

## LITERARY FORGERIES AND HOAXES

Picasso once remarked that “Good artists copy. Great artists steal.” Forgers do both.

We will look at literary works that are forgeries or hoaxes through the centuries with a special look at the ‘Golden Age of Forgers’ in 18<sup>th</sup> c Britain but continuing right into the present age. What motivated these men (mostly men)? Have ethical issues evolved over time? How do we judge these works artistically? What skills are involved? What role do collectors play in these dramas? How are hoaxes and forgeries eventually exposed?

Participants will choose a forger or hoax to explore for the group from the list below. If you have another example you want to present, please discuss it with me.

We will meet on zoom and you can do any kind of presentation you want – reading, power point, etc.- but be prepared to pose questions to the group after you present.

We will all watch the recent film ‘Can you ever forgive me?’ about the forger Lee Israel before the first meeting and explore our reactions to what goes on in Israel’s story of forgery and ask general questions which we can address throughout the following weeks.

For help with research on any of these topics, talk to me about resources.

- Septimius and Dictys of Crete
- Dead Sea Scroll fragments in the Museum of the Bible
- Papyrus of Jesus’s wife and Karen King
- Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (disciple of St Paul?)
- Galileo sketches and notes at the University of Michigan
- Ireland’s Shakespeare
- Thomas Chatterton’s Rowley
- Macpherson’s Ossian
- Napoleon’s letter to ‘Ellen’
- Joseph Cosey’s forgeries
- Abraham Lincoln letters, notes, etc.
- Emily Dickinson letter and the Jones Library
- Bilitis and Pierre Louiys
- Thomas James Wise’s forgeries
- Adolph Hitler’s diaries
- Howard Hughes’ diaries
- Naked Came the Stranger and Penelope Ash
- JT LeRoy ‘memoir’
- Alan Sokol’s hoax