



CZECH NATIONAL
CORPUS

Introduction to Text Corpora and Their Applications

Corpora in forensic linguistics

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OUTLINE:

1. LECTURE

- forensic linguistics
 - prominent topics and methods
 - the Derek Bentley case (videos)

2. SEMINAR

- reading (Olsson):
 - *The Barrel Killer*
 - *Is the Da Vinci Code plagiarism?*
 - *The Man with the Baseball Bat*





LECTURE





Forensic linguistics



Definition(s)

- little consensus on a definition of FL (Hardaker 2016)
 - 'narrow' view:
 - forensic = court, ergo FL is the study of language and/or linguistic evidence in the courtroom
 - 'broad' view:
 - the study of how language, the law, and criminal investigations, judicial procedures, civil/criminal trials, etc. intersect



Definition(s)

- FL = the application of linguistic knowledge to a particular social setting, namely the legal *forum* (> *forensic*)
- the interface between language, crime and law, where law includes law enforcement, judicial matters, legislation, disputes or proceedings in law...
- term **forensic linguistics** first coined by **Jan Svartvik** in **1968** in connection with Timothy John Evans case (an infamous case of miscarriage of justice)



Two main research questions

1. What is the **MEANING** of Text A?

- Was this letter a threat?
- What does this contract clause include/exclude?
- Did Officer Smith entrap Suspect Jones?

2. Who **AUTHORED** Text A?

- Did Shakespeare write everything attributed to him?
- Is A's suicide note forged?
- Was B's confession tampered with?



FL and CL

- FL partly determines the data and research question
- CL partly determines the method
- possible areas of interest and disciplines used within FL
 - Author identification (aka authorship attribution)
 - Stylistics (inc. "literary detection")
 - Discourse analysis
 - Dialectology, sociolinguistics
 - Sociophonetics, Phonetics
 - Psycholinguistics





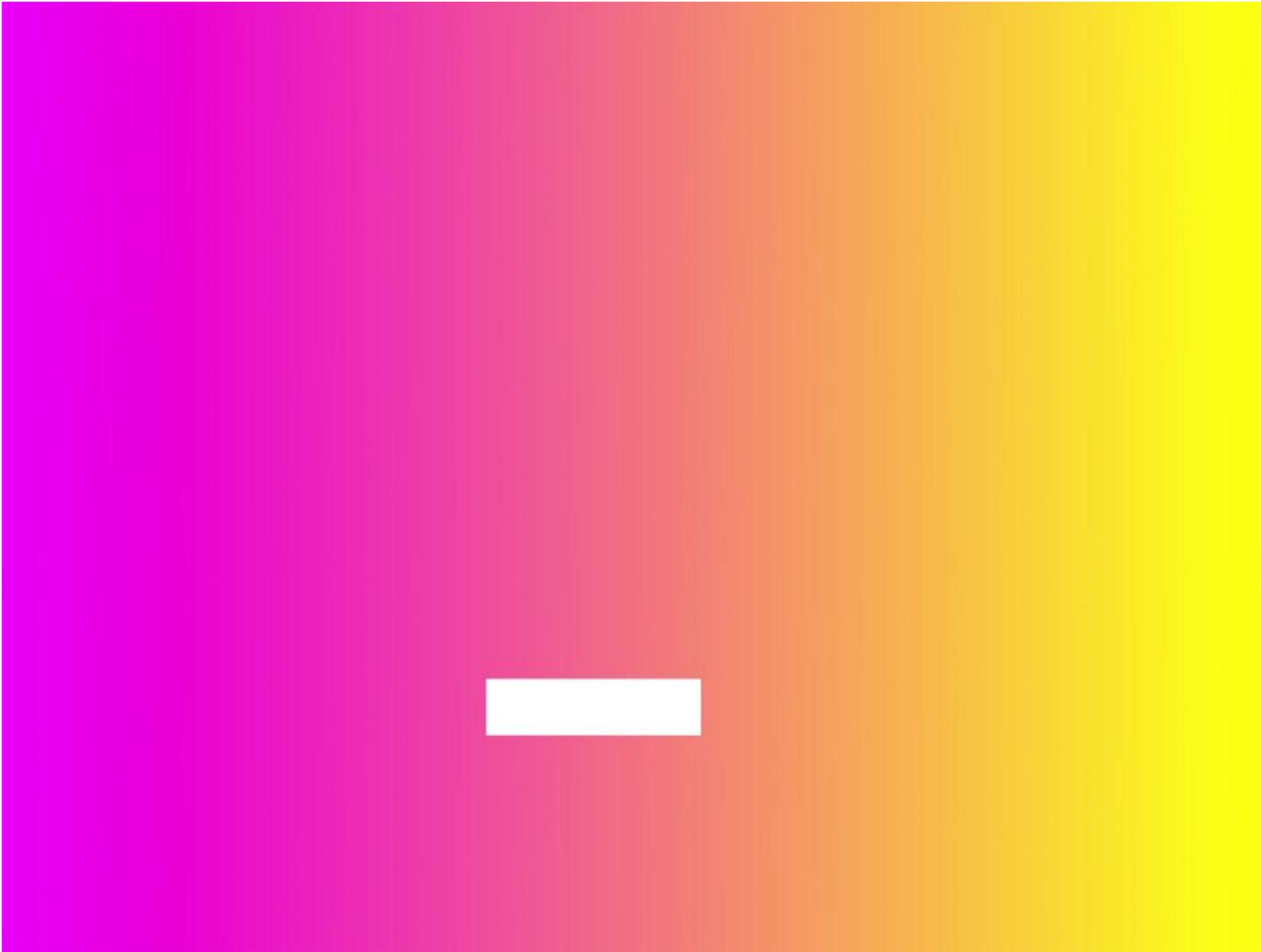
Famous case: Derek Bentley (video)

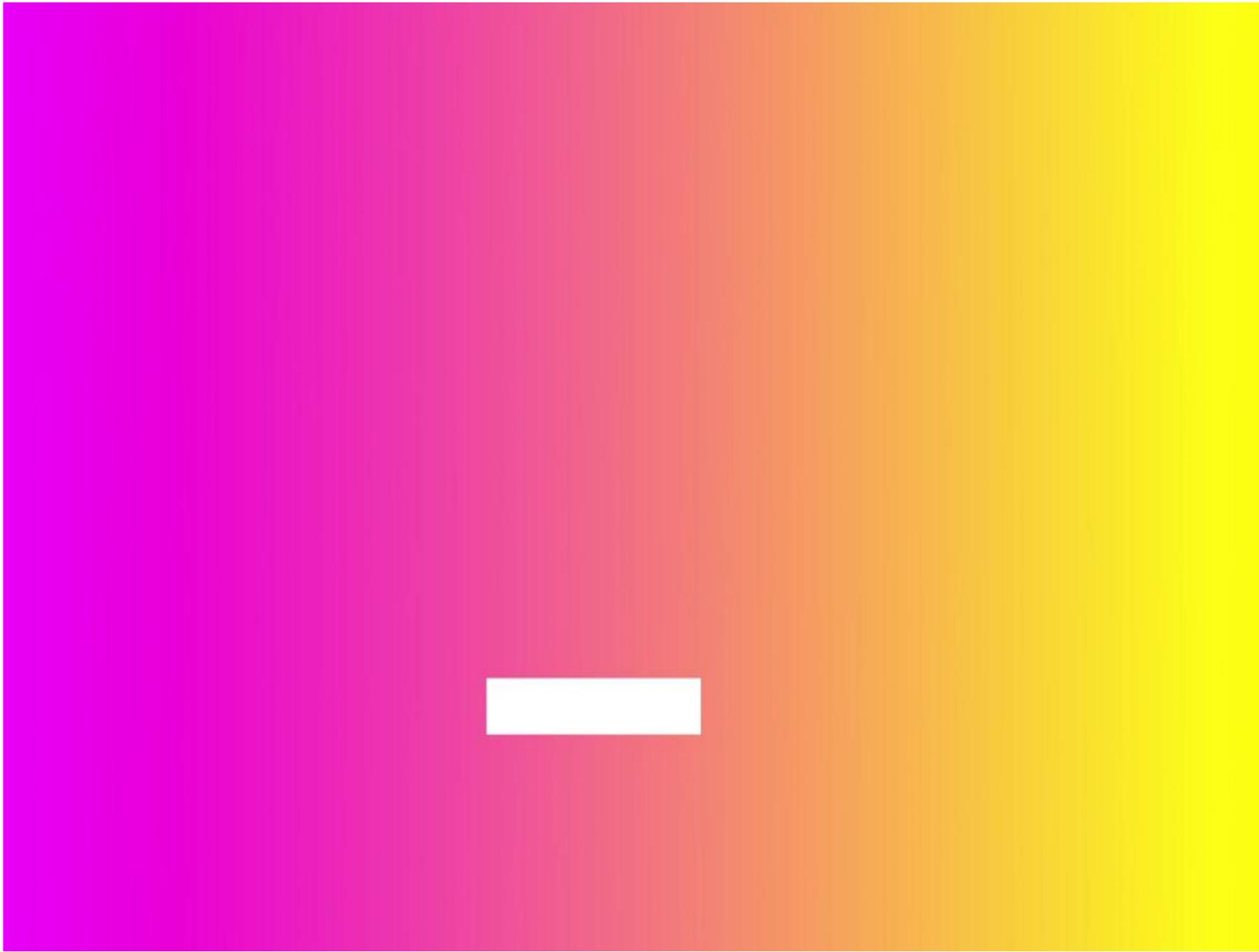


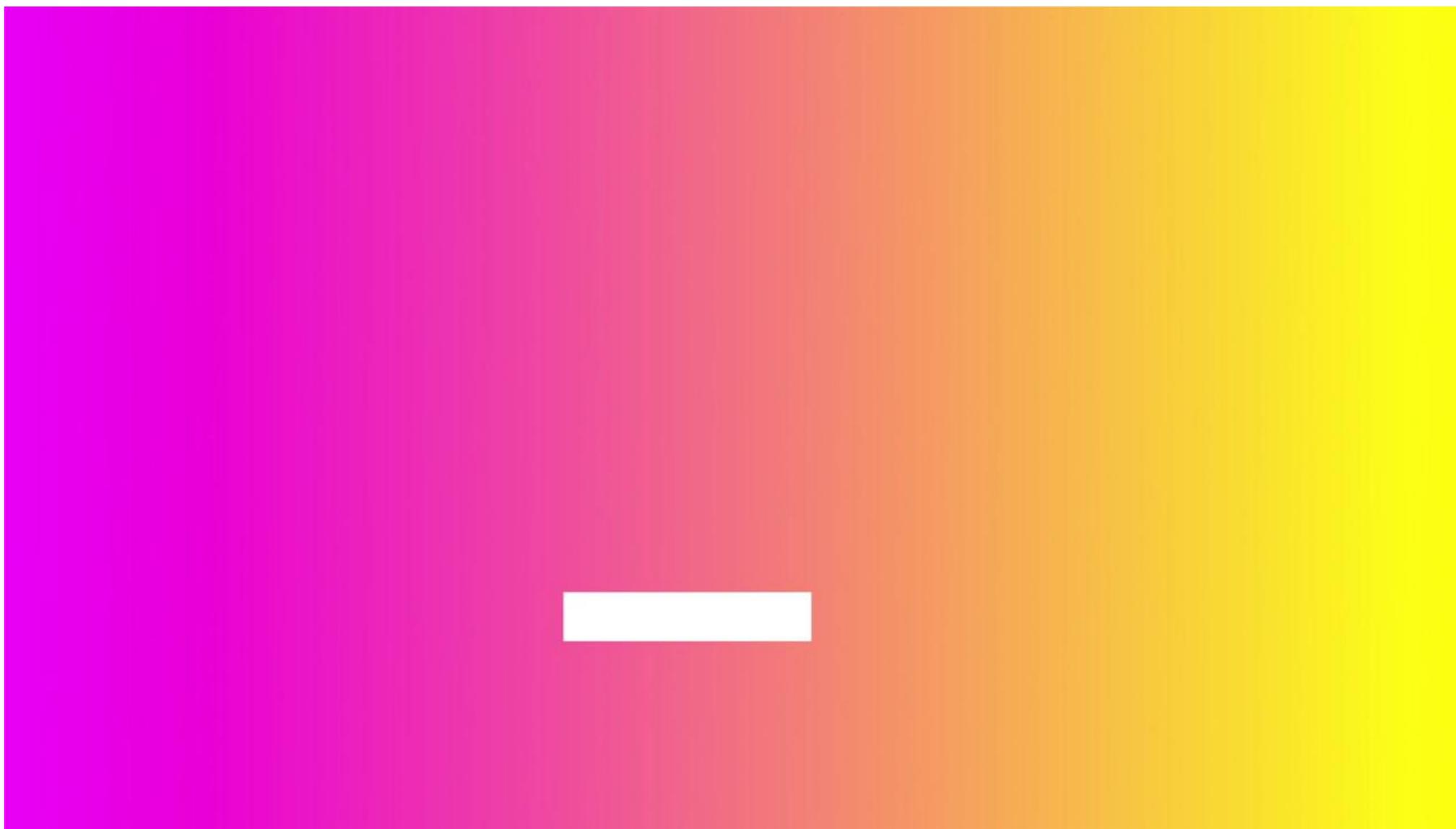
The Derek Bentley Case

- The case of **Derek Bentley** (1952-1998) involves an initial miscarriage of justice later corrected, in part, due to FCL
- Bentley was born 30th June 1933, and by 19, had been through some tough times (health and developmental problems)
- 2nd Nov 1952: Bentley (19) and Chris Craig (16) are attempting to **burgle the warehouse** of Barlow & Parker's confectionery company on Tamworth Road, Croydon
 - controversial sentence allegedly said by Bentley: *Let him have it, Chris.*
 - officer shot dead by Craig, but Bentley is jointly charged alongside Craig with the **murder**
 - two day **trial**, both found guilty (Craig as a minor – life imprisonment, Bentley – capital punishment...)









Thank you for your attention!

Questions?





SEMINAR



Reading

common reading:

Olsson, J. (2008). The Barrel Killer. Is the Da Vinci Code Plagiarism? The Man with a Baseball Hat. In J. Olsson, *Word Crime*, New York: Continuum, pp. 7-10, 23-34, 41-44.

