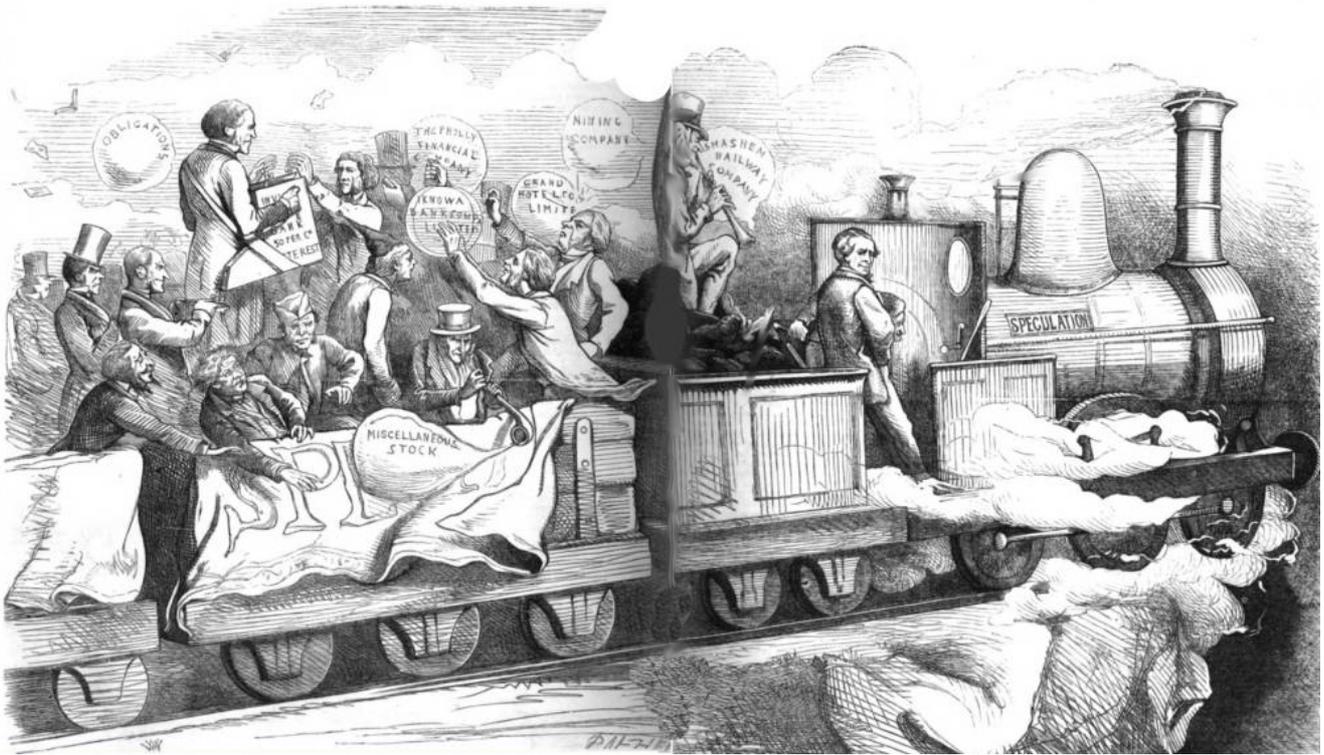


Call for Papers



Fraud and Forgery in Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century

22-23 June 2018

Aarhus University, Denmark

<https://fraudandforgery.wordpress.com/>

Keynote speakers:

Dr. James Taylor, Lancaster University:
'How to get rich quick: Financial advice in nineteenth-century Britain'

Professor Nick Groom, University of Exeter:
'How much blood and horror lies behind all "good things"!': Vampiric Authenticity and
Catachthonic Forgery in the Long Nineteenth Century

“The beginning of financial crime is the attempt to make an appearance which the legitimate resources of the adventurer in the game of fortune will not justify. Other resources must, therefore, be found, and thus fraud, forgery, and misappropriation are called into existence, with all their frightful and heavy legal responsibilities.”

D. Morier Evans, *Facts, Failures and Frauds* (1859)

Literature from the long nineteenth century abounds in acts of fraud and forgery, whose far-reaching implications captured the popular imagination during this period of rapid economic development and offered a means of engaging with the unstable realities of a burgeoning capitalist and industrial era. Sara Malton points out that forgery ‘enacts a violation on several fronts: it signifies a transgression against property, identity, the authority of law, the nation-state, and the economic system’. Acts of fraud and forgery are more than simply crimes of mendacity; they destabilise and jeopardise the intertwined systems upon which society is founded. Writers and readers were simultaneously alarmed and fascinated by such acts, which became elemental to new plots but also raised unsettling questions about origins, authority, and the nature of wealth and merit.

Acts of textual forgery frustrate the continuity between text and truth, signifier and signified, with the popularity of object or ‘it-narratives’ complicating these dichotomies even further, and the deployment of pseudonyms by authors problematising the question of authority and the fluid transmission of texts. Authors of this period also implicated the body in acts of forgery, with disguise and false identity common themes in nineteenth-century sensation fiction and often linked with acts of monetary falseness. Novelistic realism, and its strange claim on reality, is intimately entangled with the vocabulary of counterfeiting: plausible worlds minted on the flat ontology of words. Many financial protagonists in Balzac, Dickens, Trollope, and Zola combine financial success with loose dealings in disguises and words, and become symbols of economic categories in turmoil. Before this, romantic poetry participated in debates about bullion and the gold standard, absorbing it into larger discussions of language, nature and truth, and speculative economies – often thinly veiled frauds themselves – further contributed to the nebulous nature of ‘paper wealth’ during the period. Romantic fraud and forgery also surface, with bigamy and false vows appearing in popular texts such as *Jane Eyre* and *Jude the Obscure*.

This conference will consider representations of fraud and forgery in all areas of literature from the long nineteenth century (1789-1914), from its deployment as theme to its entanglement with the processes of literary production themselves. Following the recent financial crisis and contemporary concerns over ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’, consideration of the complex slippages between text and reality, money and value, are more urgent than ever, and for this reason we also encourage papers on contemporary neo-Victorian works and the reimagining of Victoriana through the prism of modern concerns with truth and representation.

We welcome proposals for 20 minute papers, or panels of three papers, on topics that can include, but are not limited to:

The body: disguise; mistaken identity; the signature; impersonation; evidence of the senses; the body as text; misleading the senses; the body as evidence; sexual fraud and forgery

The child: illegitimate children; fraud and forgery in children’s literature; the child as forged ‘text’; children and trickery; child fraudsters

Love and marriage: bigamy; polygamy; fraudulent marriage contracts or vows; marital falsehoods; inheritance and the ‘marriage market’

Death: fraudulent deaths; death and authority; inheritance
Politics: political fraud and forgery; acts of censorship; mendacious politicians; political satire
Gender: cross-dressing; the gendering of fraud; gendered susceptibility to fraud and forgery
The spiritual and supernatural: spiritualism as fraud; the legitimacy of supernatural phenomena; spiritual means of divining 'truth'; religion as moral economy; discursive overlap between religious ideas and the semantics of finance
Financial fraud and forgery: speculation; gambling; relationship between financial writing and fiction; ideas of credit; paper money and the gold standard; financial bubbles and joint stock companies
Genres and authorship: poetry and the poetics of monetary meaning; the authority of fiction; periodicals and authorship; financial narratives and 'it-narratives'; pseudonyms
Paratexts: images and documents as evidence in literary narratives; maps; forged documents
Neo-Victorian and other anachronistic narratives: imitations of Victorian style and genre; adaptations or dramatisations of Victorian works

Please send proposals of no more than 300 words and a 50 word biography in Word format by **15 January 2018** to Dr. Elly McCausland and Jakob Gaardbo Nielsen at

fraudforgeryconference@gmail.com

We hope to be able to offer a limited number of travel bursaries for postgraduates and early career researchers; further details will be available after the deadline for submissions.

(IMAGE CREDIT: [Hathi Digital Library Trust and the University of Minnesota Library](#))