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The case for academic plagiarism education: A PESA Executive collective writing project

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The Case for Academic Plagiarism Education: Introduction

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Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion.

–T.S. Eliot, (1921) *The Scared Wood*, <https://www.bartleby.com/200/sw11.html>

creative imitation is a modern market imperative

–Richard Posner, *The Little Book of Plagiarism* http://www.amazon.com/Little-Book-Plagiarism-Richard-Posner/dp/037542475X/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1199474795&sr=8-1

Some scholars have argued that while plagiarism is as old as writing itself in the current technological environment of use and reuse, paste and edit, plagiarism has become a monumental problem and that ‘recent solutions to the plagiarism problem, including Web-based plagiarism detection services, enact a particular kind of societal control unique to postindustrial technologies of information exchange and processing’ (Marsh, 2007, p. 1). Historically, the term has been appraised differently and proposed remedies have differed according to the value accorded academic writing, the dynamics of the legal system governing copyright and the rights of the author, and the ways in which plagiarism detection has ‘function[ed] within a broad educational regime that emphasizes the management of student writing practices’ (Marsh, 2007, pp. 2–3). Marsh’s perspective that draws on Foucault to develop a critical

historical approach attentive to changes on technology has strong implications for plagiarism education. Thus, he argues

To teach the prevailing conventions of quotation, paraphrase, and summary, I propose, is to teach a pseudo-alchemical lesson whose secrets require a level of genre (or insider) knowledge not usually accessible to beginning writing students. (Marsh, 2007, p. 7)

Students need to know not only how and when to cite, and the moral arguments concerning appropriate citation and acknowledgement but also the changing historical role that plagiarism has played in the evolution of a legal system of intellectual property that ascribes rights to an author. Only through a proper introduction to the historically developing culture of publishing can academic writing – its prohibitions, its genres and its forms, as well as the recent development of ‘publishing ethics’ – can students come to understand the problem that plagiarism represents and why they should avoid it.

As the Editor-in-Chief of *Educational Philosophy and Theory* for over twenty years and the foundation editor of many other journals including *The Beijing International Review of Education*, *Policy Futures in Education*, *Knowledge Cultures* and the *Video Journal of Education*, among others, I have become concerned at the increasing levels of plagiarism considered as responses to the new social technologies of information. Students need to learn how to play the game, but also why they must play the game in a certain way so that it enables their learning, academic writing and research. Ideally, students must also come to understand text production and the different genres of academic writing – the materiality and historicity of genres and texts – including the history of the essay and its relation to the journal within the wider history of scientific communication (Peters, 2009). Writing in the new technologically-driven academic writing culture has created a new relationship of print to media, developed hypertext and incorporated the Web into new standards of the computer for writing and for reading (Bolter, 2001). There is a plethora of new writing tools and programs including Automated Writing Evaluation, Automated Essay Scoring and Intelligent Tutoring Systems as well as tools that unevenly support the argumentative essay rather than the research essay (Strobl et al., 2019). It is the argument of this paper that plagiarism education needs to be taught by examining plagiarism in the historical emergence of academic culture as a quasi-legal system together with its different genres and its academic norms, ethics, and procedures that govern the acceptability or non-acceptability of various practices of academic writing. Plagiarism needs to be studied as part of a cultural evolution of text production that generates legal, ethical and pedagogical problems where ‘plagiarism detection services, under the aegis of pedagogical reform and the promise of technological progress, serve to regulate student writing and reading practices’ (Marsh, 2007, p. 7). Yet it is necessary also to rescue students, especially graduates, from the ‘publish or perish’ culture that only measures performance through citation analysis in journals with the highest impact factor without due regard for the critical knowledge and ethical self-cultivation of how academic writing culture technologically and socially reconstructs the scholar, the researcher, and the graduate student. In addition, it is necessary to inform existing scholars of different forms of plagiarism and the ways that academic norms have changed over the last few decades.

Stealing Ideas: the History of Plagiarism

In the essay on Phillip Massinger in *The Sacred Wood*, T.S. Eliot (1920) makes his famous remarks on plagiarism in respect of Massinger and Shakespeare in a discussion of Elizabethan drama where to continue the opening quotation he suggests

A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest. Chapman borrowed from Seneca; Shakespeare and Webster from Montaigne. The two great followers of Shakespeare, Webster and Tourneur, in their mature work do not borrow from him; he is too close to them to be of use to them in this way. <https://www.bartleby.com/200/sw11.html>

Eliot is talking about what we might call ‘creative appropriation’, that is, taking a phrase or sentence that expresses an idea so well that it is hard to improve on it and developing it in a paraphrase or in a different language. In Eliot’s terms it is quite proper to ‘steal’ from another if we ‘make it new’. As Oscar Wilde puts it ‘Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness’. But mimicry is not mediocre. Mimicry – the activity or art of copying the behaviour or speech—exists in most animal life forms who use it for protection and survival, perhaps as an aspect of the processes of natural selection.¹ In the world of letters, ‘mimicry’ or imitation, is not an evolved resemblance but rather most often a conscious act, involving a deliberate decision. Aristotle suggested that art was the imitation of nature based on *techne*. In 1 *Corinthians* 4:16, Paul writes, ‘I urge you, then, be imitators of me’, appealing to apostolic power and or simply responding to social situations (William, 2013). Imitation is a developmental learning tool used by children and teachers alike. Experiments show that toddlers learn through peer imitation (e.g., Hanna & Meltzoff, 1993). Mark Twain in a letter to his friend Helen Keller accused of plagiarism, wrote ‘Substantially all ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources’.² In this letter he continues ‘The kernel, the soul — let us go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of all human utterances — is plagiarism’. Twain was expressing the essence of a kind of interconnectedness that has characterized literary writing over many centuries and also the idea that there is circular economy of writing where the best ideas get recycled. Virginia Woolf penned a letter to a friend in 1899 where she argued

After all we are a world of imitations; all the Arts that is to say imitate as far as they can the one great truth that all can see. Such is the eternal instinct in the human beast, to try & reproduce something of that majesty in paint marble or ink. Somehow ink tonight seems to me the least effectual method of all — & music the nearest to truth.³

Imitation is a major literary technique that characterizes certain ages. In ‘Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance’. George W. Pigman (1980) writes

From Petrarch’s sonnets to Milton’s epics a major characteristic of Renaissance literature is the imitation of earlier texts, and the Renaissance contains a vast and perplexing array of writings on the theory and practice of imitation.

He continues by drawing attention to different perspectives on plagiarism in the classical world:

Writers discuss imitation from so many different points of view: as a path to the sublime (‘Longinus’), as a reinforcement of one’s natural inclinations (Poliziano) or a substitute for undesirable inclinations (Cortesi), as a method for enriching one’s writing with stylistic gems (Vida), as the surest or only way to learn Latin (Delminio), as providing the competitive stimulus necessary for achievement (Calcagnini), and as a means of ‘illustrating’ a vulgar language (Du Bellay).

In this literature there is a difference between imitation and emulation, and more generally between content and style. Generally, group style or style of an age is not subject to the charge of plagiarism. In terms of academic writing we all adhere to the same academic style demanded by industrial journal systems. The notion of a ‘school of thought’ or intellectual tradition often express shared philosophical ideas or a common metaphysical core. Pastiche and parody are works based on imitation; the one celebrates while the other mocks. Within postmodernism pastiche became a technique that was a largely respectful and whimsical homage to another work or genre. It is an imitative technique used also in architecture, cinema, music, and theatre, often as an ensemble in the history of deliberate references or allusions to create something new – a veritable echo-chamber of references to past works and styles.

Imitation also had its place in a copyist culture where copying was a full time and the main way of processing, preserving and storing manuscripts in the age before printing. The copyist manuscript culture fulfilled a large role in the monastery schools. Medieval scribes copied, sometimes parts of text, sometimes illustrated, initiating the *pecia* system developed in Italian universities where a number of copyists worked on the same manuscript. In this manuscript culture

common elements began to emerge such as the table of contents, chapters, running heads, and indexes. This became the basis for a codification that was emulated in the age of printing. Blind copying led to many errors and the repetition of these mistakes. In general, copying became a major educational strategy and it was an accountable action where plagiarism is deemed unaccountable.

Philosophically, everyone has heard the old sayings ‘there are no new ideas’ and ‘new wine in old bottles’, expressed in biblical terms in *Ecclesiastes* 1:9 as ‘What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun’. Again, Mark Twain held a similar view:

There is no such thing as a new idea. It is impossible. We simply take a lot of old ideas and put them into a sort of mental kaleidoscope. We give them a turn and they make new and curious combinations. We keep on turning and making new combinations indefinitely; but they are the same old pieces of colored glass that have been in use through all the ages.

Audre Lorde, the US poet writes ‘There are no new ideas. There are only new ways of making them felt’. Steven Poole (2016) in the *Rethink: Surprising History of Ideas* attacks the ‘Silicon Valley ideology’, a flash of inspiration where an invention is the creation of ‘something from nothing’. He suggests we live in ‘an age of rediscovery’, where ‘Old is the new New’.

The history of plagiarism is very much a product of the eighteenth century growing out of a set of ideals of genius, authenticity and originality that emerged with the Romantic movement (1770–1848) which left an indelible mark on modern academic culture. It emphasized how intense emotions can act as the source of aesthetic experience and inspiration in face of the sublime and beauty of nature. The Romantics emphasized the emotions and spontaneous generation of emotion as the basis for the expression of inspiration in the creation of original work, of creating something from nothing. Plagiarism came into being in its modern form as a concept in its relations to the notions of individual genius, originality, inspiration and creativity. It emerged as an ‘immoral act’, an infringement and violation of the work of others, where the work (thoughts, ideas, expression) of another is represented as one’s own and use of the author’s work is made without proper and due acknowledgement.

Intellectual property and the legal concept of author

The legal concept of author emerges in relation to copyright and legal ownership by the person who created the work. The ‘author’ is invested with the ownership of the intellectual property of the work and entered a legalistic framework with the passing of the first copyright act called the Statute of Anne (after the Queen) in 1710 with the title ‘An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned’.⁴ The Act, a culmination of several petitions to Parliament by Stationers, recognized the author as the source of rights and were granted the exclusive right of publication for 21 years. The Act was limited to books in the period before the first academic journals. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* was established in March 1665 and the first fully peer-reviewed journal was *Medical Essays and Observations* (1733). Over a thousand periodicals were founded during the eighteenth century but many ran for only a few issues (see Geilas & Fyfe, 2020, for the editing of scientific journals in the period 1660–1950). Author rights were transferred to the publisher traditionally in the name of protection but increasingly this transfer has been challenged especially by activist of the open access movement in order to move to a system where the ‘publisher has permission to edit, print, and distribute the article commercially, but the author(s) retain the other rights themselves’.⁵

William F. Patry (1994: 3) writes: ‘Sir William Blackstone, English jurist and writer on law, associated such protection with the law of occupancy, which involves personal labor and results in “property,” something peculiarly one’s own (as implied by the Latin root “proprius”)’. It was

based more on principles of natural law and rested more on labour than occupancy. Locke's (1690) influential theory of natural law in *The Second Treatise of Government*, Chapter V 'Of Property', §27 reads

Sec. 27. Though the earth, and all inferior creatures, be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labor of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labor with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state nature hath placed it in, it hath by this labor something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other men: for this labor being the unquestionable property of the laborer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good, left in common for others.

http://web.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/LockeBook_Property_and_Tax.htm#:~:text=27.,may%20say%2C%20are%20properly%20his.

Patry (1994) remarks in a footnote: 'By contrast with the British emphasis on occupancy and labor as the foundation for copyright, continental theory, emphasizing "a personal and indissoluble link between the author and his creation" is based on Kant'. American law followed the British example. He continues

The printing press, with its ability to make multiple copies of a work easily, is frequently cited as the impetus for efforts to secure a more formal type of protection for books. These early efforts were sometimes made by printers and sometimes by authors, and took the form of royal printing licenses. Venice, Italy, predated England both in the introduction of printing and in the granting of printing licenses.

This discussion of the emergence of intellectual property is important historical background because it establishes the legal system of concepts including the concept of author in respect of their rights, against which modern plagiarism comes into play in the modern sense.

Why do Chinese students plagiarise? Cultural antecedents

Liz Jackson

Education University of Hong Kong

It has been commonly observed in western higher education Chinese students' tendencies to plagiarise, even at the postgraduate level. It is important here to understand the way writing and knowledge are understood in Chinese education, to recognise reasonable confusions and differences in views about plagiarism between western- and Chinese-based students and scholars.

In some ways Chinese views of the value of imitation mirror western ones in history, before the concept of ownership prevailed. In this orientation, there is a preferable or 'best' practice; the best has already been written, so why mess with perfection? Mao Zedong stated in 1964 that if one student told their peer the answer, both of their answers should be considered equally good (Mooney, 2006). In imperial China, where examinations served as the basis for entrance into civil and diplomatic service, memorisation and copying were the norm. As James et al. (2019) note, in exams, 'if the source material was a famous classic, paraphrasing or changing the source text would have been considered inaccurate while extensive uncited quotations were acceptable' (p. 634). Gow puts it more strongly: in imperial exams, 'citation was unnecessary and would even be interpreted as insulting to the learned reader' (2013, p. 28).

Such historical trends still shape education in Chinese societies today. While there has been a shift toward active and student-centred learning with less emphasis on examinations, copying from textbooks is still a normal practice in secondary schools in Hong Kong and China. Stating 'your own view' in these contexts is not particularly encouraged, as knowledge is still viewed hierarchically. Furthermore, students are understood to be engaging in learning from others;

they would not imagine that they are claiming their *own* knowledge in educational settings, as western understandings of plagiarism today imply (Gow, 2013).

While plagiarism discourse has been introduced into Chinese universities, it remains a vaguer concept than in the west given this ambivalence. Most higher education institutions rely on word-matching software in conjunction with a moralistic, shaming discourse to discourage plagiarism (Hu & Sun, 2017). It is treated as immoral to steal others' words, but as knowledge is still seen as external to the student, it is common for students to simply learn a paraphrasing game, to effectively plagiarise sources while going undetected. Plagiarism education in Chinese universities is also not common today, beyond the presence of moralistic policy discourse, and the common use of word-matching software. In this context authors of policy texts, university administrators and educators, do not demonstrate a particularly sophisticated or western view of plagiarism themselves (Hu & Sun, 2017).

It should then be unsurprising that Chinese students in western universities encounter a new orientation to plagiarism to which they are unaccustomed. As Ehrich et al. (2016) note in comparing views of Australian and Chinese university students, Chinese students are less likely to think that plagiarising another student's paper is unacceptable, and in general see plagiarism as acceptable when workloads are high. Interestingly, in the survey, Chinese students were more critical toward the student lending the paper to a peer than Australian students, reflecting the presence of thoughtful moral judgments, but ones clearly structured differently across these two groups. Such differences in experiences and views of knowledge and ownership one education contexts across students should be kept in mind, in place of unhelpful negative stereotypes of Chinese students as cheaters or less developed.

The Possibility of Academic Plagiarism Education: the Inquiry into the Chinese “Mountain Fortress” Phenomenon

Ruyu Hung
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Following Peters and Jackson, I fully agree that ‘Plagiarism needs to be studied as part of a cultural evolving form of text production that generates legal, ethical and pedagogical problems’ and try to answer the question ‘Why do Chinese students plagiarise?’ by exploring the cultural and historical root.

Imitation, as Peters discussed, is an important literary technique that characterizes certain ages in the West. However, it also has dominated the Chinese literary tradition and thereby produced a great impact on many various aspects of social life. One of the prominent examples is the notoriously widespread ‘Shanzhai’ (山寨) phenomenon in China. The term ‘shanzhai’ literally means ‘mountain fortress’ or ‘mountain stronghold’. In contemporary Chinese slang, *shanzhai* refers to ‘fake’, ‘copy’, ‘counterfeit’, ‘mimick’, and ‘imitate’. Anything could be ‘shanzhaied’ in China, from shoes to mobile phones, from superstars to cars, from fashion designer clothes to architectures, from food to restaurants. Andrew Chubb (2015) describes, from the lens of consumption culture, the *shanzhai* production spaces as ‘spaces of contact and exchange between local or “grassroots” Chinese cultures and the authorities of global capitalism and the Chinese Communist Party’ (p. 261). The space of the local or grassroots cultures can be identified as the mindset of the Chinese Robin Hood – the legendary bandit Song Jiang (宋江). Song Jiang was the leader of a band of robbers in a Chinese classic novel *Outlaws of the Marsh* (水滸傳). The bandits were described as sort of Robin Hood-styled robbers. Facing the challenge of global capitalism, the Chinese *shanzhai* culture is taken as a certain Robin Hoodism (Ho, 2010). However, the pursuit of profit rather than justice is the main driving force of the *shanzhi* phenomenon.

The *shanzhai* phenomenon has a deep-seated Chinese traditional maxim – following the dao. The maxim ‘following the dao’ is incorporated in the respect for the ancient sage king because they are the chosen who come to grips with dao and set up rules and standards for every aspect of life (Hung, 2018). In Chinese tradition, this respect is embodied in many different practices and conventions, for example, the rules of writing calligraphy. Calligraphy is one of the indispensable practices for literati in ancient China. In the process of taking the discipline of writing calligraphy, the elite literati have two most important rules to follow, which are imitation and repeated practice (Hung, 2018). Although ‘[t]he process of imitation allows for the absorption of masterworks’ characteristics and thus results in the creation of the later master’s individual and unique style’ (Hung, 2018, p. 50), not all students are capable of developing individual artistic style. However, less obvious but more important is that the lengthy process of learning calligraphy through the history keeps endorsing the value of imitation and copying.

‘Following the past sage king’ could be one of the factors resulting in the widespread acceptance of imitation and copycatting. As the cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han (2017) argues, Chinese culture can be characterized by ‘deconstruction’ or ‘decreation’. For example, in ancient China, the way of collectors’ treating masterpieces is to put their own stamps on the paintings or calligraphic work and, sometimes, leave poems as well. The collectors, mostly, literati, official-scholars, nobility or royalty, form a dialogue crossing time on the empty space on the masterpieces. The concepts of authenticity, identity, and originality are not what they are understood in the West. In Chinese tradition, authenticity, identity, and originality are always in the making.

Overall, imitation in Chinese culture could be more a virtue than a vice and thereby is convenient for the rampancy of Chinese *shanzhai* phenomenon. Academic plagiarism is a certain variation of the *shanzhai* phenomenon. As the *shanzhai* manufacturing seriously deteriorates industries and markets globally, so does academic plagiarism damage scholarship in many ways. Cultural studies may have revealed the traces of imitation that is implemented in many aspects of Chinese life, from the old age to modern times, and therefore, shed a light on the Academic Plagiarism Education.

The riff and the ref: Softly ethical?

Carl Mika

University of Waikato

The Western academic tradition makes it clear that one should always acknowledge sources. However, the case for referencing the subtle impacts on one’s thinking remains unclear. Perhaps there is a reason for that uncertainty. In what follows, I contemplate some of the tensions around letting a reference to the initial impetus slide on the one hand, and feeling a need to acknowledge that first prompt on the other.

There is a term in jazz which is useful for this phenomenon: to *riff*. It refers to taking a line from a musician and then running with it – not copying it, but allowing it to act as an inspiration. It can occur also in writing, but perhaps even less obviously. Consider the following scenario: I read A’s work, and then I am jettisoned into a completely different line of thinking, to such an extent that perhaps A’s work is not discernible in mine. The prompt for thinking (Mika & Southey, 2016) might simply be a style of writing, a single word or – and more conventionally – it could be an idea. Especially in doctoral work in the Humanities, interview data might provide the push (Southey, 2020). Even in the case of the other writer’s idea, there has been a usefulness to it but it is not logically related to the current writer’s thinking. It might be that the initial writer could not be referenced because his/her ideas would not fit.

Because the writer has created a new idea which has come about through ‘mere’ association, where the link between the current writing and the impetus for it is oblique, Western scholarship

would suggest that a reference is not needed. However, if the creative force for the writer's thinking is sufficiently powerful, we may need to revisit that stance. We would not be in a position to reference all galvanising sources, but some would call for acknowledgement. Note that the prompt can come from a situation that provokes one's writing. My own personal experience serves as an example here: I used to work as a criminal lawyer, and I observed during court sessions that clients (overwhelmingly Maori) were forced to answer questions directly, as if all things in the world were clear. Especially in presentations, I have discussed how this experience was formative for my scholarship. Similarly, I have outlined how the Gaze has inspired me to write as a colonised being (Mika & Stewart, 2015). However, I might not feel compelled to reference a word that someone else used which caught my attention and fuelled an article (although this does happen fairly regularly), unless it was in direct relation to the theme of my writing.

What I mean here is that there is a fundamental indebtedness to the first cause of one's thinking, and occasionally it is so productive that it should not be ignored. There is an ethicality here that is not as immediate as western scholarship currently demands but nevertheless calls for our attention.

Plagiarism education: beyond technical solutions and toward ethical consideration

Rachel Buchanan

University of Newcastle, Australia

In his commentary that pulls aside the curtain hiding the process of peer review, Jandrić notes that:

...junior scholars are expected to pick up the research culture of their discipline as a part of their own knowledge formation and development as researchers. ... [They] need to figure out sets of invisible rules relating to academic publishing largely on their own (2021, pp. 36–37).

While Jandrić's focus is peer review, he could equally be discussing plagiarism. Higher education is the primary site of academic induction into the norms of scholarly publishing. Yet, in attempting to address plagiarism universities have embraced a problematic solution. With the ready availability of plagiarism detection software programs, plagiarism in higher education and academic publication is rendered a technical problem rather than an educative one. The routine use of plagiarism detection software corrodes rather than enhances education – it institutionalises distrust (Bayne et al., 2020). Where plagiarism software is used as the default in teaching, academic trust is supplanted by a culture of surveillance (Ross & Macleod, 2018).

Rather than the issue of plagiarism being used as a catalyst for teaching the ethics underpinning scholarly writing and the historical and philosophical trajectory that has culminated in current scholarly practices, the use of software such as TurnitinTM, provides an ethically impoverished technical solution. With applications such as TurnitinTM, plagiarism is narrowly conceived as something that can be detected through patterns of text matching. It is argued that such software can be used as a pedagogical tool to improve students' writing (Halgamuge, 2017; Orlando et al., 2018); however, in such a context scholarly writing is rendered an exercise in paraphrasing to beat the machine. Citation and paraphrasing become a fig leaf covering the naked cobbling together of sources in aid of providing a passable imitation of academic writing.

While admittedly this is a crude characterisation of a complex and entrenched problem it allows for the elucidation of potential ways to move beyond the current situation. On the one hand, there is an educative solution available. In mentoring scholars into academic publishing, we need to provide students with not only an historical understanding of current cultural forms of text production but, equally, the time and space to practice – to develop reading, writing and thinking skills that ameliorate need for scholastic short cuts such as plagiarism.

On the other hand, there are ethical considerations to be brought to the issue. Can we move beyond institutional distrust? To ensure proper inculcation into the norms of academic writing

and publication would be to extend an ethic of care to the junior scholars in our sphere of influence (in our roles as editors, academics, supervisors and mentors). To make explicit the history of academic publishing makes clear the cultural imperialism of particular notions of the ownership of ideas and the hegemonic reproduction endemic in much of contemporary citation practice. While robust citation is a prophylactic against plagiarism, citation is a form of 'performative politics' (Mott & Cockayne, 2017) where hierarchies are maintained, particular voices are amplified, and through which others are excluded (typically scholars of colour, women in the Academy and those working in peripheral institutes).

Research ethics is embedded in the academic teaching of research methods and methodologies. University students are taught to think ethically about the objectives and design of their research; involvement, recruitment of, and communication with participants; storage of research data; and the way in which the research and its participants are described in publication. Institutional ethics is an established norm and thus such processes are explicitly taught to research students. Likewise, publication ethics should be taught as a fundamental aspect of scholarly writing. Just as ethical consideration is part of research and research education, ethical publication protocols should be explicitly embedded into the teaching of academic writing, citing and publishing practices.

Plagiarism: Philosophy, Methodology and Education

Marek Tesar
The University of Auckland

The topic of plagiarism is complex, and can be analysed from the perspective of knowledge; law; teaching and learning, but also culture, values and ideology. While there are many perspectives to consider that may add to the knowledge base of plagiarism education, I immediately thought of Rancière's (1991) *Ignorant Schoolmaster*. It is a text that, to me, speaks of a concern of plagiarism; the relationship between the teacher and student. The idea of a student plagiarising is, in my assessment, a relational concern, linked to the argument of the Learned and Ignorant Master. The master is 'concealing knowledge' from the student, and within the circle of power that links the student with the Master, there is an inherent struggle between thinking about, 'to understand', and thinking about to 'repeat'.

The idea of repetition in educational contexts is that to thrive is to 'understand'. To understand is to know and therefore is an epistemological concept. In contrast, repetition is an act of ontological positioning towards an educational task given, in the Rancière example, by the Master. Repetition is associated with a lack of critical engagement, a lack of originality and a lack of understanding of the material. It can be a subject or character positioning as well. However, such a binary and dichotomy, that we are presented within the conceptualisation of plagiarism, is problematic.

The idea of plagiarism, repetition or copying is a deeply problematic and troubling student behavior. It is considered a serious transgression and consequently is severely punished. It is hard to be disputed, what is plagiarized and what is not when the texts are compared, and the similarity score is so high. What, however, can be disputed is the idea that plagiarism is intentional; that plagiarism is the student's fault; and that plagiarism is ahistorical and not contextual. The understanding of the student, mentioned above, relates to the idea of gaining epistemological understanding of the subject – the logic, the progression, the overall set of thoughts and ideas. The repetition is the problem; as the repetition of understanding (for instance of memorizing and repeating) is mechanical and problematic, and becomes problematic as the student plagiarizes the sentence or the statement. but does not necessarily plagiarize the understanding that was the ultimate goal of the pedagogical process of which the student was a part. It

somewhat relates to the idea presented in Peters et al (2020) *Infantologies* where one may argue that plagiarism – copying and repetition – is part of learning ever since infancy.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we have been subjected to and have encountered in Universities enhanced number cases of cheating and plagiarism among students (Tesar, 2021). There has been an extensive recorded number of students who have, in Rancière's sense, opted for replacing repetition with understanding. The question that the University administrators must answer is how it was done, seeking evidence and determining the severeness of the offence depending on the percentage of the text that was copied or plagiarised, whether deliberately or not. However, rarely do we engage in the conversation of why. And the stress, the context, the pressure of family, the cultural background will all contribute to the decision to alter the 'understanding' and opt for 'repetition'. Buchannan et al. (2021) has done tremendous collective work in re-thinking ethics associated with education and their ideas have a merit here. Furthermore, as the editor of a journal, I have been receiving more and more paper submissions that are plagiarised. The vast range of scholars from diverse countries at different stages of their careers who have engaged in this act, raises the question of the need to think about the interconnectedness of education, philosophy and methodology as a potential way for how to engage with this topic (Tesar, 2020). We also need to think about the pressure on performance, the pressure to produce, the pressure to excel. One way to think about this concern is thus perhaps not only to educate about plagiarism but also to enhance critical thinking, engagement, learning, asking ourselves questions about what assessment questions we are asking students to complete that generate such an amount of plagiarism?

Assessing the Impact of Academic Plagiarism Detection Services

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All university sites now display information about academic plagiarism sometimes also in relation to academic integrity, with questions on forms of academic plagiarism, why it matters and how to avoid it. Generally, this is also some comment on how the university handles such cases depending upon its form and extent. Sometimes there is an online course and there is accompanying notes of study skills. In addition to university sites there are a number of other sites that provide information such as Turnitin, 'the American commercial, Internet-based, closed-source plagiarism detection service which is a subsidiary of Advance Publications',⁶ established in 1997 which also supports a quiz.⁷ Turnitin,⁸ advertises its mission in the following terms: 'to ensure the integrity of global education and meaningfully improve learning outcomes'. The software checks its own databases and those of other academic databases with whom they have agreements for unoriginal content by identifying similarities with extant works. In 2019 Advance Publications Inc,⁴ a private American media company reputedly the fourth largest in the state of New York, acquired Turnitin for \$1.75 billion.¹⁰ The company has faced some criticism. First, students have objected to submitted their work to Turnitin as a course requirement because such an action it is argued contains a presumption of guilt. Sean Michael Morris and Jesse Stommel (2017) complain that

Plagiarism detection software (PDS), like Turnitin, has seized control of student intellectual property. While students who use Turnitin are discouraged from copying other work, the company itself can strip mine and sell student work for profit.

<https://hybridpedagogy.org/resisting-edtech/>

They go on to note that 'Turnitin isn't selling teachers and administrators a product. The marketing on their website frames the Turnitin brand less as software and more as a pedagogical lifestyle brand' and they set up an exercise 'not to "take down" or malign any specific digital tools or edtech companies, but rather for participants to think in ways they haven't about the tools they already use or might consider asking students to use'.

1. Who owns the tool? What is the name of the company, the CEO? What are their politics? What does the tool say it does? What does it actually do?
2. What data are we required to provide in order to use the tool (login, e-mail, birthdate, etc.)? What flexibility do we have to be anonymous, or to protect our data? Where is data housed; who owns the data? What are the implications for in-class use? Will others be able to use/copy/own our work there?
3. How does this tool act or not act as a mediator for our pedagogies? Does the tool attempt to dictate our pedagogies? How is its design pedagogical? Or exactly not pedagogical? Does the tool offer a way that 'learning can most deeply and intimately begin'?

They argue that this kind of awareness of edtech and especially of plagiarism detection software (PDS), like Turnitin, is ethical activism work that is part of critical digital literacies. They summarize and quote 'CCCC-IP Caucas Recommendations Regarding Academic Integrity and the Use of Plagiarism Detection Services'.¹¹

Plagiarism detection services:

1. 'undermine students' authority' over their own work;
2. place students in a role of needing to be 'policed';
3. 'create a hostile environment';
4. supplant good teaching with the use of inferior technology;
5. violate student privacy.¹²

One of the most troubling claims of the CCCV-IP document is that PDS damages writing pedagogy. Deborah Weber-Wulff (2019) suggests that 'Plagiarism detectors are a crutch, and a problem';

Software cannot determine plagiarism; it can only point to some cases of matching text. The systems can be useful for flagging up problems, but not for discriminating between originality and plagiarism. That decision must be taken by a person. The most important method for finding plagiarism is reading a text and studying the references for inconsistencies. A spot check with an Internet search engine, using three to five words from a paragraph or a particularly nice turn of phrase can uncover copyists.

Recent research testing tools for plagiarism detection 'show that although some systems can indeed help identify some plagiarized content, they clearly do not find all plagiarism and at times also identify non-plagiarized material as problematic' (Foltýnek et al, 2020). There are now more than twenty major PDS on the market.¹³ There have been some advances in the software but there are still major problems in principle, and with issues of control, ethics, and agency, especially when some systems generate a large number of *false* detections. There are also problems of 'resistance' when institutions and publishers make a commitment and blanket policy to one major form of PDS.

The multiple faces of plagiarism (Open review)

Nina Hood

The University of Auckland

This collective writing project explores what, as many of the authors have identified, is a topical and challenging issue – plagiarism. The introductory pieces explore the historical and literary roots of plagiarism and in doing so highlight key themes that traverse the different authors' contributions. In particular, it raises awareness to the varied understandings of plagiarism – what it is, what it means, and the implications associated with it. What becomes clear is that plagiarism is complex, contextually mediated and a valued laden topic.

At the heart of many of the accounts – see for example here Jackson, Hung, Mika, and Buchanan – is the question ‘how do we conceptualise what plagiarism is?’. Various answers are explored; a cultural and historical phenomenon, a technical issue that requires a technical solution, an ethical consideration, an issue of academic induction and enculturation (or as many of the authors point out the lack of such induction and enculturation). Each author and their conceptualisation is of course correct. Plagiarism is a social construct, which is heavily influenced by dominant cultural norms and very much dominated by Western traditions and expectations.

Tesar pushes these ideas further to ask the important question of why people plagiarise, noting that such a question often is missing from discussions and dealings of plagiarism, particularly in universities. Such a complex issue as plagiarism no doubt has complex antecedents. And if we (universities, publishers, the academe and education more generally) are to ‘solve’ the plagiarism ‘issue’ it undoubtedly is crucial to more fully understand what is leading to it. While some of the authors provide some ideas for where to look, one cannot help to think that as well as more global explorations we also will need to explore and understand plagiarism at the level of the individual.

One thought that I could not escape reading these interesting contributions was that while plagiarism might be alive and well (as the authors suggest), so too is what one might call reverse plagiarism. That is, an author including what, at times may be considered spurious citations, in order to increase citation counts. The reasoning, behind such actions reflect the current impact-driven culture in academia, where citations become the all too important metric for individual academics as well as journals. This idea was touched on by Buchanen: ‘citation is a form of “performative politics” (Mott & Cockayne, 2017) where hierarchies are maintained, particular voices are amplified, and through which others are excluded (typically scholars of colour, women in the Academy and those working in peripheral institutes)’. She speaks to a dual issue – self-promotion or the promotion of one’s colleagues and friends, at the expense of those on the periphery. This raises the real possibility that academic publishing is experiencing (or promoting depending on how one chooses to look at it) of the Matthew Effect.

Plagiarism is a bad idea ... (Open review)

Sean Sturm
University of Auckland

... but it’s an old idea, as Michael Peters documents in his introduction, an idea that in its defence of the legal copyright of authors is indebted to the western liberal heritage of Lockean individualism and Smithian capitalism based on individual property rights and the Romantic ideal of the author as lone genius that was its inheritance. Of course, depending on our view of this heritage, plagiarism is creative and emancipatory (it’s art), naïve – or culturally relative – but remediable (it’s a mistake), or simply illegitimate (it’s cheating or theft).

Most of the authors of this article, like many teachers, see plagiarism as a mistake by students. But they see it as an educative occasion: a chance to educate students about the ethics and aesthetics of scholarship and thereby induct them as apprentices into their scholarly community. They advise teachers to introduce students to the history, as well as the ethical and aesthetic norms, of academic writing and publishing (and perhaps also how they are culturally relative – and imperialist), in particular, about when imitation is appropriate in academic writing. So far so good. But what most teachers do in practice is default to scholarly norms that recapitulate the western liberal heritage: for example, that copying ideas or phraseology from individual authors is bad (although once upon a time it was expected), unless you cite them to acknowledge your indebtedness to them; and that mimicking generic style is good (unless you are acknowledged a genius in your discipline) because ‘classic style’ (Thomas & Turner, 2011) is the common currency of academia. (For my part, I normally end up holding the line on the former, if not the latter.)

If teachers end up stopping short in their response to plagiarism, it is not – or, at least, not usually – from a lack of will to contest scholarly norms or, indeed, from a lack of good will towards students. Rather, it is because they assume that they are the experts in the scholarly community – and experts in plagiarism. What if they were to see plagiarism as an authentic and adaptive response by students to how they were teaching and thus educative for them as teachers? What plagiarism reveals that teachers tend to ignore how many students actually learn. (Marek Tesar is right to cite Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* [1991], which argues not that teachers are or should be ignorant, but that students *aren't* [Biesta, 2017].) First, students often learn socially, that is, by working together, including by copying each other, and they do so in technology-enhanced ways, that is, by working with the technologies that help them achieve what seems to be required, be that plagiarism services or plagiarism detection software. Second, they learn by adapting to what they are taught to value, which, in the case of plagiarism, as with much else in the unscholarly community that is the neoliberal university, seems to be credentialization, individualism and 'stultification' (Rancière, 1991, p. 8). Plagiarism is a bad idea because it undervalues students and cheapens the *universitas magistrorum et scholarum*.

Plagiarism and the neoliberal university (Open comment)

Bernadette Farrell
University of Canterbury

This project contributes to an important dialogue on plagiarism, placing it historically, culturally, legally, ethically, politically and pedagogically. The rise of the neoliberal university and the commodification of education have changed how many people, including students, think about their work within the university. As students, and perhaps academics, increasingly come to think of their studies as a means to an end (employment), they may start to think strategically about how to achieve that goal. For some students, the university is their first experience of large personal debt, and this alongside family, cultural and personal expectations puts them under enormous pressure to perform. The stakes are high, and many struggle to navigate the university, its traditions, power relations and ways of doing and being. This is coupled with the situation that some students may credit the regurgitation of 'facts' as having gotten them this far; as Peters explains, both imitation and copying have historically been understood as learning strategies. This is not to point the finger of blame at any student, as plagiarism, as Tesar argues, is connected to the relational nature of education.

Simultaneously there has been a proliferation and increasing usage of plagiarism detection software in the university as time and capacity is stretched to meet productivity goals. As Buchanan argues, this has the effect of reconstituting how plagiarism is perceived, while simultaneously eroding the trust that underpins the university's work. A slower university (Mahon, 2021) is perhaps called for; one where students have the time to read critically and come to understand the history and context of their work with a little less pressure to complete tasks. Following Besley and Peters, it appears that the modern conception of plagiarism also places it among debates around the political economy of publishing as students' work is taken and sold for profit. Understandings of plagiarism are evolving. This project is a timely reminder that the academe has a continuing ethical responsibility to engage with this topic.

Thinking about plagiarism (Open comment)

Andrew Madjar
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As a student, the word plagiarism has an ominous tone. When spoken, I hear the word as an offence – one that is policed by the university. If this charge would be made against me, I would

face discipline and punishment. In reading this project, there is a sense of wanting to move away from this penal understanding of plagiarism towards seeing it as an educative opportunity. Plagiarism education is about supporting students to learn the rules of academia so that they can understand the obligations and expectations that are involved in academic writing. This is a positive direction to take the discussion of plagiarism.

Another important thread I see in this project is how plagiarism is rooted in historical and cultural meaning. When we talk about plagiarism, we are assuming particular understandings of what an author is, how ideas can be considered one's intellectual property, and the rights that an author has for their work. These assumptions structure the relationship that we, as academic writers, have with authors and ideas. But these assumptions are not based in the objective qualities of authorship and texts, but rather emerge from historically contingent understandings.

Combining these two threads, a curious connection appears. When we teach students the rules of the academic game, other understandings are being smuggled into this process. That is, by teaching students about plagiarism, we are also tacitly communicating understandings about the nature of authorship and texts. This occurs irrespective of teachers' or students' awareness. To me, this suggests that plagiarism education raises not only the need to utilise the important academic processes of how to use and reference other people's ideas; furthermore, we also need to confront the particular assumptions and limitations involved in these processes.

In Mika's piece, he suggests that common notions of plagiarism and referencing are not completely concordant with the rich and messy processes involved in being inspired by others' ideas. Reductive notions of plagiarism assume that the line between our own ideas and the ideas of others can be clearly demarcated. But, like Mika, this does not match my experience of thinking and writing. When I try to be original by creating a space separate from the ideas of others, I only come up with superficial and hackneyed ideas. The times that I have made progress in my understanding is when I come into close proximity with other thinkers, engaging in an intimate dialogue. These thinkers touch me, leaving me changed in some way, so that when I emerge from such encounters it is difficult to divide thinking into what originates from myself and what originates from the other.

Mika raises this issue to interrogate our notions of plagiarism in relation to the complex ways that our ideas are inspired. Additionally, this challenge can be framed to speak to a different issue: How does the way we educate students about plagiarism also give students an understanding of how we are inspired by the ideas of others? When we think about plagiarism, we are also thinking about something more. What is it to be a subject in the presence of others? What is it to be an author? What is the significance of having and encountering ideas? What is the nature of inspiration? So, it is not enough for plagiarism education to be concerned with guidelines and processes. There is more at stake for us to think through – for teachers and for students. As I read this project, it is exciting to see this work taking place.

Governing thought through academic plagiarism (Open comment)

P. Taylor Webb

University of British Columbia

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another's oral or written work as one's own. Colloquially, plagiarism is often referred to as a copy, a kind of illicit re-production. Today, the ubiquitous practices of similitude (copy-paste, photoshop, deepfakes) intensify discussions about academic integrity and academic authenticity. As such, plagiarism strongly governs academic work, has nothing to do with conscious intention, and often forms a basis for exclusion and expulsion. My own university considers plagiarism an act of 'intellectual theft', linking it to the political economies of property (industrial capitalism) and copyright (jurisprudence). Here,

plagiarism smacks as a kind of ‘securities fraud’, albeit a claim that is made within the dubious sanctity of the financialized and neoliberal university. Nevertheless, student and faculty economies are strongly regulated through ideas of plagiarism, while other academic economies remain ‘free’ and unfettered. In the end, plagiarism forms a conservative enunciation of the broader arts of similitude, and often through punitive registers of something considered unoriginal, disingenuous, and false.

Let’s go in another direction. Let’s not discuss property, penalties, legalities, and fraud. Rather, let’s ask what constitutes something as academically original or new? Pausing outside of academia, one of my favourite musical bands – *De La Soul* – found themselves in hot water when sampling other songs in their own. I enjoy sampling – the reuse of a portion of a sound recording. I think of it as a creative practice that functions as both homage and as a way to layer additional meaning in songs. Another wonderful artist, Takashi Murakami, has others paint according to his designs – which he then claims as his own – deliberately blurring the author-function. Of course, Andy Warhol likewise got himself into a few pickles from repeatedly reproducing particular images. Nevertheless, Foucault (1983) recognized the political possibilities involved when subverting the author-function (see also, Foucault, 1984). Thinking with Andy Warhol, Foucault (1983) mused ‘A day will come when, by means of similitude relayed indefinitely along the length of a series, the image itself, along with the name it bears, will lose its identity’ (p. 54).

Again, what is original or new in academia? What distinguishes an original contribution from one that is derived? Deleuze (1994) argued that most notions of ‘new’ are only derivations of the past – hence, not new. The ‘new’, Deleuze (1994) argued, can only be produced through a break or rupture with habit and memory. As such, I contend that there is hardly anything ‘new’ or original in the arts and humanities. Scholarship might be interesting and informative, but, using Deleuze, rarely new. In so far as plagiarism demands intellectual derivations – but not replicas – it limits particular forms of thought and protects particular political economies. Further, I think that some intellectual ideas have unfortunately lost much of their significance – not from plagiarism – but from serial repetitions of academic thought that misplace the creative and political intent that Foucault (1983, 1984) believed could be found in practices like sampling, authorial-blurring, and serial re-representations. In this sense, plagiarism ensures the political economies of intellectual property, and simultaneously assists in simulating derivative thinking.

Importantly, intellectual derivations – and not replicas – limit the very attempts to rupture academic habits and intellectual memories. Ironically, then, plagiarism governs academic and literary production by limiting possibilities to form something ‘new’. Even though blatant copies without creative intent are detestable, plagiarism also restricts or limits forms of thought and creative practice that could produce something new. Academic publishing is slowly rupturing intellectual habits, for example, through open and video publications. How university economies wrestle with our increasingly ‘similitudic’ capacities will, I believe, denote an increasingly factious threshold between new intellectual thought and derivative academic productions.

Notes

1. <https://medium.com/@carolineherrera/imitation-is-the-sincerest-form-of-flattery-that-mediocrity-can-pay-to-greatness-oscar-wilde-4a59ce972f67>
2. <https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/05/10/mark-twain-helen-keller-plagiarism-originality/>
3. <https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/01/14/virginia-woolf-on-imitation-and-the-arts/>
4. <https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?entryid=3389>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright_policies_of_academic_publishers
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnitin>
7. <https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-quiz/>
8. <https://www.turnitin.com>
9. [https://www.advance.com; company history](https://www.advance.com;company_history) <http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/economics-business-and-labor/businesses-and-occupations/advance-publications-inc>

10. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnitin>
11. <http://culturecat.net/files/CCCC-IPpositionstatementDraft.pdf>
12. <https://hybridpedagogy.org/resisting-edtech/>
13. See the list at <https://www.g2.com/categories/plagiarism-checker>

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