person with a distinct kind of public profile'.³⁸ Mole is of the opinion that earlier times had also seen famous people but that *celebrity culture* does not manifest itself until the nineteenth century. Three requisites had to be in place for this: an individual, an industry, and an audience. One author is generally considered to be the first literary *celebrity*: Lord Byron.³⁹ One

32 Higgins 2005, 5.

33 Braudy 1986, 390.

34 Cf. Mole (ed.) 2009.

35 Abrams 1953.

36 Cf. Braudy 1986, 418.

37 Safranski 2007.

38 Mole 2007, xii.

39 Mole 2007; McDayter 2009.

could even argue, as Inglis does, ‘that it is during Byron’s brief lifetime – he died at thirty-six in 1824 – that charm and its distorted and magnified echo, glamour, become public values, and what is more, values looked for as attributes of celebrity’.⁴⁰ Thus, Byron succeeded in creating a *branded identity*.

Such branding of identity is, in fact, equally characteristic of all the authors that are highlighted in this volume, from Goethe towards the end of the eighteenth century to Oksanen, the Finnish Goth author who takes centre stage in the last chapter – and of all the case studies in-between. Obviously, the fields in which they operated were totally different, having undergone an enormous development in the course of over two centuries. At the time that Goethe was an up-and-coming author, medialization as we know it did not exist as yet. All this was to change in the course of the nineteenth and, in particular, the twentieth century. The introduction of trains, steam ships, telegraphy, and new printing techniques increased the dissemination of information and news. The number of newspapers and magazines rose. The advent of photography around 1840 boosted the democratization of celebrity culture. The medium offered celebrities the opportunity to manifest themselves, while the audience could now see what a celebrity really looked like. Then, at the beginning of the twentieth century, film added its share – a medium that brought celebrities into the audience’s living rooms. The last decade saw the additional arrival of the Internet, which offered individuals – including authors – new opportunities to present themselves to their audiences. Since this book centres on the period from 1800 to the present day, it offers the reader a glimpse of this evolving field of celebrity.

The diachronic perspective characterizing this volume shows how more classical forms of fame gradually morphed into contemporary celebrity culture. With this setup, we have aimed to map the first tension field – between celebrity culture and the official culture of the canon, the critic, and the connoisseurs. This tension has been addressed through the inclusion, in this volume, of both canonical and lesser-known authors – from Goethe and Proust to Drachmann and Voddenikov. The interplay between authorial self-fashioning and public perception, finally, features in all articles, as each of the chapters has been given a similar approach, despite the historical and geographical differences between the case studies. Attention is, firstly, given to the ways in which the authors shaped their image. Here, insights with regard to self-fashioning (Stephen Greenblatt, Erving Goffman) and

40 Inglis 2010, 67.

posture (Jérôme Meizoz) are drawn upon. Secondly, the role of the audience is examined: the way in which admirers contribute(d) to an author's celebrity status, both during his or her life and posthumously. Reception analysis and fan studies research offer useful tools with which to analyse how readers, or fans, highlight or downplay particular characteristics of their admired authors, intensifying or modifying the author's image in doing so.

About this volume

Idolizing Authorship is composed of three chronologically successive parts, which each take two subjects as their starting point, as stated above: the self-fashioning on the part of the author himself and the role of critics, admirers, and fans in the construction of an authorial identity. The first part, 'The Rise of Literary Celebrity', focuses on the roots of literary celebrity culture. Three literary celebrities are focused on here, a German, a Dutch, and a Norwegian author: Goethe, Beets and Ibsen. All three acquired celebrity status in the nineteenth century, Goethe even earlier. In none of these cases did medialization in the modern sense play a role, yet all three were, even in their lifetime, revered by admirers. Silke Hoffmann demonstrates how the writer, who in 1774 acquired great fame with *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, moulded his image in the shape of a contemporary Jupiter, exalted above ordinary people: he resided in Weimar like an Olympian. Visitors travelling to the little German town felt, as they mounted the stairs to his *Haus am Frauenplan*, as if they were climbing Mount Olympus. Hoffmann shows how Goethe adopted an 'Olympian posture', for which he was inspired by such mythological heroes as Jupiter, Apollo, and Prometheus. In a time before the invention of photography, Goethe exploited other means to disseminate this self-image: through busts of himself, whereby he assumed a godlike status. He thus rose to become 'the Divine Leader of German Literature', admired by all and sundry.

Rick Honings demonstrates how, in the 1830s, the Dutch poet Nicolaas Beets was influenced for his self-fashioning by a contemporary literary celebrity: Lord Byron. This English author acquired great fame upon the publication of his work *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812). Numerous authors were to imitate his work and rebellious image. In the Netherlands, it was the theology student Beets who contributed most to the Byromania, by copying Byron's image and publishing works written in his spirit. Much like Byron, he became famous overnight, albeit that this fame remained limited to

the Netherlands. Similar manifestations of a fan culture sprang up around Beets as around Byron. Female readers in particular were impressed by the young Byronian, who outwardly presented himself as a melancholy genius. Other than Byron, however, he did not distance himself from Christianity: nowhere do his characters renounce their faith.

Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen, born in 1828, also acquired the status of a superstar. Suze van der Poll investigates how he managed to achieve this status and offers three explanations. First, there is the resonance between his work and the sociopolitical and literary context that it was embedded in. Had it not been for the Norwegian nationalism that flourished in the nineteenth century, Ibsen would never have been able to achieve the status of a national icon. His plays shocked his audiences because he levelled criticism at the state, the church, and the education system. As it was especially in the second half of the nineteenth century that Ibsen was active as an author, he was able to utilize the possibilities offered him by new technologies – in contrast to Goethe and Beets. News spread more rapidly, and with it, Ibsen's fame. Reviews and framing by critics played a major role in this process. As a result, the audience became fascinated with Ibsen as a person and with his private life. Moreover, a visual culture developed around the author. Besides on paintings, Ibsen was also depicted by cartoonists on several occasions. These images not only illustrated his fame, they also helped to augment it.

The second part of this volume focuses on what could be termed 'The Golden Age of Literary Celebrity': a period in literary history when the conventions of the media and the laws of the market became inextricably interwoven with the rules of literary production. Where Ibsen already made greater use of modern media in the construction of his fame, the authors after him did so even more. As much comes to the fore in the four chapters that together constitute the centrepiece of this volume. The Danish poet Holger Drachmann, who was especially famous in his own country, had one foot in the nineteenth century, the other in the twentieth century. He actively moulded his image as an author, thus communicating that he was a great artist, according to Henk van der Liet. Following his debut in 1872, Drachmann was accorded the status of the Danish Ibsen. His fame stemmed in part from his visibility in the public domain; his bohemian lifestyle was a major contribution to his renown. But he also conducted a PR campaign through his work. Writing about maritime subjects, he acquired great popularity among labourers. In addition, he presented himself as a benefactor, whose work helped collect money for the benefit of widows and the poor. After his death a 'Drachmann Industry' developed: his house

became a tourist attraction, postcards with his picture were brought on the market, streets were named after him, and a statue was erected in his honour. It was thus that Drachmann retained his celebrity status.

Dutch novelist Louis Couperus also became a celebrity at the beginning of the twentieth century, as Mary Kemperink argues. His status was foremost of a national nature. He became a sort of attraction in the Netherlands, whose public performances excited general attention. Newspaper reports devoted more attention to his performances and his striking, aristocratic image than to the texts he read. His weekly columns made him a constant presence in the media. While touring in the Dutch East Indies he was received as a star author wherever he went. Couperus had meanwhile also come to expect to be treated as a celebrity, replete with the concomitant luxury. The occasion of his 60th birthday was widely celebrated in the Netherlands, and he was given a knighthood. His funeral in 1923 was a grand event. Thereafter, however, his work quickly fell into oblivion. Now that his person was no longer there to command attention, the audience lost interest, although the second half of the twentieth century saw a Couperus revival.

Marcel Proust, author of the seven-volume novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927), set himself the aim of becoming a latter-day Victor Hugo, yet acquired his biggest fame after his death. It is interesting to note that Proust amply reflects on the phenomenon of celebrity in his work, as Sjeff Houppermans shows in his article. Some elements from *À la recherche*, such as the Madeleine cake, which – dipped in jasmine tea – evokes the world of the narrator's youth in Combray, were to become iconic. Since Proust's death, numerous authors, including Samuel Beckett, Claude Simon, and J.M.G. Le Clézio, have implicitly as well as explicitly drawn inspiration from his work – for the portrayal of the workings of memory, for instance. It is thus that Proust's fame lives on indirectly in the second half of the twentieth century.

The fourth author to take centre stage in this part is the American poet Ezra Pound, whose anti-Semitic and racist views and statements made him notorious rather than famous. Pound's fascist image does not alter the fact, however, that he is considered a great author, an important representative of modernism. Pound deployed his work to communicate an image of himself: the 'autofabricated image of a man who seemed to have no other options', according to Peter Liebrechts. Still, it was foremost his eccentric and theatrical lifestyle that commanded attention. During the Second World War he chose the side of the Italian fascists; he was accused of treason and arrested in 1945. This stain on his reputation would come to overshadow his fame. Not until the decades after the war was he gradually rehabilitated, which

was reflected in the academic attention directed to his work. Yet what, to this very day, prevails for the general public is his fascist image.

The third, and last, part of this volume, titled 'The Popularization of Literary Celebrity', sheds light on how literary celebrity has changed under the influence of such modern mass media as the radio, television, and the Internet, the rise of post-structuralist ideas about authorship, and the globalization of cultural production. Central to this part are authors who benefited greatly – or still do, in some cases – from the opportunities offered by marketing techniques and modern media. The first article here is by Sander Bax and has the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch for its subject. Much like Goethe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Mulisch – in both his works and his public performances – carried the mythical self-image of a great author, akin to (or perhaps even more important than) God: a genius, an Olympian. Numerous drawings and cartoons have conveyed this image, in particular after Mulisch's death in 2010. The author's image assumed mythical proportions, with Mulisch becoming a kind of human deity, an 'Author-God'. Bax shows that, curiously, Mulisch had in his early work shown himself critical of the power of the author. This could be explained, Bax argues, by the fact that authors are required to move within two domains in the modern age of celebrity: mass culture (for the general public) and high culture (of connoisseurs).

That contemporary literary celebrity can be a global phenomenon is demonstrated by the example of Haruki Murakami. Globalization of literary production, Gaston Franssen reasons, has had major consequences for this author's image: for instance, Murakami is frequently attacked in Japan by literary critics on account of the allegedly Westernized style and atmosphere that characterize his work, whereas he is frequently framed in Europe and the United States as an author who presents a penetrating analysis of Japanese culture. Intriguingly, Murakami boasts a broad fan base of loyal readers in both the West and in Japan, who will stand in line at bookstores for hours to buy his latest novel and who gather to share experiences at Murakami festivals. Franssen demonstrates that the author pits different forms of literary authorship against each other in his work, expressing apparent criticism of the commercialization and mediatization of literature.

More so than any other author in this volume, the Russian poet and essayist Dmitrii Vodennikov makes enthusiastic use of the possibilities offered him by 21st-century media, as Ellen Rutten claims in her article. Just as nineteenth-century authors had their portraits made to publicize their image, Vodennikov publicizes his by means of blogs, Twitter and Facebook,

thereby constantly balancing between sincere autobiographical confessions and artistic performances. Ruten thus speaks of 'e-self-fashioning'. Not only does he know how to command attraction in the popular Internet culture with his performances, he also manages to be well liked by critics and academics. In this sense he operates, as a modern author, in the same two domains that were discussed in the chapter on Mulisch: mass culture and high culture. Vodennikov deploys the social media to provide his readers with information about his private life, but he sometimes does so in such exaggerated ways that he creates a fascinating atmosphere 'in which readers continually wonder how upright this virtual intimacy really is'. Is Vodennikov 'real' or 'fake', a '(post-)postmodern fraud', or isn't he? This uncertainty ensures that this author will continue to fascinate.

Finally, Sanna Lehtonen shows that, at first sight, Finnish bestseller author Sofi Oksanen stands out in the public domain because of her gothic appearance, although Oksanen herself would maintain this is not so much a pose as an authentic image, which she has carried since her youth. In addition, Oksanen presents herself as a sexually conscious feminist, who communicates her bisexuality actively. At the same time, she stresses that she could not but become a writer and presents herself as a devoted artist. She constantly engages in public and social debates through both her works and her public performances. Although her work and performances have met with appreciation, criticisms have also been voiced online by people who accuse her with her PR machine of being overly intent on seeking commercial gain. The literary field has meanwhile embraced Oksanen as an important author, given the distinctions she has so far received. The Oksanen case study shows that in these modern times a star author moves in quite different domains, yet that presenting oneself as both a celebrity and a public intellectual is not necessarily problematic.

Taken together, the three parts offer a sampling of literary celebrities from various historical periods and against varying national backgrounds. Obviously, they provide, to some extent, mere snapshots from a history of literary celebrity that can hardly be described as complete, but all the same, they do conjure up an image of how this phenomenon has evolved and will continue to do so, over the centuries and from context to context. Due to the variety of historical and geographical backgrounds, the various articles make clear how the construction of writerly and readerly identities – be it local, national, gender, class or ethnic identity – time and again takes shape within the intriguing tension field between then and now, between high and low culture, and between author and audience.

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