In the first chapter a question was posed: whether the original and the derivative represent a classic binary opposition in Chatterton. The wide usage of repetition in the novel was revealed to highlight the textuality (in the sense of Waugh’s ‘condition of artifice’), intertextuality and self-intertextuality of Chatterton – in particular through references to other texts, the novel’s self-referentiality, but also the applying of the means of visual representation (as it was shown in the third chapter).

By showing its dependence on particular artistic and textual representations, repetition calls attention to the fact that for example also history could be considered a textual construct. Going back to the initial discussion of the opposition between the original and the derivative, it should be mentioned, as John Frow states, that it is exactly the metaphor of textuality what has a power to overcome ‘the dichotomisation of the real to the symbolic, or the base to the superstructure, or the social to the cultural,’2 or the original to the derivative.

The subversiveness of embracing the metaphor of textuality goes beyond the one of a forger, counterfeiter or plagiarist. Their works, as Ruthven puts it, ‘exhibit a carnivalesque irreverence towards the sanctity of various conventions designed to limit what is permissible in literary production.’3 However, their irreverence is straightforward – they defy the law. On the other hand, as it was already discussed, highlighted textuality and metafictional nature of Ackroyd’s novel subverts more general rules: literary conventions, established notions of history, or, generally, the possibility of any ideas that would be entirely objective.