

How I Did Not Write Some of My Books
*An Appropriation Lexicon*¹

Guy Bennett

Whatever is well said by another, is mine. – SENECA²

The practice of literary borrowing is rooted in a very long and rich tradition, reaching back to antiquity and stretching uninterrupted up to the present. It seems to know no cultural or linguistic boundaries, nor is it limited to any particular writerly form or genre. Examples are readily found across the literary spectrum, from folktales to lyric poetry – Calvino's *Italian Folktales* and Philippe Brunet's *L'Egal des dieux : cent versions d'un poème de Sappho* ["The Gods' Equal: One Hundred Versions of A Poem by Sappho"] both demonstrate how ancient texts have served as source material for writers over the ages.

My subject here, however, is not literary borrowing broadly speaking, but textual appropriation more narrowly defined. Thus I am not concerned with the appropriation of a given work (such as Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone*), genre or form (such as Rothenberg's *Lorca Suites*), or thematics or aesthetic (such as Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan*), but with the reutilization in one's own writing of text written by another writer.

What I am proposing below is a brief typology/genealogy of textual appropriation focusing on some of the primary techniques writers, including myself, have used to work from source materials. I will consider each approach separately, and present them in the form of a lexicon in order to highlight the specificity of each individual procedure and hopefully introduce some clarity into the terminology of writerly borrowing. As appropriation is common to many of the arts, I will draw occasional parallels with works of painting, music, and film, to broaden the discussion, emphasize connections between the various media, and recall that aesthetic recycling has long been a staple of artistic creation.

¹ This essay originally appeared in the first issue of *Fold Magazine* (2007).

² Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. Regarding the titles of works in languages other than English: I give the standard English title when possible, otherwise my translation of the title appears between brackets.

Appropriated Text

Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it. It clings to an author's words, uses his expressions, erases a wrong idea, replaces it with the right idea. – ISIDORE DUCASSE

This is perhaps the most difficult term to define precisely, precisely because it is the most ambiguous – one can appropriate text in many ways. This may explain why “appropriation” is often used in a general sense to describe all forms of textual borrowing.

Working from the definition of the verb “to appropriate,” which stresses the act of taking possession of something belonging to someone else, we could say that appropriated text is incorporated into or made to form a new body of text *without acknowledging its provenance*. I feel that the latter idea is particularly important, since to reveal the source is to acknowledge that it is, technically and legally speaking, the property of another writer. To conceal the source is to steal that property and present it as your own.

Though the act of appropriating text had long been a legitimate literary practice, common from antiquity through the late Middle Ages,³ with the advent of printing in the early Renaissance, which strengthened the bond between authors and their writings, and the creation of the first copyright law in the early 18th century, which created legal protection for that bond, the notion of textual appropriation became morally and legally problematic. Today of course the unacknowledged use in one's own work of words taken from another writer is considered plagiarism, and has led to the pulling of books from shelves, the cancellation of publishing contracts, movie deals, potential legal action, and stigmatization (cf the recent case of Kaavya Viswanathan). That certainly hasn't curtailed the practice, and the list of “literary plagiarizers” is quite long and includes many well-known names, from Shakespeare and Corneille to Alex Haley and Jerzy Kosinski.

One of the greatest appropriators of texts is undoubtedly Isidore Ducasse, the self-styled Comte de Lautréamont, whose works are a monument to the art of textual appropriation. Even his pseudonym was taken from another writer.⁴ The sources of his *Songs of Maldoror* are so numerous that several studies have been written on the subject, which has not yet been exhausted; the case of his *Poems* is no different. Regarding the *Songs*, in addition to overt allusions to and unattributed quotations from Baudelaire, the *Bible*, Blake, Byron, Chateaubriand, Dante, Daudet, Du Boisaymé, Goethe, Helmholtz, Horace, Hugo, La Fontaine, Lamartine, Leconte de Lisle, Maturin, Mickiewicz, Musset, Sade, and Young, entire passages have been taken verbatim, or with the only most minor of changes, from Chenu's *Encyclopédie d'Histoire naturelle* [“Encyclopedia of Natural History”] (which itself draws from Buffon and Montbéliard) and Pouchet's *Zoologie Classique* [“Classic Zoology”], as well as from several texts by Michelet (whose work was informed

³ There is in fact a genre dating back to antiquity – the cento – in which the entire text, whether verse or prose, is made up of unattributed borrowings.

⁴ From Eugène Sue, whose 1838 novel *Lautréamont* gave Ducasse his initial *nom de plume*.

by Pouchet), including *The Insect*, *The Sea*, and *The Bird*. In the second volume of *Poems*, from which the above epigraph on plagiarism is taken, plagiarized authors and works include the *Bible*, Dante, Hugo, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, Shakespeare, Vauvenargues, as well as himself, since he cannibalized lines and passages from both *Maldoror* and the first volume of *Poems* in writing it. True to his word, in these latter cases, Ducasse removed “wrong” ideas from the celebrated lines he stole, and replaced them with the “right” ones, as in his reworking of Pascal’s dictum: “Had Cleopatra’s nose been shorter, the face of the world would have changed.”, which becomes: “Had Cleopatra’s morals been less short-lived, the face of the world would have changed. But her nose wouldn’t have grown any longer.”

Collage

Feathers [“plumes”] may make plumage, but glue [“colle”] does not make collage.

– MAX ERNST

Borrowed from the visual arts, the term refers to the act of taking pieces from a given source or from various sources and combining them (with glue, *colle* in French), potentially with “original” material, to create a new work. In a literary context the glue is optional but the practice is otherwise the same.

“Collage” and “collage text” are often used interchangeably with “appropriated text” and indeed the two terms are similar, both referring to the incorporation of external materials into a new piece of writing. It seems to me, however, that there is a difference between the two, and that resides in their respective specificities: unlike appropriated text, collage by its very nature tends to foreground its heterogeneity and thereby emphasize its composite character. There are many ways to do this, of course, the most obvious being to actually identify the bits and pieces that make up the collage, as does Shelley Jackson, for example, in her hypertext novel *Patchwork Girl*. This postmodern version of *Frankenstein* incorporates passages from a number of source texts taken from writers ranging from Mary Shelly (whose novel is both Jackson’s conceptual premise and narrative point of departure) and Frank L. Baum (whose own *Patchwork Girl of Oz* gave Jackson her title), to Derrida, Cixous, and Lyotard, among others. All borrowings are clearly acknowledged in a section entitled “Sources” and in footnotes in the various lexias where the borrowed text appears, thus underscoring the patchwork metaphor.

The collaged materials can also be set off typographically, the use of different typefaces suggesting the disparate origins of the writing. This is the case of Michel Butor’s *Mobile*, a textual collage incorporating excerpted materials from a number of sources, whether books on various aspects of American history, travel guides and brochures, fragments of conversations overheard by the author while traveling in the U.S., statistical information on ethnic populations, names of newspapers and radio stations, list of ice cream flavors available at the local Howard Johnson, etc. The use of different typefaces – upper and lower case roman and italic for notional passages and appropriated text, upper case roman for geographic nouns, small

capitals for magazine names, etc. – reflects not only the heterogeneity of the verbal content, but also that of the semantic content: Butor’s novel purports to represent the United States,⁵ and its typographic diversity suggests the country’s diversity, be it ethnic, geographic, etc. As with *Patchwork Girl*, the collage technique in *Mobile* is both self-referential and motivated, i.e. related to the central theme of the story – the creation of a new being/state from a number of unrelated parts.

Cage made similar use of the collage technique in a number of his texts (though he preferred the term “mosaic” to describe them), most notably in the series entitled “How to Improve The World: You Will Only Make Matters Worse.”⁶ Here, too, the collage operates on both the textual and the typographic levels, as it combines fragments from many written sources set in a variety of typefaces. Additionally, one of these pieces (that of 1967) is printed in varying gradations of black, with passages ranging from a very light, almost illegible gray, to 100% black, which creates a shimmering effect on the page. The first of these works, published in Clark Coolidge’s magazine *Joglars* in 1966, set the tone for those that followed: its structure, i.e. the number of parts, the number of words per part, the choice of typeface, and the depth of indentations, was determined by the use of chance operations. As in the above examples, Cage’s use of the collage technique reflects the disparate nature of the text, whose heterogeneity is not only apparent on the textual level, but on the visual level as well.

Cut-Up

*You read the leaflets catalogues posters that sing out loud
That’s poetry this morning and for prose there are the newspapers*

– APOLLINAIRE

As the term implies, the printed source text is literally cut up and reorganized into a new work. The first discussion of the cut-up that I am aware of is Tzara’s “To Make A Dadaist Poem,” which appears in his 1920 *Dada Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love*. This is the (in)famous “poetry recipe” that explains how to make a poem from a newspaper article (though at this time the cut-up is simply called a “dadaist poem”). Breton also made some early cut-up poems, such as “The Mystery Corset” from his 1919 collection *Pawnshop*, and “Poem,” which appears in the final pages of the 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism*, in which Breton refers to it as an “as gratuitous an assemblage as possible ... of headlines and fragments cut out of

⁵ The French edition bears the subtitle “Study For A Representation of The United States” and begins with a map of the country, with each state outlined and identified by name, neither of which appear in the English edition, strangely enough.

⁶ There were eight of these diaristic works, one each for the years 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970-’71, 1971-’72, 1973-1982.

newspapers.”⁷ The cut-up is the writerly equivalent of the photomontage, a product of the same era practiced by Dadaist and Constructivist artists such as John Heartfield, Hannah Höch, El Lissitzky, and Aleksandr Rodchenko.⁸

The cut-up was rediscovered and given the name it goes by today in 1959 by Brion Gysin, as Burroughs noted in the essay “The Cut-Up Method of Brion Gysin.” This piece contains a brief history of the technique going back to Tzara, an explanation of the method in recipe-like fashion (as per Tzara), as well as a couple of examples of cut-up text (ditto): one of them a cut-up of Rimbaud’s “Voyelles,” the other of a few paragraphs of the essay itself. The first cut-up books – *Minutes to Go*, by Burroughs, Gysin, Corso, and Beiles; and *The Exterminator*, by Burroughs and Gysin – were published in 1960. Burroughs made further use of the technique in later works such as the *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket that Exploded*, and *Nova Express*, often collectively referred to as the “Cut-Up Trilogy.”

In addition to its value as a historical document, the above essay is noteworthy for a number of points: first of all, Burroughs emphasizes the cut-up’s inherent intertextuality (which is, of course, true of all types of textual borrowing), anticipating Barthes’ now famous definitions of a text given in “The Death of the Author.” The latter’s description of a text as “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash,” and “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture,” are foreshadowed by Burroughs’ blunt assertion that “All writing is in fact cut-ups. A collage of words read heard overheard.” “Use of scissors,” he adds, “renders the process explicit and subject to extension and variation.”⁹

Burroughs also notes that the cut-up technique is not limited to writing, but is inherent in filmmaking and (analogue) sound recording. While all edited films and tapes inevitably include some degree of cutting and splicing, at a minimum between successive shots and tracks, by their very nature many works foreground these techniques, as their joins have been emphasized rather than concealed. Burroughs’ own “cut-up films” (made with Antony Balch), such as *Towers Open Fire* (1963) and *The Cut-Ups* (1966), revel in the mechanics and aesthetic of the splice, as do the “metric” films of Peter Kubelka who had pioneered the approach several years before. His *Adebar* (1957), *Schwechater* (1958), and *Arnulf Rainer* (1960) all feature extremely rapid editing, with most cuts occurring in less-than-one-second intervals, in many passages on a frame-by-frame (1/24th of a second) basis. In recorded music, the cut-up technique has driven compositions ranging from Cage’s *Imaginary Landscape No. 5* (1952) and *Williams’ Mix* (1952), both of which feature

⁷ Breton, *Œuvres complètes*, v. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 341.

⁸ Clearly I am referring here to the montage of photographs cut up and reassembled to create new images, as opposed to superimposed montages created by sandwiching negatives during the printing process. The latter technique, created in the mid-19th century by Henry Peach Robinson, bears the same name but does not involve cutting.

⁹ One such variation used by Burroughs himself is the “fold-in method”: a page of text is folded in half vertically and set on another page of text, the resulting composite text is read normally, i.e. left to right, top to bottom.

complex, rapid edits,¹⁰ to the Beatles' 1967 "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" and their 1968 "Revolution Number 9," both of which feature previously existing recordings cut-up and spliced together.¹¹

Digital technology has softened the violent materiality of the cut-up, giving us the "sample" (which I suppose could also be termed the "cut-and-paste-up"), though the original samplers were analogue keyboard instruments: the Chamberlin and Mellotron, both of which used brief prerecorded tapes that were activated by the keys. The first use (to my knowledge) of sampled sound: Ottorino Respighi's 1924 symphonic poem *Pines of Rome*, which features a phonograph recording of a nightingale singing.

Found text

Everything can be used, but of course one doesn't know it at the time. – JOSEPH CORNELL

The source text is presented verbatim as a new work by the writer in question. A fictitious example: Borges' "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*," though in a typical Borgesian twist the protagonist did not plan to recycle the 17th-century classic but to write it himself. As Borges notes, "[Menard's] admirable ambition was to produce a number of pages which coincided – word for word and line for line – with those of Miguel de Cervantes," and of course Menard succeeds in doing so. The highlight of the story comes when the narrator compares a passage from Cervantes' *Quixote* with the same passage from Menard's, demonstrating how, though verbally identical, Menard's version is superior.

A real-life example: Reznikoff's *Testimony* and *Holocaust*, which are made up of witness testimony excerpted from legal documents, the former drawn from hundreds of volumes of the reporter series, and the latter from *The Trials of the Major War Criminals at Nuremburg* and *The Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem*. Though Reznikoff faithfully quotes his source texts, the latter are subject to a subtle mediation on being selected, edited, and put into verse. They are also transformed in their presentation as poetry. As with Duchamp's readymades to which they are related, this transformation removes them from the realm of the historical document and relocates them in the territory of art, a process that endows these poems with aesthetic distance and conceptual weight such that they become as powerful a statement about poetry itself as they are about the events they relate.

¹⁰ In fact, the score of *Williams Mix* is nothing more than a diagram of the different splices used to join the various tapes together.

¹¹ In addition to its background of cut-up and randomly assembled tapes of steam organs, the lyrics of "Mr Kite" were taken in great part from a 19th-century circus poster, so the song uses both appropriated sound and text. In fact, the Beatles frequently utilized appropriated text in their lyrics, drawing from books such as Timothy Leary's *The Psychedelic Experience* (in "Tomorrow Never Knows") and the *Tao Te Ching* ("The Inner Light"), to newspaper articles ("A Day in The Life"), as well as from the lyrics of other songs, by themselves and by others (for example, "Come Together" features a line from Chuck Berry's "You Can't Catch Me," for which Lennon was sued.)

I know of very few found texts to have been published unmodified by a writer as his own work. The few that come to mind include Breton's 1923 "PSTT," which is an unmodified passage from the Paris phonebook with the addresses and telephone numbers of all of the Bretons listed at the time (with the exception of André Breton himself, whose name appears only at the end of the excerpt, as a signature); and Richard Brautigan's "San Francisco," which appears in his *The Pill Versus the Springhill Mine Disaster*, and which I will quote here. A note introducing the poem explains that it "was found written on a paper bag by Richard Brautigan in a laundromat in San Francisco. The author is unknown." Here it is:

"San Francisco"

By accident, you put
Your money in my
Machine (#4)
By accident, I put
My money in another
Machine (#6)
On purpose, I put
Your clothes in the
Empty machine full
Of water and no
Clothes

It was lonely.¹²

As innocuous as it may seem, "San Francisco" is both a provocative and problematic poem: though Brautigan acknowledges that he himself did not write it ("the author is unknown"), it appears in a book written by him and is copyrighted in his name. One inevitably presents it – as I have here – as being "by" Brautigan, though supposedly it is not. In spite of its lighthearted humor, it tests the limits of the notion of authorship, since it is the legally protected intellectual property of a writer who openly admits he has no legal claim to it. To me this piece recalls in tone and intention Williams' 1950 "This is just to say," ostensibly a found poem and which, if indeed it is what it appears to be (i.e. a note left for the person who had put the plums in the ice box and that was later published as a poem), is a fine example of stellionate or self-plagiarism, since on publishing the text Williams would have been repurposing something he himself had written.

¹² Brautigan, *The Pill Versus The Springhill Mine Disaster* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1968), p. 10.

A related category is what we could call the “overheard poem,” which, as the name implies, consists of words and phrases overheard by the poet and noted down as such. Works of this type have also been referred to as “conversation poems” and “simultaneous poems,” in that they seek to convey the verbal simultaneity of a given situation, though neither of these terms seems exact enough. Apollinaire’s “Monday in the Rue Christine,” from his 1918 *Calligrammes*, is a good example of the overheard poem. According to Jacques Dyssord, who was drinking with Apollinaire and Peter Madsen in a café in the Rue Christine one evening in December 1913, the poem is essentially a notation of their discussion. “You will find our conversation,” he wrote, “in one of Apollinaire’s most beautiful poems, which was written there, quickly in pencil, on the edge of a table.”¹³ Rather than follow their exchange as it unfolded, the poem presents their discussion as a fractured, non-sequential text that suggests a Cubist aesthetic. Of course this comes as no surprise, since Apollinaire knew well Picasso, Braque, et al, and wrote *The Cubist Painters*, an important early study of their work. Nor should we forget that he had originally planned to publish some of the calligrammes in 1914 under the title: *I’m a Painter, Too*.

Writing Through

...that which he hid reveal I... – TOM PHILLIPS

A term coined by John Cage to describe the act of extracting one text from another, whatever the method used. Cage himself frequently utilized this technique, most notably in a series of texts derived from Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake*. To “write through” his source, Cage invariably used a mesostic on its author’s name to determine the words to be extracted, a mesostic resembling an acrostic, only the “spine” letters run down the middle of lines rather than at the beginning (and as opposed to the telestich, in which the “spine” letters run down the end), as in the following example from “Writing for the Second Time Through *Finnegan’s Wake*”:

you were the doubleJoyn ted
 jAnitor
 the Morning
 thEy were delivered and you’ll be a grandfer
 when the ritehand Seizes what the lovearm knows

¹³ Apollinaire, *Œuvres poétiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), p. 1081.

hetty Jane's a child
she'll be cOming
theY're
tourCh
to rEkindle the flame¹⁴

Cage created several variations on the mesostic, and in most cases allowed himself to include words either preceding or following those bearing the spine letters. He explained the use of these “wing words,” as he later called them, in the score of the *Roaratorio*, writing that “Other adjacent words from the original text ... may be used according to taste, limited, say, to forty-three characters to the left and forty-three characters to the right....”¹⁵ Such a statement, with its appeal to individual taste and arbitrary intentionality, conflicts with Cage’s oft stated (though oft contradicted by his actual practice) predilection for limiting authorial intent during the creative act, an inconsistency for which he was occasionally taken to task by his critics.

Cage’s use of the mesostic is related to Mac Low’s “diastic reading-through text-selection methods,” which preceded and undoubtedly inspired it. Mac Low began working with such methods in January 1963, and wrote many poems and performance pieces using them, for example “The Bluebird Asymmetries,” “Let It Go,” and “Quatorzains from & for Emily Dickinson,” as well as the books *The Virginia Woolf Poems* and *Barnesbook* were all written using various diastic devices, which Mac Low described in these terms:

Most of these methods use a “seed” or “index” word or phrase that is spelled out by reading through a source text to find words that have, successively, the seed’s letters in corresponding places.... The seed is used to select words (or other linguistic units) that *spell it through* repeatedly throughout a poem, hence, “diastic” < Gk. *Dia* through + *stichos* row, line, verse, on somewhat imperfect analogy with “acrostic”: the seed is spelled *through* in the poem’s *lines*.¹⁶

Unlike Cage, Mac Low often pointed out that though non-intentional (in that the author cannot foresee what his text will be), these methods are in fact deterministic (in that he has devised and implemented a procedure intended to generate text according to certain specifications). Thus they reduce but do not eliminate authorial intent, as some of Cage’s statements on the related use of chance and indeterminacy might lead us to believe. In fact, for Mac Low “Nonintentional operations and intuition seem made for each other!”, since they bring us to work in often interesting ways we might never otherwise discover.

¹⁴ Cage, *Empty Words* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), p. 140.

¹⁵ Cage, *Roaratorio* (New York: Mode Records, 1992), p. 60.

¹⁶ Mac Low, *Barnesbook* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1996), pp. 47–48.

Though there are probably as many “writing through” methods as there are poets using them, I’d like to highlight one work that is particularly emblematic of the technique generally speaking; I am thinking of Tom Phillips’ *A Humument*, whose source was W.H. Mallock’s 1892 triple-decker *A Human Document*. In Phillips’ remarkable work, which was inspired by Burroughs’ use of the cut-up, the technique of writing through is brought prominently to the fore, since it has been literally superimposed on the printed pages of its source: in creating *A Humument* Phillips drew on and/or painted out those words of the original text that he did not wish to retain, thus highlighting the words selected to form his new work. At times Mallock’s words are visible, even legible, beneath Phillips’ overpainting, at times they are entirely obscured by it. The resulting palimpsest allows an interesting intermittent dialogue between the source work and its derivative, a relationship rendered more complex still by the interplay between Phillips’ own text and the paintings and drawings – some abstract, some figurative – used to reveal them. Unlike most “written through texts,” which inevitably take the place of their sources on the page, thereby concealing the processes that generated them, *A Humument* reveals to the reader its own coming into being and thus allows him to experience the method with which it was created.

Texts created by writing through the texts of others are more often than not reductive by nature, as all of the above cases show, but occasionally the opposite is true. Perhaps the most striking example of an expansive text is Schwitters’ *Ursonate*, one of the highpoints of modernist sound poetry. The entire work, which runs to more than 25 pages and lasts more than 30 minutes when performed, was expanded from a single, two-line *plakatgedicht* or “poster poem” by Raoul Hausmann, which in its entirety reads: “fmsbwtözäu / pggiv-...?mü.” This minimal text is the seed from which Schwitters’ monumental sound poem grew, which it did in pseudo-sonata fashion: it begins with a prelude derived from Hausmann’s poem and which is followed by four movements, each with a number of themes, developments, and variations (with fragments and echoes of Hausmann throughout), and concludes, after a cadenza which can be improvised by the performer if he or she wishes, with a finale. The *Ursonate* is the sonic equivalent of Schwitters’ first *Merzbau*, an architectural assemblage which likewise grew by accretion from a column-like object to an entire interior construction that transformed the artist’s Hannover home: after filling his studio, the *Merzbau* spilled into his son’s adjacent playroom, then grew out onto the adjoining balcony, into an attic room, then into the space beneath the balcony, and, finally, climbed down into a well, its construction stopping at water level. Expansive though it may have been, the *Merzbau* literally disappeared in a single, reductive event: it was destroyed in an Allied bombing raid in October 1943.

* * *

By way of a conclusion...

The practice of appropriation – textual or otherwise – has long been of particular interest to me, not only on a conceptual level, but as a writerly procedure as well. As such it has informed and driven my own

work from the very beginning. I am sure that it is related to my activity as a translator, since to translate is also to write from a source text, though I can't say whether I have come to translation from my interest in appropriation, or whether I have come to appropriation from my interest in translation. Whatever the case may be, the act of borrowing remains a constant in my work, and each of the collections I have published to date, as well as most of my as yet "uncollected" poems, have been derived from previously existing source materials.¹⁷

Not only is textual appropriation useful as a machine for creating new work, as Mark Ford has written it "underlines the truism that all writing depends on other writing."¹⁸ In displacing the point of origin of the text, however, it causes us to reconsider what it means to write, and what we mean by "original text" and "original author." By extension it challenges the notion of originality itself, thus calling into question the single most fundamental aesthetic criteria in western art since the Renaissance.

Finally, textual appropriation can have the added benefit of giving new life to old texts by drawing our attention to them and encouraging us to seek them out. Certainly Du Boisaymé's dissertation *De la courbe que décrit un chien en courant après son maître* ["On The Curve Described by A Dog Running After His Master"] is only known today because Ducasse used its title in the fifth song of *Maldoror*. Mallock would likewise be a footnote to readers today (and undoubtedly is to most), though I am sure than many, like myself, know of him and have actually read passages from *A Human Document* simply because Phillips used it to create *A Humument*. That being the case, one can only wonder about the myriad works that have not tempted successive generations of literary plagiarists, all of those lost books that never became found texts. To go out on a bit of stellionate, I'll conclude by saying that *unfound poetry calls for its own disappearance*.

¹⁷ An avowal which prompted one listener at a reading to comment: "You mean you didn't actually write any of them?"

¹⁸ Ford, "Love and Theft." *London Review of Books*. 2 December 2004. 30 May 2006

<<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n23/print/fordo1.html>>