

“property” doesn’t capture. And works of art exist simultaneously in two economies, a market economy and a *gift economy*.

The cardinal difference between gift and commodity exchange is that a gift establishes a feeling-bond between two people, whereas the sale of a commodity leaves no necessary connection. I go into a hardware store, pay the man for a hacksaw blade, and walk out. I may never see him again. The disconnect-ness is, in fact, a virtue of the commodity mode. We don’t want to be bothered, and if the clerk always wants to chat about the family, I’ll shop elsewhere. I just want a hacksaw blade. But a gift makes a connection. There are many examples, the candy or cigarette offered to a stranger who shares a seat on the plane, the few words that indicate goodwill between passengers on the late-night bus. These tokens establish the simplest bonds of social life, but the model they offer may be extended to the most complicated of unions—marriage, parenthood, tutorship. If a value is placed on these (often essentially unequal) exchanges, they degenerate into something else.

Yet one of the more difficult things to comprehend is that the gift economies—like those that sustain open source software—coexist so naturally with the market. It is precisely this doubleness in art practices that we must identify, ratify, and enshrine in our lives as participants in culture, either as “producers” or “consumers.” Art that matters to us—which moves the heart, or revives the soul, or delights the senses, or offers courage for living, however we choose to describe the experience—is received as a gift is received. Even if we’ve paid a fee at the door of the museum or concert hall, when we are touched by a work of art something comes to us that has nothing to do with the price. The daily commerce of our lives proceeds at its own constant level, but a gift conveys an uncommodifiable surplus of inspiration.

The way we treat a thing can change its nature, though. Religions often prohibit the sale of sacred objects, the implication being that their sanctity is lost if they are bought and sold. We consider it unacceptable to sell sex, babies, body organs, legal rights, and votes. The idea that something should never be commodified is generally known as *inalienability* or *unalienability*—a concept most famously expressed by Thomas Jefferson in the phrase “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights. . . .” A work of art seems to be a hardier breed; it can be sold in the market and still emerge a work of art. But if it is true that in the essential commerce of art a gift is carried by the work from the artist to his audience, if I am right to say that where there is no gift there is no art, then it may be possible to destroy a work of art by converting it into a pure commodity. I don’t maintain that art can’t be bought and sold,

but that the gift portion of the work places a constraint upon our merchandising. This is the reason why even a really beautiful, ingenious, powerful ad (of which there are a lot) can never be any kind of real art: an ad has no status as gift; i.e., it's never really *for* the person it's directed at.

The power of a gift economy remains difficult for the empiricists of our market culture to understand. In our times, the rhetoric of the market presumes that everything should be and can be appropriately bought, sold, and owned—a tide of alienation lapping daily at the dwindling redoubt of the unalienable. In freemarket theory, an intervention to halt propertization is considered “paternalistic,” because it inhibits the free action of the citizen, now repositied as a “potential entrepreneur.” Of course, in the real world, we know that child-rearing, family life, education, socialization, sexuality, political life, and many other basic human activities require insulation from market forces. In fact, paying for many of these things can ruin them. We may be willing to peek at *Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire* or an eBay auction of the ova of fashion models, but only to reassure ourselves that some things are still beneath our standards of dignity.

What's remarkable about gift economies is that they can flourish in the most unlikely places—in rundown neighborhoods, on the Internet, in scientific communities, and among members of Alcoholics Anonymous. A classic example is commercial blood systems, which generally produce blood supplies of lower safety, purity, and potency than volunteer systems. A gift economy may be superior when it comes to maintaining a group's commitment to certain extra-market values.

### The Commons

Another way of understanding the presence of gift economies—which dwell like ghosts in the commercial machine—is in the sense of a *public commons*. A commons, of course, is anything like the streets over which we drive, the skies through which we pilot airplanes, or the public parks or beaches on which we dally. A commons belongs to everyone and no one, and its use is controlled only by common consent. A commons describes resources like the body of ancient music drawn on by composers and folk musicians alike, rather than the commodities, like “Happy Birthday,” for which ASCAP, 114 years after it was written, continues to collect a fee. Einstein's theory of relativity is a commons. Writings in the public domain are a commons. Gossip about celebrities is a commons. The silence in a movie theater is a transitory

commons, impossibly fragile, treasured by those who crave it, and constructed as a mutual gift by those who comprise it.

The world of art and culture is a vast commons, one salted through with zones of utter commerce yet which remains gloriously immune to any overall commodification. The closest resemblance is to the commons of a *language*: altered by every contributor, expanded by even the most passive user. That a language is a commons doesn't mean that the community owns it; rather it belongs *between* people, possessed by no one, not even by society as a whole.

Nearly any commons, though, can be encroached upon, partitioned, enclosed. The American commons include tangible assets such as public forests and minerals, intangible wealth such as copyrights and patents, critical infrastructures such as the Internet and government research, and cultural resources such as the broadcast airwaves and public spaces. They include resources we've paid for as taxpayers and inherited from previous generations. They're not just an inventory of marketable assets; they're social institutions and cultural traditions that define us as Americans and enliven us as human beings. Some invasions of the commons are sanctioned because we can no longer muster a spirited commitment to the public sector. The abuse goes unnoticed because the theft of the commons is seen in glimpses, not in panorama. We may occasionally see a former wetland paved; we may hear about the breakthrough cancer drug that tax dollars helped develop, the rights to which pharmaceutical companies acquired for a song. The larger movement goes too much unremarked. The notion of a *commons of cultural materials* goes more or less unnamed.

Honoring the commons is not a matter of moral exhortation. It is a practical necessity. We in Western society are going through a period of intensifying belief in private ownership, to the detriment of the public good. We have to remain constantly vigilant to prevent raids by those who would selfishly exploit our common heritage for their private gain. Such raids on our natural resources are not examples of enterprise and initiative. They are attempts to take from all the people just for the benefit of a few.

#### **Undiscovered Public Knowledge**

Artists and intellectuals disheartened by the prospects for originality can take heart from a phenomenon identified about twenty years ago by Don Swanson,

a library scientist at the University of Chicago. He called it “undiscovered public knowledge.” Swanson showed that standing problems in medical research may be significantly addressed, perhaps even solved, simply by systematically surveying the scientific literature. Left to its own devices, research tends to become more specialized and abstracted from the real-world problems that motivated it and to which it remains relevant. This suggests that such a problem may be tackled effectively not by commissioning more research but by assuming that most or all of the solution can already be found in various scientific journals, waiting to be assembled by someone willing to read across specialties. Swanson himself did this in the case of Raynaud’s syndrome, a disease that causes the fingers of young women to become numb. His finding is especially striking—perhaps even scandalous—because it happened in the ever-expanding biomedical sciences.

Undiscovered public knowledge emboldens us to question the extreme claims to originality made in press releases and publishers’ notices: is an intellectual or creative offering truly novel, or have we just forgotten a worthy precursor? Does solving certain scientific problems really require massive additional funding, or could a computerized search engine, creatively deployed, do the same job more quickly and cheaply? Lastly, does our appetite for creative vitality require the violence and exasperation of another avant-garde, with its wearisome killing-the-father imperatives, or might we be better off ratifying *the ecstasy of influence*—and deepening our willingness to understand the commonality and timelessness of the methods and motifs available to artists?

### Give All

A few years ago, the Film Society of Lincoln Center announced a retrospective of the works of Dariush Mehrjui, then a fresh enthusiasm of mine. Mehrjui is one of Iran’s finest filmmakers, and the only one whose subject was personal relationships among the upper-middle-class intelligentsia. Needless to say, opportunities to view his films were—and remain—rare indeed. I headed uptown for one, an adaptation of J. D. Salinger’s *Franny and Zooey*, titled *Pari*, only to discover at the door of the Walter Reade Theater that the screening had been canceled: its announcement had brought threat of a lawsuit down on the Film Society. True, these were Salinger’s rights under the law. Yet why would he care that some obscure Iranian filmmaker had paid him

homage with a meditation on his heroine? Would it have damaged his book or robbed him of some crucial remuneration had the screening been permitted? The fertile spirit of stray connection—one stretching across what is presently seen as the direst of international breaches—had in this case been snuffed out. The cold, undead hand of one of my childhood literary heroes had reached out from its New Hampshire redoubt to arrest my present-day curiosity.

A few assertions, then: Any text that has infiltrated the common mind to the extent of *Gone With the Wind* or *Lolita* or *Ulysses* inexorably joins the language of culture. A map-turned-to-landscape, it has moved to a place beyond enclosure or control. The authors and their heirs should consider the subsequent parodies, refractions, quotations, and revisions an honor, or at least the price of a rare success.

A corporation that has imposed an inescapable notion—Mickey Mouse, Band-Aid—on the cultural language should pay a similar price.

The primary objective of copyright is not to reward the labor of authors but “to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts.” To this end, copyright assures authors the right to their original expression, but encourages others to build freely upon the ideas and information conveyed by a work. This result is neither unfair nor unfortunate.

Contemporary copyright, trademark, and patent law is corrupted. The case for perpetual copyright is a denial of the essential gift-aspect of the creative act. Arguments in its favor are as un-American as those for the repeal of the estate tax.

Art is sourced. Apprentices graze in the field of culture.

Digital sampling is an art method like any other, neutral in itself.

Allusion is a step toward making the modern world possible for art.

Despite hand-wringing at each technological turn—radio, the Internet—the future will be much like the past. Artists will sell some things, but also give some things away. Change may be troubling for those who crave less ambiguity, but the life of an artist has never been filled with certainty.

The dream of a perfect systematic remuneration is nonsense. I pay rent with the price my words bring when published in glossy magazines and at the same moment offer them for almost nothing to impoverished literary quarterlies, or speak them for free into the air in a radio interview. So what are they worth? What would they be worth if some future Dylan worked them into a song? Should I care to make such a thing impossible?

Any text is woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The citations that go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*; they are quotations without inverted commas. The kernel, the soul—let's go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of all human utterances—is plagiarism. For substantially all ideas are second-hand, consciously or unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources, and daily used by the garnerer with a pride and satisfaction born of the superstition that he originated them; there is not a rag of originality about them anywhere except the little discoloration they get from his mental and moral caliber and temperament, and which is revealed in characteristics of phrasing. Old and new make the warp and woof of every moment. There is no thread that is not a twist of these two strands. By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote. Neurological study has lately shown that memory, imagination, and consciousness itself is stitched, quilted, pastiched. If we cut-and-paste our selves, might we not forgive it of our artworks?

Artists and writers—and our advocates, our guilds and agents—too often subscribe to implicit claims of originality that do injury to these truths. And we too often, as hucksters and bean-counters in the tiny enterprises of our selves, act to spite the gift portion of our privileged roles. People live differently who treat a portion of their wealth as a gift. If we devalue and obscure the gift-economy function of our art practices, we turn our works into nothing more than advertisements for themselves. We may console ourselves that our lust for subsidiary rights in virtual perpetuity comprises some heroic counter to rapacious corporate interests. But the truth is that with artists pulling on one side and corporations pulling on the other, the loser is the collective public imagination from which we were nourished in the first place, and whose existence as the ultimate repository of our offerings makes the work worth doing in the first place.

As a novelist, I'm a cork on the ocean of story, a leaf on a windy day. Pretty soon I'll be blown away. For the moment I'm grateful to be making a living, and so must ask that for a limited time (in the Thomas Jefferson sense) you please respect my small, treasured usemonopolies. Don't pirate my editions; do plunder my visions. The name of the game is Give All. You, reader, are welcome to my stories. They were never mine in the first place, but I gave them to you. If you have the inclination to pick them up, take them with my blessings.

### KEY: I IS ANOTHER

This skeleton key to the preceding essay names the source of every line I stole, warped, and cobbled together as I “wrote” (except, alas, those sources I forgot along the way). First uses of a given author or speaker are highlighted in bold-face. Nearly every sentence I culled I also revised, at least slightly—for necessities of space, in order to produce a more consistent tone, or simply because I felt like it.

#### Title

The phrase “the ecstasy of influence,” which embeds a rebuking play on **Harold Bloom**’s “anxiety of influence,” is lifted from spoken remarks by Professor **Richard Dienst** of Rutgers.

#### Love and Theft

“... a cultivated man of middle age ...” to “... hidden, unacknowledged memory?” These lines, with some adjustments for tone, belong to the **anonymous editor or assistant** who wrote the dust-flap copy of **Michael Maar**’s *The Two Lolitas*. Of course, in my own experience, dust-flap copy is often a collaboration between author and editor. Perhaps this was also true for Maar.

“The history of literature ...” to “... borrow and quote?” comes from Maar’s book itself.

“Appropriation has always ...” to “... Ishmael and Queequeg...” This paragraph makes a hash of remarks from an interview with **Eric Lott**, conducted by **David McNair** and **Jayson Whitehead**, and incorporates both interviewers’ and interviewee’s observations. (The text-interview form can be seen as a commonly accepted form of multivocal writing. Most interviewers prime their subjects with remarks of their own—leading the witness, so to speak—and gently refine their subjects’ statements in the final printed transcript.)

“I realized this ...” to “... for a long time.” The anecdote is cribbed, with an elision to avoid appropriating a dead grandmother, from **Jonathan Rosen**’s *The Talmud and the Internet*. I’ve never seen 84, *Charing Cross Road*, nor searched the Web for a Donne quote. For me it was through Rosen to Donne, Hemingway, website, et al. I avoid spiritual matters in my own writing, and so I experienced a peculiar discomfort hijacking Rosen’s gently searching tone.

"When I was thirteen ..." to "... no plagiarist at all." This is from **William Gibson's** "God's Little Toys," in *Wired* magazine. My own first encounter with William Burroughs, also at age thirteen, was less epiphanic. Having grown up with a painter father who, during family visits to galleries or museums, approvingly noted collage and appropriation techniques in the visual arts (Picasso, Claes Oldenburg, Stuart Davis), I was gratified, but not surprised, to learn that literature could encompass the same methods.

#### Contamination Anxiety

"In 1941, on his front porch ..." to "... 'this song comes from the cotton field.'" **Siva Vaidhyanathan**, *Copyrights and Copywrongs*.

"... enabled by a kind ... freely reworked." **Kembrew McLeod**, *Freedom of Expression*. In *Owning Culture*, McLeod notes that, as he was writing, he happened to be listening to a lot of old country music, and in my casual listening I noticed that *six* country songs shared *exactly* the same vocal melody, including Hank Thompson's "Wild Side of Life," the Carter Family's "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes," Roy Acuff's "Great Speckled Bird," Kitty Wells's "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," Reno & Smiley's "I'm Using My Bible for a Roadmap," and Townes Van Zandt's "Heavenly Houseboat Blues." ... In his extensively researched book, *Country: The Twisted Roots of Rock 'n' Roll*, Nick Tosches documents that the melody these songs share is "ancient and British." There were no recorded lawsuits stemming from these appropriations. ...

"... musicians have gained ... through allusion." **Joanna Demers**, *Steal This Music*.

"In 1970s Jamaica ..." to "... hours of music." Gibson.

"Visual, sound, and text collage ..." to "... realm of cultural production." This plunders, rewrites, and amplifies paragraphs from McLeod's *Owning Culture*, except for the line about collage being the art form of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which I heard filmmaker **Craig Baldwin** say, in defense of sampling, in the trailer for a forthcoming documentary, *Copyright Criminals*.

"In a courtroom scene ..." to "... would cease to exist." **Dave Itzkoff**, *New York Times*.

"... the remarkable series of 'plagiarisms' ..." to "... we want more plagiarism." **Richard Posner**, combined from The Becker-Posner Blog and *The Atlantic Monthly*.



"Most artists are brought . . ." to " . . . by art itself." These words, and many more to follow, come from Lewis Hyde's *The Gift*. Above any other book I've here plagiarized, I commend *The Gift* to your attention.

"Finding one's voice . . . filiations, communities, and discourses." Seman-ticist George L. Dillon, quoted in Rebecca Moore Howard's "The New Abo-riticism Comes to Plagiarism."

"Inspiration could be . . . act never experienced." Ned Rorem, found on several "great quotations" sites on the Internet.

"Invention, it must be humbly admitted . . . out of chaos." Mary Shelley, from her introduction to *Frankenstein*.

"What happens . . ." to " . . . contamination anxiety." Kevin J. H. Detmar, from "The Illusion of Modernist Allusion and the Politics of Postmodern Plagiarism."

#### Surrounded by Signs

"The surrealists believed . . ." to the Walter Benjamin quote. From *Christian Keathley's Cinephilia and History, or the Wind in the Trees*, a book that treats fannish fetishism as the secret at the heart of film scholarship. Keathley notes, for instance, Joseph Cornell's surrealist-influenced 1936 film *Rose Hobart*, which simply records "the way in which Cornell himself watched the 1931 Hollywood potboiler *East of Borneo*, fascinated and distracted as he was by its B-grade star"—the star, of course, being Rose Hobart herself. This, I suppose, makes Cornell a sort of father to computer-enabled fan-creator rework-ings of Hollywood product, like the version of George Lucas's *The Phantom Menace* from which the noxious Jar Jar Binks character was purged; both in-corporate a viewer's subjective preferences into a revision of a filmmaker's work.

" . . . early in the history of photography" to " . . . without compensating the source." From *Free Culture*, by Lawrence Lessig, the greatest of public advo-cates for copyright reform, and the best source if you want to get radicalized in a hurry.

"For those whose ganglia . . ." to " . . . discourse broke down." From David Foster Wallace's essay "E Unibus Pluram," reprinted in *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*. I have no idea who Wallace's "gray eminence" is or was. I inserted the example of Dickens into the paragraph; he strikes me as overlooked in the lineage of authors of "brand-name" fiction.

"I was born ... *Mary Tyler Moore Show*." These are the reminiscences of **Mark Hosler** from *Negativland*, a collaging musical collective that was sued by U2's record label for their appropriation of "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." Although I had to adjust the birth date, Hosler's cultural menu fits me like a glove.

"The world is a home ... popculture products ..." McLeod.

"Today, when we can eat ..." to "... flat sights." Wallace.

"You're surrounded by signs. Ignore none of them." This phrase, which I unfortunately rendered somewhat leaden with the word "imperative," comes from **Steve Erickson's** novel *Our Ecstatic Days*.

#### Usemonopoly

"... everything from attempts ..." to "defendants as young as twelve." **Robert Boynton**, *The New York Times Magazine*, "The Tyranny of Copyright?"

"A time is marked ..." to "... what needs no defense." Lessig, this time from *The Future of Ideas*.

"Thomas Jefferson, for one," to "... respective writings and discoveries." Boynton.

"... second comers might do a much better job than the originator..." I found this phrase in Lessig, who is quoting Vaidhyanaṭhan, who himself is characterizing a judgment written by **Learned Hand**.

"But Jefferson's vision ... owned by someone or other." Boynton.

"The distinctive feature ..." to "... term is extended." Lessig, again from *The Future of Ideas*.

"When old laws ..." to "... had been invaded." **Jessica Litman**, *Digital Copyright*.

"I say to you ... woman home alone." I found the Valenti quote in McLeod. Now fill in the blank: Jack Valenti is to the public domain as \_\_\_\_\_ is to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### The Beauty of Second Use

"In the first ..." to "... builds an archive." Lessig.

"Most books ... only one year ..." Lessig.

"Active reading is ..." to "... do not own..." This is a mashup of **Henry Jenkins**, from his *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, and **Michel de Certeau**, whom Jenkins quotes.

"In the children's classic ..." to "... its loving use." Jenkins. (Incidentally, have the holders of the copyright to *The Velveteen Rabbit* had a close look at *Toy Story*? There could be a lawsuit there.)

#### Source Hypocrisy, or Disnial

"The Walt Disney Company ... alas, *Treasure Planet* ..." Lessig.

"Imperial Plagiarism" is the title of an essay by **Marilyn Randall**.

"... spurred David Byrne ... *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* ..." **Chris Dahlen**, *Pitchfork*—though in truth by the time I'd finished, his words were so utterly dissolved within my own that had I been an ordinary cutting-and-pasting journalist it never would have occurred to me to give Dahlen a citation. The effort of preserving another's distinctive phrases as I worked on this essay was sometimes beyond my capacities; this form of plagiarism was oddly hard work.

"Kenneth Koch ..." to "... déluge of copycats!" **Emily Nussbaum**, *The New York Times Book Review*.

#### You Can't Steal a Gift

"You can't steal a gift." **Dizzy Gillespie**, defending another player who'd been accused of poaching Charlie Parker's style: "You can't steal a gift. Bird gave the world his music, and if you can hear it you can have it."

"A large, diverse society ... intellectual property." Lessig.

"And works of art ..." to "... marriage, parenthood, mentorship." Hyde.

"Yet one ... so naturally with the market." **David Bollier**, *Silent Theft*.

"Art that matters ..." to "... bought and sold." Hyde.

"We consider it unacceptable ..." to "... certain unalienable rights..."

**Bollier**, paraphrasing **Margaret Jane Radin's** *Contested Commodities*.

"A work of art ..." to "... constraint upon our merchandising." Hyde.

"This is the reason ... person it's directed at." Wallace.

"The power of a gift ..." to "... certain extra-market values." **Bollier**, and also the sociologist **Warren O. Hagstrom**, whom **Bollier** is paraphrasing.

#### The Commons

"Einstein's theory ..." to "... public domain are a commons." Lessig.

"That a language is a commons ... society as a whole." **Michael Newton**, in the *London Review of Books*, reviewing a book called *Echolalias: On the Forget-*

*ting of Language* by **Daniel Heller-Roazen**. The paraphrases of book reviewers are another covert form of collaborative culture; as an avid reader of reviews, I know much about books I've never read. To quote **Yann Martel** on how he came to be accused of imperial plagiarism in his Booker-winning novel *Life of Pi*:

Ten or so years ago, I read a review by John Updike in the *New York Times Review of Books* [sic]. It was of a novel by a Brazilian writer I'd never heard of, Moacyr Scliar. I forget the title, and John Updike did worse: he clearly thought the book as a whole was forgettable. His review—one of those that makes you suspicious by being mostly descriptive ... oozed indifference. But one thing about it struck me: the premise. ... Oh, the wondrous things I could do with this premise.

Unfortunately, no one was ever able to locate the Updike review in question.

"The American commons ..." to "... for a song." **Bollier**.

"Honoring the commons ..." to "... practical necessity." **Bollier**.

"We in Western ... public good." **John Sulston**, Nobel Prize-winner and co-mapper of the human genome.

"We have to remain ..." to "... benefit of a few." **Harry S Truman**, at the opening of the Everglades National Park. Although it may seem the height of presumption to rip off a president—I found claiming Truman's stolid advocacy as my own embarrassing in the extreme—I didn't rewrite him at all. As the poet **Marianne Moore** said, "if a thing had been said in the *best* way, how can you say it better?" Moore confessed her penchant for incorporating lines from others' work, explaining, "I have not yet been able to outgrow this hybrid method of composition. ..."

#### Undiscovered Public Knowledge

"... intellectuals disheartened" to "... quickly and cheaply?" **Steve Fuller**, *The Intellectual*. There's something of Borges in Fuller's insight here; the notion of a storehouse of knowledge waiting passively to be assembled by future users is suggestive of both "The Library of Babel" and "Kafka and His Precursors."

#### Give All

"... one of Iran's finest ..." to "... meditation on his heroine." **Amy Taubin**, *Village Voice*, although it was me who had made the discovery at the Walter Reade Theater and who had the fresh enthusiasm for Iranian cinema.

"The primary objective ..." to "... unfair nor unfortunate." **Sandra Day O'Connor**, 1991.

"Allusion is a step ... possible for art." **T. S. Eliot**, in his review of Joyce's *Ulysses*.

"... the future will be much like the past" to "... give some things away." Open-source film archivist **Rick Prelinger**, quoted in McLeod.

"Change may be troubling ... with certainty." McLeod.

"... woven entirely ..." to "... without inverted commas." **Roland Barthes**.

"The kernel, the soul ..." to "... characteristics of phrasing." **Mark Twain**, from a consoling letter to Helen Keller, who had suffered distressing accusations of plagiarism(!). In fact, her work was a composite of received phrases; under her particular circumstances, Keller's writing could be understood as a kind of allegory of the "constructed" nature of artistic perception. I found the Twain quote in the aforementioned *Copyrights and Copywrongs*, by Siva Vaidhyanathan.

"Old and new ..." to "... we all quote." **Ralph Waldo Emerson**. These guys all sound alike!

"People live differently ... wealth as a gift." Hyde.

"... I'm a cork ... blown away." This is adapted from the Beach Boys' song, "Til I Die," written by **Brian Wilson**. My own first adventure with song-lyric permissions came when I tried to have a character in my second novel quote the lyrics, "There's a world where I can go and tell my secrets to/In my room/In my room." After learning the likely expense, at my editor's suggestion I replaced those with "You take the high road/I'll take the low road/I'll be in Scotland before you," a lyric in the public domain. This capitulation always bugged me, and in the subsequent British publication of the same book I restored the Brian Wilson lyric, without permission. *Ocean of Story* is the title of a collection of **Christina Stead's** short fiction.

**Saul Bellow**, writing to a friend who'd taken offense at Bellow's fictional use of certain personal facts, said: "The name of the game is Give All. You are welcome to my facts. I gave them to you. If you have the strength to pick them up, take them with my blessings." I couldn't bring myself to retain Bellow's "strength," which seemed presumptuous in my new context, though it is surely the more elegant phrase. On the other hand, I was pleased to invite the suggestion that the gifts in question may actually be light and easily lifted.

## KEY TO THE KEY

The notion of a collage text is, of course, not original to me. **Walter Benjamin**'s incomplete *Arcades Project* seemingly would have featured extensive interlaced quotations. Other precedents include **Graham Rawle**'s novel, *Diary of an Amateur Photographer*, its text harvested from photography magazines, and **Eduardo Paolozzi**'s collage-novel *Kex*, cobbled from crime novels and newspaper clippings. Closer to home, my efforts owe a great deal to the recent essays of **David Shields**, in which diverse quotes are made to closely intertwine and reverberate, and to conversations with **Sean Howe** and **Pamela Jackson**. Last year **David Edelstein**, in *New York* magazine, satirized the Kavya Viswanathan plagiarism case by creating an almost completely plagiarized column denouncing her actions. Edelstein intended to demonstrate, through ironic example, how bricolage such as his own was ipso facto facile and unworthy. While Viswanathan's version of "creative copying" was a pitiable one, I differ with Edelstein's conclusions.

The phrase *Je est un autre*, with its deliberately awkward syntax, belongs to **Arthur Rimbaud**. It has been translated both as "I is another" and "I is someone else," as in this excerpt from Rimbaud's letters:

For I is someone else. If brass wakes up a bugle, it is not his fault. That is obvious to me: I witness the unfolding of my thought: I watch it, I listen to it: I make a stroke of the bow: the symphony makes movement into the depths, or comes in one leap upon the stage.

If the old fools had not found only the false significance of the Ego, we should not now be having to sweep away these millions of skeletons which, since an infinite time, have been piling up the fruits of their one-eyed intellects, proclaiming themselves to be the authors!