Forgery as a Romantic Form of Authorship: The Czech Manuscripts in Comparative Perspective

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Following the manuscript battles of the 1880s, Czech literary studies adapted fairly rapidly to the fact of the nineteenth-century origins of the Dvůr Králové and Zelená Hora manuscripts and the poetry they contained, and from the early twentieth century onward, histories of Czech poetry, studies of Czech prosody, and discussions of Czech literature in the period all regularly treat the manuscripts as a part of the literary production of the time.[1] In this sense, the Czech forged manuscripts have had a better fate than some other forged literature, like Macpherson's Ossianic poems or Chatterton's Rowley poems, which until very recently remained mostly outside the purview of legitimate English literary history.[2] On the other hand, the purported authors of the manuscripts, Václav Hanka and Josef Linda in particular, have been relegated to the margins of the literary canon and their other works have been studied, when at all, largely only for the indirect (if often damning) evidence they provide of the authors' participation in the forgeries.[3] Thus it would seem that Czech literary scholarship has managed to sever the manuscripts from their authors in order to treat the poetry as literature while still treating the authors as damned forgers. One of the ways this has been accomplished is by treating the poetry of the manuscripts primarily only in other contexts: their verse forms in relation to the metrical and prosodic experimentation of the time; their mythic picture of Czech nationhood in connection with the developing ideology of the Czech national revival. Questions of authorship have remained largely neglected. Dalibor Dobiáš recently noted that while the likely participants in the creation of the manuscripts have been identified, the details of the particular contributions of each author to specific poems has not been resolved, so that the authorship of the poems remains an open question (Dobiáš 2010: 190, 264-65). This neglect of the question of authorship is not by chance, but follows from the nature of the manuscripts themselves as they present their implicit authorship. As I will argue below, the possibility of attribution of the poems to *any* individual author was a powerful argument in the inauthentication of the manuscripts, and detailed analysis and allocation of responsibility was unnecessary to the economy of such arguments. The stigma attached to "forgery" in the dominant moral framework has also largely inhibited the possibility of the reexamination of the activities of Hanka, Linda, et al. in

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[1] See the overview of the reception of the manuscripts in the recent edition by Dalibor Dobiáš (2010), esp. pp. 263, 267.

[2] The renewal of interest in Macpherson followed the work of Fiona Stafford and Howard Gaskill (Stafford 1988; Gaskill 1986; Gaskill 2004; Gaskill 1991; Stafford and Gaskill 1998). Nick Groom led the way in the reevaluation of Chatterton (Groom 1998; Groom 1999).

[3] On Hanka's marginalization in the context of the history of Czech romanticism, see Tureček (2006: 125-27). There are exceptions, such as Felix Vodička's work on Linda's novel *Záře nad pohanstvem* (1948), which treats its important place in the working out of a modern Czech prose idiom. But Linda's innovations in prose are not treated in relation to his part in the influential poetry of the manuscripts, so that legitimate authorial innovation and forgery are kept separate. Jaromír Loužil's compelling reading of the confrontation of the Christian and pagan worlds in Linda's novel (1978) makes the novel a kind of atonement on Linda's part for the sin of participating in the forgeries. Here genuine authorial creativity is motivated by guilt for illicit authorial activity, which at least maintains a relationship between the two spheres.

connection to larger theoretical questions of authorship as a cultural institution, in particular the rapidly changing notions of authorial creativity, authorial identity, and author-reader relationships, among others, connected to the emerging romantic paradigm.

One of the goals of my current project is to put the Czech forgeries into dialogue with the growing scholarly literature that has appeared in the last two decades around English literary forgeries, to bring a new perspective to the Czech case and to see what the Czech case can contribute to the larger comparative and theoretical discussion. Of particular interest are the attempts in that literature to theorize literary forgery in a way that gets beyond legal or moral discourse and sees forgery as an unavoidable part of the literary process, maybe even as essential to literature. For this essay I would like to examine some theoretical questions and hypotheses regarding the connections between forgery and romanticism, and in particular the question of romantic authorship. Clearly the author-forger remains problematic in Czech literary studies in ways that the forged text does not. I suspect that this has to do in the first place with the troubling intentions ascribed to the authors: the intent to deceive, to deliberately falsify history, and so on. But to what degree, in any particular case, are such intentions really present? And even if they are present, how important are they in the overall matrix of forces of intent, motivation, and pressure that produce the forged document? Formalist criticism has reminded us how inaccessible an author's intent is to the reader, and thus how unimportant it must be to the judging of an artistic work (Wimsatt and Beardsley's "intentional fallacy") (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1989: 3-18). But however irrelevant to the work's meaning or its artistic value, intention remains an aspect of readers' construction of the author, and so I would like to investigate those intentions a bit further, to see if there are not other, perhaps more important intentions and forces acting there as well, and less reprehensible authors as a result. I would also like to develop other frames for viewing the authorial creativity of the forgers, to see forgery as an aspect of romantic creativity and literary practice, which means also to explore such notions as authenticity, originality, and simulation.

The Intent to Deceive

Nick Groom in *The Forger's Shadow: How Forgery Changed the Course of Literature,* one of the more ambitious recent attempts to theorize forgery, regards authorial intention as "wholly irrelevant," noting, "It is a common defense by art forgers that they never *intended* to deceive: they merely painted; the signatures were added later by dealers or restorers or other forgers, the forgery that arose was not a deliberate act" (Groom 2003: 61). Working with the concept of "fraudulence" rather than forgery, Scott Carpenter comes to some conclusions similar to Groom's about the intimate relationship between forgery/fraudulence and literature, but authorial intent is definitional to his main term: "Fraudulence does not exist without a motive, and it cannot occur by accident. Without intent, deception becomes merely a mistake, stupidity…. [Fraudulence] is thus a deliberate attempt to deceive" (Carpenter 2009: 5). The choice of terms here is crucial, and I prefer to follow Groom rather than Carpenter, to decentralize the importance of authorial intent under the rubric of "forgery."[4] This opens a wider

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[4] There is no agreement on terms in the literature and each scholar deploys or advocates for terms that depend on their emphases or the particular cases they analyze. K. K. Ruthven inclines somewhat idiosyncratically toward "the spurious" as a general term, but ultimately suggests that there is no way through the chaos of both synchronic and diachronic diversity in usage to a satisfactory general term (Ruthven 2001: 34-39). In a recent article, Groom uses "fakelit" as a general term, under which he distinguishes between "counterfeit," "forgery," "plagiarism," and "hoax"

field for investigation as well. While fraudulence cannot occur by accident, it is possible for something to be taken as a forgery by accident, through misappropriation, misreading, mistake. In fact, the two most prominent recent skeptics regarding the twelfth-century origins of the Russian *Slovo o polku Igoreve,* Andrei Zimin and Edward Keenan, ultimately suggest that the text was composed by their candidate authors as a kind of exercise in stylistic imitation (!), which was later misused and passed off as ancient by other parties (Zalizniak 2004: 12, 30).[5] The fact that we are, in this case, in fact dealing with a genuine medieval manuscript (Zalizniak's weighing of the linguistic evidence and the arguments on both sides is, it seems to me, incontrovertible) should not deter us. Regardless of the actual ontological status of the contested object (which is not always knowable), the disputed and ever-shifting ground of the realm of forgery includes the possibility of such inadvertent cases.

Groom goes on to illustrate the multiplicity of artists' intentions in cases of forgery, and how even those intentions are often subordinate to other factors, including the economic motivations of other involved parties. In cases when artists are creating in response to particular demands, whether of their paying patrons or of an expectant audience or market, their intentions are often overridden or altered, deflected into new paths and shaped by the demands placed upon them. Susan Stewart, in the seminal *Crimes of Writing,* relates the situation of George Psalmanazar, who "From 1702 to 1708…presented himself to British Society as a Formosan [Taiwanese] Pagan converted to Christianity" (Stewart 1991: 31). Much of Psalmanazar's creativity in inventing ethnographic information came as a direct response to the demands of his interlocutors for information. "Alas for me," he wrote in his memoirs, "my fancy was but too fertile and ready for all such things…and when any question has been started on a sudden, about matters I was ever so unprepared for, I seldom found myself at a loss for a quick answer, which, if satisfactory, I stored up in my retentive memory." Stewart notes, "There is no supply of answers here without the demanding questions" (Stewart 1991: 41). Note also that what is saved of the fictionalizing is that which is "satisfactory" to its receptive audience—Psalmanazar was able to test the credibility of his inventions on a live audience and adjust to their expectations. When he wrote his entirely fictive *Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa,* public imposture was translated into ethnographic forgery and his audience could not wait to be deceived. He later recalled, "All this while, both [Dr. Innes] and the booksellers were so earnest of my dispatching it out of hand, whilst the town was hot in expectation of it, that I was scarcely allowed two months to write the whole" (Stewart 1991: 37). Whatever Psalmanazar's initial intentions when coming to London, his impersonation and forgery were strongly shaped by the willing audience he found there.[6] Groom observes, "Sceptics made a crucial contribution to

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(Groom 2007: 1633-36). "Mystification," which seems to have become the general term of choice among Russian and Czech scholars, has not found much of a place in the English-language discussions. One of the appeals of "forgery" is the double sense of the term in English, pointing at the same time to falsification and to making (that is, *poesis*) and thus the culture-creative aspect of certain falsifications.

[5] Keenan, even as he absolves Josef Dobrovský of the guilt of forging *Slovo,* appeals to his mental illness as a part of the complex of causes for his complicity: "What Dobrovský did do, seen in context, was to write a few harmless passages in imitation of the *Zadonshchina* and other texts that he had recently read, and in the style of other early Slavic heroic narratives that he knew well….Given the manner in which the text seems to have evolved, and taking into account the agency of Malinovskii and perhaps others, it is entirely possible that the text we have represents no single intent of Dobrovský's, but is the product of a series of separate acts, some of them irrational, not all of them his, over which he ultimately had little control" (Keenan 2003: 424-25).

[6] He had already had a career as an impostor, travelling on fake passports since age 16 and presenting himself in Germany and the Netherlands as a Japanese pagan. There William Innes detected his hoax and threatened him with

Psalmanazar's incessant performance of otherness purely by being sceptical: they themselves were performing scepticism much as Psalmanazar was performing Formosan, while his believers performed belief" (Groom 2007: 1642). In other words, Londoners had as much a hand in shaping Psalmanazar's Formosa as Psalmanazar (whatever his real name) himself.

A similar dynamic of demand and reward shaped the creative translations/adaptations undertaken by James Macpherson of Scottish folksongs into prose-poem epics in English. Macpherson had to overcome an initial reluctance to do the first translations of "fragments" of ancient Scottish poems, but these highly mediated attempts produced an overwhelmingly enthusiastic reaction and garnered and promised rewards on multiple levels, from personal contacts with the Edinburgh literary elite to renewed cultural prestige for a dying Highlands culture. He very soon faced insistent demands from Scottish intellectuals that he find and translate a complete Scottish epic. His patrons, including David Hume and Hugh Blair, continually pushed him to do more and financed his travels through the Scottish Highlands in search of epic material (Stafford 1996: xii-xiv). The intent of audience and patrons to have the material here seems to be the fundamental force, and any authorial intent to produce Scottish epic is itself already a product of that demand.

In the case of Hanka and Linda, we do not, so far as I know, have evidence of such immediate personal pressures from patrons or audience.[7] But the demand for Czech epic poetry and the expectation of its discovery were very prominent at the time. One source of the demand was German researchers like the Grimms and Schlegels who were collecting European epic materials in this period for their histories of European literary traditions. To be unable to supply meant quite literally having nothing to contribute to the new grand narratives of European "romantic" literary history. In the reigning historical understanding of the day, all national literatures progressed through a stadial development proceeding from origins in epic (Leerssen 2004: 124). Czech patriots certainly believed that they had a national literary tradition, and therefore there must be an epic origin in their past.[8] These expectations, and the delight at their fulfillment by Hanka's discoveries, are eloquently expressed by František Palacký in a Czech literary history written for the *Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur* in 1822: "The Czechs too had their history sung to them in old heroic and love songs: but the period seemed to have safeguarded nothing of itself for us; for the rhymed legends…and the romances of the fourteenth century had no national import… One began to think that it had all been irretrievably lost, until Mr. Hanka had the luck…to discover in Králové Dvůr in Bohemia the remains of a Czech codex…. Only six longer heroic songs and eight delightful shorter songs did destiny grant us: but let us be thankful to the spirit of the Czechs even for this!" (Palacký 1874: 23-24)[9] Palacký

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exposure in order to secure his cooperation in a staged baptism designed to impress the bishop of London. The two conspirators travelled to London together in 1703 and Psalmanazar successfully won over the public there. He published his forged history of Formosa the following year, at the age of 20 (Stewart 1991: 33-34).

[7] The internal evidence of the poems, with their celebration of the Šternberk and Lobkovic houses, does suggest at least some attempt to appeal to those noble families that were playing an important role in the national revival.

[8] The demands on Macpherson derived from similar reasoning, that there must have been a Scottish epic, at an early stage in the development of this historical conception (Ruthven 2001: 9). Leerssen shows how effective Macpherson's production of this epic material was in the consolidation of this understanding of European literary traditions.

[9] "Auch den Čechen erzählte ihre Geschichte von alten Helden- und Minnegesängen: aber die Zeit schien uns davon nichts aufbewahrt zu haben; den die gereimten Legenden…die Romane des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, hatten keine nationale Bedeutung…. Schon glaubte man alles unwiederbringlich verloren, als dem Herrn Hanka das Glück zu Theil ward..., zu Köiginhof in Böhmen Ueberbleibsel eines schönen böhmischen Codex zu entdecken.... Nur sechs

nicely illustrates the way in which the historical theories shaped perceptions of reality: he has no doubts that the Czechs had heroic epic. The lack of such material in preserved manuscripts does not cast doubt upon this assumption, but is attributed to losses in the manuscript collections.

I would suggest that the demand for a Czech epic in the context of the theoretical understanding of the day, according to which a Czech epic MUST HAVE existed, allows us to frame Hanka and Linda's work as an attempt not to falsify history, but to rescue and resurrect history, to reconstruct the Czech epic as it must have existed, to fill a lacunae in Czech manuscript collections that could easily have been caused by the destruction wrought on old Czech manuscripts by the Hussite Wars and the Counterreformation. We might then see their Czech epics as reflecting the kind of drive to reconstruct origins that also motivated the contemporaneous efforts to reconstruct the proto Indo-European language, which in the end also revealed itself as a theoretical fabrication, if perhaps to a lesser degree.[10] The idea that the Czechs must have had an epic tradition was only shown to be false by comparative Slavic literary studies in the later nineteenth century.[11]

In this perspective, Hanka and Linda's reconstructions form a regular part of the methodology of romantic science. Roman Jakobson made precisely this argument in an article dedicated to Hanka's memory in 1931 that seems to have had little effect on Hanka's reception in Czech literary studies:

Scholars of the Romantic period painted the national past in bright strokes. In "restoring" the picture of the ancient way of life, its customs and beliefs, they gave their fantasy free reign. A Middle Ages without bards or epic poetry seemed to them a contradiction in terms. If no epos had come down to us, it could only mean that the following centuries had wiped away all traces of it: the oral tradition had died out, the manuscripts had been destroyed. But one could reconstruct the hypothetical content and artistic form of such works by using the comparative method, and the plausibility of such reconstructions was not inferior to the authenticity of the grammatical forms established by the Romantic linguists of the time. From the point of view of the scientific Weltanschauung of the period, it would be a grave error to conclude from the lack of preserved monuments that they simply did not exist: would it not be better to try to reconstruct these treasures that were lost by chance? Thus the line separating the

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grössere Heldengesänge, und acht kleinere köstliche Lieder vergönnte uns das Schicksal: doch lasset uns auch dafür dem Genius der Čechen dankbar sein!" The editor, Jernej Kopitar, declined to print the article, citing the problems likely to ensue from its politically questionable stance.

[10] Ruthven also draws the analogy between Indo-European linguistics' efforts to reconstruct the origins of language and the drive towards origin that motivated so many forgeries in a chapter entitled "Fantasies of originality." He notes, in a passage worth quoting, that the problem with the quest was its projection of a unitary language as source: "A desire for 'the' origin is symptomatic of a monism that seeks to subordinate diversities to a prior singularity from which they are deemed to have derived. A famous example is that Indo-European *Ursprache* which nineteenth-century philologists tried to reconstruct in response to Sir William Jones' conjecture in 1786 that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin had evolved from a no longer existent common source. What questers find when they reach the limits of their enquiries, however, is never a singularity. Instead, it is one of those hybridities or creolisations that lead Jean-Loup Amselle to argue in his *Mestizo Logics* (1990) 'that mixture is originary' (Ruthven 2001: 132).

[11] Vatroslav Jagić is credited with debunking the myth of old Czech epic (Jagić 1876). (See Vlček 1960 and Dobiáš 2010: 247). Roman Jakobson, on the other hand, demonstrated the existence of remnants of Common Slavic epic verse forms in Czech oral poetry (Jakobson 1966).

quasi-scientific dreams and literary mystifications of the Romantics became obliterated in principle.[12] (Jakobson 1987: 401)

How different are the false foundations laid for Czech literature by Hanka and Linda and company from the contemporary refounding of national literary traditions in other parts of Europe on long lost and forgotten "national" epic poems like "Beowulf," "The Song of Roland," or even the "Niebelungenlied"? In addition to the serious problems in national patrimony for some of these (the canonical Roland, for example, survives in a single manuscript in a British library, and one that is written in an Anglo-Norman dialect [Taylor 2002: ch. 2]), treating them, in analogy with Homer, as the foundation of the national literary tradition ignores how marginal they had become and creates a fictive genealogy as a basis for modern literary practice.

Still, such national literary myths are often profoundly effective moments of culture-creation, and no less so in the case of the Czech manuscripts. If I were to ask, who were the most influential and important poets of Jungmann's generation, would we not be far more likely to cite Čelakovský and Kollár than Hanka and Linda? That is wrong, I believe. Just one example of how Hanka and Linda were more successful poetically and programmatically can be found in their successful Slavicizing of the Czech language. Kollár's experiments with mixing Czech and Slovak into a new literary idiom in the 1820–30s were rejected, though they appealed to the popular values of Slavic nationality, a shared Slavic literary language, and libozvučnost (Cooper 2008). Hanka and Linda, on the other hand, were able to successfully introduce dozens of Russian elements into the RKZ and have it accepted as genuine old Czech language, which helped to prepare the way for Čelakovský's later echoes of Russian folk songs. This intervention both justified and contributed to Jungmann's Slavicizing modernization of Czech by demonstrating the shared language basis in the deepest past and thus the common national ground. Some of these Russian elements eventually became primary evidence of the forgery: the use of short adjectives in the attributive function, of „i" instead of „a" as the primary copulative conjunction, adverbs ending in –o instead of –e, and so forth, all of which did not correspond, in frequency and function, to other old Czech documents. I would argue that the RKZ was not meant to correspond, that these are not mistakes but deliberate distortions (the misuse of the aorist and imperfect past tenses are mistakes, on the other hand), and they have their source not only in Jungmann's programmatic borrowing from Slavic languages. The other source is Homeric epic, which also represents an unusual mixture of Greek dialects. I would suggest that Hanka and Linda are here creating (or recreating) a Czech epic language on the model of the Greek, with its mixing of dialects—as Macura and others have observed, the Greek dialects were a particularly influential model for the Czechs in thinking about the relationship between the various Slavic "dialects," as they called them (Macura 1995: 133-38; Lencek 1971).

While the careful covering up of any direct evidence of the production of the RKZ leaves little doubt about an intention to deceive on the part of its producers, when we reconsider the larger complex of motivations, intentions, and pressures that converged in the production of the Czech forged manuscripts, deception is mitigated by a number of much more positive motivations and intentions, and by a reconstructive methodology that is very much in line with the best contemporary scholarly practice. I believe, then, that there is good reason to stop treating Hanka, Linda, and their other possible collaborators as damned forgers and to fully recognize them as the authors of the most successful Czech poetry of the day, poetry that inspired and in

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[12] The original article, in Russian, was published as "Pamiati V. V. Ganki," *Tsentral'naia Evropa* 4 (1931).

many cases literally made Czech patriots (in the quasi-religious idiom of the day, "converted" readers to the Czech cause) and contributed greatly to the success of the Czech national movement.

Forgery and Romanticism

Hanka and Linda's fictions belong very much to a romantic context, responding to Romantic theories of national literatures and epic. Some more recent work by Czech scholars on the manuscripts is finally discussing them in connection to romanticism, instead of preromanticism, which had been the standard periodization term covering Czech literature from 1800 to 1830 (Procházka 1993; Tureček 2006; Krejčová 2010). But what exactly is the relationship between forgery and romanticism? Is forgery, as my title might suggest, an especially romantic form of authorship? How does forgery contribute or respond to the development of the romantic ideology of authorship?

Literary forgery of course predates romanticism—there are medieval forgeries, early modern forgeries, forgeries in every period. Historically speaking, literary forgery is practically coeval with literature. The theme is even readable in Homer's *Odyssey,* in the explicit question of the possibility of lying narrative and in the juxtaposition of incomplete and therefore inadequate narratives and the authoritative narrative of the *Odyssey* itself. Laura Slatkin analyses the moment in Book XI where Odysseus's narrative of his adventures to the Phaeacians breaks off and he is encouraged to continue by Alkinoos: "Odysseus, we as we look upon you do not imagine / that you are a deceptive or thievish man, the sort that the black earth / breeds in great numbers, people who wander widely, making up / lying stories, from which no one could learn anything. You have / a grace upon your words, and there is sound sense within them, / and expertly, as a singer would do, you have told the story / of the dismal sorrows befallen yourself and all of the Argives" (Homer and Lattimore 1999: XI, ll. 363-369). As the audience knows, however, Odysseus is a very deceptive man, a master of disguise, of half-truth, of misleading answers, of narrative shaped to achieve his purposes with his audience. Alkinoos alludes to his mistrust of the fantastic tales Odysseus has sung so far and, as Slatkin observes, asks for a confirmation of their truthfulness by an appeal to epic singers and their narratives. He compares Odysseus to such singers and asks him to continue by relating the heroic exploits of his companions at Troy. "Alkinoos' reminder to Odysseus of the *topoi* of the Trojan heroes both acknowledges a conventional hierarchy of subjects within epic and reverts to it as a touchstone of poetic truth…. Recounting stories of the heroes at Troy will authenticate, for Alkinoos and the Phaeacians, Odysseus' claims about himself—and by extension, his unprecedented adventures outside the Trojan sphere (that is, outside the realm of common human history)" (Slatkin 1996: 230). But Odysseus's easy transition into that narrative, his ability once again to adapt his narrative to his audience, calls into question that conventional standard of truthfulness, of historicity. Moreover, Odysseus's own narratives are often incomplete, and while he can narrate his experiences, at crucial moments he is unable to account for them, while the larger narrative provides its audience that perspective. Thus the *Odyssey* works to establish a standard of narrative authority, completeness, authenticity, and truthfulness, which it opposes to the conventions of epic-historical narrative and the unreliable eyewitness account (thereby calling into question the conventional ground of "authenticity" in bodily experience) (Slatkin 1996: 230-33).

This example from the *Odyssey* reminds us that literature has always been invested in distinguishing between authoritative, truthful, authentic narrative and narrative that is inadequate

to that standard. I think some of the best attempts to rethink forgery place it in this broadest of literary-historical contexts and interrogate the relationship between forgery and literature. Stewart and Groom both suggest that literature in part creates the legitimacy of its inventions by using forgery to mark a boundary to invention and exorcise forged works as illegitimate invention. In that sense, forgery as the Other to literature helps to constitute literature as a legitimate practice. Ruthven goes on to perform the Derridean deconstruction of this binary opposition (genuine literature / forgery), arguing that genuine literature is haunted by its expulsion of the spurious, and that in fact, spuriousness is the common ground of literature and forgery (Ruthven 2001: 63-73). Literature and literary forgery, then, are not merely coeval, they are consubstantial. Groom discusses forgers as makers, as practitioners, that is, of poesis in its most basic sense. "In a sense," he writes, "the literary forger is a shadow, forging what is already itself a fabrication, and thereby showing that literature, that most monumental fabrication, is no less forged than any shadowy literary forgery" (Groom 2003: 2).

If forgery has always haunted literature, why does forgery seem to flourish in particular periods? How to account for the flowering of literary forgery in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the period of the rise of romanticism? I would suggest that *in part* this is the effect of romanticism's fundamental redefinition of literature, its redefinition of creativity, of the author and reader relationship, of the nature and continuity of tradition, and so on. The drive to expose forgery is a part of the setting up of new boundaries and protecting new categories. It is not so much, then, that more people intended to forge literature (this intent is, as we have discussed, not necessary), but that more forgeries are identified as a way of reconstituting literature. Formerly legitimate practices of copying, imitation, and variation become newly illegitimate, and thus more forgeries are identified (hence the rising concern with plagiarism as well, which may have less to do with new copyright laws and more to do with the romantic transformation of literature).

Ruthven notes that the 1760s were the decade of both Macpherson and Chatterton, as well as of the emergence of the category of "original genius" (Ruthven 2001: 121). In fact, Chatterton and Macpherson's creations seem designed to illustrate precisely that category. If Homer is the model "original genius" of literature, then Macpherson's Ossian stands at a similar place for the origin of Scottish literature; and Chatterton' s Thomas Rowley, purportedly a 15th century monk who "composes Pindaric Odes two centuries before Cowley, anticipates Surrey in his experiments with blank verse, writes a tragedy whose plot foretells *Othello,* and, most notably, invents several variations on" what is known as the Spenserian stanza, three centuries before Spenser (Russett 2006: 61-62), is a medieval monk poetic genius who originates the forms and themes of modern English poetry. These are founders of traditions, poets whose creativity opens up new practices rather than following old ones. They are creative fictions that respond to the displacement of the classicist method of agonistic *imitatio* by the new romantic value placed on originality (Ruthven 2001: 121 ff.). But they are rejected as illegitimate approaches and claims to this new value, even as they continue to stand as ideal models for what is sought. Here we see exemplified the complex role of forgery in defining new boundaries, even as it is censored according to them. Cases of "forgery" would seem to be ideal sites for exploring historically changing notions of what literature is, what authors are, and so on.

Another value that gains prominence under romanticism is "authenticity." The authentic is a category that aims to address a perceived lack in modern subjectivity, like the romantic nostalgia for a lost organic wholeness. One scholar who has addressed forgery's relationship to this in a helpful way is Margaret Russett in *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity*

1760–1845. She argues that "spectacular fakes participated in defining the 'fictional identity' bequeathed to the modern subject by Romantic culture." Her thesis offers a subtle perspective on authenticity, fictionality, forgery, and modern subjectivity:

> Poetic identity, even and especially in the honorific mode called "authenticity," is a *fictional* construction, but this does not make it false. Indeed, I will ultimately suggest that the acknowledgment of subjectivity *as* fiction is an ethical condition of authenticity in its fully Romantic sense. My thesis, then, is that modern subjectivity should be understood as a subset and, to some extent, as a precipitate of the representational practices the Romantics called 'romance' but which, in their derogated forms, also go by such names as "imposture," "forgery," "plagiarism," and "delusion." (Russett 2006: 5).

That authenticity is a fictional construction sounds like a very modern idea, but in fact it accords very well with the perspective of Homer's *Odyssey* on truthful and authentic narration, which requires great artistry and is itself an artifice.

Another scholar who has explored romantic identity in its artificial aspect is Melissa Frazier, in the context of a study of one of the most problematic authors of Russian romanticism: Osip Ivanovich Senkovskii. Born Józef-Julian Sękowski into a minor Polish noble family and trained as an orientalist, Senkovskii came eventually to serve as the editor of the highly successful journal *Biblioteka dlia chteniia,* a position he used to torment Pushkin and his allies, making him a figure of scorn and disdain in Russian literary history. Senkovskii was not only the editor but also the author of much of the journal's content, and as a critic he practiced a strange brand of criticism: a highly personal criticism performed in the masks of author-personas of his own invention, including Tiutiun'dzhiu-Oglu, O. O. . . . O!, and his most prolific, Baron Brambeus. Thus Senkovskii presents a figure of dramatic insincerity, inauthenticity, and could be taken as anything but romantic, but Frazier shows that, in fact, his extremism reveals an underlying romantic tendency: "While few are brazen as Senkovskii, there are a great many Romantic writers who deliberately construct inauthentic, insincere, or fragmentary selves and in fact, as we will see, despite their reputations even Rousseau and Wordsworth partake of a certain bent in this direction" (Frazier 2007: 48). For Frazier, Senkovskii's artifices of identity help to reveal the place of irony in the formation of the romantic subject, which fundamentally changes how we understand the romantic categories of authenticity and originality. "Just as Romanticism understands a national literature as the original and unique expression of its people, so does it see a given text as the original and unique expression of its creator. Along with a new concept of authorship, Romanticism also offers an emphasis on authenticity that seemingly grounds the text in the real experiences of a real person. … [But] to take the Romantic concept of originality without a good dose of Romantic irony is to ignore the extent to which Romanticism is not about originality or even imitation, but rather simulation" (Frazier 2007: 5-6).

Frazier's invocation of Baudrillard's notion of the simulacrum here will remind Czech scholars of Vladimír Macura's interpretation of the Czech national revival's strong tendency toward the creation of simulacra, in an analysis that includes the forged manuscripts (Macura 1995; Macura 2001). Macura follows Baudrillard in opposing the simulacrum to a more "natural" or "organic" relationship to signification—for Macura, the Czech revival cultural type is contrasted to a more natural cultural type, where cultural products meet specific cultural needs and audiences, rather than creating the illusion of the existence of such a culture and audience. Frazier's reading of Senkovskii suggests another way of interpreting this: seeing the Czech case

not as different but rather as an extreme that reveals an underlying artificial tendency in romantic "national cultures."[13] For the study of forgery and fakes, Ruthven suggests we follow Gilles Deleuze and reject the Platonic denigration of simulacra: "This redemptive manoeuvre puts a positive spin on the much despised simulacrum by redefining it as the site of creativity rather than the absence of reality" (Ruthven 2001: 86).

While their terms are different, both Frazier and Russett point to a fictional or artificial moment that structures romantic categories in counterintuitive ways, and perhaps to a greater comfort with that fact among the romantics than among those of us who have inherited their categories. I would suggest that forgery, broadly conceived, is incorporated in a fundamental way in romantic literary practice, even as more and more forgeries are expelled from literature.

To sum up then, the connections between romanticism and the flowering of forgery are manifold and intricate. First, it would seem that the redrawing of literature's borders through terms like originality and authenticity places some formerly legitimate practices outside the new bounds, and these practices get labeled forgery, plagiarism, and so forth. This happens even when these practices help to constitute the new categories and boundaries. In fact, this contamination of the new categories by their nominal opposites seems to be unavoidable, because romantic identity, whether individual or national, is founded on a moment of fictive play or ironic performance, a creative forging of identity. But there are limits drawn to this creative aspect as well, and some actors are found to have transgressed those limits, not necessarily because they are acting more cynically or with a more explicit understanding of the fictive roots of identity (I want to avoid here reintroducing the problem of potentially censurable authorial intent at another level). Romantic identity thus both *prescribes* forgery as a method, and *proscribes* that activity beyond a certain vaguely defined limit.

Author and authority in the manuscripts

I would like to move now from these theoretical considerations back to the Czech manuscripts and the relationship between the author figure and authority that they construct. Scholars have noted the central role that Macpherson's Ossianic poetry played in advancing the concept of "oral tradition" (Hudson 1996). The Czech manuscripts also gesture strongly toward oral traditions, but in a very different manner. For Macpherson, the past survives in the voice of the bard as still reflected in living Scottish song traditions. There is a continuity of tradition that keeps alive the voice of the bard and thus continues to speak a living witness to ancient history (Macpherson 1996: 48-50; Mulholland 2009).[14] The figure of the bard thus mediates between the romantic "original genius" and the elevation of the oral tradition as its carrier. There is little demand, at first, to see the material sources for Macpherson's translations because they nominally derive not from manuscripts but from the still living oral tradition that keeps alive the authoritative and original voice of the bard.

In contrast, while the Czechs had a living folksong tradition, it did not include epic material. The continuity of the oral tradition was, presumably, broken. What they needed, then,

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[13] I argue this in (Cooper 2010: 255-56).

[14] The end of the "Songs of Selma" offers a pathos-ridden example of Ossian's projection of his voice into future times: "Roll on, ye dark-brown years, for ye bring no joy on your course. Let the tomb open to Ossian, for his strength has failed. The sons of song are gone to rest: my voice remains, like a blast, that roars, lonely, on a sea-surrounded rock, after the winds are laid. The dark moss whistles there, and the distant mariner sees the waving trees." (Macpherson 1996: 170)

was material evidence from a much older period, before the continuity had been broken. Hence the forging of medieval manuscripts, which had to represent a kind of fragmentary writing down of a much larger oral epic tradition and, at the same time, be a sign of Czech *writing* traditions in a much earlier period than hitherto attested (in order that the Czechs be able to compete with the Germans in civilizational development). This introduces a profound tension in the manuscripts between oral and written forms, because the authority of the manuscripts to speak to ancient history and poetic traditions had to be grounded not merely in the representation of the oral tradition, but also in the representation of the writing tradition.[15] It is not surprising to find, then, that the figure of the bard in the Czech manuscripts, the singer Zaboj (with mere mention as well of Lumír), is much more marginal. The Czech songs are not Zaboj's songs, but the songs of the Czech people. This is exemplified primarily in the manifold ways that the manuscripts make use of oral poetic figures, syntax, and narrational devices (Dobiáš 2010: 278), and thus present themselves as belonging to the anonymous and collective patrimony of folklore. The Czech manuscripts represent a later conception of authorship in relation to the oral tradition than Macpherson's Ossianic poems: original genius is ascribed not to an individual but to the national collective, the people, the carriers of the tradition as its creators.

I would also argue that this anonymity of collective authorship and authority is reflected profoundly in the epic battle scenes of the Czech manuscripts. As so often in epic, many of the battles at their climax are decided in the hand-to-hand combat of the leaders of the opposing sides. But in the battles that precede these final showdowns, where many oral-epic traditions describe numerous other individual encounters between powerful warriors individualized and given by name (the *aristeia* of each hero), the Czech epics primarily represent the warriors in synecdoche by their arms and represent battle almost exclusively in storm similes (amusingly, in a kind of realization of the simile, the decisive battle against the invading Mongols is turned, in the poem "Jaroslav," by an actual storm).[16] Ultimately it is the force of the Czech people as a whole that is elevated over the exploits of individual warriors—they speak with one voice; they fight like an elemental force of nature. Unified Czech nationhood is represented above all else. The voice of the Czech people in its oral traditional form, tenuously captured in the forms of an early writing tradition, this is what constitutes the performance of a fictive authenticating basis for modern arguments for Czech membership in the family of nations. This is national mythopoesis at its best, if perhaps also in its most transgressive mode.

The authority and authenticity of the manuscripts derived from this collective anonymity of authorship. In such a case, any evidence that can be taken to demonstrate a unitary authorial consciousness behind the manuscripts, a single author, becomes a powerful argument against the authority of the manuscripts. The existence of an author is equivalent to the inauthentication of the manuscripts. The Moravian Germanist Julius Feifalik was the first to present evidence, in 1860, that the poems of the Dvůr Králové manuscript were not folk poems but had the characteristics of the work of a single, educated author (Dobiáš 2010: 241; Vlček 1960: 483). Others later contributed to this line of argument, and for many, as for the great literary historian Jaroslav Vlček, this evidence remained decisive (Vlček 1960: 485). As I have already noted, in

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[15] Martin Procházka noted the difference in methods of historical mediation, from the Ossianic poems' reliance on voice to the Czech manuscripts' material documents, which results in a "problematický vstah psaní a hlasu" in the Czech poems (Procházka 1993: 38-39).

[16] In this the manuscripts most resemble that strange Russian "epic" *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, which, as Boris Gasparov has shown, incorporates epic material into a narrative that functions on the level of myth (Gasparov 2000).

the economy of this argument it was not necessary to work out the disagreements and contradictory attributions of the poems to various authors proposed by different investigators. Whether there was one author or a small group and whether the author of a particular poem was Hanka, Linda, Jungmann, or some combination of them together did not matter. Authors and the manuscripts did not go together. This logic has continued to shape the study of the Czech manuscripts to this day, and the question of the authorship of the manuscripts, both in its specifics of attribution and in its theoretical and contextual aspects, remains open to investigation.

Conclusion

      I will conclude here by suggesting that the case of the Czech manuscripts offers a wonderful site for exploring the manifold connections between romanticism and forgery in more depth and investigating whether, as the theory advanced here suggests, the assignment of the work to the category of forgery is a part of a larger process of the reorganization of literature as an institution, including new understandings of authorship. The initial unquestioned legitimacy of the manuscripts in patriotic circles, with notable exceptions, followed by a long and slow-developing process that eventually leads to their labeling as forgeries, offers rich material for an analysis that will contribute greatly to the international theoretical discussion of forgeries and their place in literature. There is a potentially fruitful parallel to be explored between the falling popularity of Ossian in the later nineteenth century and the rise of critical voices directed at the Czech manuscripts. Vlček observes, "Koncem let padesátých, se zánikem názoru romantického ve vědě i v poesii, po pádu Ossiana a jiných analogických zjevů cizích...dostavuje se nové vystřízlivění a s Libušiným soudem zasahuje i jiné památky domněle staročeské, mezi nimi i *Rukopis královédvorský*" (Vlček 1960: 481). This parallel suggests a tolerance for forgeries among romantics that begins to disappear with the rise of a new literary ethos. V. A. Svoboda's oft-cited statement from his early polemics with Dobrovský that "Cenili bychom si toho, kdybychom mezi sebou měli druhého Chatertona, aniž bychom kladli obzvláštní váhu na historickou pravost jeho děl," (Dobiáš 2010: 228), should not be read as representative of a cynical ahistoricism among the Czech romantic generation. It accords very well with what scholars have observed in the reception of the Ossianic poems in the early nineteenth century, when readers were already aware of the problems surrounding the provenance of the poems but still valued them for the authentic literary value they presented (Groom 2007: 1627-28; Gaskill 2004: 1-3, 9-10). Here too we see a tolerance for artifice, simulation, and invention in the creation of works that appeal to the romantic values of originality and authenticity, a tolerance that would disappear as those values came to be defined more strictly. Forgery as a romantic form of authorship came to be seen as an illegitimate and non-literary practice, and certain authors and their forged works were expunged from the canon of literature. Why these authors and works and not others is a question that may be productive in working out the details of the transition from romanticism to the new era that follows.

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