

**Forging the Past**

**Forgery, Pastiche and Metafiction in Peter Ackroyd’s *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London***

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**Introduction**

*‘O then thou dost ope wide they hideous jaws*

*And wide rude laughter and fantastic tricks*

*Thou clasps they rattling fingers to their side*

*And when this solemn mockery is over –‘*

*(Vortigern.* William Henry Ireland*)*

These are the lines uttered by king Vortigern to his troops before their battle against the Romans. They are also the lines uttered by the Shakespearian actor John Philip Kemble after which, on the first performance of the fraudulent Shakespearian play, the audience burst out in prolonged hysteria. This hysteria was founded in the audience’s correct assessment that the play was not a genuine work of Shakespeare’s.

These events are retold in Peter Ackroyd’s novel *The Lambs of London* (2004). The fact that the famous lines are spoken on a stage gives the novel an undeniable metafictional quality. In fact the whole novel takes place in the context of various forms of text production and in the company of text producers, the most important of these being William Henry Ireland, who created several Shakespearian forgeries including *Vortigern*.

This is not the first time Ackroyd has written about the great forgers from literary history. *Chatterton* (1987), one of his early works, is a historical investigation into the life and death of the young forger-poet Thomas Chatterton. Both *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* are filled with discussions about the world of literature. These discussions are among other things centred on the subject of artistic mimesis. This is meant in the sense that there is a close and special relationship between art and reality. This in turn quickly develops into a discussion about the role that authenticity and authorship have in the significance of a piece art or literature. This is done in a way that relies heavily on the reader’s knowledge of the world of literature and literary theory. In fact many of the characters in both novels, as well as in many of Ackroyd’s other works, are deeply involved with literature and are constantly making both vague allusion to literary works as well as quoting specifically from both well-known and lesser known works.

The concept of pastiche is used often in both novels, in *Chatterton* more so than in *The Lambs of London*. It is used as a way of describing the world of forgeries and counterfeits. When is something a fraud and when is it merely a pastiche? This question is often discussed and argued about in the novels. William Ireland seems to argue back and forth with himself whether or not what he is doing can be justified, and practically every character in *Chatterton* is involved with some kind of forgery or pastiche.

The use of the word mockery in ‘*and when this solemn mockery is over –‘* also adds to an understanding of pastiche. Mockery, of course, has an additional meaning as the word can also mean, according to *OED*, a ‘sham, counterfeit or imitation’. A literary pastiche can be one of two things, either it is an artistic hodgepodge or it can be an imitation. A hodgepodge is a kind of pastiche with, according to OED, ‘a medley of various ingredients; a hotchpot, farrago, jumble.’ However, it is not this definition of the word that the two novels deal with. Rather it is pastiche in the meaning imitation or *mockery*. Indeed, in this way the whole of Ireland’s Shakespearian work can be seen as pastiches of, rather than works belonging to Shakespeare. Semantically a pastiche can mean and be many different things. Ingeborg Hoesterey identifies and classifies nineteen different kinds of pastiches in her book *Pastiche: Cultural Memory in Art, Film, Literature* (2001). Of these many subcategories the *fake* is the one that has the closest connection with *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London*. The fake is, as the name indicates, a work of pastiche that not only simulates the qualities of another work of art, but also in fact tries to appear as such a work. These kinds of pastiches or forgeries, for that is indeed what they are, are mostly known from the world of paintings, but as Peter Ackroyd’s two novels show they also appear as forgeries of literary works. Fakes share many of the qualities of a normal pastiche, the biggest difference being that the purpose of the fake is to deceive the reader into thinking that the fake is a genuine work of another author.

As I have already mentioned *The Lambs of London* and *Chatterton* both have several metafictional elements in them. In fact they also have several intertextual elements as well. Both novels are as such highly postmodern and to analyse them without any form of postmodern theory would not produce a complete result. Therefore in order to analyse these two works in depth I will use Gérard Genette’s theories of genre and pastiche and also to some extent Ingeborg Hoesterey’s, with specific focus on the concept of the *fake* pastiche, which I have already presented. Furthermore, in order to get a proper classification of postmodernist literature and specifically of metafiction, again more specifically historiographic metafiction, I will include Linda Hutcheon’s writings on the subject.

The term historiographic metafiction is a subcategory of regular metafiction. Whereas the common species of metafiction deals with a text referring to itself, a historiographic metafictional text does this from a historical perspective. Hutcheon defines it as: ‘those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages’. (Hutcheon 1998, 10) This is something that both of Peter Ackroyd’s novels have, as they both have real historical and fictional elements in them. Indeed, they can be said to blur the line between historical fact and narrative fiction. It is because of this I will also explore and analyse the novels from a new historicist point of view.

One of the governing terms in new historicism is *negotiation*: Negotiation between the present and the past, between the reader and the text and between the text and history. These different kinds of negotiations are profoundly present within each of the novels, and focus on them will serve an important role in analysing and understanding them fully. In fact, I would argue that Ackroyd wrote and structured the novels in such a way it forced the reader to take part in these negotiations. As much as the texts compel their reader to enter into negotiation they themselves are also involved in a negotiation. While Ackroyd is not usually read as being a new historicist - in fact I might well be the first, and perhaps only one to view him as such - there are elements in both *Chatterton* and *The* *Lambs of London* that I read as being new historicist. Whether this makes Ackroyd a new historicist or simply means that at least these two of his novels have new historicist elements in them, I will explore further later on in this thesis.

The works of Peter Ackroyd span almost forty years. During this time he has written about a wide variety of subjects and in a variety of genres, both fictional and non-fictional. Ackroyd has for long had a both critically acclaimed and commercially successful career as a novelist and has won several prizes for his work. His works often reflect his great knowledge of literature, and often his inspiration is found here rather than in real life. (Massie: 52) This great knowledge and command of the literary world can also be seen in his works as a literary critic and biographer. Ackroyd has been described as being Dickensian in the sense that ‘he has the same sense of the strange poetry of life, the same relish in the human behaviour, the same awareness that comedy derives from the point of view...’ (53) Furthermore his central characters are often naturalistic and dull, but nevertheless they are surrounded by ‘characters conceived and displayed as grotesques... in a joyous celebration of human variety.’(53) These kinds of Dickensian characters are clearly evident in *Chatterton* and to a lesser extent in *The Lambs of London*. The difference in the characters is a clear example of how Ackroyd has evolved as a writer. One must remember that the two books were written twenty-seven years apart and in that period Ackroyd never stopped publishing new works. However, his personal style has remained much the same. Ackroyd always managed to keep his novels firmly within the realm of literature, making frequent references to other works, both his own as well as those of others.

The novels that this thesis will focus on, namely *Chatterton* (1987) and *The Lambs of London* (2004) were published almost thirty years apart, but yet they have several aspects in common. The narratives of both novels are based on forgeries and forgers; but they are also both, to some extent, historical novels. In fact, it might be more precise to call them both examples of historical metafiction.

These works are also interesting because of the unique use of postmodern literary techniques that Ackroyd employs in the telling of the stories. Another reason these two novels stand out is their connection with Romanticism. Charles and Mary Lamb lived at the height of the Romantic Period and Thomas Chatterton was the personification of the Romantic genius. Indeed, Chatterton’s great fascination with the medieval period and his pseudonym Thomas Rowley, a medieval monk, are mirrored in the similar fascination that can be seen throughout the Romantic Period.

One of the important elements linking the two books, as well as the bulk of Peter Ackroyd’s literary production, is their location, London, of which Ackroyd has also written a biography. The great similarity of the two novels besides their subject matter is also that of the genius forger that is presented in both, Thomas Chatterton and William Henry Ireland. The way these two characters are described is surprisingly similar. Ackroyd brings their brilliance to life both by quoting their works often and at length, but also by embracing their vast knowledge of literature. There is never found a long passage of conversation with either character without them making references to some great narrative or easily quoting passages from great works of literature. Their command of authentic prose is in this manner mixed with their own forged works. Indeed, many of these passages can be read as a salute to the two forger geniuses. However, simply reading the books as tributes to them would be an error as the ramifications of their actions are apparent in each book with the deaths of key protagonists.

**Problem Formulation**

How are intertextual and metafictional devices employed in *The* *Lambs of London* and *Chatterton* as a means of discussing the concepts of artistic and literary originality and authenticity in a postmodern age?

**Narrative Structures: Cross-cutting and Palimpsest**

***Chatterton***

In *Chatterton* Peter Ackroyd presents a narrative that is divided into three different time periods. One chronicles the life and death of Thomas Chatterton, another tells the tale of how Henry Wallis painted the famous picture of the dead poet, and finally there is the present-day story of Charles Wychwood, who studies and investigates Chatterton’s life. Thus we have three narratives on set in the eighteenth century, one in the nineteenth and the final one in the twentieth century. The novel continuously shifts back and forth between these three different periods and narratives using the narrative technique of cross-cutting.

Structurally Chatterton is dived into three parts as well as three time periods. Each of the three parts begins with two quotations from poems by Chatterton. It is not only here that we find these kinds of quotations in *Chatterton*; throughout the book there are quotations taken not only from Chatterton’s body of work, but from other artists’ as well.

Before part one even begins, there are collected four quotations or passages from the book itself in a kind of brief prelude to the novel itself. The first three representing each of the three time periods that the book covers, and the fourth combines Chatterton’s century with Charles Wychwood’s as Chatterton’s ghost has just appeared to Wychwood in it. The combination of these four quotations foreshadows the historically intertwining narratives to come.

Part one of the novel only concerns the part of the narrative that happens in the present time. However, even in the first part of the book Ackroyd plays with the notion of time and chronological events. Small parts of the last sentence of each chapter are quoted in the new chapter, though not as part of any dialogue, and it even seems that it is not even the narrator who utters these lines. They are placed there outside of the main narrative.

Part two presents the first narrative about Thomas Chatterton as printed in the Bristol’s papers. It is also only here in part two that Henry Wallis and George Meredith appear. In the thematically important chapter six there is a clear distinction between the past and the present. This line between the past and the present becomes increasingly blurred as the narrative continues. While one might think that this would make the individual stories harder to follow, this is not the case. The events of past and present are often closely related beyond the simple fact that they all are connected to the title character. The prime example of this is also in chapter six where the alleged intentions of Chatterton to fake his own death are revealed as read to Philip Slack by Charles Wychwood. The conversation that follows between Charles Wychwood and Philip Slack mimics the one that had taken place between Chatterton and Johnson in the flashback. In this way Ackroyd presents us with a discussion of originality and forgery divided by more than two hundred years, yet this discussion is tied firmly together by his use of the narrative technique of cross-cutting between the two different periods.

It is not until the last part of the novel that the past and the present start to become really fused with chapters jumping back and forth between the two. Also the use of the brief quotations becomes more widespread. In the last chapter there is almost no distinction between the Chatterton narrative and the present-day narrative.

In the scene with the burning of the painting of the middle-aged Chatterton, which ironically was the consequence of a bungled attempt at its restoration, many new faces are revealed one after another, as the painting has been re-painted or retouched several times in its history, and one by one during the burning of the painting the top-layers disintegrate to reveal the layers and faces, which they have covered. This indicates all the different poets whose styles Chatterton has mastered and thus made part of himself.

From a thematic point of view the destruction of the painting is also significant, as what is also revealed is the writing process called palimpsest, which physically means that a piece of paper or other writing surface is reused over and over again for writing, after earlier writing has been (partially) erased. Here in this final scene of the painting, the discovery of which started the novel, and the destruction of which signifies the end of the novel, the close connection between originality, pastiche and forgery is almost spelled out to the reader, as the painting serves as the embodiment of them all.

In the novel Chatterton has appeared as a ghost to both George Meredith and Charles Wychwood. Chatterton also sees them as he lies dying, and in this way the time periods and their characters are mystically united.

***The Lambs of London***

*The Lambs of London*, on the other hand, presents its narrative very differently, and as such the plot of the novel is likewise differently structured. The novel is almost from page one full of hints and small indications of what is going to happen at the end. This is most likely the product of the many actual historical events incorporated into the novel. The reader knows that William Ireland is a forger, and if the reader is familiar with the works of Charles and Mary Lamb it is quite possible that the murder of Mrs. Lamb is no surprise either. What is interesting then is not the ending, we know that Mrs. Lamb is going to get killed by her daughter Mary, and that Mary ends up in a madhouse. Likewise we also know that William Henry Ireland is going to get exposed. What is fascinating is how Peter Ackroyd builds up to these final inevitable events, how he describes what happens before William Ireland’s forgery is uncovered and before Mary Lamb finally snaps. That these events are then tied together makes it all the more fascinating, especially when coupled with the dual family narratives that also play out in the Ireland and Lamb families.

The difference in how Ackroyd chooses to have the plots unfold in *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* is closely connected to what the reader already knows when beginning the very first page. As both the novels revolved around historical personae they are a mixture of historical fact and historical fiction. In order to stress the historical significance of the novel *Chatterton* for example starts with a short one-page biography of Thomas Chatterton, thus ensuring that the reader knows at minimum who he was, and how he died. The rest of the book then tries to make the reader doubt this and blur the lines between what is fact and what is fiction, or perhaps expressed in a better way, what is real, and what is unreal. *The Lambs of London* deals differently with the relationship between real and unreal starting off with a small message stating simply that: ‘This is not a biography but a work of fiction. I have invented characters, and changed the life of the Lamb family for the sake of the larger narrative. P.A.’ (Ackroyd, 2004) Here, unlike *Chatterton*, Ackroyd draws a clear line between what is fiction and what is fact. This does not make the novel any less interesting, far from it. *Chatterton* relies on both the historical curiosity of the reader and the sense of excitement that comes from reading a good detective story. *The Lambs of London* also relies heavily on the reader’s historical curiosity; but more than that it focuses on classical drama element, namely the love story between Mary Lamb and William Ireland, and more importantly the family narratives that the two of them are caught up in. Indeed, the main thing that holds the larger narrative together is the family narratives. Also in *Chatterton* the family is present; this is mainly seen with the Wychwoods. The function this family has in the novel is much smaller, though. To say that there is a family narrative present in *Chatterton* seems somewhat of an over-statement. While we hear a lot about the Wychwoods, what makes them important to the plot of the novel is not their interactions together, but rather the events that otherwise happen in their lives: The gallery where Vivien Wychwood works, Harriet Scrope and Philip Slack both acquaintances of Charles Wychwood. The only Wychwood that does not have any form of interaction outside of the family is the son Edward.

The narrative structure of *The Lambs of London*, while far less complex, is by no means less interesting. What makes it especially interesting is how the motif of ‘life imitating art’ is used throughout the novel. The novel makes several references to the works of Shakespeare, and these are almost all used to foreshadow events to come. Most noticeable is the references to the character Ophelia from *Hamlet*, who goes insane and commits suicide by drowning herself.

*The Lambs of London* is built up around two family narratives, the Lambs and the Irelands. The novel focuses on the relationship in each of these families, and the relationship they have with each other. The main focus here lies with William Ireland and Mary Lamb. It is these two characters and their unspoken love for each other that links the two families. The family narrative is mirrored in the forged Shakespearian play *Vortigern* made by William Ireland. In the few lines that are quoted from the play in the novel, family plays a strong role. The relationship between *Vortigern* and his son is portrayed to mirror that of William Ireland’s relationship to his own father.

*The Lambs of London* relies upon the readers’ knowledge of both history and literature to navigate the novel. Shakespeare’s life and plays, the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb together with that of William Ireland, and the ability to connect these with the novel all are crucial for an in-depth reading of the novel. A reader who knows the tragic story of the Lamb family will find an abundance of clues and hints foreshadowing the end of the novel, likewise those readers familiar with William Ireland will know from the first page that the letters, papers, plays and hair he produces are all forgeries made by himself, and that his forgeries will eventually get exposed.

The prologue in *Chatterton* serves to educate the readers so that they are familiar with the general aspects of Chatterton’s life. Differently the exclusion of such a prologue in *The Lambs of London* means that the reader is kept in the dark about the characters in the novel, and thus it is more likely that the reader is unaware of the historical facts surrounding Peter Ackroyd’s fictional story about the Lamb and Ireland families.

**Pastiche**

**The Imagery and Use of Pastiche in *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London***

# Forgers and forgeries are present throughout *Chatterton*. The three storylines that make up the bulk of the novel are all centred on apparent plagiarists and forgers. The story from which the novel gains it title is that of the eighteenth-century poet and forger *Thomas Chatterton* and his life and works leading up to him apparently faking his own death. The present-day investigation of his suicide by the protagonist Charles Wychwood is the framework for the two other stories of plagiarism and forgeries. The first is that of a writer named *Harriet Scrope*, who started off her career by copying a plot from another author. And finally there is the story of an artist named *Stewart Merk*, who has taken over from an aging painter publishing works in his name. The knot that ties these three quite different stories of text manufacturing together is Charles Wychwood, who is a writer in poor health struggling with writer’s block.

# Ackroyd uses these different kinds of illicit and uneasy text productions to bring to light a unique discussion of the subject of forgery and *pastiche*. Indeed, through the course of the novel as the plots unfold the reader is presented with many different views and interpretations of the various forgers and just to which degree they can actually be said to be forgers. In these discussions, whether they simply are in the thoughts of single individuals or are between two or more persons, the word pastiche is mentioned sporadically. I use the term sporadically because it is rare that the term is used and if used it is never defined or discussed any further. The only place in the novel where pastiche is truly given any form of definition or longer discussion is in chapter five, where Philip Slack starts to suspect Harriet Scrope of plagiarism after having found a book by an author named Harrison Bentley called *The Last Testament,* which shares the same plot as Harriet Scrope’s first novel. It should be mentioned that Harrison Bentley is a fictitious author created by Ackroyd for the novel. Whereas Bentley’s body of work may be based on an actual author, he himself is completely made up. The thoughts that Philip Slack has concerning Harriet Scrope and her apparent plagiarism serves not only as a discussion of plagiarism, but also as a discussion of Philip Slack’s own writing process, which in itself is interesting from a metafictional angle:

And so what did Harriet’s borrowing matter? In any case Philip believed that there were only a limited number of plots in the world (reality was finite, after all) and no doubt it was inevitable that two of Harriet Scrope’s novels resemble the much earlier works of Harrison Bentley might even be coincidental. He was less inclined to criticize her, also, because of his own experience. He had once attempted to write a novel but he had abandoned it after some forty pages: not only had he written with painful slowness and uncertainty, but even the pages he had managed to complete seem to him to be filled with images and phrases from the work of other writers whom he admired. It had become a patchwork of other voices and other styles, and it was the overwhelming difficulty of recognizing his own voice among them that had led him to stop the project. So what right did he have to condemn Harriet Scrope? (70)

The above quotation can in part be seen as Ackroyd’s own opinion about plagiarism. At least to the degree of Philip Slack’s writing style. Indeed, the fact that Philip Slack feels his own writing is full of ‘images and phrases from the work of other writers’ can be seen as a reflection on how *Chatterton* itself is written. This is not meant as a criticism of the novel, but rather as the certain style of writing that Ackroyd has become a master of, and of which *Chatterton* along with *The Lambs of London* are prime examples. This is a form of writing that incorporates ‘images and phrases from the work of other writers’ in order to improve and add to a new narrative. This is done by not only quoting from other authors, but by naming other authors or their works. *Chatterton* is a novel that is full of literary references, and is all the better because of it. The novel exists in a world of quotations and intertextual references, indeed even the most well-read reader will have trouble keeping track of all of these. However, this adds tremendously to the novel’s themes and subjects and also adds credibility to the claims it makes concerning these. Indeed, every conversation that takes place about art or literature seems to be by people who themselves are experts on the subject being either artists themselves or art critics.

There is another type of characters in the novel besides these intellectual artists. These are the ones that have a certain unique Dickensian quality to them, which often borders on the grotesque. As I have already mentioned, these characters the Lenos, for example, can be seen as being a pastiche of the kind of characters found in a work of Dickens. In the above quotation Philip Slack as the voice of Ackroyd himself also mentions pastiche, not the word itself but rather its definition: ‘a patchwork of other voices and other styles’. Here it is the word patchwork which should jump off the page for any reader who is familiar with the various definitions of pastiche.

**Pastiche, Its Theory and History**

As already mentioned, pastiche plays an important role in both *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London*. Literature was the first art form to develop pastiches (Hoesterey 2001, 80). These first works of pastiche came from Greek antiquity and were called *cento*. Centos were poems constructed muck like patchwork of verse from different famous poets of the times such as Homer and Vergil. Centos were mainly periodical in function and intent; however, centos were also at times used for more serious purposes. There are several passages of cento in the comedy *The Frogs* by Aristophanes (405 B.C.). Here Aristophanes uses the cento as a means of ‘literary satire and critique in their time’ (80)

Classical philology has never paid much attention to the antique centos, nor given much merit to them. This is largely because it was not considered to be part of the canon, but rather an aberration thereof, and as such its position was outside the classical notion of art (80). However, to ignore the importance of the cento would be not so wise. The paradigm that the antique centos created is of the utmost importance when discussing pastiche or any form of artistic borrowing. The characteristic medley type of pastiche is present in its earliest forms in the antique centos and it is from here, although in a very different form, that the pastiche found in the aesthetics of postmodernism has its roots. There are of course types of pastiche more closely connected to the antique cento than others.

The differently structure homage type of literary pastiche – French, mostly – also links up with the foundational cento forms; in both modes of the work of a generally revered author is appointed by a later writer. Homage (pastiche) and the subtextual anxiety of parody (cento) are – in psychoanalytical terms – not so far apart. (80-81)

While one might be tempted to think that the connection between the cento and the modern literary pastiche indicates that the later had its origins in Greek antiquity, this is not so. Literary pastiche was introduced to the European writers by the French. This was done in the French writings and discussions about pastiche as it appeared in paintings (81). In fact, it may well be the literary theoretician Jean-François Marmontel, who in his eighteenth-century writings instigated the pastiche as a genre in French literature.

Within the subject matter of this thesis it is interesting to note one of the genre’s first instances in Germany, which is connected to the early writings of Goethe. As a young man Goethe was a great admirer of a collection of English or rather Scottish songs entitled *Ossian*. The Ossian songs were believed to have been written by a medieval bard, and the songs were cherished by literati all over Europe. However, in reality *Ossian* was the works of a contemporary Scottish writer named James Macpherson. There is a brief reference to Macpherson in *Chatterton*, as the two books that Charles Wychwood sells to the Lenos are in fact written by Macpherson. Ossian was highly influential on Goethe’s first novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werther.* In fact the songs so much influenced the mode of this novel that *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* can be viewed as being a pastiche of *Ossian* (82).

This is a prime example of how a work of literary forgery can have just as much influence on the academic world as an original work of literature. In fact, I would argue that such an influential work of forgery could possibly gain even more importance as time goes by, and it is discovered that the work is indeed forged. This is because of the increased focus and attention the work would get. There would be an even greater readership of the work because of this attention; which in turn would cause the work to influence even more readers. However, this line of thought is very dependent on the quality of the work. A forged collection of bad poems is just that, bad. But if the forger has the skill of a Thomas Chatterton then it could easily be just as brilliant as a truly original work. This perhaps was the reason for the downfall of William Henry Ireland. For while he had the skill to forge papers and documents, so to make the scholars of the time believe them genuine, he lacked the skill to write a play that would equal any of Shakespeare’s. In fact, not only were Ireland’s Shakespeare forgeries believed to be genuine, they were believed to have an almost spiritual quality about them.

The biographer of Dr. Johnson, James Boswell, who was one of the intellectuals of the day, also fell for Ireland’s forgery, going so far as to say: ’I now kiss the invaluable relics of our Bard and thank God I have lived to see them’ (Ireland, 1805: 96), after having inspected a portion of the papers. This at least is how Ireland himself recounts the situation in *The Confessions of William-Henry Ireland* (1805).



Sylvester Harding, The spirit of Shakspere appearing to his detractors. 1796. Hand-coloured etching, 22.2x29.8 cm, British Museum, London.

In the same year that Edmond Malone published *An inquiry into the authenticity of certain miscellaneous papers and legal instruments* the ghost of Shakespeare appeared in this satirical attack on the Ireland family. The conversation between William Ireland and William Shakespeare is printed beneath the engraving:

'Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee Undivulged crimes,  
Unwhipp'd of justice  
Shakspere.  
Ah me, Ah me, O dear, O dear,  
What Spectre's this, approaching here:  
Surely tis Shakspeare's injured shade.  
It fills my soul with so much dread  
It is, it is, thus on our knees,  
Let's strive his anger to appease.  
O Father of the British Stage,  
Whose wit has charm'd from age to age:  
Pardon the base unworthy flame,  
That Burn't to rob thee of thy fame.  
But now this Solemn mock'ry 's o'er  
Thy gracious mercy wee implore  
We'll never more disgrace thy page.  
Our Brains were gone a pilgrimage.'

Indeed, even Edmond Malone, who would later in *An inquiry into the authenticity of certain miscellaneous papers and legal instruments* (1796) prove all of Ireland’s papers false, was fast to believe in the legitimacy and importance of the papers, when first they were made public.

What made Ireland a great forger was that he knew how to mimic Shakespeare’s handwriting and make papers and ink appear genuinely old. What he wrote, however, was, unlike Chatterton, not a masterpiece in and of itself. For example, take these lines from *Vortigern* compared with one of Chatterton’s poems:

**Vor.** As with their bloods I stain'd my reeking blade,  
From summit of the tow'r, the raven croak'd  
Th' heavy-wing'd crow did chatter o'er my head,  
And seem'd to bear black laurels for this brow;  
Yet, did not, erst, the sun-defying eagle  
O'er the world-conquering Macedonian hero,  
Flutter, and point his way to victory?  
Then from thy jarring throat spit pestilence;  
And, bird of hell, I'll take thee for my guide.

(Ireland, 1796)

*The Deth of Syr Charles Bawdin*

Howe oft ynne battaile have I stoode,

Whan thousands dy’d aroune;

Whan smokynge streemes of crimson bloode

Imbrwe’d the fatten’d grounde:

Howe dydd I knowe thatt ev’ry darte,

Thatt cutte the airie waie,

Myghte nott fynde passage toe my harte,

And close myne eyes for aie?

(Rowley, 1778: 62)

The avian imagery used by Ireland in Vortigern’s lines is here rather unfortunate with the fluttering eagle and the chattering crow. Compared with the taut medieval style of Chatterton in “*The Deth of Syr Charles Bawdin*”, which he wrote when he was only sixteen years old, it easily becomes clear who of the two forgers is the greater poet. Indeed, the writings of Chatterton, forgeries as they may be, are still of remarkable quality and beauty.

Ireland was able to cheat almost all of the contemporary Shakespearian scholars into believing his work, *Vortigern*, to be one by Shakespeare himself. Put in other words, he managed to influence the negotiation that occurred between the readers and the text, by presenting falsified paratexts for *Vortigern*. These paratexts were the different Shakespeare papers that he claimed to have found alongside the play itself. Indeed, for any forger to make his works believable as originals he needs to produce some kind of paratext along with them. This can be as simple as the alleged name and identity of the author to something much more complicated. It is by doing this that a work that could otherwise be viewed as a pastiche becomes a forgery, or a fake.

The distinction between pastiche and forgery is not an easy one to make. While academic scholars versed in the pastiche genre may consider works of ¨forgery¨ as simply a subgenre of pastiche, others may not. Ingeborg Hoesterey describes how when *Ossian* was discovered to be a work of forgery it ‘could hardly be celebrated as an ingenious pastiche (which it was)’ (Hoesterey: 82). Hoesterey argues that the contemporary academics could not delight in the songs anymore now that they had found out the truth; they felt they had been cheated. In her words they felt as if *Ossian* was ‘...nothing but a sham’ (82). Hoesterey, however, admires the work as a prime example of pastiche; going as far as to call the work ‘ingenious’. This is hardly the case of modern-day literary history scholars, who view the work as plain forgery (Rosenblum: 23). Here the consensus is that while the work had great importance and influence while it was thought of as an original, this was lost when the truth about it became known. Such a thought seems faulty though.

Gérard Genette defines pastiche as a unique kind or subcategory of *imitation*. He sees pastiche as a kind of homage that is poised ambiguously between mockery and admiring references (Genett: 98), noting that it is important to distinguish between imitation for the sake of humour and for the sake of praise. Genette gives two crucial conditions for any work of pastiche whatever form it might take:

The first ¨condition¨ established (and self-evident) as necessary to the success of caricature is that the pastiched author be famous /to be recognizable, one must be known); the second condition is that the author ¨be imitable: that is posses bold characteristics, mannerisms, specialities.¨ This, too, is self evident: in order to imitate a style, one must be dealing with a style, a specific manner of writing. (96-97)

These two conditions are both viable for satirical and non-satirical pastiches alike. If applied to the many and various works of pastiche in *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of* *London* various observations can be made. First of all Genette’s use of the term pastiche here only seems to cover the kind of pastiches where the author wants to make people aware of the nature of the text. If for example the author’s intention were plagiarism, such as the character Harriet Scrope, she would hardly want the reader to be aware of the pastiche. Here Genette is limited in his definition of what constitutes pastiche and what constitutes, for example, forgery, plagiarism and other kinds of imitation. Genette does make a distinction between forgery and pastiche. While both being a subcategory of imitation, pastiche is done with a playful mood whereas forgery is done with a serious mood (28). Genette himself points out the limitation of this over-simplified definition of the two terms.

*The Lambs of London* draws on so many well-known characters and events from Shakespeare that it itself can in several ways be said to be a pastiche of a Shakespearian play or Shakespearian plays. There are certainly elements enough in the book to support this claim. The novel shares several elements with *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night’s* *Dream* and also the Shakespearianesque play *Vortigern*. The plot of the novel also seems to have well-known elements of Shakespeare’s writing. There are the family quarrels, the tragic love story and even a play with in a play. Both *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night’s* *Dream* have additional plays within them. In *Hamlet* prince Hamlet puts on a play mimicking how his uncle killed his father in order to make his uncle confess. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* the play serves a different purpose. The play is the one of *Pyramus and Thisbe* put on by a small acting troupe commonly called The Mechanicals. This is the very same play adapted from a copy of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which Mary and Charles Lamb are planning to perform with some of Charles’ friends and co-workers. It is interesting to note that the well-known Shakespearian play *Romeo and Juliet* can be seen as an adaptation of the original tragical love story of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, who are forbidden to see each other because of the rivalry between their parents. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* the play is used mainly as comical device, but it also comments on the many love stories in the real play.

That *The Lambs of London* is indeed a Shakespearian pastiche is also pointed to in the novel. Many times the characters themselves explicitly mention when events are happening that they are similar to those of a Shakespearian play, and at other times the reader himself has to make the connection between events in the novel and those of a Shakespeare play. This connecting of novel and play becomes easier and clearer as the reader gets further and further into the narrative. As the plot of the novel progresses, the clues and hints written by Ackroyd to help make the reader understand the intension of the pastiche accumulate, and the characters comment on these similarities between the events of the plot and the events taking place in Shakespeare’s plays. At one point de Quincey says to Charles Lamb that: ‘Why much you see everything as drama, Charles? Mary is not a character in a play’ (183). Of course at this point the reader has already, like Charles, linked Ophelia and Mary together and knows that a tragic end is in store for her. At the conclusion of the novel de Quincey himself must also realize that while the events that have happened surrounding the Lambs and William Henry Ireland may not be a drama, they are nevertheless in his words: ‘...a fine story!’ (208), or to put it more precisely, a fine *pastiche*.

Like *Chatterton*, *The Lambs of London* also has forgers among its characters though not in the same degree. William Henry Ireland is of course a prime example of a forger, but a case could also be made for Mary and Charles Lamb. While not forgers they, the real-life Lambs, wrote *Tales of Shakespeare*, which was a retelling of numerous of Shakespeare’s play rewritten for children. Granted this is not a work of forgery, but rather it is a pastiche of the works of Shakespeare. It is noteworthy that this similar academic and literary interest in Shakespeare is the only real thing linking the historical Lambs and the historical William Ireland.

The way that history views literary forgers has proven to be more about their motives and intentions than anything else. While we may credit any successful forger for his skill and resourcefulness, forgery is indeed not a very sympathetic occupation. However, the story of William Henry Ireland, like that of Thomas Chatterton, is not the account of a greedy and deceitful forger, but rather that of a son desperate for his father’s attention, and who was able to fool almost all of the academic world in order to gain his father’s approval.

Not only do both *The Lambs of London* and *Chatterton* deal with various forms and incarnations of pastiche, they also in various ways discuss the term, and as such this is one of the metafictional elements of the two novels. This is especially true of *Chatterton* where there are many conversations and speculations about the term and especially when something is pastiche, when it is plagiarism and when it is forgery.

There are several different ¨forgers¨ and ¨forgeries¨ at work in *Chatterton*. First and foremost there is Thomas Chatterton himself. There is the bookseller who forged the painting of Chatterton. There is Harriet Scrope, who started her writing career off by stealing the plot from a novel by a different author. Then there is the painting by Henry Wallis depicting Chatterton’s death. And then finally there are the art dealers Cumberland and Maitland, who make and sell counterfeit paintings. All of these can be said to in one way or another to be the type of pastiche called a *fake* though certainly to different degrees and perhaps more importantly with different intentions behind them.

As *The Lambs of London* can be read as a pastiche of Shakespeare, so too can *Chatterton* be viewed as a work of pastiche. There is a special Dickensian quality found in much of the novel and especially its characters. The sign that Charles Wychwood sees at the start of the novel (8) reads: ‘Leno Antiques. Don’t Linger. Make Us Very Happy. Walk Up. Do.’ This sign compels Charles Wychwood to enter Leno Antiques, which as it turns out is a parody of Dickens’s *Old Curiosity Shop*. Indeed, the interaction between the odd and grotesque Mr. and Mrs. Leno seem to be a wonderful blend of Dickensian and Punch and Judy traits (Onega, 1998: 34). Even their names should ring out for readers familiar with Ackroyd’s other works. Ackroyd’s eighth novel *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994), tells the story of Dan Leno, who was a famous music hall comedian often appearing as a pantomime dame. Ackroyd has himself said of Leno that he was ‘the funniest man on earth’ (34). The use of his surname in *Chatterton* does not only show a similarity between Mr. and Mrs. Leno and the great funny man, but also hints at a family connection and indeed Mr. and Mrs. Leno can be read as both a *parody* of Dickens’s *Old Curiosity Shop*, a *pastiche* of Punch and Judy and an allusion to Dan Leno himself.

**The use of Shakespeare and Family Discourse in *The Lambs of London***

*The Lambs of London* is a novel that draws heavily on the works of Shakespeare. This is not surprising since the protagonists of the novel all are connected with his works. The siblings, Charles and Mary Lamb, published a book with many of Shakespeare’s play rewritten for children. After his sister’s madness Charles Lamb also wrote several books and essays himself many of these about the works of Shakespeare. It should be noted that unlike the events of *The Lambs of London* Mary in fact died several years after Charles, who had taken care of her after she was released from a mental hospital after she had killed their mother in a fit of madness. In fact Ackroyd’s depiction of Mary Lamb seems to differ from the historical Mary Lamb. She is clearly described in a way to get the reader’s sympathy.

William Henry Ireland will forever be linked with Shakespeare, but perhaps not in the way he had hoped. Instead of being the discoverer of the “lost” play *Vortigern*, he will be remembered as a forger and a liar. However, one should not neglect to mention the genius and skill required to do what he did. Indeed, many of the books written about him and similar forgers, Thomas Chatterton for instance, give increasing credit to them and salute their genius and the quality of the work they did. (Ruthven: 18, Rosenblum: 105) However, it should be noted that there is widespread agreement among scholars that the works of Chatterton are far superior in their artistic quality when compared to the somewhat clumsy style of Ireland (Rosenblum: 157)



John Nixon, The oaken chest or | The gold mines of Ireland a farce. 1796. Hand-coloured etching, 42.1x44.9 cm, British Museum, London.   
This satirical print of the Ireland family show the contemporary ridicule they suffered because of the forgeries. Beneath the title’s there is a quotation from Macbeth:: '"the Earth hath Bubbles as the Water has and these are of them, Shakspere ['of inserted in pen]'

*The Lambs of London* are concerned mainly with two Shakespearian plays, *Vortigern* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. While the main story centres on the discovery and performance of *Vortigern*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* takes the role of a play within a play. In fact, it is the play put on by the small acting troupe in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* that is also being put on in *Lambs of London* by Charles Lamb and his friends and colleagues. The function of this play within a book is much the same as it is in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. It serves both as a kind of comic relief and as a commentary on the events surrounding it. The most significant moment involving the play is when it finally premieres at the hospital where Mary Lamb is staying. The lines spoken there and also those not spoken along with Mary’s sudden death end the story of Charles and Mary Lamb and their relationship with William Henry Ireland. It should be noted that this relationship is a completely fictitious one made up by Ackroyd. There has never been any indication that either of the Lambs ever had anything to do with William Ireland.

Another use of Shakespearian texts in the novel is the character Ophelia from *Hamlet,* who like Mary is mentally ill. Almost directly after Mary falls into the Thames (134), Ireland introduces a new Shakespearian find to the City Shakespearian Society (143). This find concerns the suicide of a young woman at the time of Shakespeare; her named was ‘Kathrine Hamnet or Hamlet’ (143). This young woman allegedly took her own life by jumping into River Avon, the river that flows through Stratford-upon-Avon. Ireland concludes that since this was done at a time when Shakespeare would have heard about it, and because of her being named Hamlet and the similarities between her and Ophelia’s death, she must have been the real life source of the famous fictional character of Ophelia. The fact, that so shortly after Mary Lamb falls into the Thames and almost drowns, we are presented with this story about Kathrine Hamlet and her connection with Ophelia also links Ophelia with Mary. This connection of the frail-minded Mary and the suicidally insane Ophelia foreshadows the tragedy that is about to befall Mary. The reader is forewarned that she will become insane and like Ophelia probably take her own life. Indeed, the connection between the two characters also means that Mary’s fall into the Thames was hardly an accident. Charles Lamb himself notes that Mary’s behaviour is very similar to that of Ophelia going so far as to say: ‘so she is Ophelia ... Wasting.’ (183) Charles Lamb compares the relationship of Hamlet and Ophelia with that of Ireland and Mary. The point that he makes is that like Ophelia Mary’s love for Ireland is unreturned, and she is neglected. This neglect from the one you love is what drove Ophelia into madness and finally suicide. Fearing a similar result de Quincey warns Charles not to tell Mary of his suspicion that Ireland is himself manufacturing all of the Shakespeare papers that he claims to have found.

Mary Lamb’s suicide attempts did not come out of the blue. She was already in a pretty frail frame of mind. But what really set her off was the violent quarrel between a mother and daughter she overheard while walking with William Henry Ireland in Southwark: ‘There was a sound of a fierce argument, as between a mother and daughter, followed by screaming and repeating blows.’ (134) This argument between mother and daughter mirrors Mary’s own relationship with her mother. The theme of the relationship between child and parent is not only used by Ackroyd concerning Mary and her mother, but also William Henry Ireland’s and his father’s relationship is heavily commented on. At the start of chapter six Charles and his friends are sitting in the Billiters Inn drinking. They are having a conversation about “the mother” or more precisely the concept of *hysteria passio*. The terms derived from Shakespeare’s play *King Lear* from act II in which Lear utters: ‘0 how this mother swells up toward my heart! / Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow’ (Shearer, 61)

A precise definition for the term is given by Mark S. Shearer in the article “The Cry of Birth: King Lear's Hysterica Passio”:

Etymologically, the phrase means womb-suffering and refers to the travail attendant upon birth. Its use to denote the feeling of suffocation, of "climbing sorrow" as Lear describes it, derives largely from the increasing pressure women feel on their lungs during pregnancy as a result of the expansion of their wombs (Shearer: 62)

Shearer goes on to explain that he term also has a different meaning in the play:

Lear himself implies that his suffering is very nearly life-threatening, using the term in its standard Elizabethan sense to refer to a feeling of suffocation, deriving, as Shakespeare's contemporaries believed, from an increase of pressure in the chest because of a movement of vapors from the abdomen toward the head (62-63)

This definition is one that Benjamin Milton also gives to Charles Lamb. However, Benjamin Milton does this from the point of view that it is truly absurd to believe such a thing.

‘The passions create bodily humours.’ Benjamin was intent upon following his thought through the mist of drink. ‘And the lower vapours rise into the brain. That is hysteria.

Charles was thinking about this sister. (Ackroyd 2004, 78)

However, this old belief that passion can cause one to faint could give an explanation of how it was that Mary ended up in the Thames. Having just experienced the fight between an unknown mother and daughter, which ended in the mother striking the daughter repeatedly, she flees down to the river. It is here that she is overcome by hysterica passio and faints thereby falling into the river. This also seems to be more true to what William Ireland witnesses. She does not jump willingly into the river, but rather falls: ‘He noticed that she was trembling violently. Then she made a movement – it was as if she was falling sideways. And she slipped, or toppled, from the bank into the river below’ (134). If we are to believe that it was because of hysterica passio that Mary Lamb fell into the Thames, then it could also be the reason for her attacking her mother and her own death at the end of the novel.

Mary Lamb’s attack and killing of her mother happens just after she has learnt that William Henry Ireland did indeed forge all of the Shakespeare documents that he produced. This realization leaves Mary in somewhat of a daze and results in her killing her mother at the dinner table. During her walk back to her house she comes to the conclusion that: ‘I am discharged from life... after valiant service’ (204)

The forged Shakespearian play *Vortigern* also plays an important role in the novel. Specifically it is used as a means to illustrate the relationship between William Henry Ireland and his father. Almost all of the lines quoted from it deals with the relationship of Vortigern and his sons, which mirrors the relationship between William and his father.

Ackroyd’s portrayal of William Henry Ireland is a very sympathetic one. Ireland’s desire to please his father and also impress Mary Lamb is the governing reason for his construction of the several fake Shakespearian items connected with him. Ackroyd never makes it seem as if Ireland was motivated by anything sinister. He merely wanted to make his father proud and impress Mary Lamb. This is to a certain extent also true of the real William Henry Ireland. Profit never seemed his motive either but rather approval of his father, who never thought it possible for his dimwit son to create such spectacular forgeries (Pierce 2004, 196). There are, however, certain passages that Ireland wrote which Ackroyd never mentions in the novel that make him out to be less sympathetic. For example, after the play was found out to be a fraud and only given a single performance, unlike the several weeks it gets in Ackroyd’s version, Ireland published the play. This was done some three years after it was played on the stage, and Ireland saw fit to write a small explanatory prologue to the play in his own words. The play he still claimed was a genuine early work of Shakespeare. In the introduction he wrote directly to the general public asking them to make up their own mind as to whether the play was a work of forgery or the genuine thing:

*The cause with learn'd investigation fraught,  
Behold at length to this tribunal brought,  
No fraud your penetrating eyes can cheat,  
None here can Shakespeare's writing counterfeit.* (Ireland, 1796: 3)

**Pastiche or Forgery?**

The vivid discussion of the use and value of pastiche found in *Chatterton* reaches its perhaps most intense point in the sixth chapter. In this chapter the protagonist of the novel Charles Wychwood discusses the merits of Chatterton’s works with Philip Slack, while at the same time in the past Chatterton himself has a similar conversation with one of his publishers. Chatterton points out that there is a link between plagiarism and poetry using an example from one of the Rowley poems:

Now Rowlie ynne these mokie Dayes

Sendes owte hys shynynge Lyghte

And Turgotus and Chaucer live

Inne evey line hee wrytes.’

Thus do we see in every Line an Echo, for the truest Plagiarism is the truest Poetry. (Ackroyd, 1993a: 87)

The two poets referred to in the poem are Johannes Turgotus and Geoffrey Chaucer, Chaucer is the more famous of the two, having written several major works, the most import of which is *The Canterbury Tales*. The claim that Chatterton makes is that for a poet to be truly great he must master the techniques of the poets that came before him. Thus it would seem it is only by embracing plagiarism that one can become a true poet. The problem here is of course how we define plagiarism, if it is seen only as a stylistic imitation, then it is fine. If, however, it is seen as the deliberate stealing of another author’s work and passing it off as one’s own, then it becomes a problem. But then what of Chatterton himself, could he be called a plagiarist? *Webster’s* defines a plagiarists as ‘One who plagiarizes; or purloins the words, writings, or ideas of another, and passes them off as his own; a literary thief; a plagiary.’ (*Webster’s*) Using this definition Chatterton would hardly qualify as a plagiarist. It would in fact seem as if he was the exact opposite, for he passes his own work off as someone else’s. Therefore it would seem the only definition that fits him is forger, he perfectly fits the definition of one. So while Chatterton may have some romantic notion of not being a counterfeiter, one that might be shared by Ackroyd himself, he clearly is one. However, much of the discussion of Chatterton’s work in the novel centres on whether he is a forger or a poet, whether his works are genuine masterpieces or just spectacular works of counterfeit. Here it is mainly the enthusiastic Charles Wychwood who is of the opinion that Chatterton is indeed a genius in his own right, and his works are likewise the works of a genius, not just mere forgeries. This can especially be seen in the lengthy conversation Charles Wychwood and Philip Slack have about Chatterton in chapter six, which ends with Charles proclaiming that Chatterton was ‘the greatest poet in history!’ (Ackroyd, 1993a: 94). This is done in the belief that Chatterton had not committed suicide, but had rather faked or forged his own death. Chatterton would then be free to continue writing his forgeries and publishing them under the names of the other great writers of the age. Actually, it is revealed at the end of the novel that this is not the case. Chatterton had intended to fake his own death; but by drunken accident he had mixed a lethal dose of poison that he ingested. While in truth his contemporaries believed that his death was the result of a deliberate suicide, however as Ackroyd himself has pointed out later, this might simply have been the forced view of the times, which wished to romanticize the death of the poet:

‘it was necessary and inevitable that his death was deemed to be a suicide, a last gesture to society from a doomed poet; more recent commentators have suggested that it was a botched effort to cure a bout of syphilis’ (Ackroyd, 2002: 426).

Indeed, much of Chatterton’s life has been romanticized, perhaps best known in the poem *Resolution and Independence* (1807) by the English Romantic poet William Wordsworth in which he writes:

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,

The sleepless Soul that perish’d in his pride

(425)

The title of ‘marvellous boy’ is one that has stuck with Chatterton ever since, and one that speaks of the way that his contemporaries viewed him, especially the great poets of the day. In fact *Resolution and Independence* is written in the same metre as one of the poems forged by Chatterton, *An Excelente Balade of Charitie*. Another interesting thing connecting Wordsworth with Chatterton is that Wordsworth like the protagonist of *Chatterton* Charles Wychwood owned a portrait of Chatterton that was a forgery. It might well be here that Ackroyd found the inspiration to write a novel about a poet that becomes infatuated with the ‘marvellous boy’ after having acquired a painting of him.

The quotation from the Wordsworth poem also raises and interesting question about forgeries. For if the works of Wordsworth were inspired and influenced by forgeries, would they themselves not also be fraudulent? This is what happened to Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. To call such works fraudulent seems to be a gross exaggeration, though. In fact it may be said that the forgeries on which such works are based or are inspired by often produce an idealized version.



John Flaxman, Chatterton taking a bowl of poison. (n.d.) pencil on paper, 18.8x15.4 cm, British Museum, London.

The continued celebration of Thomas Chatterton as an elevated poet-genius and the Romantic conception of his suicide.

**Gérard Genette’s Pastiche and Ingeborg Hoesterey’s Fake**

The question of how we define pastiche in relation to concepts such as plagiarism and forgery is one that Gérard Genette has considered and expanded upon.

In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*Genette begins his discussion of the nature of hypertexts by considering different definitions of parody, and he finds it necessary to establish six different subdivisions of this term. These are organized in the following chart as they appear (leaving out examples) in *Literature in the Second Degree* (28):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***mood***  ***relation*** | **Playful** | **Satirical** | **Serious** |
| **Transformation** | *Parody* | *Travesty* | *Transposition* |
| **Imitation** | *Pastiche* | *Caricature* | *Forgery* |

The six categories: *parody, travesty, transposition, pastiche, caricature* and *forgery* are themselves divided into different categories in order to properly define them. Genette also gives examples for each of his six different subcategories. The text he uses to describe forgery is oddly enough the third century epic poem *Posthomerica* by Quintus Smymaeus, *Posthomerica* has never been accused of being a forgery. And apart from its use as an example of forgery in the above chart Genette never calls it an actual forgery or fake. In fact, the only actual definition that Genette gives of the epic poem is that it is a sequel to the *Iliad*, the famous work by Homer. Genette, however, also writes of *Posthomerica* that it fails as a sequel and goes on to call it ‘an endlessly repetitive prolongation’ (207), and not a real sequel. This honour he reserves for the *Odyssey*. Whereas *Posthomerica* might seem like a questionable choice to illustrate the category of forgery, Genette’s methodical analysis of the genre concludes that *Posthomerica* is not a forgery after all, but rather a failed attempt at a sequel by an author different from the one who wrote the original work. In fact with this conclusion in mind it is interesting to note that Genette himself as soon as he had compiled his different textual examples for the chart pointed out that: ‘the choices are inevitably arbitrary and even unfair, since specific works are always, and happily so, much more complex than the species to which they are affixed.’ (28) So already from the start Genette is quick to mention the weakness of this textual representation of the forgery category. However, though *Posthomerica* may not be a forgery it does prove that the analytical and theoretical method behind the idea is solid. Unfortunately, it does leave the reader without a proper example of what Genette views as a proper representation of the category he calls forgery.

The works of each of the different “forgers” in *Chatterton*, Thomas Chatterton, Harriet Scrope and Stewart Merk can each be defined using the categories in Genette’s chart. As I have already discussed it would seem that the works of Chatterton would fall firmly within the category of forgery. Here I am of course only talking about the works he made and published while claiming they were the works of the medieval monk named Rowley. But in order to classify each of these text producers it is imperative to understand the chart and each of the different categories.

Genette starts out with explaining, as he sees it, the relationship between the hypotext and the hypertext. A relationship he dubs hypertextuality. This is the relationship between a given text and another text that exists only because of the first text. This is not because the hypertext quotes or refers to the hypotext, or not even because it has an intertextual or metatextual relationship with the hypotext. The connection is simply that the hypertext cannot exist without the pre-existence of the hypotext. The process of creating such a hypertext is one that Genette calls *transformation*, and it is the cornerstone of how he goes on to explain the various forms in which hypertextuality may be encountered. His first and perhaps best example of this is the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*. In this example the *Odyssey* is of course the hypotext and *Ulysses* the hypertext. It is clear that there is a connection between the two texts, and Genette describes this as the transformation that ‘consists in transporting the action of the *Odyssey* to twentieth-century Dublin’ (5-6).

The second cornerstone that Genette produces is the term *imitation*. Again to describe this he returns to the *Odyssey* as a hypotext, and this time as the hypertext he uses the *Aeneid*:

The transformation that leads from the *Odyssey* to the *Aeneid* is more complex and indirect. Despite appearances (and the greater historical proximity), this transformation is less direct because Virgil does not transport the action of the *Odyssey* from Ogygia to Cartage and from Ithaca to Latium. Instead he tells an entirely different story: the adventures of Aeneas, not those of Ulysses. He does so by drawing inspiration from the generic- i.e., at once formal and thematic-model established by Homer in the *Odyssey* (and in fact also in the *Iliad*); that is, following the hallowed formula, by imitating Homer. (6)

This imitation, Genette explains, is also partly a transformation, one that requires an intricate creation process. Firstly, it requires a ‘model of generic competence’. For the above example this would be the literary genre epic poem. Then it requires a ‘singular performance’ of said genre in this case the *Odyssey*, and finally it is required that the text chosen is capable of ‘generating an indefinite number of mimetic performances’. This process explains the difference between simple transformation and the more complex imitation. Genette goes on to explain the differences between the act of transforming a text and imitating it:

In order to transform a text, a simple and mechanical gesture might suffice (an extreme example would consist in tearing off a few pages-a case reductive transformation. But in order to imitate a text, it is inevitably necessary to acquire at least a partial mastery of it, a mastery of that specific quality which one has chosen to imitate. (6)

Thus for the simple act of transformation one needs not go through any form of meditation or other creational stages, but for the act of imitation these become inevitable. However, it should be noted that a transformed text is in no way better or of higher quality than an imitated text. They are simply different. While it might require more skill and knowledge to create an imitation, it does not mean that an equally skilled text producer could not create an equally good transformation of a hypotext.

Imitation and transformation are the two terms that detail the hypertextual relationship between the hypotext and the hypertext. However, as the chart shows there are several types of both imitation and transformation, three of each in fact. These are divided by the degree in which they differ from the hypotext. In the case of transformation it is the degree of ‘distortion inflicted on the hypotext’ (25) and in the case of imitation it is ‘their function and the degree of their stylistic aggravation’ (25). This divides the chart into two groups ‘one structural and the other functional’ (27). The terms used to describe this by Genette is *relation* and *function,* the latter of which he later changes to *mood*. Below the heading *relation* we thus have *transformation* and *imitation*. The categories of *function* are first divided into non-satirical and satirical. However, these are later changed by Genette to the *moods* playful, satirical and serious. This is mainly done because of the limitation of the first two terms. As Genette himself points out the correction is in order because the ‘distinction between satirical and the non-satirical is obviously too pat’ (27). Therefore he aims at dividing what he previously called non-satirical into further categories since ‘there are no doubt several ways of not being satirical’ (27). The distinction he comes up with is whether or not the non-satirical hypertext is *playful* or *serious*, ‘One [*playful*] (to which belong the practices of the pastiche and parody) aims at a sort of pure amusement or pleasing exercise with no aggressive or mocking intention’ (27). The other non-satirical mood is one that Genette dubs serious. The new terms following these new headings are *transposition* covering serious transformation and *forgery* covering serious imitation. These two final terms complete Genette’s chart of hypertextuality and leave us with six very different versions of hypertexts. Genette, however, also makes it clear that it is possible for a hypertext to have qualities of several of these different terms and to even transcend the chart entirely.

Genette started off the whole discussion about “Literature in the Second Degree” with introducing five types of intertextual relationship: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and finally architextuality. Focusing on hypertextuality he narrows it further down to six different kinds of hypertexts all of which closely resemble what we normally would call pastiche. In her book *Pastiche: Cultural Memory in Art, Film, Literature* Ingeborg Hoesterey has a different approach altogether. Instead of a complicated analytical and methodical approach she identifies and classifies all the different kinds of pastiche she has encountered, ending with a total of sixteen kinds of pastiche. However, while Genette’s approach is solely literary Hoesterey focuses on a wide variety of different kinds of texts: films, paintings, theatre, television and also literature. This of course creates several difficulties when trying to compare their different categories and discussing them in depth.

Even though Hoesterey has a total of no less than nineteen different types of pastiche, it is only a few of them that are of interest when it comes to comparing her categories with those of Genette, and even fewer when they are to be used to describe *Chatterton* and the many forms of text encounter within it. Of her nineteen definitions of pastiche I will focus on: *fake*, *imitation* and *plagiarism*. In choosing these three terms I have quickly cast aside most of what Hoesterey has written. This is done mainly out of a need to limit the amount of space it would take up if I were to fully describe all of her many categories of pastiche. The three categories I have chosen are not only the ones that are the most closely related to Genette’s; but they are also the only ones that have any real relevance when it comes to analyzing *Chatterton* and *The* *Lambs of London*.

Hoesterey’s *fake* might sound like another word for defining what is essentially a forgery, yet this is not the case. The fake is the closest Hoesterey comes to a kind of pastiche, which could be construed as to include forgery, for which she has no category at all nor any real definition. She does use the term, though, going so far as to call forgery pastiche (Hoesterey: 82). But she never defines it beyond that. Indeed, she includes *Ossian* in her chapter “Literary Pastiche” as the prime example of pastiche found in literary form. This does not make her able to classify the songs any further, nor does it enable her to write anything about forgeries except from quick observations, and how the work was viewed after it origins were discovered. In the chapter “Literary Pastiche” Ingeborg Hoesterey does make one useful observation.

What makes contemporary pastiche novels more accessible is their tendency to combine quasi-homage and parodic modes with a sophisticated patchwork of textual styles that resembles the mix-and-match modes we saw in the other arts. (83)

This is the same quality that the character in *Chatterton* Philip Slack resents in his own writing. In *Chatterton* Philip Slack’s failed attempt to write a novel is described as being ‘patchwork of other voices and other styles’ (Ackroyd, 1993a: 70). This description is surprisingly close to the one that Hoesterey gives of the positive qualities of contemporary pastiche novels, so what is criticized in *Chatterton* in praised by Hoesterey. Whether or not the criticism presented in *Chatterton* then is the opinion of Peter Ackroyd himself or merely that of a single character is a matter of discussion. In my opinion Philip Slack’s criticism of his failed attempt at writing a novel and his consequent reluctance to criticize Harriet Scrope is used by Ackroyd as a way of expressing his own opinion on the subject in a less than obvious way. As I have already written and discussed it the style of writing that Philip Slack compares his own to is exactly style in which Ackroyd has written the vast majority of his works. So as I read it Ackroyd uses the character of Philip Slack in this instance to validate his own style, which also is the style that *Chatterton* is written in.

However, this does not bring us any the closer to finding a definition of forgery by Hoesterey. Again the closest we come is the *fake*. The problem with designating something as *fake* is that the term carries with it an understanding of the fraudulent nature of the text in question. In fact the understanding that something is fake is so self-evident that it can hardly be called fraudulent. Hoesterey’s example of fake does to an extent cover forgeries, but only so far that she only mentions the two terms together a single time and without really describing their relationship with each other. Hoesterey uses fake as a term to describe the obvious, not the deceitful. An example of this would be the Las Vegas Stripe full of fake monuments and the fake promise of easily earned money at every corner. In this sense fake is much more closely related to parody or pastiche than it is to forgery. Everyone knows that the Eiffel Tower located in the Las Vegas skyline is not the real Eiffel Tower but a replica. According to Hoesterey’s definition it is a clear example of what is meant when something is *fake*. No one in their right mind would believe it to be the real and original Eifel Tower, and therefore it cannot be viewed as a forgery, rather it is a imitation done to the point of being exactly like the real thing, only with the explicit knowledge by everyone that is not the real thing but rather it is *fake*.

To use the vocabulary of Genette, a fake would be a text of any kind that has a clear and apparent hypotext. The fake is an almost perfect copy of its hypotext, to the degree that it could be said that it borders on not only an imitation but on a downright forgery. Yet the fake is not the same as Genette’s forgery. The fake is not meant to fool anyone, nor is it meant to be a means for its creator to gain ill-gotten goods. The fake is in this aspect perhaps much more closely connected to Genette’s pastiche or caricature. Caricatures, however, are too far removed or different from the hypotext they are caricatures of to be similar to the fake. No one would mistake a caricature for the real thing. Much more interesting is the relationship between the fake and pastiche. For while the pastiche mimics the style of its hypotext, it is not meant to be confused with the hypotext, merely to be similar to it, and it is the same with the fake, only to a much, much higher degree. The fake is the perfect copy in all aspects except that everyone is aware of it derivative nature. Thus, if we considering Hoesterey’s fake, and compare it to Genette’s pastiche, we will see various examples of hypertextuality which would surprisingly have more in common with pastiche than with forgery, though they would have elements from and closely resembling both forgery and pastiche.

Whether a text is deemed a work of forgery, a pastiche or a fake is in the hands of the reader of said text, and thus it is liable to the negotiation that takes place between the reader and the text. For a reader to be able to make this distinction between originality and hypertextuality requires a lot of knowledge from the reader. Not only knowledge of the text in question, but also knowledge of the specific genre the text belongs to, knowledge of the author and in the case of really insidious forgery even knowledge of calligraphy will be required to come to the right conclusion. This said, it is not the common reader that can make the distinction between what is original and what is clever forgery. This is left in the hands of scholars. However, when it comes to pastiches and also fakes the common reader is much better equipped to not only identify the works as what they are, but also enjoy them for it. The problem arises when we encounter a forgery and believe it to be an original work. Or to put it in other words the problem is when the negotiation between the text and reader fails.

The whole point of a forgery is to fool the reader. A forger aims at deceiving a reader in such a way that the reader’s negotiation with the forgery will mislead the reader into believing that the forgery is an original. Thus the function of the forgery is to make the reader draw false conclusions from his or hers negotiation with the forgery. A fake, on the other hand, tries to make it clear to the reader in the negotiation that the fake is indeed just that, a fake not an original. An example of just how a forgery can fool readers is evident in both *Chatterton* and *The* *Lambs of London*; in fact there are several examples of different forgeries, all of which deceive the reader in different ways. In the case of *Chatterton* the most interesting forgery is the painting of Chatterton himself, which serves as the connection between the many different characters in the book and the connection between the three time periods, which the novel covers. The decisive aspect of this painting is that it is a forgery, which is only revealed at the very end of the novel. Because of the main character’s unwavering belief that the painting is authentic, it becomes almost impossible for the reader not to follow his line of thought, combined with the many flashbacks where it is slowly established that Chatterton, indeed, as the painting suggests, planned to fake his own death. So not only is the reader presented with a line of thought from the protagonist of the novel, the plot of the novel is also carefully constructed in such a way that it also supports Charles Wychwood’s incorrect belief that the painting is real and authentic and that Thomas Chatterton did fake his death in order to keep writing his forgeries. The novel is in this sense specifically written so as to make the reader come to a certain conclusion about what is going on. It is of course not until the end with the tragic death of Charles Wychwood and the following realization that the painting is a forgery that the reader realizes that the novel had been pulling said reader by the nose in the wrong direction the whole time. The novel aims to influence the negotiation with the reader in such a way that the end comes as a complete surprise, which it indeed does. This surprise ending is then combined with a realization that the past, or the truth of the past, is hard or difficult to catch hold of. This concept of negotiation between past and present will be further discussed in the context of searching for the truth about the past in the chapter below about new historicism.

**Metafiction**

When analysing *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* it quickly becomes clear that they are both examples of metafiction, though not to the same extent. However, it also becomes clear that they are not just metafictional, and below I intend to examine the metafictional aspects of the two novels in greater detail in order determine whether they can be labelled historiographic metafiction and/or new historicist?

In writing *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* intertextuality is not the only postmodern technique used frequently by Peter Ackroyd, metafiction also plays a very important role in the two novels. And I will now look at the metafictional traits in the two novels.

I have earlier mentioned the importance of chapter six in relation to the discussion of the term forgery and how the characters in *Chatterton* define this concept. When it comes to metafiction there is also a chapter, which stands out among the others. In this case it is because it includes many metafictional elements. This is chapter nine, in which there is a detailed description of how Henry Wallis painted his famous portrait of Chatterton lying dead by his bed after taking his own life, and also in the same chapter there is a description of Charles Wychwood and his son visiting the Tate Gallery to see this painting in the present. The painting, which I have included below, has the function of connecting the actual reader with Charles and Edward Wychwood as surrogate readers of the painting. Textual or artistic production is here connected to the reception of the work produced, in this way metafictionally stressing its textuality. What especially catches Charles Wychwood’s notice in the painting is not so much the dead figure, but rather the details surrounding it:

he looked out of the window of the garret in Brooke Street, towards the smoking rooftops over London; he examined the small plant upon the sill, with its thin translucent leaves curling slightly in the cold air; he saw the burnt-out candle on table, and his eye travelled upward along the path of its fading smoke; he turned his head slightly towards the wooden chest, lying open, and then he started to count the torn pieces of paper which lay scattered across the boards of the floor. (132)

The scene where Henry Wallis is painting the picture is described in such details that everything from the pose of Meredith’s body, the colour of the red jacket besides him, even the faintest hint of smoke from the blown-out candle at his feet are remarked upon, and here Wallis is preparing the scene:

Dragging a battered wooden chest from beneath the bed…. He opened the lid…He filled it with manuscript papers before pushing it against the side of the whitewashed wall… With quick movements he walked towards Meredith, leaned across him and opened the window… Then he moved the small wooden chair a few inches, and flung his own coat upon it. He went across to the chest and put it at an angle against the wall. (137-138)

Ackroyd thus presents the reader with the exact events of how the painting was created. Mentioning every single detail that Charles Wychwood had looked at just a few pages earlier in the novel. The scene truly shows not only Ackroyd’s ability to create a world of literature, but one of pictorial art as well.

When Charles Wychwood looks at the painting in the Tate Gallery, he at first does not see Chatterton or Meredith lying dead, but instead sees himself lying dead in the painting(132). This is meant both as a foreshadowing of Charles Wychwood’s own death soon to come, and also to show the transhistorical textual link, which exists between Charles Wychwood and Chatterton. Charles Wychwood’s image also shows itself to his wife, Vivien, and their son, Edward, in the painting of the middle-aged Chatterton, which Charles had bought, thus further stressing the connection between the two.



Henry Wallis, “The Death of Chatterton”, oil on canvas, 1856, 62x93 cm, Tate, London.  
The finished painting, which Peter Ackroyd had his characters Charles and Edward Wychwood discuss at the Tate Gallery Room Fifteen.

One of the hallmarks of postmodernism is metafiction. To put it simply as it was first defined metafiction is ‘fiction with self-consciousness, self-awareness, self-knowledge, ironic self-distance.’ (Currie: 1) Another more recent definition is that metafiction is a ‘borderline discourse ... a kind of writing which places itself at the border between fiction and criticism, and which takes that border as its subject.’ (2) This more precise definition is the logical outcome of a text that has somehow grown aware of its own textuality. With such awareness also comes a discussion or criticism of the text and also of textuality. Such discussions are evident throughout *Chatterton* and also to a lesser degree in *The Lambs of London*. In particular the two novels deal with the question of originality when it comes to text production.

Metafictional works are often concerned with the relationship between text and reality because of their awareness and recognition of their own textuality. Three possible ways that this relationship could be explored is either by commenting on the relationship between the author and the reader, between art and life, or between fiction and criticism, and this exploration is executed by internalizing these relationships within the narrative of the metafiction. For example, this could be done by having a painter and his subject discuss the process of creating a work of art, and by so doing in reality starting a discussion of art and life, as seen in chapter nine of *Chatterton*. Often these sorts of discussions are the product of an author, who is not only a writer of fiction, but also an academic writer. Again an obvious example is *Chatterton*, which is clearly written by an author that is as much a writer of fiction as he is an expert on English literature. Metafictional stories are often centred around or in a world of literary criticism. This means that the fiction created will be one that not only concerns itself with fiction, but also discusses it from a unique point of view, being a work of fiction itself. An example of this can be seen in chapter nine of *Chatterton* where Charles Wychwood actually begin to write a preface to his planned book about the ”real” Thomas Chatterton, and as a result of which he claims that ‘our whole understanding of eighteenth century poetry will have to be revised’ (127). Again another way of highlighting a metafictional text’s own textuality is by presenting a narrative that focuses on the artificiality of the creative process involved in creating any form of text. One well-known example of this is *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* by Laurence Sterne, in which metafiction is one of the central literary devices. The novel, published in nine volumes over ten years with the first published in 1759, is the attempted writing of the life story of Tristram as narrated by him. However, the lengthy novel is full of all kinds of secondary stories as Tristram is unable to produce a coherent story of his life. In fact, it is not until the third volume that he is even born. The novel is thus almost more concerned with the process of writing a biography than the life of Tristram himself, an ideal example of how metafiction directs the focus of a novel towards the novels own textuality.

Another tool that is often used in metafictional novels is the dramatisation of the narrator as a person found in the novel. This is a literary device that has long been used in literature; in the *Canterbury Tales* there are several narrators each telling their own stories, for example. Along with the dramatised narrator often comes the surrogate reader that is the audience that the narrator has when telling his story. The reader of the novel identifies with these other, fictional, readers. Closely related to the dramatised narrator is the notion of introducing a fictional author of a metafictional novel into the narrative itself. This happens to some degree in both *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London*. In *Chatterton* the character of Philip Slack overcomes his fears of writing an unoriginal text and states that because of what has happened in the course of the narrative he may just have an idea for a novel (232). Likewise in *The Lambs of London* it is vaguely implied that with de Quincy’s exclamation of ‘What a fine story!’ that he might take it upon himself to write it all down. (Ackroyd, 2004: 208)

A wholly different kind of metafiction exists, and this is found in the narratives that point to themselves as created texts, as they intertextually and explicitly borrow from other texts. Most kinds of pastiches can be said to belong to this form of metafiction. In fact, in all the types of pastiches I have presented from Gérard Genette and Ingeborg Hoesterey, it is only Genette’s forgery and Hoesterey’s plagiarism that can be said to not fully employ this kind of intertextuality. This is mainly because of the deceitful nature of these two kinds of pastiche, as they deny any connection with the hypotexts they are pastiches of, or they make false claims about themselves and their origins, and thus also deny any form of intertextual relationship with the hypotext.

Peter Ackroyd wholeheartedly embraces intertextual metafiction and often uses it in his novels to create his literary worlds, to which both *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* belong.

**Metatextuality in *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London***

The four excerpts that begin *Chatterton*, and which I have already discussed in the chapter on narrative structures, will here be reconsidered in the light of metafiction. They can be read as a sort of slightly edited version of events to come later on in the novel. The first tells the story of Thomas Chatterton as a boy talking to a girl, and then looking at the tower of St Mary Redcliff while citing a poem he has just read. The poem foreshadows one of the main themes that the novel is concerned with: whether or not a writer will live on forever in the work of other writers.

The time of my departure is approaching.

Nigh is the hurricane that will scatter my leaves.

Tomorrow, perhaps, the wanderer will appear –

His eyes will search for me around every spot,

And will, - and will not find me. (Ackroyd 1993a: 2)

This small poem, which is cited by the young Chatterton at the very beginning sets the stage of what will ultimately be the biggest concern in Chatterton’s life, his fear that he will not be remembered. The wanderer is thus a symbol of the writers and poets that will come after Chatterton’s own career and life have ended. Whether or not they will remember and thus draw inspiration from his work is what Chatterton wonders about up to the moment of his death (233). The wanderer has two incarnations in the novel both of whom Chatterton appears to as a ghost. They are George Meredith and Charles Wychwood. As Chatterton finally lies dying and realizes that his life will end he gets the feeling that he is falling and while doing so he encounters Meredith and Wychwood:

Falling and Chatterton is walking down a stairway of old stone where he passes a young man [Meredith] ascending on the other side... Falling and Chatterton is standing behind a young man [Wychwood] with his head bowed in pain; there is a fountain behind them... (233)

These encounters have of course already happened in the novel, and both Meredith and Wychwood have had visions where they thought they saw Chatterton just as Chatterton is now seeing them. However, the difference is that as Chatterton lies dying they join with him and he becomes aware that he ‘will live forever’ (234). The realization that Chatterton achieves is that as a poet he will live on in the works and minds of other poets to come, and thus will never be forgotten as he had feared.

The second excerpt is taken from a conversation between Henry Wallis and George Meredith and deals with another of the novel’s main themes ‘the question of reality/unreality and of the truthfulness or falsehood of art’ (Onega, 1999: 59). This conversation, which takes place in chapter nine, is also one of the most metafictionally concerned places in the whole novel. By this I do not mean that it is simply a conversation that happens to have metafictional elements. I mean that it is a discussion with so many metafictional thoughts and contemplations in it that it can hardly be read as anything other than a discussion of metafiction by two historical characters as presented in a fictitious literary retelling. This conversation begin with a simple question by Meredith, when the painting is finished, who will it be that is in the picture, ‘Will it be Meredith or will it be Chatterton?’ (Ackroyd, 1993a: 3) The answer to this question comes some hundred and fifty pages after Meredith asked the question: ‘The poet does not merely recreate or describe the world. He actually creates it. And that is why he is feared.... And that is why,’ he added quietly, this [the portrait] will always be remembered as the true death of Chatterton.’ (157)

The third fragment is taken from a conversation between Harriet Scrope and Sarah Tilt, which appears on pages thirty-four and thirty-five. In it Scrope misquotes a line from the chorus’s epilogue in Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* and Sarah corrects her:

Harriet Scrope rose from her chair, eager to deliver the news. ‘Cut is the bough,’ she said, ‘that might have grown full straight.’ And doubled up, as if she were about to be sawn in half.

‘Branch.’ Sarah tilt was very deliberate

‘I’m sorry’

‘It was a branch, dear, not a bough. If you were quoting’ (2)

This misquotation is almost characteristic of Harriet Scrope, for instead of admitting her own mistake she immediately tries to cover it up by another quote, this time from Wordsworth’s *Resolution and Independence* (1807), the very same poem in which Wordsworth calls Chatterton ‘the marvellous boy’. The fragment not only introduces Scrope’s easy-going relationship with originality, but also her secret beginnings as a plagiarist.

The whole excerpt is itself and interesting example of metafiction as it not only is an example of fictitious literary characters discussing literature, but also because the excerpt is, in fact, itself a misquotation. Just as Scrope’s misquotation so too is the excerpts not entirely correct. For the attentive reader this adds a certain aura of mistrust of the narrator, who seems in this instance almost to have become infected with Scrope’s imperfections. The dialogue is presented correctly, but the descriptions provided by the narrator have changed. Therefore, the events with which the reader is presented are changed. For example, the line that in the except reads simply ‘then sat down again’ (3) was in the passage that was quoted ’then sat down, rather heavily, and took another sip of gin’ (34). The difference is similar to Scrope’s incorrect use of the word bough instead of branch. It is not a gross misquotation, but a misquotation nonetheless.

This is not the only place where the novel’s narrative structure breaks free of what might be called a normal structure. Quotations are often used by the various characters in *Chatterton*, but also the narrator or perhaps more precisely the author has quotations of his own. These appear inside various chapters, at the start of chapters, and sets of two quotations appear at the start of all three parts of the novel. When occurring within a chapter they are used as a means of bridging the gap between the various stories that occur in the novel. For example on page 152 there is a short passage from one of George Meredith’s sonnets.

‘...it must be sleep, when low

Hangs that abandon’d arm towards the floor:

The head turn’d with it. Now make fast the door.’

(Mordern Love. Sonnet 15. George Meredith) (152)

Here the quotation is both used as a way of commenting on what has just happened in the narrative, Charles Wychwood’s collapse, and a way of foreshadowing what directly follows the poem as the narrative skips from the present to the past and focuses on George Meredith and Henry Wallis. The style in which these quotations are made places them outside the narrative of the rest of the novel. First and foremost there is no character who utters these words, and secondly the quotations are present as from a nonfictional textbook with the correct source and author mentioned following the quotation.

There are also other quotations that appear in *Chatterton*, but these are quite different from the poems quoted outside of the texts at the beginnings of chapters and at the start of each of the novels three parts. These are small quotations, which somehow exist outside of the rest of the narrative, yet at the same time are found within it. These appear only in the first five chapters as a series of fragmentary phrases and sentences printed in italics, which are always gathered together at the end of the chapter they appear in. This produces a unique effect, which at the same time fragments the novel and it binds it together. When they are put together and uttered by a character at the end of a chapter they also demonstrate profound insight into the themes of the novel. The fragments in chapter one consists of: ‘*oh yes’* (13); ‘*if it is real*’ (17); ‘*this is him*’ (21). This line is also uttered by Charles Wychwood at the very end of chapter one (23) in reference to the fake Chatterton painting that apparently proves that Chatterton did not die at the age of seventeen. In this way there is created a kind of double emphasis on the premise of the whole novel: What if Chatterton had survived?

A second group of fragments appear in chapter two: ‘whereof we cannot speak’ (28), ‘thereof we must be silent’ (30) this is a quotation taken from Ludwig Wittgenstein’s [*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tractatus_Logico-Philosophicus) *(1921)* and it ‘points to Chatterton’s basic insight: the radical autonomy of language’ (Onega, 1999: 61). From chapter 3 on the fragments begin to point to the atemporal, almost spiritual, connection between Chatterton and Charles Wychwood.

The quotation in the fourth chapter shows that Charles Wychwood has indeed crossed over into the literary world, ‘Craving a devouring; but my eyes are always upon thee, O lovely Delusion’ (Ackroyd: 1999a: 60) the quotation is from William Blake’s unfinished epic poem *The Four Zoas*.

The final of these fragmented quotations appears in chapter five and foreshadows the merging of Chatterton’s and Charles Wychwood’s voices in the atemporal world of literature (Onega, 1999: 61). This quotation can in fact been seen as foreshadowing the very end of *Chatterton*, when Thomas Chatterton together with George Meredith and Charles Wychwood together join hands and enter the atemporal world of literature together (Ackroyd: 1999a: 234): ‘‘The dream unfolds,’ he said. ‘The sleeper awakes, but still the dream goes on.’ And he realized at once that these were not his words, but those of someone other’ (78)

**Historiographic Metafiction**

In both *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* Peter Ackroyd employs a special kind of metafiction, i.e. historiographic metafiction. It is a genre that appears in the space between fiction and history. The term historiographic metafiction was coined by Linda Hutcheon, who describes it as:

Those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages. ... Its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and rewording of the forms and contents of the past. (Hutcheon, 1988: 5)

Historiographic metafiction is a mixture of history and fiction. It is paradoxically both aware of its own fictitiousness, but at the same time it embraces historical figures and events into its narrative. The fiction produced by this is in part historical fact and in part historical fiction, and it is explicitly aware of this. This is clearly evident in *The Lambs of London* as this novel employs among its cast almost solely actual historical figures, be they main characters or simply only appearing in a single scene.

*The Lambs of London* start out with a disclaimer stating the fictitiousness of the story the reader is about to be presented with, but many of the events of the novel are actual events that have happened. Many of the accounts about William Henry Ireland are nonfictional, and even the dialogue of some of these events are taken from Ireland’s own biography to further stake a claim for their originality. So while *The Lambs of London* declares its own fictitious textuality, it at the same time adheres to history, and thereby constructs a narrative that is in fact both historiographic and metafictional.

While *The Lambs of London* openly admits its own fictitious textuality, *Chatterton* does nothing of the sort; in fact it does quite the opposite. By beginning the whole book with a bibliography of Thomas Chatterton, and by time and time again using lines and passages from the works of Thomas Chatterton, George Meredith and others it fully embraces its historical characters and thereby tries seemingly desperately to become a historical narrative. However, it soon become clear that the walls between past and present, indeed between history and fiction, are starting to break down. The events of the past and the present are intertwined and interconnected. This linking of past and present in a constant negotiation is also one of the trademarks of new historicist writing as we shall see below. However, more than new historicism *The Lambs of London* and *Chatterton* are historiographic metafictional narratives. They both incorporate historical texts into their own narratives: Shakespeare, Dickens, “Rowley”, Eliot and more. All of these authors from the past are included into the narratives. In fact these are only the examples that jump off the page, and if one were to mention every single author that was referenced in some way or another this would truly be a daunting task. Just on the first page of *Chatterton* there are direct references to such diverse texts as Charlie Brown, Lassie, and the song *Old Dog Tray* (1853) by Stephen Foster (7). This is perhaps also the place in the novel that is much more concerned with American culture rather than English culture, as all three are mainly known for their connection to American popular culture. They are also one of the easier examples to notice of how Ackroyd in *Chatterton* creates a truly intertextual world. A far less obvious example is Mr. Gaskell, Harriet Scrope’s cat. Mr. Gaskell is named after the English Victorian writer Elizabeth Gaskell, who was commonly known simply as Mrs. Gaskell.

*The Lambs of London* like *Chatterton* is also heavily influenced by metafiction. However, *The Lambs of London* is more dominated by another kind of metafiction than *Chatterton*. While *Chatterton* relies heavily on its intertextual references and a narrative structure that is metafictional in itself, *The* *Lambs of London* instead relies on the world of literary critics and producers of texts of various kinds.

The majority of the characters in *The Lambs of London* are all based on real and historical people from the lives of William Ireland and Mary and Charles Lamb. Many of whom are writers and art critics. Indeed, much of the narrative takes places among these people, and as such much of the narrative is full of references to text production or literary criticism. These are people like the famous Shakespearian scholar Edmond Malone and the author Thomas de Quincey who, in fact, was a genuine acquaintance of Charles Lamb.

**New Historicism**

New historicism, a term coined by Stephen Greenblatt (Veeser: 1), differs greatly from what one could call traditional historicism. Whereas traditional historicism deals with a notion that it is possible to recapture the events of the past almost perfectly, new historicism does not. Instead new historicism deals with historical texts or indeed any text as a negotiation between the text and the reader. This means that every text is a negotiation of the past it was written in and of the present it is read in.

The ancient Greeks and Aristotle in particular, believed that the historian’s purpose was the pursuit of the truth about the past. Aristotle believed that is was possible to find this truth and record it so that future generations might know the historical events as they truly happened. This way of thinking is preserved in the philosophy of historical writers to this day. Whenever one picks up a history book, one is presented with a version of the events as they happened. Rare are the history books that differ on the outcome of the great events of history. It is, however, also rare to find a new historical text that would challenge such events, as the focus of new historicism is the less know and perhaps less important events and people throughout history.

Aristotle distinguished between the function of the poet and the historian:

…it is not the poet’s function to describe what has actually happened, but the kinds of thing that might happen, that is, that could happen because they are, in circumstances, either probable or necessary. The difference between the historian and the poet is not that the one writes in prose and the other in verse… The difference is that the one tells of what has happened, the other of the kinds of things that might happen. For this reason poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history; for while poetry is concerned with universal truths, history treats of particular facts. (Aristotle: 43-44)

The negotiation between the past and the present is the focus point of new historicism. This negotiation means that every tale of the past is influenced by the present. This does not only mean that every text offers something different according to when it is read, but also that every text differs due to the cultural context of the time it is read in. This does not just mean that there is a difference in how we view historical events at different times, because of the fact that additional information has been uncovered at different times, rather it means that since society constantly changes, so does society’s view of history. For example the way we think of the First World War as The War to End All Wars changed after the Second World War. Indeed, one could say that the very definition of war may very well have changed since then.

The fact that different readers will create different connotations from a historical text is one of the fundamental thoughts behind new historicism:

New historians acknowledge that they themselves, like all authors, are ”subjectivities” that have been shaped and formed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era, hence that their own critical writings construct, rather than discover ready-made, the textual meanings they describe and the literary and cultural histories they narrate. (Abrams: 251)

New historicism can be traced back to poststructuralism, Marxist esthetical theories and similar cultural studies (Veeser: xi). One of the ways new historicism differs from what might be found in traditional historicism is which people and events are the focus of the writing. In traditional historicism we often hear about the kings and queens and other grand characters of the ages, but never about ordinary people. It is often the unknown and forgotten person that new historicism deals with. The peasants and workers, who never got their names written down in the history books, it is these people that we hear about in the works of new historicists, the characters in both *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* differ from this model, however. Thomas Chatterton and Mary and Charles Lamb are real actual people from history. Indeed they are all quite famous people, though on the other hand in no way people of power, only of culture. Peter Ackroyd managed to present them in a wholly new way from what we otherwise have read about them in old history books and various encyclopaedias. In the case of Thomas Chatterton Ackroyd shows us the hidden truth about his alleged suicide, and thus truly renegotiates the past mixing fiction and historical fact.   
The negotiation between past and present, not to mention between reader and text, can be seen clearly throughout *Chatterton*. Here are we not only presented with the past in the form of flashbacks to not only Chatterton’s life, but to the events concerning the painting of his death by Henry Wallis. These flashbacks are framed by events taking place in present times. So in a very real sense we see the past from the point of view of the present, and from the point of view of Charles Wychwood, who as a reader is able to reinvent or renegotiate the past.

This renegotiation of the life of Thomas Chatterton also serves to illustrate that it is not possible to accurately depict or recreate the past, because such a recreation would indubitably create new and different connotations from each reader. In fact even the creator of such a recreation of the past would himself create a subjective reading. This inevitably leads to the conclusion that it is entirely implausible to accurately depict the past. For the new historicists there in no great historical truth waiting to be uncovered and presented to the world. This also means that the past is not absolute, in the sense that due to the constant renegotiations between the past and the ever-changing present the past is recreated over and over again.

It is left to the individual readers of historical texts for themselves to create their own negotiation of past and present in order for them to create an image of the past – a past that is always imagined by the present. However, this again is an ever-changing perception, as the present from which the past is negotiated from is never the same. This is a point that Ackroyd makes several times in *Chatterton* as with each flashback more information is learnt of the past, and our preconceived notions of the past changes again and again.

the convenient working distinction between cultural texts that are social and political and those that are not becomes something worse that error: namely, a symptom and a reinforcement of the reification and privatization of contemporary life. Such a distinction reconfirms that structural, experiential, and conceptual gap between the public and private, between history and society and the “individual,” which – the tendential law of social life under capitalism – maims our existence as individual subjects and paralyzes our thinking about time and change just as surely as it alienates us from our speech itself. (Fredric Jameson in Veeser: 2)

The above quote by the American Marxist aesthetic theorist, Fredric Jameson, shows the problem with Marxist thinking when it comes to cultural texts. Jameson views the distinction between cultural texts that are social and those that are political as one of ‘privatization.’ Stephen Greenblatt rightfully criticizes Jameson for entering the notion of ‘privatization’ into a discussion of social and political cultural texts. Greenblatt points out that the private ownership found in capitalistic society has not led to a privatization of discourses, but rather to a ‘drastic communalization of all discourses.’(Greenblatt in Veeser: 2) Indeed, it has led to the creation of an ever-growing mass audience and the construction of a ‘commercial sphere unimagined and certainly unattained by the comparatively modest attempts in pre-capitalist societies to organize a public discourse.’(2-3)

Jameson views all differentiations of the aesthetic as one that is linked to the private, which in turn is linked to the psychological, the poetic, and the individual, as opposed to the public, the social, and the political.(3) It is all these interconnected distinctions that, according to Jameson, ‘maims’ and ‘paralyses’. The cause of all this is capitalism. Jameson’s writings aim at creating a distinction between the individual and the individual subject. It is only by maiming the “good” individual subject that the “bad” individual is able to emerge.

There are many ways in which one can describe a text’s connections to historical events to which it may refer: words such as allusion, symbolization, allegorization, representation, and mimesis are all often used examples. All of these words are rich in meaning and yet mean almost the same thing. What is more, they all seem to fail when it comes to explaining the way in which certain materials, such as official documents and private papers, newspaper clippings, and the like, are transferred from social discourses into aesthetical discourses. It is in this transference that new historicism has its home. When the historical “truth” and fictionalization of history becomes intertwined in an altogether new form of discourse, new historicism is created. It was precisely these kinds of private papers and letters, which were the bulk of William Ireland’s body of forged Shakespeare items.

The social or historical discourse and its credibility or its search for truth is never good enough or completed. It is not possible for the creators of these discourses to reveal the great historical truth, nor is it possible for them to achieve absolute credibility. Aesthetical discourses, on the other hand, have the possibility to create or narrate contents without the need for historical facts, or to put it in Aristotle words: ‘poetry is concerned with universal truths.’(Aristotle: 44) It is in the merging of these two types of discourses that the possibility of renegotiating the past comes to life. Bear in mind that this is not the historical truth that Aristotle strived for, nor is it completely fiction. It is a negotiation of the past and the present. It is only in this negotiation that we have a chance to catch a glimpse of the past. However, the past we create in this negotiation will never be the fabled truth that so many historians have tried to capture. Peter Ackroyd’s *The Lambs of London* and especially *Chatterton* demonstrate this point time and time again. The clearest example of this is found in the last chapter of *Chatterton*, were Harriet Scrope almost spells it out for the reader: ‘None of it seemed very real, but I suppose that’s the trouble with history. It’s the one thing we have to make up for ourselves.’ (Ackroyd: 1993a: 226)

This is the closest that we as postmodernist are able to get to the past. We must not only look to the text but to ourselves as readers of texts and to the environment, society and culture from which we are viewing the text. Only then will we be able to understand what meaning and insight the texts hold of the past and based on this renegotiate create our own perception of history.**The Reappearance of Chatterton**

The subject of *Chatterton* and forgery is one that Ackroyd has written about not only in *Chatterton,* but also in his 2002 non-fictional book *Albion* *the* *English* *Imagination.* In this book Ackroyd discusses among other things the history of English literature and there is a chapter that focuses on great English forgers. This chapter, “Forging a Language” deals with Thomas Chatterton in particular and it is full of Ackroyd’s own thoughts and observations about Chatterton and his works. Chatterton also makes a brief appearance in Ackroyd’s bibliography of Charles Dickens.

As I have shown throughout my analysis and discussion of both *Chatterton* and *The Lambs of London* the novels both show sympathy for the forgers in them. This is especially the case with *Chatterton*, which can almost be read as a defence of its title character. It is clear that Peter Ackroyd shares the notions of Thomas Chatterton that was found among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poets and artists that he was not a mere forger or charlatan, but rather a rare genius, truly worthy of the title of ‘marvellous boy’.

While in no way praising William Henry Ireland to the same heights as Thomas Chatterton, it is also clear that *The Lambs of London* is not meant as an attack on him, but rather as an explanation of the circumstance that almost forced him into the life of a forger. While Ireland simply tryes to impress his father, Ackroyd shows how things got out of hand for the young man, and how when intertwined with the life of the Lambs it ended in tragedy.

What saves Thomas Chatterton’s soul at the end *Chatterton*, and thus granting him an immortal life of fame and not infamy like William Ireland, is perhaps also tied to Peter Ackroyd’s own personal and professional feelings on the subject. These feelings are also explored in much more depth in *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination*. Ackroyd begins the chapter “Forging a Language” by detailing the literary environment in England at the time of the early eighteenth century as a way of contextualizing the literary background of Chatterton. He points out that at the time there were no fixed rules concerning the identities of authors, and it was not uncommon for authors to publish their works under pseudonym. Examples of this include authors like Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe, who both ‘faked’ the identity of the author of *Gulliver’s Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Also it is worth mentioning that the concept of identity when it came to authors was not a very sensitive issue. Indeed, it was possible for Daniel Defoe to both appear as two different fictional authors: Robinson Crusoe in 1714 and as Moll Flanders eight years later in 1722. Peter Ackroyd goes on to mention the development of copyright as a governing factor in the way people viewed forgeries. The Copyright Act of 1709 brought with it the individual’s right of ownership of words and intellectual property. This was increasingly important since: ‘the notion of individual ownership led in turn to the development of the literary personality and to the affirmation of the romantic selfhood’ (Ackroyd, 2002: 424). Here might be traced the origin of the romantic self as an economic unit. Indeed, when it comes to the crime of forgery there is often talk of a crime for economic gain. But until the passing of the Copyright Act authors had been able freely to borrow and use ideas and words from other authors.

With the creation of the romantic self and the notion of individual ownership of intellectual properties such forms of writing were a thing of the past. It should of course be noted that the concept of the individual author is not one that emerges in the Romantic Period. Authors as far back as Geoffrey Chaucer have deliberately introduced themselves as characters in their narratives. As such the identity of the author has always been of importance, not just from an analytical perspective, but also from a social one.

This also becomes clear when reading Ackroyd’s bibliography of Charles Dickens entitled simply *Dickens* (1990). Published only three years after *Chatterton* the bibliography has a small chapter or so-called interlude in it in which there is a conversation between T. S. Eliot, Oscar Wilde, Charles Dickens and Thomas Chatterton. These writers have been employed to embody each their own literary period: T. S. Eliot represents Modernism, Oscar Wilde represents Fin-de-siècle, Charles Dickens Victorianism. While the chapter is meant as a way of showing the difference between the greats of English literature, it also has the effect that is shows just how highly Ackroyd thinks of Chatterton. To be included in the company of T. S. Eliot, Oscar Wilde and Charles Dickens is perhaps the single greatest compliment one can give to an English writer. These are the people who truly show what English literature is at its finest. However, Ackroyd further compliments Chatterton by crediting him with launching the Romantic Period:

*Wilde*. He [Chatterton] is the only romantic among us.

*Chatterton*. What is a romantic?

*Wilde*. It happened after your lifetime. Amusing, is it not, to find the originator of a movement has not the least idea what it is? (Ackroyd, 1996: 453)

All in all *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* and *Dickens* are works that among their many other subjects can be seen as a defence of and tribute to Thomas Chatterton. As in *Chatterton*, in *Albion* Ackroyd’s defence is centred on the brilliance of Chatterton’s work and his abilities as a poet. In *Dickens* Ackroyd even gives Chatterton credit for starting the Romantic Period and also stresses Chatterton’s ability to command the literature of the past. It is clear that in the thirty odd years since Ackroyd wrote *Chatterton* his view of the title character has not changed as it is presented in *Albion* and *Dickens.*

**Conclusion**

It is clear that Peter Ackroyd does not look at William Henry Ireland with the same sympathy as the one he has for Thomas Chatterton; rather one detects a note of pity. This I would claim is because of the difference in not only the quality of Ireland’s work when compared to Chatterton’s, but also because of the fact that, unlike Chatterton, Ireland set out to forge the work of a known artist, Shakespeare, whereas is can be said that Chatterton never stole from or hurt anyone with his forgeries. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Ireland. He unintentionally tarnished the works of William Shakespeare by claiming his own work was that of Shakespeare’s.

This brings me to one of the most important conclusions I have reached in this thesis. For any kind of forgery to be truly a forgery it is required that there is some kind of hypotext. A forgery is reliant on the existence of its hypotext. As Chatterton never had any form of hypotext to imitate, I would not deem him a forger. He cannot be called a forger simply because he published his own work under the name Rowley. Countless other artists have published works under pseudonyms without problems.

Peter Ackroyd’s inclusion of several well-known poets and other writers in *Chatterton* helps to create a metafictional world of literature, and it links not only these great writers to each other, but also to Chatterton himself. Famous writers like Chaucer, Eliot and more are all mentioned either by name or by quoting from their works. The novel is also full of quotations taken from Thomas Chatterton’s own writings. By doing this Peter Ackroyd favourably compares Chatterton’s writings with those of these other great writers.

Both novels are concerned with forgers, and they have in them a discussion of forgery, focusing on the morals involved in forging and the justification of creating a forgery. However, they come about this in very different ways. *Chatterton* is a very advanced metafictional and intertextual narrative presented in three different time periods. *The Lambs of London*, on the other hand, is a much simpler narrative, lacking the complicated postmodern qualities of *Chatterton*. In *The Lambs of London* Ackroyd certainly writes about the subject of forgery. However, this novel is as much a narrative about two families as it is about forgery. Specifically it deals with how forgery affects the people that otherwise believed it to be the genuine.   
Ackroyd managed in both *The Lambs of London* and *Chatterton* to create his trademark literary worlds full of characters taken from and around the world of literature.

In creating these two worlds Ackroyd embraces intertextuality to such a degree that both novels begin to be so crowded with these references that they become pastiches. *The Lambs of London* have so many Shakespearian elements in it that it can be read as a pastiche of a Shakespearian play. *Chatterton* with is many grotesque characters can also be regarded as a pastiche of Dickensian style characters.

Furthermore while dealing with the pastiche genre and its many subcategories that Genette and Hoesterey present I have come to the conclusion that forgery as a literary genre is a subcategory of pastiche. Forgery, in other words, is a legitimate form of pastiche.

As part of my definition of forgery I have used the new historicist term negotiation as I have found that it is useful in showing what happens when a forgery deceives its reader and thus makes the reader fail in his negotiation with the text. The function of a forgery must be to cheat its reader from the truth about its origins, and this is done by making the reader fail his negotiation with the forgery, thereby providing him with false information about the forgery believing it to be original.   
After my first finished reading of *Chatterton* I was convinced that the novel was a work belonging to new historicism. However, having analysed the novel more methodically it has become increasingly clear to me that this is not the case. It is not a new historical novel; rather it is a metafictional novel that in combining its metafiction with something more akin to a historical novel becomes a historiographic metafictional novel. However, while *Chatterton* and *The* *Lambs* *of* *London* may not be examples of new historicism, this does not mean that one cannot perform an analysis of them using the method of new historicism. New historicism is based on a constant negotiation and renegotiation between the past and the present; therefore it is possible to look at a text that takes place in the past using the optics of new historicism. Indeed, much can be learned by doing so, for, as is the case with *Chatterton* and *The* *Lambs* *of* *London*, more often than not both novels have in them a unique interpretation of history derived from the fictional retellings of the past.   
By introducing the notion of a forger into his literary worlds Ackroyd managed to show the interconnectedness between all types of texts. Much as Chatterton has a longing for a romanticised past and tries to recreate it in his poetry, so too does Ackroyd manage to create a fictional world where literature transcends the bounds of time and place to create a truly textual reality. It is in this world that Chatterton will live forever, as he is never forgotten in the passage of time.   
Peter Ackroyd fully embraces the use of intertextual and metafictional narrative devices in telling the story of a Thomas Chatterton, who was anything but a simple deceitful forger. In *Chatterton* Ackroyd shows how every literary text is connected, and how Thomas Chatterton was able to become part of this interconnectivity and thus take his place in the transcendent literary world.In my treatment of the question of what constitutes forgery one of the key qualities I came across was the necessity that a forgery needs to have some kind of tangible hypotext. One of the reasons that Chatterton was and is so beloved is that there never existed a real, historical blind priest named Rowley. One could say that instead Chatterton’s hypotext was an unrealistic romantic notion of the past. Ireland, on the other hand, had a real-life person for his hypotext, Shakespeare. And as such one could say that his forgery in fact did tarnish the reputation of a real person in opposition to Chatterton’s. Also it is worth mentioning that as soon as it was discovered that Shakespeare did not write *Vortigern*, this play was quickly dismissed by history having only recently begun seeing life on stage again. However, even after the discovery of his forgery or perhaps because of it Chatterton was embraced by the Romantics as a true genius. While Ireland was condemned for his “solemn mockery” Chatterton is glorified as a “marvellous child”.**Dansk resumé**

Specialets emne er brugen af metafiktion og intertekstualitet i to værker af den engelske forfatter Peter Ackroyd. Romanerne *Chatterton* (1987) og *The Lambs of London* (2004) anvender hver især disse postmoderne, narrative træk i deres diskussioner om litterær forfalskning og originalitet. Det er især disse diskussioner som specialet undersøger nærmere.  
I min analyse gør jeg brug af adskillige teoretikere, dog er den teoretiske del af specialet domineret af en komparativ diskussion af Gérard Genette og Ingeborg Hoestereys forskellige teorier om pastichebegrebet, og hvordan dette kan bruges. Som del af denne diskussion kommer jeg selv med min egen definition på et brugbart forfalskningsbegreb, da jeg finder både Genette og Hoestereys noget manglefuldt. Efter en længere gennemgang af Genettes seks forskellige typer af parodi og en sammenligning med udvalgte typer af Hoestereys pasticher, klassificerer jeg de forskellige forfalskere, der optræder i de to romaner, efter de opstillede teoretiske begreber. Det er med baggrund i denne opdeling og med den omfattende diskussion, der er at finde i de to romaner om forfalskning, at jeg har valgt at præsentere min egen forbedrede definition af, hvad der konstituerer forfalskning, og i hvilken grad Ireland og Chatterton opfylder denne.  
Jeg undersøger derudover det intertekstuelle forhold mellem *Chatterton* og Charles Dickens’ velkendte groteske karakterer, samt familiediskurserne i *The Lambs of London* og de forskellige Shakespeare-teksters samspil med dem.   
Som del af min komparative analyse af de to romaner undersøger jeg endvidere, hvordan de hver især er opbyggede narrativt. Dette er af særlig interesse, da deres narrative struktur er meget forskellig. *The Lambs of London* er en forholdsvis simpel fortælling om to familier, mens *Chatterton* derimod er langt mere kompliceret narrativ fordelt i tre tidsperioder, som der krydsklippes frem og tilbage imellem. I den narrative analyse indfører jeg palimpsestbegrebet.  
Specialet indeholder dernæst en diskussion om, hvorvidt man kan kalde de to bøger for nyhistoricistiske eller for historiografisk metafiktion. I denne diskussion bliver det dog hurtigt klart, at selv om begge bøger har nogle nyhistoristiske træk, så er de begge eksempler på historiografisk metafiktion. Som del af denne diskussion inddrages de to teoretikere Stephen Greenblatt og Linda Hutcheon.  
Både *The Lambs of London* og *Chatterton* indeholder grundlæggende diskussioner om originalitet og om forholdet mellem kunst og virkelighed. Måden, som Peter Ackroyd har valgt at behandle disse på, er dog vidt forskellig i de to romaner, ikke mindst på grund at de forskellige forfalskere, der indgår i hver af dem. Mens Thomas Chatterton bliver hyldet som en sand og genial digtertype, bliver William Henry Ireland skildret som en usikker svindler, der primært af familiemæssige årsager fanges i sit eget net af forfalskninger.  
Specialet konkluderer, at på grund af den overvældende sammenhæng, der eksisterer i den litterære verden, som Ackroyd arbejder inden for, så mister originalitetsbegrebet snart sin vigtighed og bliver i stedet afløst af den atemporale eller transhistoriske intertekstualitet, der eksisterer i store dele af Peter Ackroyds postmoderne forfatterskab.

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**Illustrations**

Henry Wallis, *The Death of Chatterton*. 1856. Oil on canvas, 62x93 cm, Tate, London.

John Flaxman, *Chatterton taking a bowl of poison*. (n.d.) pencil on paper, 18.8x15.4 cm, British Museum, London.

John Nixon, *The oaken chest or | The gold mines of Ireland a farce*. 1796. Hand-coloured etching, 42.1x44.9 cm, British Museum, London.

Beneath the title: '"the Earth hath Bubbles as the Water has and these are of them, Shakspere ['of inserted in pen]'

Beneath the design:  
'In A musty Old garret some where or another,   
This Chest has been found by some person or other.   
Yet by whom is A secret that must not be told   
For your mystery puzzles the young and the Old:   
But the Chest being here the contents you shall see,   
Subscribe but four Guineas as part of my fee.   
The first thing I shew you is a relick most rare,   
An astonishing Lock of the great Shakspeare's hair!   
Out of which twenty rings more or less have been made;   
Nor a Single Hair miss't from this wonderful Braid.   
The next is the Manuscript play of King Lear;   
It is true Master Critic so pray do not Sneer:   
In its own native form by no Editer drest;   
But in Adam Like Nakedness simple and chaste.   
An Original Sonnet I now shall present,   
From sweet Willy to Anna Hatherrewaye sent.   
Plainly telling in numbers so simple and new,   
That Willye thye Willye to his Anna still trewe   
With drawings and leases and deeds without number;   
And fifteen new Plays that have lain by as lumber:   
Which shall soon be brought forward to pleasure the town,   
All our pocketts to fill and our labour to Crown!   
For genious like Ours thats so little regarded,   
Ought some way or other to be well rewarded.   
Hark great Vortigern comes now ye criticks be dumb;   
This is Shakespeares I'll swear: If 'tis not 'tis a Hum!

Sylvester Harding, *The spirit of Shakspere appearing to his detractors*. 1796. Hand-coloured etching, 22.2x29.8 cm, British Museum, London.

Beneath the title:  
'Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee Undivulged crimes,  
Unwhipp'd of justice  
Shakspere.  
Ah me, Ah me, O dear, O dear,  
What Spectre's this, approaching here:  
Surely tis Shakspeare's injured shade.  
It fills my soul with so much dread  
It is, it is, thus on our knees,  
Let's strive his anger to appease.  
O Father of the British Stage,  
Whose wit has charm'd from age to age:  
Pardon the base unworthy flame,  
That Burn't to rob thee of thy fame.  
But now this Solemn mock'ry 's o'er  
Thy gracious mercy wee implore  
We'll never more disgrace thy page.  
Our Brains were gone a pilgrimage.'

**Front Page illustration**

Ireland, William Henry, "William Shakespeare" [N.d.] 1 p., folded sheet (265 x 180 mm). [Internet]. Available from http://ny.bloomsburyauctions.com/detail/NY032/286.0 [Accessed 28 July 2009]