Aping the Master

19th-Century Voltaire Pastiches and the Anxieties of Modern Authorship

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The *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy*, published in 1834, relate the following anecdote: in Ferney, Voltaire receives the visit of a young clockmaker who has recently been convicted of adultery. Voltaire makes fun of him, giving him the nickname "Monsieur le Fornicateur". Not understanding Latin, Voltaire's servants mistake "Fornicateur" as the clockmaker's surname and begin to call him by the same name. The clockmaker believes that they are deliberately aping Voltaire's joke and rebukes them harshly: "est-ce que vous prétendez imiter votre maître et singer M. de Voltaire?" (Courchamps 1834: 218) Without consciously doing so, the servants have imitated Voltaire's way of speaking, his personal style. In the terminology of literary criticism, such imitation is called a pastiche.

Since the early days of his celebrity, many writers have imitated Voltaire and tried to have their works attributed to him. The *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy* are no more innocent in this respect. Not only are the memoirs themselves apocryphal (Courchamps tried to pass them off as being by the Marquise), they also contain an apocryphal Voltaire letter (209-11). For those readers who believed the *Souvenirs* to be authentic, the apocryphal Voltaire letter might have appeared so, too. And even if the reader did not regard the letter as authentic, this pastiche might have distracted his or her attention from the bigger forgery in which it stands. It goes without saying that the anecdote about "Monsieur le Fornicateur" is as untrustworthy as the letter.

Despite the huge number of acknowledged and unacknowledged pastiches in Voltaire's style, it is only recently that Voltaire scholars have begun to address this corpus.[1] In order to further explore it, this article will pay attention to a

1 | Joseph Patrick Lee (2004) develops some categories for understanding how texts can be attributed to Voltaire and cites interesting examples of apocryphal texts that found their way into editions of Voltaire's collected works. Nicholas Cronk recently studied 18th-century Voltaire

specific and little known group of Voltaire pastiches: the apocryphal Voltaire letter in Courchamp's *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy* shows us that such pastiches continued to proliferate after Voltaire's death. According to Paul Aron's and Jacques Espagnon's *Répertoire des pastiches et parodies littéraires des XIX^e^ et XX^e^ siècles* (2009: 520), Voltaire remains one of the most imitated and parodied authors of French literature in the 19th and 20th centuries.[2] This article will argue that the 19th-century reactions to Voltaire's practice of publishing and to the pastiches written in his style reflect a fundamental change in conceptions of authorship. I will focus on some Voltaire pastiches written between 1800 and 1855, and in particular on the outstanding case of the pastiche writer Nicolas Châtelain. Furthermore, I will exclude parodies from the corpus and concentrate on two particular categories in Gérard Genette's classification of intertextuality, the pastiche and the forgery (1982: 37). The former is the admitted imitation of an author's style without satirical intent. The forgery differs from the pastiche only in so far as it breaks the *"contrat de pastiche"* (93) with the reader and tries to delude him or her into taking it as an original. In order to understand why Voltaire pastiches come to take on a new meaning after 1800, though, one must adopt a historical approach.

Authorship and Pastiche Writing: From the 18th to the 19th Century

As studies in 18th-century authorship have shown, to publish one's texts anonymously or under a pseudonym was rather the rule than the exception before the French Revolution (Tunstall 2011: 674). In fact, "Voltaire" is a pen name of the man called François-Marie Arouet. But even in the context of *Ancien Régime* publishing, Voltaire's multifarious conception of authorship sticks out. As the catalogue of the French National Library tells us, Voltaire devised more than two hundred pseudonyms to sign his works (*Catalogue général* 1978: 162-66). Furthermore, he was soon extensively and successfully imitated — Georges Bengesco's bibliography of Voltaire's works lists some 140 erroneous attributions (1890: 273-380) — and to make things even more complicated, Voltaire indiscriminately denied the authorship of any text that was attributed to him, including his own. If we take into consideration the sheer mass of his writings, it is easy to imagine what reading Voltaire in the 18th century was like: except in the case of some famous works, there was often no way of making sure whether a text had actually been authored by him or

apocrypha (2013) and published some seminal articles on Voltaire's practice of authorship (2007; 2009; 2011).

2 | The claim I make is based on the number of entries in the index of imitated authors.

not. For instance, an apocryphal sequel to *Candide*, probably written by Henri Joseph Du Laurens, was read as an original throughout the 18th century and succeeded in making its way into the 1880 edition of Voltaire's complete works as compiled by Louis Moland.[3] Nicholas Cronk has argued that Voltaire himself considered his "fakability" as a highly welcome side effect. According to Cronk, Voltaire "does not want to own his ideas; on the contrary, he wants to disown them, and so share them as widely as possible. Voltaire creates a distinctive style and voice that embody a distinctive worldview, and his name comes to stand for a style of thinking that reaches beyond him" (Cronk 2013: 573). Even those who successfully imitated Voltaire magnified his voice and disseminated his 'brand', as defined by a certain manner of writing, but also a set of ideas. Fakes thus increased the reach and the impact of the Enlightenment campaign run by Voltaire. For this enlightened printing machine to work, the recognisability of the trademark was more important than authenticity.

This authorial practice clashes with the paradigm of modern authorship as it emerges at the beginning of the 19th century. The contrast between Voltaire's and Rousseau's conceptions of authorship, often discussed with regard to 18th-century publishing conventions (Sgard 2016: xxii), is equally insightful when considered retrospectively through the eyes of the 19th century. In contrast to Voltaire (and unlike most 18th-century authors), Rousseau signed his texts with his "real" name and thus turned his striving for personal transparency into a publishing practice. As Geoffrey Turnovsky writes with regard to Rousseau, "anonymity was an aberrant, senseless gesture once the book was conceived as a medium whose primary function and value lay in its capacity to project an image of its author before a reader" (2003: 395). Whereas Voltaire's strategy of systematic disorientation is firmly rooted in the "somewhat chaotic freedoms of the publishing world of his time" (Cronk 2013: 575), Rousseau anticipates the modern conception of authorship: after the introduction of copyright in France in 1791, authors had an interest to sign their books with their real name in order to protect their intellectual property, but also to meet certain ideals of Romantic aesthetics as defined, for instance, by Germaine de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* in 1810 (Carpenter 2009: 11). One can thus speak about the advent of a new aesthetic and legal paradigm in the early 19th century. Through owning its texts and expressing its personality in writing, the author-subject rises to power (Edelman 2004: 378).

As a corollary, it becomes increasingly difficult for the readership to digest a work of literature without knowing the author's name and identity. As Michel

3 | According to Patrick Lee (2004: 267), Du Laurens' apocryphal sequel to *Candide* had originally been included in volume 32 of Moland's edition, but was then cut out. Until the completion of the Oxford edition of Voltaire's works in 2018, the one by Moland remains the best available reference for many texts.

Foucault remarks, "[l']anonymat littéraire nous est insupportable" (1994: 800). In this respect we are all children of the 19th century. The desire to have certainty about the author's identity seems to be significantly stronger in the 19th century than ever before. The emerging discipline of bibliography meets this need and is firmly committed to enforcing identifiable authorship. One of its most important tasks is to identify anonymous authors and to unveil literary mystifications, usually called *supercheries littéraires*. Although the first dictionary dedicated to anonymous authors, Vincentius Placcius *Theatrum anonymorum et pseudonymorum*, dates back to 1674, the first one in French is Antoine Alexandre Barbier's *Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes* (1806-1809).[4] Barbier lays the foundations for a never-ending series of similar dictionaries: In 1834, Louis-Charles-Joseph de Manne publishes his *Nouveau recueil d'ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes*. The major 19th-century bibliographer, Joseph-Marie Quérard, joins in the campaign some ten years later with his five-volume dictionary *Les supercheries littéraires dévoilées*. Georges d'Heylli's more accessible *Dictionnaire des pseudonymes*, focusing exclusively on contemporary authors, went through three revised editions between 1868 and 1887. The bibliographer and Voltaire editor Adrien-Jean-Quentin Beuchot is also a major figure in this movement.

This network of newly emerging concepts and disciplines — intellectual property, identifiable authorship and bibliography — has a common epistemological foundation, which one could identify, following Jacques Rancière, as the aesthetic regime of the arts (2000: 31). According to Paul Aron, it is within this regime that the pastiche arises as a genre in its own right (2008: 101). Since the pastiche is defined as an "[o]uvrage où l'on a imité les idées et le style d'un grand écrivain" (Littré 1889: 999), the history of the concept of style provides a suitable perspective to retrace the rise of the pastiche in the modern sense. The predominant notion of style in the 18th century was a rhetorical one, the appropriateness of *verba* in relation to *res*. Voltaire himself is a good representative of this conception of style: "Rien n'est […] plus difficile et plus rare que le style convenable à la matière que l'on traite" (1879: 437). Throughout the 18th century, however, the concept of individual style gains currency. While Marmontel and Mercier are forerunners of this conception (Diaz 2010: 47-48), the first entry in a French dictionary defining style as something personal dates from 1798: "On dit d'Un Écrivain, qu'*Il n'a point de style*, pour dire qu'Il n'a point une manière d'écrire qui soit à lui" (*Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* 1798: 603). Even though these two connotations of 'style' — the generic and the individual — coexisted for a rather long time, the personal conception of style becomes

4 | In his preface Barbier refers to a number of precursors, but also notes that the study of anonymous authors has been widely neglected in France (1806: xiii). The term "bibliography" becomes current at the end of the 18th century, when the discipline undergoes an increasing professionalization (Malclès 1956: 75-84).

more predominant around 1800. The increasing number of pastiche collections at the end of the 19th century would be inconceivable without this transformation.

Juxtaposed against the background of modern authorship, the pastiche remains riddled with paradoxes. As an original and identifiable creator, the author imprints his style on the text like an individual minting ("empreinte de l'âme", "cachet"; Diaz 2010: 48). But just as coins and seals can be forged, so can a personal style of writing. Having become an autonomous genre in the context of modern aesthetics, the pastiche also threatens to subvert the assumptions that made it possible. The pastiche, as an imitation of individual style, is the disquieting other of modern authorship. Charles Nodier, who played a crucial role in distinguishing the pastiche from other practices of mimetic writing such as plagiarism, argues that one can only imitate "les tours familiers d'un écrivain", but not "la succession de ses idées" (2003: 89) — an argument already put forward by Marmontel in 1781 (Aron 2008: 100). Concerning only the superficial level of *elocutio*, the pastiche would be unable to mimic the overall intellectual structure of longer texts, even though Nodier is aware of some notable exceptions such as the apocryphal sequel to Marivaux's unfinished *Vie de Marianne* by Marie-Jeanne Ricoboni. Quérard tries to solve the same problem by maintaining that what can above all be imitated are the deficiencies of a literary text (1847: XXIX). But why, if this is true, have such supposedly excellent authors as Voltaire or Victor Hugo been most successfully pastiched? Given that it subverts the relation between author and text, the pastiche becomes the Achilles' heel of 19th-century authorship.

Voltairean Authorship between Bibliography and Romanticism

When bibliographers such as Quérard and Beuchot set out to establish the canon of Voltaire's works, they are bound to encounter a resistance inherent within Voltaire's conception of authorship and in his publishing practices. While Voltaire aims to create "the illusion of collective authorship" (Cronk 2013: 572), the task of his 19th-century editors is to obliterate this fact by creating an order centred on the individual. And yet the task of exhaustively cataloguing all the texts belonging to 'Voltaire' imposes itself not only for epistemological and aesthetic, but also for political reasons: with his 'panthéonisation' in 1791, Voltaire had become a part of the national heritage and his work was now considered to contribute to French cultural prestige. The numerous connections between politics and bibliography are by no means coincidental: Barbier, for instance, was nominated Napoleon's personal librarian in 1807.[5] As for Quérard, his *La France littéraire*, published in

5 | On Napoleon's personal endorsement of bibliography see Malclès 1956: 77.

1827, is the first national bibliography of France and therefore "un monument" to its literary wealth (1827a: IX). Modern authorship, bibliography and nation-building form an alliance to clear up the disorder the *Ancien Régime* book market has left behind.

Voltairean techniques of blurring identities pose a threat to such an enterprise. This is the reason why Quérard takes issue with Voltaire in the preface of his monumental dictionary *Les supercheries littéraires dévoilées*:

> Vint ensuite le dix-huitième siècle, et avec lui Voltaire qui, en le traversant, a jeté près de deux cents pseudonymes dans la littérature de son époque, et a fait naître un grand nombre de singes.
> L'admiration pour Voltaire au XVIII[e] siècle fut si grande, qu'on imita jusqu'à sa manie de travestissements. […] Le dix-neuvième siècle comporte encore assez d'imitateurs de Voltaire, en moins grand nombre, à la vérité, sous le rapport de l'esprit, que sous celui de sa manie de se déguiser. (Quérard 1847: LI)

Even though Voltaire is not the first literary mystificator, Quérard regards him as the model of those who resist the standard of identifiable authorship. Seen from the viewpoint of a 19th-century bibliographer, Voltaire thus becomes the founding father of authorial mystification. In this case, the 'original' is already constituted by procedures of faking and counterfeiting, namely the blurring of stable relationships between author and text. The very act of forging Voltaire thus involves a twofold process of imitation: one in terms of style and one in terms of authorial practices.

The fact that Voltaire's highly recognizable style invites pastiche also elicits a certain amount of irritation from modern readers outside the field of bibliography. In his *Tableau de Paris*, Louis-Sébastien Mercier dedicates a chapter to Voltaire, entitled "Écrits de Voltaire". The account Mercier gives of Voltaire's writing is not a flattering one: "Brillant, ingénieux, vif, plaisant, gracieux, il n'a aussi aucune sorte de profondeur; il ne touche jamais qu'aux superficies" (1994: 1440). Mercier then relates Voltaire's supposed superficiality to his brilliant style: "Les idées étroites de l'âge de vingt ans le dominaient à soixante: il ne travaillait pas sa pensée, mais son style" (1443). Voltaire's counterpart — implicit here, but explicit in other texts — is once again Rousseau, whom Mercier exalts for his "génie méditatif" (1766: 103).[6] Mercier thereby inaugurates a whole series of comparisons between Rousseau and Voltaire, which predictably result in the disparagement of the latter. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin's comments on both authors are

6 | On Mercier's life-long allegiance to Rousseau see Rufi 1995: 69-115. As Quérard's entry on Voltaire in *La France littéraire* shows, the comparison between Voltaire and Rousseau becomes a commonplace around 1800 (Quérard 1827b: 429).

couched in exactly the same terms and oppose Voltaire's protean superficiality to Rousseau's profound and steady genius (Saint-Pierre 1818: 111-20; Saint-Martin 1807: 319-31).

The stylistic criticism directed at Voltaire thus hinges on the concept of depth, which plays a crucial role in German literature of the Romantic period[7] and which Germaine de Staël imports into France. In *De L'Allemagne*, Voltaire's brilliance constantly serves as a point of contrast to highlight the profundity of German poetry: "Le poëte français [= Voltaire] a su mettre en vers l'esprit de la société la plus brillante; le poëte allemand [= Goethe] réveille dans l'âme par quelques traits rapides des impressions solitaires et profondes" (Staël 1958: 182). Seen through the lens of Romanticism, Voltaire's writing can be characterised thus: a vivid style covers a lack of intellectual and emotional depth. Voltaire's writings are thus associated with certain aesthetic shortcomings (stylized, superficial), which make them appear akin to what a pastiche — according to certain preconceptions — can do. A pre-modern kind of authorship and an inferior literary genre end up in the same category at the lower end of the aesthetic hierarchy. This also implies that Voltaire's texts should perfectly lend themselves to stylistic imitation because they fit neatly into the domain of the pastiche as traditionally described.

At this point, the aesthetic ideology of Romanticism seems to converge with the facts of literary history: Voltaire, a widely and successfully imitated author, writes in a light and superficial style. However, this might also be a case of wishful thinking: as a matter of fact, a major Romantic author like Victor Hugo turned out to be at least as imitable as Voltaire, judging from the enormous number of pastiches and parodies written in his style (Aron/Espagnon 2009: 505-06). One could thus reverse the perspective and argue that Voltaire simply takes advantage of a possibility inherent in every recognizable style, namely that it is liable to being pastiched. Voltaire is not by nature more imitable than many other famous authors, but he is one of the few to deliberately exploit the fact that any individual style can give rise to deceptive imitations. Yet this is exactly what arouses the anxiety of a certain form of Romantic aesthetics. The analogy between Voltaire's style and the pastiche, based on the common denominator 'shallowness', should not be taken for granted: it rather serves to suppress the fact that any personal style, not only Voltaire's 'superficial' brilliance, can be forged. Voltaire thus comes to represent everything the new regime of the arts attempts to exclude. What is at stake in imitating Voltaire, then, is not only a random case of pastiche writing, but a powerful subversion of modern aesthetics.

7 | Vera Bachmann (2013: 12, 25-26) shows that depth is increasingly conceived in relation to a surface around 1800 and that it becomes a pivotal metaphor for the literary text. The earliest example analysed by Bachmann is Schiller's "Der Taucher", written in 1797, only a few years before M^me^ de Staël's visit to Weimar.

Moments of Uncertainty: Nicolas Châtelain's Voltaire Pastiches

The sheer number and diversity of 19th-century Voltaire imitations — they include stylistic parodies, explicit pastiches as well as forgeries — would surpass the limits of this study. The purpose of this article, however, is less to give a comprehensive account of this corpus than to examine some cases that pertain to the concept of personal style and to its implications for modern authorship. A glance at Aron's and Espagnon's *Répertoire des pastiches* tells us that the majority of the texts imitating Voltaire in the first decades of the 19th century use him either as a mouthpiece of different political claims (Delisle de Sales 1802) or as an easy model for writing fiction (Sewrin 1809), but do not aim at a convincing or even deceptive stylistic imitation.

The interest in writing Voltaire pastiches seems reinvigorated in 1828, when Scipion Du Roure, president of the French Bibliophilic Society at the time, publishes his *Réflexions sur le style original*, the first collection of pastiches in the modern sense of the term, which also features a parody of a Voltairean *conte philosophique*. One has to wait until 1842, though, to see the first hoax based on an imitation of Voltaire's style, Arsène Houssaye's "L'Arbre de science". Appearing anonymously in the *Revue de Paris*, this compelling pastiche of a *conte philosophique* is a sophisticated literary mystification. An 'avant-propos' tries to clarify the question how a *conte* by Voltaire could have remained unknown for such a long time and how it was rediscovered. But Houssaye seems to have been aware that what had the potential of a publishing sensation was not quite convincing. He therefore attenuates the claim of authenticity by mentioning his own "doutes renaissans" (Houssaye 1842: 75) and states that he simply submits his discovery to the public judgment. At any rate, Joseph-Marie Quérard was not deceived. The corresponding entry in *La littérature française contemporaine* cites "L'Arbre de science" as being by Houssaye and as being "mis sous le nom de Voltaire" (Quérard 1848: 324). But even if we can assume that Houssayes's pastiche is a hoax, intended to be unveiled after a certain time, it involves the possibility of being read as a text written by Voltaire. Although Houssaye's pastiche neither ends up contaminating the canon nor aims to do so, it produces a moment of uncertainty and blurs the boundary a bibliographer such as Quérard strives to render as watertight as possible. And even after the moment of bibliographical demystification, uninformed readers might have continued to wonder whether it is authentic or not.

In the case of Nicolas Châtelain (1769-1856), these moments of uncertainty are much more pervasive than in Houssaye.[8] Châtelain made a literary career of writing pastiches. Given that Quérard extensively takes issue with Châtelain's hoaxes in the

8 | Paul Aron (2008: 125-30) gives a short overview of Châtelain's work as a pastiche writer. I will focus on those of Châtelain's pastiches that involve questions of authorship.

preface to the *Supercheries littéraires dévoilées* (1847: XXVIII-XXXII), one could even consider him as the most famous literary pasticheur in the first half of the 19th century. Born in Holland, he settles in Switzerland in 1812 and acquires "une sorte de réputation bizarre et passagère" (Thierry 1911: 211). In the highly specialised domain of literary mystification, Châtelain's pastiches have repeatedly attracted critical attention. Augustin Thierry depicts him as the archetypal pastiche writer: "il dérobe constamment sa personnalité sous un masque d'emprunt" (210). He is erudite, witty and has a strong sense of irony, but he fundamentally lacks imagination and is "[i]mpuissant à créer" (211). Measured against the paradigm of originality, the pastiche writer must appear as a bizarre and deficient character, even though one cannot dispute him a certain skill. As someone who plays with masks and identities, he is also close to his Voltairean model.

Châtelain achieved his major *supercherie littéraire* in 1837 when he anonymously published a Voltaire pastiche, the *Lettres de Voltaire à Mme du Deffand au sujet du jeune Rebecque, devenu depuis célèbre sous le nom de Benjamin Constant*. Again a preface undertakes to prove the authenticity of the letters. Châtelain's paratextual strategy is much more firmly rooted in history than Houssaye's, but no less spectacular: The four apocryphal letters from Voltaire to Mme du Deffand concern Benjamin Constant, whom Voltaire — according to the preface — met in Ferney in 1774. Voltaire gives Constant a letter of recommendation to Mme du Deffand and subsequently corresponds with her on the subject of the young Constant. The letters then pass to Horace Walpole, Benjamin Constant himself and finally to the editor. The preface discusses a further problem of plausibility: The editor maintains that, according to the testimony of two relatives, Benjamin Constant was born in 1759, whereas the *Bibliographie universelle* indicates 1767 as his date of birth. As a last proof, the publisher of the letters announces that the original letters can be found "chez M. Chevillard père, notaire, rue du Bac, n° 15" (Châtelain 1837: 10).

The reaction of the public best shows how convincing Châtelain's pastiches of Voltaire's style are. Not only were several newspapers and erudite readers deceived,[9] but the *supercherie* itself could only be unveiled when Beuchot undertook to go to the rue du Bac: "J'étais tenté d'aller à Morges faire mes remercîmens à l'éditeur anonyme; mais avant de faire le voyage, je suis allé à l'adresse où l'on disait qu'étaient les originaux" (1838: 126, 1317). Since the notary did not exist, the supercherie was evident. Given that Beuchot was editing Voltaire's complete works at the time, his scrutiny prevented him from inserting four apocryphal letters into his edition. As Beuchot's key role in unveiling the hoax shows, *supercheries littéraires* in the 19th century are based on a three-part relation between the fraudulent author, the public and the bibliographer. But instead of being antagonistic, the relationship between author and expert seems rather symbiotic. If the mystification

9 | E.g. the *Revue Britannique* and Alexandre Vinet, see Thierry 1911: 210, 224.

were never discovered, it would be absolute and therefore inexistent. This might be the reason why Châtelain chose to construct his *supercherie* in such a way that it could be unveiled: Such compromising details as the mistake in Constant's date of birth and the address of the notary could easily have been replaced by a more likely story.

The fact that Châtelain's hoax could only be uncovered by recourse to extra-textual points of reference is deeply unsettling for those who proclaim a general distinguishability between original and pastiche. Augustin Thierry, for example, puts Nodier's dictum that one can imitate an author's style, but not her or his train of thought, as a disclaimer at the beginning of his chapter on Châtelain. The pastiche, generally conceived as playful and unserious, becomes threatening as soon as it can no longer be distinguished from what it imitates. In the case of the *Lettres de Voltaire à M^me^ du Deffand*, Sainte-Beuve was maybe the last to be undeceived: it was only in 1862 when he noticed that he had quoted Châtelain's pastiche as being by Voltaire in his *Portraits littéraires* (Aron 2008: 125-26). Even bibliographical demystification does not prevent the *supercherie* from exercising its power over decades.

In 1855, one year before his death, Nicolas Châtelain publishes his last collection of pastiches: *Pastiches ou imitations libres du stye de quelques écrivains du XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles*, a series of pastiches in the style of Rousseau, d'Holbach, d'Alembert, Voltaire (of course) and some others. As apparent from the title, Châtelain this time concludes a *contrat de pastiche* with his readers. The preface thus seems to serve exactly the opposite purpose than in the case of a *supercherie littéraire*: In a very humble manner, Châtelain pays respect to the inimitability of these great authors. He distinguishes two kinds of pastiche writers: Some are driven by an "amour-propre excessif" and hope to equal their model, whereas others write pastiches only as an innocent amusement. He himself, the reader is to understand, belongs to the innocent class and merely pays a tribute to the "magie de leur style qui nous séduit" (Châtelain 1855: VI). In addition, Châtelain develops a theory of personal style which takes individualism to an extreme:

> Le style […] n'est autre chose que l'expression fidèle des conceptions intellectuelles et morales de l'individu, manifestées au dehors et aussi nettement rendues qu'un cachet en cire représente en relief la ciselure d'une *intalgie*, l'empreinte d'une cornaline, ou de toute autre pierre précieuse. Or cette intalgie, cette image intérieure, nous l'avons au dedans de notre esprit, nous la portons pour ainsi dire au fond de notre âme, et en écrivant, bagatelle ou chose importante, nous ne faisons que la manifester dehors, la rendre en relief. (VII)

Given that a writer, according to this stylistic hyper-determinism, cannot imprint anything other than his static character, one might wonder how a pastiche can be possible. Does the pastiche writer subsequently become all the authors he imitates?

He does not, Châtelain answers, and this is the reason why he will never equal his model, with whom he can only 'identify'. One could conclude that everything is now ordered in the way a bibliographer desires it to be: a domesticated pastiche. The boundaries of individuality are strictly preserved since "Châtelain" is printed on the title page and since he openly explains his purpose. This might be why Quérard's review of the book lavishes praise on the *Pastiches*. Châtelain possesses "une habileté singulière à saisir le cachet distinctif de chaque style" (Quérard 1855: 562). After two decades of hoaxes and pseudonymous publishing, Châtelain seems to have given up the trade of mystification.

Yet all of Châtelain's commentators overlook one decisive passage at the end of the preface and take for granted his claim that the *Pastiches* are only an innocent "exercice de style" (Aron/Espagnon 2009: 129). It seems a *leçon d'humilité* when Châtelain writes that he has inserted some unmarked originals among his own pastiches:

> Enfin pour ménager à la sagacité du lecteur un plaisir piquant, celui de découvrir de temps en temps une page des originaux mêmes, j'en ai glissé quelques-unes qui prouveront mieux que chose au monde que, quoi que l'on fasse, on demeure toujours, comme l'a si bien exprimé M^me^ de Sévigné, à neuf cents lieues d'un cap, auquel on avait follement essayé d'atteindre. (1855: IX)

The deep irony of this announcement, however, becomes apparent when the reader undertakes to distinguish the Voltaire pastiches from the original letters in the collection. The *Lettres de Voltaire à M^me^ du Deffand* have sufficiently proved that Châtelain's imitations of Voltaire's letters cannot be distinguished from the originals on the basis of the text alone. In the case of the best pastiches in the *recueil* — those of Voltaire and M^me^ de Sévigné — the presence of original letters among the imitations effects just the opposite of what Châtelain announces in the preface. His Voltaire imitations do not show that he remains "neuf cents lieues d'un cap", but rather that it is impossible to distinguish his pastiches from the original. Thanks to the *Electronic Enlightenment* database, today it is easy to track the originals. Two letters from Voltaire to the Comte de Schouwalow are indeed authentic (11 August 1757 and 23 September 1758; Châtelain 1855: 70-72, 77-80). Since the letters in Châtelain's *Pastiches* are not dated, it seems unlikely that any 19^th^-century reader would have been able to do this without a considerable expense of time.

Châtelain's *Pastiches* thus turns out to be just the opposite of what it seemed to be. It announces itself as a collection of controlled pastiches, which clearly acknowledge their inferiority to the original. The name "Châtelain" on the cover, however, is laid as a trap to reassure and then deceive the reader. Given that Voltaire himself frequently published volumes of *mélanges*, where the authors of the unsigned texts were no longer clearly distinguishable (Cronk 2013: 575; 2011: 781-

82), Châtelain's puzzling mixture of originals and pastiches is based on a highly Voltairean device. In the age of Quérard's *Supercheries littéraires*, the format of the *recueil* also offers the advantage of escaping the demystifying grasp of the bibliographer. In the absence of bibliographical certainty, the reader has to make her or his own decision — at the risk of false attribution.

Due to such figures as Châtelain, the 19th century has been called the century of mystification (Dousteyssier-Khoze / Vaillant 2012). Even if this claim has never been empirically proven, most bibliographers of the time lament an increase in literary hoaxes. Obviously, the standard of identifiable authorship and the proliferation of literary fakes are two sides of the same coin. As Scott Carpenter writes, "transgression is entirely dependent on the presence of a line to cross" (2009: 11). It is the rule of identity that produces its own violation. Pastiche writers like Châtelain therefore represent the uncanny double of modern authorship. And Voltaire, who seems so close to the 19th-century aesthetics of fraudulence, becomes the patron saint of literary mystification in modernity.

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