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VICTORIAN NETWORK Call for Papers: Forgery and Imitation

Victorian Network is an open-access, MLA-indexed, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to publishing and promoting the best work across the broad field of Victorian Studies by postgraduate students and early career academics. We are delighted to announce that our twelfth issue (Summer 2018) will be guest edited by Aviva Briefel on the theme of “Forgery and Imitation”.

Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the increase in art and literary forgery in the nineteenth century, and to the preoccupation with themes of illicit imitation in the Victorian cultural zeitgeist. Critics have highlighted the manifold, intricate, and sometimes surprising ways in which forgery was woven into the social and cultural fabric of the era. The forged, the fake, and the imitative became pressing issues for artistic reproduction as growing demand and changing technology shaped the way in which texts, images, and objects circulated. The spectrum encompassed forged and imitative objects faked with criminal intent, as well as cultural and economic productivity.

Anxieties surrounding the concepts of originality and fakery also permeated nineteenth-century discussions of social authenticity – did forging an identity in a changing world open the door to faking social class, race, or gender? Did cleaving closely to imitate cultural peers maintain the status quo, mask individual dishonesty, or constitute plagiarism? Frauds, cheats, liars, and copycats of every ilk caught the public imagination. The range of depictions was broad and ambivalent. From villainous cheats like Count Fosco to romantic depictions of Chatterton, forgery and imitation marked for the Victorians a point of uneasiness that called for intricate negotiation. Furthermore, as channels of patronage and influence became increasingly fragmented, new ways of conceptualising artistic indebtedness were required. Here, too, forgery and imitation did moral battle. Appropriation, pastiche, and homage had their dark doubles: deceit, plagiarism, and hack work. Navigating intertextuality meant gauging where boundaries of influence could be crossed and where they should be policed.

We invite submissions of approximately 7,000 words on any aspect of the theme in Victorian literature and culture. Possible topics include, but are by no means limited to:

- Fakery and cultural identity, the (cultural and/or economic) value of forgeries and imitations
- Fakes as cultural participation
- Identities of forgery and forged identities (individual, cultural/national)
- Illegitimacy, genealogy, and heredity theory
- Imitation in nature and evolutionary or scientific theory
- Artistic reproduction (eg. photographs, prints, and casts), copying, and forgery: the original versus the copy
- Forgery and imitation as gendered activities
- Public persona: masks and makeup
- Fashions, trends, and crazes
- Acting as imitation; theatricality versus authenticity
- Fraud, counterfeit money, financial corruption, white-collar crime
- The forgery of memory; history-writing; misremembrance
- Originality, the Romantic genius, and Victorian imitation
- Imitation as literary practice: (mis-)quotation, adaptation, plagiarism, piracy
- Literature as imitation: re-creating other mediums in words (*ut pictura poesis*)
- Imitating the Victorians: the re-creation of Victorian texts in neo-Victorian writing and fan cultures

All submissions should conform to MHRA house style and the [in-house submission guidelines](#). Submissions should be received by **1 November 2017**.

Victorian Network is also looking for book reviewers to reflect on recent scholarship relating to the theme of “Forgery and Imitation”. If you are interested in reviewing a book for our forthcoming issue, please contact us with your status/job, affiliation, research interests, and (if you have any) ideas of books you would like to review in connection to the theme.

Contact: victoriannetwork@gmail.com