RECONFIGURING THE REPRESENTATION OF PLAGIARISM AND MISUSE OF SOURCES

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In "Plagiarism as Metaphor," David Leight traces the use of four concepts, "plagiarism as stealing," "as ethical violation," "as borrowing" (without returning the "item"), and "as intellectual laziness" (229) in contemporary English composition textbooks, and he notes that some texts present overlapping definitions. According to Rebecca Moore Howard, "part of what makes 'plagiarism' a difficult topic is that it masquerades as a natural, moral category, which obscures its social construction" ("Rebecca Moore Howard Responds," 376). In this light, numerous composition scholars like Howard who are aligned with Cultural Studies and/or a politicized "Post-Process" pedagogy have articulated the socially constructed aspects of "plagiarism," have indicated how the concept is imprecisely used to house a variety of writing practices, and have expressed their alarm at manifestations of the "war" against plagiarists in academe, including shrill moralistic rhetoric and the ways in which plagiarism-detection services are deployed.

Decrying "the absurdity of enforcing ethical behavior with threats of public humiliation" (680-1) to be found in these tendencies, Sean Zwagerman argues that "a university in which cooperation is fostered by trusting and respectful authorities is far more desirable than one in which order is enforced through fear of powerful authoritarians" (682). He calls "trust…an essential nutrient for academic vitality" for both faculty and students, especially since the latter are encouraged "to take risks, to try on

new roles" and see "what new possibilities emerge" (703). Further, "the roles" that professors "are best equipped to play," Zwagerman notes, are "as thinkers and educators, not moral enforcers," and he believes that "if we put less energy into catching cheaters and more into teaching writing and critical thinking, we should achieve the very objective of academic integrity: students more invested in their learning *and therefore* less inclined to cheat and plagiarize" (702). Specifically, he advocates "a critical curriculum" that "renders visible and malleable the socially constructed nature of contexts, acts, genres, and roles, including…: the classroom, the essay, the student, and the teacher" (703).

Perhaps Zwagerman's suggestion that particular transformations in pedagogical praxis and attitudes involving academic integrity can consistently engender a significantly higher degree of student engagement in the learning process seems overly optimistic, given contrary forces (to be discussed shortly) that militate against such investment in painstaking research and critical thought and in the use of academic citation and documentation. However, his hypothesis deserves to be taken seriously and tested, not only because the "moral enforcement" approach is likely to backfire and engender all-around ill feeling, but because a *laissez faire* attitude about pedagogy virtually guarantees that positive change will not occur. One way of trying to increase student investment in their research writing or at least to reduce their degree of alienation is to continue the work that compositionists have done to re-examine particular contexts for various characterizations of plagiarism and (unintended) "misuse of sources" (see "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices," Council of Writing Program Administrators), develop more capacious new representations of those terms on the basis of such re-examination, create documents that elaborate on these revised representations, and use the documents as resources and starting points for extensive classroom and office hour conversations that reflect a wide range of perspectives on (and contexts informing) citation,

documentation, plagiarism, and misuse of sources. Such changes might influence more of those who are leaning toward committing plagiarism or being careless about the use of sources not to follow those paths.

It is important to try to examine the variety of perspectives that college students themselves have about quotation, academic documentation, and plagiarism before supposing that one knows how to communicate effectively with them about these things. In a 2010 *New York Times* Online opinion piece, critical (and legal) theorist Stanley Fish asserts that students often perceive the avoidance of "plagiarism" as "an annoying guild imposition without a persuasive rationale" that takes a lot of time, and so student plagiarists "are just failing to become acclimated to the conventions of the little insular world they have, often through no choice of their own, wandered into." Obviously sympathetic to this perspective, he believes that this failure should be penalized as "a breach of disciplinary decorum, not a breach of the moral universe." As an anthropologist, Susan D. Blum in *My Word! Plagiarism and College Culture* (2010) carefully examines the mismatch between contemporary American college students' social practices and what faculty members try to teach them about academic honesty and documentation of sources in research essays. When she observes the culture of Instant Messaging—now supplanted by text-messaging—and social networks like Facebook, Blum finds that students hold as an "ideal… to present obscure but meaningful and mysterious quotes" (46) that are "designed, as a whole, to convey one's selectivity and depth, and often an ironic stance" (47). Blum states that the students attribute sources "only when [they] assume that others will not know where the quote comes from," but not, for example, for popular songs. Those who associate their selectivity with their unique and evolving identity "accept that intellectual concepts can be simultaneously their own and someone else's" (55).

Ruefully confirming Blum's findings about lack of attribution, Will Stape writes in a 2009 post:

People on Facebook are copying and pasting quotes, song lyrics, all sorts of things onto their Facebook page and not crediting writers. To add to the mess, people comment on the stolen text and praise their relative or friend's witty remarks. When the offending FB page owner does nothing to clear things up, effectively taking credit for not sourcing the text, it irritates me.

And it seems that plagiarism is not only acceptable for many who use such internet venues as Facebook, but it serves as a tool for academic plagiarism, as a 2011 Washington Post.com article by Daniel de Vise indicates. De Vise reports that a survey with an extremely large sample, "nearly 40 million student papers," by Turnitin attributed "one-third of all unoriginal content" to "social networks, including Facebook and all of the various 'content-sharing' sites where users post and share information," and in turn, "typically, the content of those sites is unverified and unsourced. Users may say pretty much whatever they want, factual or not."

Advocates for the theory and practice of particular experimental forms of contemporary literature—modes of appropriation that stand in relation to conceptual visual art since Duchamp and earlier writers like John Cage, the New York School Poets, and Language Poetry, as Marjorie Perloff indicates in *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* — seem to serve as justification for the student perspectives and practices that Blum is characterizing. Noted conceptual writer Kenneth Goldsmith, for example, echoes the students' attitude in his defense of (un)creative writing:

If it's a matter of simply cutting and pasting the entire Internet into a Microsoft Word document, then what becomes important is what you—the author—decide to choose. Success lies in knowing what to include and—more important—what to leave out. If all language can be transformed into poetry by merely reframing—an exciting

possibility—then she who reframes words in the most charged and convincing way will be judged the best.

Goldsmith, whose own books include a collection of weather reports and a transcription of a single day's edition of *The New York Times*, teaches a course called "Uncreative Writing" at the University of Pennsylvania in which "students are penalized for showing any shred of originality and creativity. Instead they are rewarded for plagiarism, identity theft, repurposing papers, patchwriting, sampling, plundering, and stealing." He claims that "what they've surreptitiously become expert at is brought out into the open and explored in a safe environment, reframed in terms of responsibility instead of recklessness." I can acknowledge that at least a handful of students (in courses that are not underwritten by the tenets of "Uncreative Writing") who use extensive cut and paste without quotation marks or citation in their research papers may care about producing "charged and convincing" "reframing" and may even have a theoretical interest in making a statement against the notion of intellectual property rights. However, the result of "reframing" could be achieved more explicitly and thoroughly in a conventional, plagiarism-free essay, and, as Blum suggests, many "repurposers" are solely interested in doing an assignment as quickly and painlessly as possible.

In his hybrid text, *plagiarism/outsource*, Tan Lin writes that in the "system" of Web 2.0, "creating content is less useful than passing on existing content or re-creating a context for re-use. Plagiarism…is one parameter to define this recontextualizing mode" (unpaginated). Writing a review of Lin's book, Thomas Fink poses the question,

> Tan Lin, you dwell so often in your work at the meta-level and are preoccupied with the critique of 'orthodox assumptions.' So do you always or primarily want to valorize effortless sampling as a reading practice over painstaking sociocultural reflection, long slow

demystification (lsd), etc., or are you setting in motion an energetic antagonism between two or more modes?

Lin responds to his text in the same e-journal: "Critical reading and rereading of the kind that Tom Fink outlines is useful as a practice, but it's a relatively narrow practice, like footnoting, that is commonly situated in academic or high literature settings: in other words, directed at work that is *meant* to be read and reread…." ("Plagiarism: A Response to Thomas Fink"). For him, such a "practice… is still useful, but under specific conditions and in specific reading formats"; he finds that "it is often tied to notions of an *individual* performing labor that either results in or is connected to something 'original' and to specific kinds of 'value' or cultural capital." Ignoring the presence of collaborative scholarship, Lin states that this "critical reading and rereading" is inadequate "when directed at 'content' that is jointly produced or produced under socially networked conditions, content that is harder to classify as 'original' or pleasurable—as opposed to, say, boring."

Lin is "very interested in what [he] would term 'social reading' on the periphery of one's attention or something inexact like that." Especially considering the expense of higher education, students do not need it and cannot use it, except perhaps in a(n) (un)creative writing class like Goldsmith's, to engage in this kind of leisurely "social reading." While Lin, who himself wrote a doctoral dissertation on T.S. Eliot before gaining prominence as an innovative poet, democratically accepts the possible uses of scholarship, his and Goldsmith's points would probably lead many students to say that "critical reading and rereading" with proper documentation is not just "narrow" but *too* narrow to be worth taking seriously. Even if they recognize the sophisticated iconoclastic dimension of Lin's stance, most U.S. academics, on the other hand, would see the narrowness on the other side; they would find that many students' production of "'content'… under socially networked conditions" already undermines their ability to become engaged in and competent at intellectual work.

According to Blum, "the principles of the academy" allegedly "accord with the authentic self," which values "uniqueness, individual contribution, essence, fixity, and authorship" (61). As Alastair Pennycook puts it, there is "a constant interplay between creativity and previous writing" in academic work, whose criteria manifests a tense "relationship between the demand for originality and the reverence of other writers…." (207). On the other hand, Blum asserts that students who do not see the value of extensive quotation and documentation practices—the avoidance of plagiarism—fit into the category of "the performance self," which "celebrates collaboration, incorporation, fluidity, appearance"; this self's "words are derived from many different sources and may be spoken or written in earnest or in jest, with conviction or just to get along" (61). In their *Notes on Conceptualisms*, Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman, fellow travelers of Goldsmith and Lin, offer a theoretical (Lacanian) basis for the stance of the "performance self": "Note Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*: the self is an Imaginary construct, made of parts of one like an other so as to be recognized as one by another, thus made contingent. Mimicry/ mimesis being the means by which the subject makes the imaged self" (19). Lacan would probably cringe at the lack of relevance to his psychoanalytic aims of their paraphrase; nevertheless, Place and Fitterman then use this concept of the split self as evidence of a grand (and paradoxical) totalization of decentering and destabilization: "Contingency/multiplicity is therefore the one true nature of universality."

Given the emphasis on performativity in Gender Studies and Queer Theory—for example, in the work of Judith Butler—many members of the academy in Humanities departments, including compositionists, give some credence to Blum's "performance self," but not necessarily every attribute that she lists. There is a major distinction between an ethically based respect for (and carefully reasoned belief in) interdependence suggested by the noun "collaboration" and the blatant opportunism implied by the phrase, "just to get along." If the performance self considers

"boundaries between its own and others' contributions… permeable," thus making "the origins of textual material… unimportant," the assumptions may reflect an egalitarian, democratic "philosophy" *or* a rationalization for the attempt to achieve personal goals "by any means necessary" through "cheating and intertextual strategies" involving plagiarism. Given the possibility that students' thinking and behavior might stem, at least in part, from the former and not just the latter, faculty should think critically about whether such claims of the performance self destabilize anti-plagiarism tenets that they profess and try to enforce in the classroom.

Nevertheless, if there is philosophical justification for regarding "originality" as an illusion, then doesn't the ethical justification for citation of sources fall apart? In 1995 Rebecca Moore Howard contends that "hypertext makes visible what literary critics have theorized: the cumulative, interactive nature of writing that makes impossible the representation of a stable category of authorship and hence a stable category of plagiarism" ("Plagiarisms, Authorships, and the Academic Death Penalty" 791). She cites Francoise Meltzer's account of "Descartes's and Freud's anxieties about originality" as stemming from a desire for recognition necessitating the assertion of "priority," which is "to assert originality," which in turn produces "a fear of being robbed," "behind" which is a fear that originality does not exist. Howard reasons, "If there is no originality, there is no basis for literary property. If there is no originality and no literary property, there is no basis for the notion of plagiarism." In *plagiarism/outsource*, Lin goes so far as to declare: "Originality is the last remaining waste product (*muda*) of creative practices and remains to be eliminated within aesthetic production and/or distribution systems…." But, *pace* Howard and Lin, it is important to situate the realm in which this illusion, waste product, or precious quality is located to determine what should be done with or about it.

Marcus Boon in *In Praise of Copying* (2010) usefully discusses the Platonic "paradox" through which "intellectual-property law functions"—"that you cannot protect an idea itself" (since it is

"intangible" and "exists in a realm beyond the human realm") "but… only a fixed, material expression of an idea" (21), such as words in a text. The worldly "expression belongs… to the person who, receiving the ideas as author, inventor, or owner, fixes it materially as self-expression through his or her labor and turns it into property. This is called 'originality.'" Informed by the work of such continental theorists as Derrida, Lacan, and Baudrillard, as well as Tibetan and other Buddhist teachings, Boon counters the Platonic assumptions that an author can "fix" an "original idea" in his/her "expression." While the moral condemnation of "copying" as a "deceptive" action is derived from "the belief that it is always possible to name and describe things correctly, to say what an original idea is," he holds that there is an "absence of any locatable essence"; thus, "all production involves the presentation of something in the guise of something else, and the possibility, in effect, of deception" (111). Even if one values "recognition of and striving for situationally valuable originality," as well as "respect for the contributions and the integrity of others," no "ground" permits the affirmation of "originals in opposition to copies" (112).

Stanley Fish acknowledges that recent "philosophical reasoning" tells us that "all texts are palimpsests of earlier texts," indicating that "there's been nothing new under the sun since Plato and Aristotle and they weren't new either," yet he insists that the position has no impact on business as usual. According to Fish, "the ensemble of activities that take place in the practice would be unintelligible if the possibility of being original were not presupposed." He perceives particular conventions, then, as necessary fictions for an institution to function, and so "if [one is] a professional journalist, or an academic. . . the game you play for a living is underwritten by the assumed value of originality and failure properly to credit the work of others is a big and obvious no-no."

One might press Fish on this point and say that an institution perched on such a shaky foundation should not survive. However, Fish's characterization itself can be questioned. Since most

academics are aware that all textual production is subject to extensive influence, especially in research writing, as any set of endnotes/parenthetical citations or Works Cited will testify, they may not demand "originality" from themselves and other scholars, much less undergraduates writing research papers in an introductory or second-level composition course. Perhaps they expect themselves and other professionals to produce an analytic synthesis, critique, or combination of synthesis and critique of strands of diverse pre-texts that does not thoroughly resemble those of other writers. What *would be* "unintelligible" for the activity of research-based academic analytic writing is the claim that no text can be judged as possessing what I think Boon means by "situationally valuable originality," because there would be no compelling reason for scholars to produce new texts.

Since the noun "originality" "always already" suggests an absolute, and since notions of "value" have frequently been framed in an absolutist way, Boon's adverb "situationally" softens the other terms in the phrase and introduces the possibility of contingency or provisional, context-specific judgment. The beginning of Rebecca Moore Howard's "proposed policy on plagiarism," a document crafted with full attention to her context as a writing program administrator and thus retaining the problematic word "plagiarism," offers another way of demystifying "originality" and yet calling for quotation and attribution: "It is perhaps never the case that a writer composes 'original' material, free of any influence. It might be more accurate to think of creativity, of fresh combinations made from existing sources, or fresh implications for existing materials" ("Plagiarisms, Authorships, and the Academic Death Penalty" 798). Next, Howard notes that since "we all work from sources, even when we are being creative," "most academic writing" requires our acknowledgment of those sources.

While Boon and Howard's approaches are apt, I believe that it might be more helpful to follow Tan Lin (to some extent!) and eliminate the use of the problematic term "originality" as a marker of positive value. Instead, an essay or book can be judged to

achieve *relative differentiation* from others in the specificity of its main or supporting idea(s) and in the interpretation of evidence. To "credit the work of others," as Fish says, is fundamental to the enterprise of academia, but one is crediting such differentiation and not "originality." Let us take the hypothetical examples of a Milton scholar, the first to use a Lacanian approach to the figure of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, who demonstrates that Satan is caught in the snares of the symbolic order and cannot activate his desire through signifiers or action, and a Postcolonial critic who, having marshaled evidence about Milton's thinking about nascent British colonialism, articulates the cooptation of Satan's rebellion against the deity by forces analogous to those operative in colonial power relations. Neither critic has invented a new theoretical lens, nor have they applied the Lacanian and Postcolonial methods respectively for the first time to British literature. Further, a third party—one invested in neither of their approaches—might find the trajectory and results of their analyses to be extremely similar. And so it does not make sense to speak of their "originality," yet they have achieved relative differentiation from one another and from others who have published criticism on *Paradise Lost*. On the other hand, a scholar who follows them a few years later by combining the Lacanian and Postcolonial strategies probably manifests a lesser degree of differentiation from these precursor critical texts—*unless*, in the dynamics of combination or in the particulars of reading, a substantially distinct thesis emerges.

Returning briefly to Blum's binary opposition between the "authentic" and "performance" "selves," let us examine a 2011 text in defense of demanding research papers by Pamela Ban, then a Harvard senior whose high school research paper had earned a place in *The Concord Review*. Saying that "the Internet makes it easy to treat the research paper as a Google exercise," she argues that such an assignment "done correctly goes beyond the mere conglomeration of facts…and instead asks us to examine current literature and argue a thesis that is not directly from conventional wisdom." While "an essay is achievable with much caffeine and an all-nighter," "the longer research paper" demands "more time

understanding sources, forming an original question and proving a thesis." Ban calls

> learning how to take what is already known and enhance it in a unique way... an unparalleled learning experience.... Struggling to come up with an interesting, original idea that gives a new spin on what is already known is a worthwhile challenge that has taught me to scrutinize current knowledge more critically, think more originally and write more effectively.

She considers "these skills" as helpful training for "the workplace," and she insists that the process should be approached "as it was intended to be approached–formulating a research question and proving an original thesis...."

One can leap on Ban's quadruple use of the concept of "originality" and the idea of "uniqueness" and claim that it is reflective of the "authentic self" mentality, but I surmise that she is placing "originality"/uniqueness in direct opposition to "the mere conglomeration of facts" and "not directly from conventional wisdom." (And if she had studied poststructuralist theory at Harvard, she probably would have put the terms under erasure.) Note, further, her concept of the "enhancement" of "what is already known." Thus, "an original question" indicates a query that is neither obvious nor easily answerable through an array of commonplace facts and inferences, while an "original answer" (or "thesis") is "a new spin" on known material, which is similar to Howard's "fresh combinations made from existing sources, or fresh implications for existing materials" and my "relative differentiation." Pamela Ban's seriousness of purpose and her rejection of "appearance" and valorization of academic substance places her in the "authentic" camp, but her interest in "collaboration" with her sources to advance understanding, which includes an "incorporation" that has nothing to do with plagiarism also places her in the "performance" camp. In other words, in the case of this student whom most professors would judge to have an

efficacious attitude about academic research, Blum's frequently useful binary opposition is an obstacle to understanding.

Several other reasons that students might find justification for plagiarism or gravitate toward the misuse of sources need to be explored. As Chris M. Anson demonstrates in the provocatively titled article, "Fraudulent Practices: Academic Misrepresentations of Plagiarism in the Name of Good Pedagogy," students—not only those who surf the net extensively to look for products and services but those who have business experience—can observe that numerous documents on company websites create "word-for-word replicas" (30) and part paraphrase/part unquoted phrases and sentences "of… information" from other companies' web documents. For example, Anson counts fifteen sites as using particular wording about "wind chill information" (31). He uses insurance agencies as an example of disseminators of "'public-interest' information" often derived from government websites, and he also shows how "non-attribution and patchwriting also abound in the world of direct business competition" (32). Since, "in… countless… examples found at hundreds of Internet sites, text is freely copied or pasted without attribution, or with varying degrees of attribution," he considers "it… impossible to determine the source of the progenitor text," and "in some cases, multiple possible progenitor texts are spliced together…."

Anson proposes various answers to the question of why such plagiarism is tolerated. In certain cases where two companies have a working relationship, such actions "exist in a domain of 'cooperative competition,' a tacit understanding between the creator and usurper of a text that both are cooperating in a mutual desire for profit," and in others, "non-attribution" allows the business to "[gain] the confidence of the consumer" through the use of communication that seems personal "but [risks] nothing by replicating" another business's phrases and sentences (34). Anson is almost gleeful in pointing out that "members of higher education institutions routinely produce documents"—including "course syllabi," "mission statements, learning outcomes, and strategic plans"—"that are willingly shared, adopted without

attribution, or repurposed" (35), because the writers do not need individual credit for institutional or field-wide advancement. Also, not only do institutions striving to disseminate information for the public good such as "AIDS-awareness pamphlets" as widely as possible not care about attribution (36), but the U.S. "Army… relies on a kind of internal plagiarism as part of its credo of efficiency"; "texts written and circulated in the Army" are regarded "as 'tools' or 'products' that are oriented toward pragmatic goals…" (37). Discussion of plagiarism in the writing classroom would be complicated but perhaps enriched by the different contexts in which quotation and attribution of appropriated material are and are not performed.

In its list of "conditions and practices" that "may result in texts that falsely appear to represent" intended "plagiarism," the aforementioned Council of Writing Program Administrators' "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism… Statement on Best Practices" includes the sentence: "Students from other cultures may not be familiar with the conventions governing attribution and plagiarism in American colleges and universities." International students and recent immigrants pursuing higher education in the U.S., as well as at educational institutions in other English-speaking countries, generally just as adept at navigation through the universe of Web 2.0 as native speakers, may or may not fit the characteristics of Blum's "performance self" or be attuned to the "plagiaristic" tendencies outside academia that Anson discusses. Speculation about their beliefs about, attitudes toward and practices involving attribution and plagiarism has been the subject of numerous studies. Although a considerable number of foreign students have already achieved a high level of education in their home countries before emigrating and may have excellent competence in English, Niall Hayes and Lucas D. Introna make the otherwise plausible generalization that "overseas students find themselves in an educational system that expects of them things they are not prepared for, and in a language they are not competent in" and the implication that such a "feeling of powerlessness" leads many of them to plagiarize (229). To indicate the numerous pedagogical

strategies needed to reduce this sense of alienation and replace it with feelings of agency and possibility is beyond the scope of this essay, but it is fair to say that rigid, overly general plagiarism documents with harsh punitive language will not work any better on most of these students than they would on exemplars of the "performance self."

Explanations of specific cultural differences are central to many studies—frequently authored by college ESL faculty—of plagiarism among international students, and they are often vigorously contested. Ling Shi found in her survey that second-language "writers" of English "from China, Japan and Korea perceived plagiarism as both linguistic and cultural hurdles whereas those from Germany perceived plagiarism primarily as a linguistic challenge" (275). In an analysis of Japanese students' attitudes, L.M. Dryden conducted a survey that revealed that most students find plagiarism morally improper, while professors downplay its importance. Dryden discounts the predominant student response by suggesting that "the students were simply writing what they thought they were somehow 'expected' to say" (76). Greg Wheeler counters: "Assuming the survey was conducted anonymously…, why would the majority of students provide a response they did not actually believe?" and "if plagiarism is not considered a major concern" among faculty in Japan, "why would they believe they were expected to condemn the practice?" (26). On the whole, Dryden argues that "plagiarism does not make much sense to the Japanese as a moral issue" because "centuries-old currents of Japanese education" have taught them that "it is proper to mistrust or discount one's own opinions," whereas "it is good and virtuous to study, memorize, and imitate proper models" and "to defer one's own judgments to the consensus of the group…" (83). "Western conventions of critical reading, argumentation, and citing sources," Dryden claims, "have little place in Japanese universities, where courses called 'composition'" predominantly involve "translating… Japanese texts into English," while "English 'reading' courses

sometimes amount to mere translation… from English into Japanese" (76).

One important aspect of the "praise" in the title of Marcus Boon's book, *In Praise of Copying*, is for "someone who copies out of love, out of a desire to share or a desire for knowledge, out of fascination with the magics of production and form" (139). Copying can be a stage in the development of intellectual skills, as Rebecca Moore Howard's analysis of "patchwriting," defined as "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one synonym for another" (*Standing in the Shadow of Giants* xvii), reveals. Howard has persistently campaigned for this "primary means of understanding difficult texts, of expanding one's lexical, stylistic, and conceptual repertoires, of finding and trying out new voices in which to speak" (xviii) to be "decriminalized"—that is, detached from the category of punishable plagiarism. (See also "Plagiarisms, Authorships, and the Academic Penalty," 799-800, as well as "The New Abolitionism Comes to Plagiarism," 93-94.)

Should the use of imitation and translation as a pedagogical strategy serve as proof that faculty support the users' belief that they *own* the texts in question and need not cite? I do not think so. Further, "mistrust" of "one's own opinions" can signify skepticism about one's own tendencies to generalize—not a refusal to think critically, as Dryden implies. Nor does one who tends to defer to group consensus necessarily claim to stand as the origin of ideas or language developed by others. Wheeler argues that Hokkaido University's speedy suspension and dismissal of a professor whose plagiarism was discovered "suggests a belief" in Japan "that plagiarism is considered unacceptable and grounds for severe punishment" (26). On the basis of his own educational experience, up to the undergraduate degree, in China, Dilin Liu disputes "the claim," stemming (he says) from students themselves, "that copying others' writing as one's own is allowed, taught and/or encouraged in China"; he states that the reverse is true. In fact, Chinese terms for plagiarism are directly associated with notions of robbery and theft, and "the concept of plagiarism has existed in

China for more than a thousand years" (235). According to Liu, those who plagiarize in China, capitalizing on "the lack of clear laws for punishing plagiarism as well as the ineffective enforcement of existing laws," are engaged in a practice that "is chastised almost daily" in "China's media" (236). Phan Le Ha maintains "that plagiarism is never allowed or made legitimate by Vietnamese culture or education" and that, "although memorizing model essays or famous ideas is common in Vietnam, this is not at all for plagiarism purposes" (76). In China, Liu asserts, memorization is designed "to help the learner appreciate and become familiar with effective rhetorical styles and useful writing techniques" (237) for future use in her/his own writing, not as an invitation to copy the models exactly.

I have cited a small fraction of articles that support or critique the notion of differing cultural perspectives on plagiarism, but a lack of consensus seems evident. However, since Liu is probably accurate in saying that many second-language learners, regardless of their reasons for doing so, articulate the view that "copying" is permissible in their countries of origin, faculty can at least concisely represent the differing perceptions as a component of the overall contextualization of attribution, plagiarism, and misuse of sources in documents and classroom instruction. What the different sides tend to agree on is that, since methods of attribution often differ markedly from culture to culture, professors should enable international students to have a thorough opportunity to consider those differences and enough time to learn the U.S. academy's citational practices.

One last obstacle to the teaching of proper documentation should be mentioned. The application of the concept of "common knowledge" may be routine for someone who is thoroughly familiar with a specific academic discourse, but in general, it is too fraught with complex nuances to be handled in a few paragraphs or pages. Miguel Roig, a psychologist who has written extensively on plagiarism and self-plagiarism, states that "the question of whether the information we write about constitutes common knowledge is not easily answerable and it depends on several

factors, such as who the author is, who the readers are, and the expectations of each of these groups" (15). Roig holds that writers should "provide a citation" whenever they are unsure about whether something falls under the category of common knowledge.

How, then, can one get most students to avoid plagiarism and to care about avoiding the "careless" misuse of sources? Blum suggests that comparison of "student quotation and intertextual practices with academic citation practices" could lead to a situation in which learners accept that "when the norms of one domain are applied to another, it demonstrates disrespect and may be punished severely," even if everyone in the conversation admits the relative arbitrariness of the rules (178). Guided by what is already embedded in syllabi and other official documents that refer to citation and plagiarism, this comparison can take place in the classroom and office hours. Here is a group of paragraphs that I intend to utilize, with slight modifications to fit my institutional context, in the section on plagiarism in my composition syllabi next year:

> There are different rules or conventions for using other people's words and ideas when you are writing, depending on the situation in which the writing is done. For example, on Facebook or other social networking spaces, some people take words said or written by someone else without using quotation marks and without identifying the writer or speaker. Not everyone who uses Facebook thinks that this is right, but it is allowed. Also, on the internet, different sites—for example, companies marketing particular products, government agencies presenting useful information to the public, and even some educational institutions that circulate documents about programs, courses, and policies—often take words formulated by someone else and do not use quotation marks or credit the author. In these cases, the people and organizations involved are cooperating to pursue a common goal, do not want

credit for their words or ideas, and are often trying to save time and energy to spread a message to as many people as possible.

According to the conventions of United States colleges and universities, taking words and specific ideas of someone else from the internet (including Facebook, text messages, or any site) and representing them as your own is called plagiarism (when it is intentional) and misuse of sources (when it is done accidentally). Plagiarism and misuse of sources are not acceptable. Instead, you are supposed to use quotation marks or block quotation and to use the methods that your professor will teach you in order to cite (identify) the author(s) and other aspects of the reference, or, if you are not using someone else's exact words but paraphrasing them, you must identify the source. Some students who have been educated in other countries may not have learned about plagiarism and the documentation of sources in the same way that it is taught in the U.S., so if this is the case, your professor will be ready to help you understand how college students in this country are supposed to avoid plagiarism and misuse of sources.

The reason that U.S. colleges and universities do not allow plagiarism is that individual and collaborative authors are given credit for presenting a statement of ideas or a group of ideas or experimental data (in research papers, articles, and books) that is different in some way from the findings of other people in the area of study. Even if the findings are only slightly different from those of others, this can be considered a contribution to the field, because many people do research, and it is very hard to develop ideas and statements of ideas that are extremely different. The credit for a contribution can involve anything from the fulfillment of requirements for a degree, a job, continued employment, professional honors, or money. Therefore, if someone who has not written the text takes the credit, then s/he receives credit unfairly, and the actual writer does not receive what

s/he has earned through her/his own research and thinking. Credit is not the same thing as ownership. You may believe that ideas and words should be shared and not "owned" by a single person. While credit is a reward for the development of concepts in language, this contribution can be made public and thus shared with and put to use by other people in the field. Finally, there are pieces of information that are considered "common knowledge" and do not need to be documented. For example, in doing historical research, you do not need to cite a source when indicating the birth date or death date of a nation's ruler or leader. In various areas of study, however, there may be differences in the kind of information that fits in this category. Therefore, if you are in doubt about whether an item is "common knowledge," you should either document it to be on the safe side, or you should discuss the matter with your professor.

Repeated discussion of the paragraphs above during class time may fail to sway the behavior of "pragmatists" who view college solely as career-accreditation and who plagiarize to save maximum time and effort and perhaps to resist engagement with material deemed irrelevant to that career. But even such "pragmatists," against their own "better" judgment, might be lured into thinking about differences in discursive realms, and this process may steer them in the direction of adequate research and honest documentation. As for those with "poor time-managements skills" who tend to "plan poorly for the time and effort required for research-based writing, and believe they have no choice but to plagiarize" (Council of Writing Program Administrators), elaborate class discussion of the ideas in my statement might persuade some chronic procrastinators to start the assignment earlier and focus on skills needed to write a passing (or even an accomplished) paper.

Finding that their own perspective has been accorded sufficient respect in the syllabus, some "performance-self"-oriented students (who are not merely interested in avoiding academic labor) may

themselves agree to respect distinctions between realms of discursive performance enough to abide by the strictures of academic documentation. A few may even experience a moderate change in belief that enables them to agree with academic documentation practices. If foreign students appreciate how their issues about past educational experiences are anticipated, they will probably be more careful to align their writing and research process with the professor's expectations, whereas various others who merely exploit misconception by pretending that the concept of plagiarism does not exist in their culture may be put on notice that such a ruse will not work to their advantage.

Old, tough rhetoric about plagiarism cannot neutralize the influence on students of innovative internet technology and practices and emergent patterns of attitude and belief about selfhood, performance, interdependence, intellectual property and credit, cultural similarities and differences, and dissemination of knowledge and cultural products. If faculty and administrators seriously discuss the feasibility of including the kind of information represented in my statement about plagiarism and misuse of sources above in departmental and even college- or university-wide documents, then students on the whole may pay stronger attention to such "official" statements.

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