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## PLAGIARISM AND ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP IN THE AGE OF AI: PRESENT COMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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PRESENT COMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
English and Writing Studies

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by  
Sarah D. LaGioia  
May 2024

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May 2024

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of plagiarism, or the passing off of work produced by others as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement of the source of creation, is not a new one. It is, however, being complicated in new and interesting ways by technological innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI)-based natural-language processing (NLP). In this paper, I investigate the present complications of defining and responding to plagiarism in the age of AI and suggest the future direction of our grappling with text-generative NLP programs such as OpenAI's ChatGPT. This paper will describe perspectives on plagiarism and potential reasons behind the use of AI to commit it, including demographic and linguistic complications. It will also develop potential actions that can be taken to avoid plagiarism altogether and/or to respond to it appropriately if and when it does still arise. Future directions include how institutions, students, and educators might come to view plagiarism and original authorship in the age of AI. I will investigate and synthesize existing literature on plagiarism and extend its conversation to include the innovation of artificial intelligence.

*Keywords:* plagiarism, artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, education

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## DEDICATION

To the California State University, San Bernardino Writing Center.

Keep fighting the good fight.

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*Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerent.*

Perish those who said our good things before we did.

(Donatus, in Posner)

## AN INTRODUCTION TO PLAGIARISM

The concept of plagiarism, or the passing off of work produced by others as one's own without appropriate acknowledgment of the source of creation, is not a new one. Questions of authorship have existed since antiquity and, according to scholars like Alexander Lindey and Joel Bloch, have only further developed with the advent of different text-producing innovations (Bloch 20). Plagiarism in academic conversations has been one of the hallmark sites of contestation and has had very real consequences in institutions of higher learning (e.g., academic probation or expulsion). Interestingly, however, academics lack a specific, across-the-board definition of what plagiarism actually means. Without consensus, it can be difficult to determine the best course of action for how to deal with those who commit plagiarism. According to Diane Pecorari, "The lack of an unambiguous, commonly held understanding may well be related to a degree of vagueness or lack of specificity in the definitions many universities include in their policies on plagiarism" (363). Although there is a lack of specificity across the board, there is a striking similarity between concise definitions offered by scholars in the fields of composition, linguistics, and education. For example:

Plagiarism is best understood as a kind of false participation in the education process. (Hubick 8)

The uncredited, knowing, and sometimes wholesale adaptation of work that is not one's own. (Fyfe 1396)

Plagiarism involves appropriating an idea or a formulation and reproducing it. (Pecorari 362)

These ideas are similar in that each reflects on instances of fraudulent claims, on instances of pretending to present oneself while actually presenting the labors of others. This misrepresentation becomes a kind of false participation that has led to university policies in which plagiarism is regarded in moral terms, classified as academic dishonesty/misconduct (Howard 797). This view of plagiarism requires a view of the author(s) as an autonomous entity, and this perspective prevails in academia despite Howard's calling it a "regulatory fiction" (797). It disregards the collaborative nature of writing, the push (even in academia) for intertextual perspectives that would appear to butt heads with the idea of an individual creative thinker and writer. Other scholars note this discrepancy, stating that

...part of the difficulty here lies in the relationship between the demand for originality and the reverence of other writers, a tension that occurs when 'the demand for novelty meets the sensitive writer's normal worship of the great literary past'. (Mallon qtd. in Pennycook 207)

Should definitions of plagiarism be revised to reflect the relationship between authors and between texts? Howard argues that perhaps intentionality needs to

be a larger factor in the punitive process against plagiarism and that perhaps strategies must be put in place that would lead to the avoidance of grades of F and/or expulsion from university for students who, knowingly or unknowingly, plagiarize (798). This may require, she says, that we “differentiate the two major categories of plagiarism: that which should be treated as an offense and that which should be regarded as a valuable transitional composing strategy” (Howard 802). Patchwriting, which involves the incorporation of bodies of text written by others into one’s own writing is pedagogically significant as it reveals an attempt on the part of the student to practice intertextuality—in other words, an attempt to compose with greater skill than they may currently possess as independent writers. It shows a level of recognition that their claims can be substantiated by scholars and experts in their respective fields (or even beyond them) but is viewed as a failure of appropriate support since the student does not attribute correctly, if at all. This can be viewed as a means by which the student is transitioning as a novice writer into one who is more aware of the collaborative nature of scholarship and, pedagogically, opens a place in the teaching process wherein the student can be guided on how to cite the sources they use to avoid plagiarism in the future. It is a teaching opportunity, and a learning one. If plagiaristic behavior persists after the fact, recourse is required, but there should be a level of awareness of the transitional nature from one level of student writing into another, more acceptable one. This opens the floor to meaningful conversation about the writing process and how to create a product that does not

disregard the individuals whose thoughts and words bolster a student's own. This perspective is controversial in that it calls for the questioning of not just student responsibility, or the responsibility of the instructors, but also responsibility on the part of the academic institution to settle on an acceptable and appropriate definition of plagiarism so that the responses to it will likewise be regarded as acceptable and appropriate.

This does, however, need to leave room for what Howard calls "positive plagiarism" in her recitation of T.S. Eliot: "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" (T.S. Eliot qtd. in Howard 796). The nature of this quotation looks for a space between immature and "good" writers where education and exploration lead to a healthy writing process and written product. Here, original authorship comes into play. A written product can be construed as either effective or ineffective and, sometimes, original (constructed in the writer's own voice) or plagiarized (constructed using the words of others).

The writer's identity can be revealed through the nature of what they write, and other people's writing likewise is revelatory of their experiences, scholastically or otherwise. However, natural-language processing (NLP) opens the door to questions of authorship and identity that would theoretically belong to an artificial intelligence. This complicates the nature of writing in general as there currently is not a consistent way of revealing and repeating the text that gets generated by AI. November 2022 heralded the introduction of a chatbot by

OpenAI called ChatGPT which became wildly popular almost immediately after it came out. Due to its rampant use and faithful following, this will be the primary artificial intelligence discussed within this paper. Every ChatGPT response to a query is unique, but often misinformed. It is characterized by its impressive ability to generate text that is both of quality and originality, sufficient to easily get past plagiarism detection methods like the human eye or even technological tools like Turnitin, and the work is fabricated rather than copied. Presently, Turnitin is not capable of detecting AI fabrication; instead, it looks for material copied, either verbatim or very closely, from published sources (be they scholarly documents or those written and previously submitted by students) and without appropriate citation and attribution. In other words, while Turnitin and other such plagiarism checkpoint tools may be useful for detecting plagiarism from traditional sources, they have not kept up with the rise of fabrication-based artificial intelligence.

In this paper, I will investigate how we view plagiarism in higher education, delving into questions of what defines original authorship and how much originality is required of a student author to make the writing stand apart as their own. I also ask readers to consider how we look at and respond to works written partially or entirely by AI NLP programs like OpenAI's ChatGPT iterations, and who should be regarded as the author of such a text. If AI will be considered as at least partial author of the ultimate product, is it then something whose work needs to be credited? Furthermore, is a human individual who chooses to submit a text generated by AI not submitting original work and, ultimately, what

constitutes plagiarism in the age of AI and what do we do about it? My intervention into the greater conversation of plagiarism in higher education will address these concerns and offer a possible trajectory of using AI in writing. It will also address what measures might be taken to deter and/or to respond to student plagiarism in the age of AI.

### TYPES OF PLAGIARISM

Concern over the growth of plagiarism in academia has led to much scholarship on the nature of and causes of plagiarism overall. In fact, the matter has featured in discussion since at least the 1950s, when Lindey published his book, *Plagiarism and Originality*, a text that follows a historical progression of plagiarism across media and genre. Joel Hubick, in the article “A Philosophical Response to Plagiarism,” notes that

It is debatable whether the increase [in plagiarism] is due to technology making it easier for students to plagiarize (electronic sources, the internet, etc.), is the result of an increase in academic efforts to detect and report on plagiarism, or if it is a symptom of a larger crisis in academia. (1)

According to Dougherty, there are a number of types of plagiarism, which complicates the process of detection. Forms of what Dougherty calls “literal plagiarism” are generally easier to detect by human or machine. This include things such as copy and pasting (or, shake and paste), changing or substituting words but otherwise remaining true to the source’s original text, and adding or

deleting words in an attempt to hide the fact that text is otherwise being copied verbatim. “Disguised plagiarism,” on the other hand, includes items such as translation plagiarism (i.e., text translated from one language to another in an attempt to hide its origins), paraphrase that is improperly or unattributed to the source’s author, structural plagiarism, or the plagiarism of an idea. It is important to note here that the ownership of translated texts is another important area of inquiry, although authorship and ownership of such translations is beyond the scope of this paper.

While software exists that can be used to detect literal plagiarism (e.g., Turnitin), as of 2019, software cannot reliably detect disguised plagiarism (Dougherty 221). Where do we draw the line between what usage is helpful and which is hurtful? Assistive technology abounds and is widely used without question by individuals across sectors; things like spellcheck/autocorrect, autocomplete and compose features, and grammar and phrasal suggestions, and others can all be implemented with the press of a key or a click (Fyfe 1396). With this in mind, it is important to consider how much AI can be used, and what type of it, to work on your authentic writing. Technological advancements have allowed for ease of collaboration between people across time and space, but now AI is being featured as another writer with no means of appropriately attributing content to it. As Pennycook states, “Even if there once were clearly defined lines between the borrowed and the original, they are starting to fade in a new era of electronic intertextuality” (212). Writers can quickly and easily pull

from electronic sources on the Internet, and this opens the door even wider to plagiarism.

### WHY IS PLAGIARISM A PROBLEM?

Across North America, “over 70% of students admit to some form of cheating” (East 70). If we regard plagiarism as false participation in the educational process as Hubick does, then plagiarism can also be viewed as a form of cheating. Howard seems to agree with this perception, including in her article a quote from Edward M. White:

‘Plagiarism is outrageous, because it undermines the whole purpose of education itself: Instead of becoming more of an individual thinker, the plagiarist denies the self and the possibility of learning. Someone who will not, or cannot, distinguish his or her ideas from those of others offends the most basic principles of learning.’ (794)

It offends not only these principles, but also the educators and institutions and, sometimes, original authors when plagiarism comes to light. Plagiarism is an emotionally charged subject. For those who plagiarize, there can be feelings of moral confusion over its commission as well as feelings of apprehension about the possibility of being caught and punished; for those who catch the acts of plagiarism, there can be a sense of loathing towards the plagiarist and plagiarized material (Pennycook 214). So charged is this issue that the



consequences of plagiarizing can be dire, even leading to expulsion from the academic institution—what Howard calls “the academic death penalty” (789).

Scholar of teaching philosophy, Brook Sadler, is cited within Joel Hubick’s article when she presents the following arguments for why people should take issue with plagiarism:

- 1) it is theft, 2) it is deception, 3) it violates the trust between students and professors, 4) it skews the grading of a single class for other students, 5) it removes the struggle/striving that makes writing papers valuable, 6) it is vicious and can lead to other vices such as laziness, cowardice, low self-esteem, etc., 7) it may subsume the educational process into one that is only end-oriented therefore making plagiarism an efficient gamble worth the risk, 8) it diminishes the value of a degree, 9) it removes the sense of achievement in education, and 10) it effaces the student. (Hubick 10-11)

There is a divide presented here wherein the first six arguments are moral in nature, while the remaining items involve what the student gives up or loses. Academic dishonesty of this sort, then, can be regarded as particularly harmful to the student—something that harkens back to Fish’s notions of individualism earlier in the same Hubick article.

Richard Reilly, Samuel Pry, and Mark L. Thomas are cited several times within Hubick’s text due to their association with the philosophical and ethical/moral aspects of plagiarism criticism. In their own article, neatly titled “Plagiarism,” the trio calls upon the problem of theft; “Since theft—unlawfully

taking another person's property—is wrong, it follows that plagiarism—unlawfully taking another's intellectual property—is wrong as well" (270). Theft is not an uncommon way of looking at the act of plagiarism. In fact, several other scholars across disciplines like composition and linguistics (e.g., Scollon, Lindey) regard it thus.

Like Sadler (see Hubick), Reilly, Pry, and Thomas point out ways in which students fail to learn and grow, to advance themselves academically, when plagiarizing because "it deprives the student him- or herself of the opportunity to improve" (271). On a moral ground, these three scholars, in a section they aptly call "The Golden Rule," declare that, "[f]undamentally, plagiarism is a form of deception. The plagiarist is lying" (Reilly, Pry, and Thomas 272); later, in this same section, they clarify that the rule is "a demand for respect toward our fellow human beings: that they be seen as like ourselves, and therefore deserving of the same consideration that it is desired they show us" (273). It is not simply a question of self-respect but also one of respecting others, respecting your audience and those readers and researchers who would try themselves to advance the literature in your discipline or others. Ultimately, Reilly, Pry, and Thomas declare plagiarism "an act of arrogance, and it deprives one of the valuable experience of actually working through one's own ideas, of working through the ideas of others, and, perhaps most importantly, of drawing connections between the two" (279). While we should not ignore the possibility that students were inappropriately borrowing text in an unfortunately failed

attempt to be intertextual—that is, to show growth in their writing and critical thinking abilities by incorporating the words of others into their own work to strengthen it—we cannot disregard the fact that the text they used was not attributed to the source, and that they therefore plagiarized, even if the source they are using is ChatGPT. This actually undermines their own work in that their words cannot be trusted to be their own and may face dismissal or disdain. My argument is that plagiarism itself is a problem, but that intentional use of it and the subsequent claim of the fruits of other people’s labor is more nefarious. The question of intentionality will be addressed in future sections.

#### TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND ADVANCEMENT

Authors of plagiarism scholarship often cite instances of technological development as major turning points in the generation of plagiarized material (see Lindey). According to Mark Rose in Rebecca Moore Howard’s article “Plagiarisms, Authorships, and the Academic Death Penalty,” “the shift from mimetic to individualistic authorship took place in response to the technological innovation of the printing press” after which readership grew and with it a demand for texts and an increase in the viability of the profession of writing (Howard 790).

One scholar, Chris M. Anson, describes in his 2022 article, “AI-Based Text Generation and the Social Construction of ‘Fraudulent Authorship’: A Revisitation” the “heightened paranoia” beginning in the 1980’s with the sudden

access to the Internet; according to Anson, however, “plagiarism will look like child’s play next to new developments in AI-based natural-language processing (NLP) systems that increasingly appear to ‘write’ as effectively as humans” (37). Elali and Rachid note a particular problem with the advent of such artificial intelligence to the writing process—namely, that there are not adequate countermeasures in place to manage its use:

The proliferation of AI-generated models without adequate detection technologies presents a contemporary challenge for the scientific community. As previously stated, humans are unable to accurately detect AI-generated or human-generated works 100% of the time. Technology must be established to combat technology. (3)

Without a way to detect, deter, or respond to the AI-supported plagiarism so many fear (and it is not an unfounded concern), the technological advancements of NLP are outpacing those of plagiarism-detection tools with little recourse. The technology that could stymie student use of AI to write their papers is not keeping up with the generative AI academia is attempting to combat. As further advancements are made to generative AI, so too must detective AI progress. Without this, accountability in scholarship goes to the wayside.

## PLAGIARISM AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

There are instances where “plagiarism” is not only acceptable but is often encouraged, such as in the incorporation of boilerplate language within

documents like syllabi or in the products created by ghost- and speechwriters for highly visible/public individuals or organizations. In fact, according to Clancy Ratliff, “we know, or should know, that the speakers don’t even necessarily write the speeches they deliver,” even in places of such scrutiny as the Republican and Democratic National Conventions (*Kairos*). Hollis Phelps, also cited in Ratliff’s piece, writes that “[w]hether in the form of research assistants or . . . plagiarism, the actual production of scholarship often depends on others, whose work often remains largely unacknowledged” (*Kairos*). Some forms of professional writing are anticipated to be egoless in the sense that they do not always advertise individual writers. Generative AI may be acceptable to construct such pieces of writing, but is there a place for it elsewhere?

It is not acceptable within academic writing, and the advent of text-generative AI is a major complicating factor in institutions of higher education. Chris M. Anson looks into this issue in depth, pointing out that it must now be considered “that students could generate entire authentic-looking essays from a small input into a natural-language processing (NLP) program” (39). NLP programs are rapidly advancing and with it comes an influx of texts generated by artificial intelligence. One such AI system currently in wide use is that which is put out by OpenAI: ChatGPT, of which there are several iterations of this “generative pretrained transformer.” Research conducted for the purposes of this paper follows these iterations through use of ChatGPT’s second and third iterations, GPT-2 and GPT-3, which is the AI focus of Anson’s paper as well as

Paul Fyfe’s research and reflection on AI’s use within university students’ papers. While there are other text-generating programs out there (e.g., Grammarly and Gmail’s Smart Compose capabilities), this paper, too, will be focusing on ChatGPT-3’s incorporation into documents submitted in a higher education setting, the reason for this being that it sits prominently at the time of this writing, as it has since its 2022 public release gained “1 million new users in just a week. This AI chatbot generates high-quality texts that easily bypass plagiarism-checkpoints and can be used to readily fabricate research works” (Elali and Rachid 1). As ChatGPT has been a topic of discussion for people across disciplines, fields, and ages, and has been put to use for a wide variety of purposes, it is a good entry point into the conversation of AI’s use in education.

AI systems designed to detect plagiarism such as the academically popular Turnitin struggle to keep up with creations like ChatGPT because the material that this system generates is freshly composed rather than being plagiarized from outside sources (Anson 40). Turnitin, which hunts for cut-and-paste language and patterns, is stymied by these “original” texts. Beyond the question of committing plagiarism explicitly and directly, there are dangers to using ChatGPT and submitting the work that it generates. Without proper revision and fact-checking—which can be incredibly difficult to do when ChatGPT is operating on an algorithm that does not always respect the sources, real or unreal, that it draws from—text coming from this AI might still be passed off as original compositions and only found to be flawed by subject matter experts. If it

is caught, students run the risk of being accused of plagiarism by virtue of ChatGPT having committed plagiarism itself, even if that was not the intention of either party, human or AI. Furthermore, as Anson points out, computers are not yet (and possibly will never be) considered authors and therefore the text created by AI cannot be cited the way human authors can be (41).

That said, Gregory A. Poland and Richard B. Kennedy investigate this issue of AI citation specifically; in it, it is suggested author disclosure of the use of AI as it was incorporated in text otherwise written by a human author (or authors) and that this policy should be made standard for, at the very least, scientific publishing (4065). Poland and Kennedy state that the onus is on the human author to do this and present suggestions on how and where exactly that statement should be placed within a document, which should include the following:

*Statement: During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [NAME TOOL / SERVICE] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication. (Poland and Kennedy 4066, emphasis in original)*

The language within this statement must be highlighted. Poland and Kennedy demand an explanation for why the author(s) felt that using AI was a necessity for the project. Why use it at all? What purpose does it serve? The statement also includes language concerning human responsibility: any errors regarding

potential sites of plagiarism and misappropriation of intellectual property or material contained within the final product is to be considered the fault of the author(s). In some ways, this statement and the associated work that must be put into the document could be even more taxing or stressful than completing the work oneself.

#### A PRESENT STUDY ON AI AND NLP: CHATGPT IN THE CLASSROOM

Scholar and educator Paul Fyfe, in his 2021 article, “How to Cheat on Your Final Paper: Assigning AI for Student Writing,” tasks his cross-disciplinary students with an assignment that requires that they “cheat” on their final essay via use of text-generating AI software—here, GPT-2 (1395). Fyfe’s research on “cheating” with AI brings up important ethical questions, familiar and new, that go neatly with my consideration of the connection and consequences of plagiarism and artificial intelligence. The study he conducted via assigning and reviewing the AI-assisted composition work of his students asks whether or not using ChatGPT-2 counts as plagiarism; asks to whom (or to what) the produced text belongs; asks whether collaboration with AI should be allowed or disallowed (Fyfe 1396). Like Joel Bloch, whose work will be discussed in the next section of this paper, Fyfe worries about imitation as a key component of the composition learning process for students; these scholars, along with Rebecca Moore Howard, mention imitation and patchwriting composition techniques as part of a “healthy effort to gain membership in a new culture” (Howard, ctd. in Fyfe 1397).



In Fyfe's course "Data and the Human" at North Carolina State University, he subjected AI-assisted student essays to something stylized as the "Professor Fyfe Turing Test"—a callback to tests run to see if an artificial intelligence could pass as indistinguishable from a human (1398). The course encouraged students to use ChatGPT-2 to write some of their paper but were told to make sure the AI-generated text that they incorporated was not noticeably written by AI (Fyfe 1398). What did the students report? That the AI-generated text was oftentimes AI-generated misinformation. Of his students, Fyfe states, "All reported that GPT-2's outputs were difficult to control and often strayed off topic or into nonsense . . . students also discovered GPT-2's capacity to fabricate information, including plausible-sounding false statements and even quotes from non-existent experts" (1399). In essence, using ChatGPT-2 to assist in their writing could actually be seen as a liability to both paper and student. Perhaps a student using AI would not be caught and punished for plagiarism, but it is not impossible that they would be otherwise held accountable for the misinformation, misrepresentation, and misappropriation they engaged in by using it, penalized in terms of a grade if not in terms of academic misconduct. For students, then, just as much if not more work may have to be put into making the AI-generated text work for their voice and purposes than they might have had to if they had written the text on their own from start to finish.

IS USING CHATGPT PLAGIARISM OR SOMETHING ELSE?

As ChatGPT generates original material with each response to the human user's prompt, the AI itself is not committing plagiarism, and, in fact, one must be cautious that its ability to fabricate is not extending to fictitious information and authors. The onus remains on the human user to construct their own writing; therefore, taking ChatGPT's automated response and claiming it as one's originally authored material is what constitutes plagiarism. As Howard states, "In composition studies, most published discussions of student plagiarism proceed from the assumption that plagiarism occurs as a result of one of two possible motivations: an absence of ethics or an ignorance of citation conventions" (788). In the matter of ethics, student writers make a conscious effort to steal the work of ChatGPT, whether or not they recognize this textual "borrowing" as a crime. For this reason, students who use the content generated by ChatGPT are engaging with false participation in the writing and education processes. This said, it would not be plagiarism should students ask for guidance with material, to aid in reading comprehension and writing conventions. Howard brings up the idea of ignorance here, implying that it is the lesser evil by keeping it separate from the question of ethics. If a student needs an example of how to cite in MLA (i.e., Modern Language Association style) format, asking ChatGPT to show them how to do it is not plagiaristic behavior. In fact, it is a tool not unlike other (and acceptable) citation generators.

Claiming text written by ChatGPT as one's own constitutes plagiarism. There is an unfortunate tradition of paper mills wherein creators other than the

expected and intended author write a text for the purpose of a different person's use—in other words, the paper is written by one entity for the use of another who states that the document is their own work. ChatGPT can intervene in present writing practices, becoming the entity generating text (even manuscripts) for a human counterpart. This writer is an artificial intelligence rather than a human one, but a human student is still claiming authorship of the material they did not write.

In the aforementioned section regarding the study conducted by Paul Fyfe in his course involving artificial intelligence, we saw that students who were asked to “cheat” on their final essays were conflicted about not only using ChatGPT to write chunks of their papers, but also about what that meant for their identity as writers themselves. Some students were uncomfortable with having “cheated,”

But other students were less sure they had really cheated, accepting GPT-2's contributions less as ‘plagiarizing a paper from a peer,’ and more as a kind of collaboration we have yet to define. In general, these [Fyfe's] students were more open to different configurations of authorship and writing. One student insightfully explained how this requires conceiving AI less antagonistically: ‘AI assistants were not meant to replace or impersonate humans but provide a bridge that connects our ideas with theirs—a hybrid.’ She moved beyond the binary of bot or not to

understand AI as a collaboration between partners who are good at different things. (Fyfe 1401)

Collaboration is an important word to be used here because it implies a less sinister relationship between AI and human authors. The idea of hybridity of the writing process is an extension of the idea that the writing process is more of an interjection of one's intervention into a previously established scholarly conversation. The problem with this notion is that the intervention is not entirely the work of the student author—the conversation is not being continued by a human, but by AI, even if the two are allegedly working together, one with the assistance of the other.

#### OTHER BARRIERS TO ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

A scholarly dialogue implies a relationship in which parties build and develop ideas by engaging in conversation, by putting their heads (and texts) together to advance their field or fields of study. The collaborative effort of scholarship becomes complicated when AI is introduced because the communication taking place is between human and AI, not human and human even though the latter arrangement is the expectation. If one person presents an AI in their stead, unbeknownst to their conversation partner(s), this is false participation in scholarship. But not all cultures and communities look at original authorship and collaboration in the same way.

Western thought prizes originality, creativity, and authority in text production which scholars like Pennycook and Bloch state is not to be assumed as universal. While one culture may embrace the idea of the individual author and his or her authenticity, another culture may look to historical figures and a rich written tradition to engage with the writing process. According to Pennycook, “the possibility that different cultures and different psyches may operate with fundamentally different understandings of self and other and therefore of boundaries and ownership” cannot be disregarded, and yet “[f]or those of us brought up in this Western tradition, we often find ourselves vehement defenders of ‘correct’ textual practices, desperately trying to promote our version of language and ownership” (Pennycook 211-12). A prescriptive approach to the writing process is not an inherently Western attribute but the expectations it holds for the structure, content, and citation styles anticipated of written work is one that is often restrictive and dismissive of other cultures’ writing conventions. When looking at students from non-western backgrounds, particularly those who are English Language Learners (ELLs), it is crucial to take into account their cultural and linguistic diversity, their learning styles and written traditions. Students may seek the aid of resources like ChatGPT to clarify ideas and define terms. These fairly innocuous uses can be gateway to unacceptable ones, however. Students may be tempted to have something in one language translated into another and use that generated text, thereby committing disguised plagiarism. They may also be tempted to use ChatGPT to write an entire

manuscript, believing that it can create an original paper better than they themselves can. While they may temporarily be relieved by having ChatGPT write something for them, such students run the very real risk of being accused of plagiarism, and of subsequently being punished for it.

Plagiarism in anglophonic countries or academic institutions is a particularly troubling issue for nonnative speakers of English for whom their L2 of English lacks fluency and proficiency, especially on a level expected of students in institutions of higher learning or research. For these students, accusations of and subsequent punishment for plagiarism can have dire consequences. As Joel Bloch points out in his book *Plagiarism, Intellectual Property and the Teaching of L2 Writing*, even if punitive measures seem equitable between L1 and L2 students, not only are English Language Learners (ELLs) disproportionately found to have committed plagiarism, but they also often face the loss of student visas and are therefore unable to continue their education in the host country (Bloch 114). For this reason, there is a lot of controversy over the standards to which each population of students should be held, which is covered extensively in Bloch's text.

Scholar Stanley Fish, cited within Hubick's text, offers a sharp critique on plagiarism and the question of original authorship:

Single authorship, we have been told, is a recent invention of a bourgeois culture obsessed with individualism, individual rights and the myth of progress. All texts are palimpsests of earlier texts; there's been nothing

new under the sun since Plato and Aristotle and they weren't new either; everything belongs to everybody . . . [and in fact] in some cultures, even contemporary ones, the imitation of standard models is valued more than work that sets out to be path-breaking. (qtd. in Hubick 4)

In other words, perhaps the notions that we have of original authorship are misguided and/or outright problematic. Overall, regarding a single person as the single creator of a seemingly original piece appears to be a relatively recent way of looking at authorship.

How do we confront textual "borrowing" as part of the learning experience? Arguments can be made for the incorporation of ChatGPT into places where struggling students can find answers on *how* to include and cite information, but there is little room for the assertion that students should be able to ask ChatGPT to write a paper for them and then to submit it under their own name. One thing to note, however, is that being caught in the act can be turned into a teaching moment—one reason for arguments that would otherwise reduce plagiarism to a pedagogical problem. Should what students get out of plagiarism on an educational level be taken into consideration when deliberating on how faculty and administration deals with said plagiarism? One student in Pennycook's article

...directly confronted the strict attitudes to borrowing from other texts since it failed to take into account what students learned. Perhaps, she suggested, this was a teacher's problem not a student's. The important

point here is that she was questioning the idea that antiplagiarism attitudes were linked to better learning. From a student point of view they may not necessarily be so: 'Whether I copy or not, I know the material. I don't think we should be forced to say it in our own words . . . I don't think if one plagiarises, that means he doesn't learn anything . . . Perhaps plagiarism is a way of learning'. (225)

This may be an unpopular opinion not shared by instructors and institutions, but the question remains how much leeway an L2 student should receive. Other students within Pennycook express frustration and despair when it comes to having to write papers on their own because it feels impossible to write things "in their own words" when they lack proficiency and feelings of ownership in English: "They are obliged to study in a foreign language and they return the chunks of language in the form in which they receive them" (225). This does not seem illogical at face value, but goes directly against the expectations of academic writing, even when chunking is a legitimate part of the learning process for ELLs. Even this poses a problem, however, since understanding that L2 learners may deliver text verbatim may lead to expectations of cheating via inappropriate textual borrowing; in other words, instructors may interpret text written in standard English as being too standard for an ELL to have produced on their own. Accusations of plagiarism may result even where it is not merited by mere virtue of a nonnative user of English simply using English *too* well. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the technical prowess with which ChatGPT operates



when constructing content in English. Students for whom English is not their first/primary language may write with even more conventionally standard academic English than their native-speaking counterparts by virtue of having learned that form of English in place of a colloquial form of the language. Expecting these nonnative users to be far less able to write in English is an unfortunate stereotype that can lead to discriminatory practices and unfair accusations, but the problem persists that ChatGPT might seem an easy way out of writing something oneself for any student. It is a greater problem that students may not realize that they are doing something wrong in the process of using something that, otherwise, might simply be regarded as a tool.

#### WHY KEEP STUDENTS FROM USING AI TO WRITE THEIR PAPERS?

In a world of predictive text, autocorrect, and grammar checkers, people have been collaborating with artificial intelligence on a small scale for years without academic pushback. It is when AI transitions from editing work to writing entire manuscripts that the true problems arise. But why are we so concerned with plagiarism in higher education? As M.V. Dougherty points out,

When articles in the downstream literature positively discuss, cite, and quote plagiarizing articles, the original authors whose works have been misappropriated are denied recognition for their discoveries. The quality of scholarly communication is compromised and the published research literature becomes less reliable. (242)

Not only do students do themselves a disservice and lose out on a learning opportunity and a chance to share their own thoughts through skills they are developing in school, they are also stripping the original authors of the text they are poaching of their due credit. Overall, students who commit plagiarism undermine the reliability of scholarship.

Dougherty is not the only one who is concerned by this. What about the incorporation of AI in the plagiarism process? Elali and Rachid state that

The feasibility of producing fabricated work, coupled with the difficult-to-detect nature of published works and the lack of AI-detection technologies, creates an opportunistic atmosphere for fraudulent research . . . and undermine[s] the legitimate works produced by other authors. (4)

The role of technology in authorship and plagiarism has already been discussed in this paper but it is worth noting that, as mentioned in the above quotation, Elali and Rachid are more concerned about the lack of reliable AI *detection*.

## TRADITIONAL RESPONSES TO PLAGIARISM AND PRESENT COMPLICATIONS

Plagiarizing students may attempt to justify their actions, using their identity as students who are international or nontraditional (i.e., students who are returning to school after a prolonged absence) or citing a lack of mentorship due to past or present guidance. A lack of familiarity with the expectations of the community of practice they are participating in could be due to time or place or

mentorship, indeed, as Scollon points out, but that does not negate the effects of having plagiarized or cheated (189). Fingers might be pointed, and blame passed around, but when the writer is found to have committed plagiarism, one must ask how others should respond. Presently, this can include things like failure on the assignment, failure in the course, academic probation, or even expulsion from the institution (Howard's "academic death penalty").

How is the appropriate response determined? Some scholars, like Lindey and Pecorari, note that, ethically, intention may be one factor in deciding the fate of a plagiarist. Did they mean to plagiarize? Did they do it unknowingly? We have touched on this to a degree when discussing the relationship international and nonnative speakers have with discourse and textual borrowing. The question becomes, Pecorari points out, "How can we reliably distinguish between a student who made a genuine mistake and one who merely claims to have done so, to escape the consequences of an act of intentional wrongdoing once it is discovered?" (364). In short, we cannot. At this time, we cannot tell 100% of the time when someone has plagiarized, just as we cannot tell 100% of the time when artificial intelligence has been utilized to write a manuscript; plagiarism-detection technology is not there yet. Something that must be kept in mind is that accusations can have very real and lasting repercussions regardless of whether the student is ultimately found to have committed plagiarism.

Ratliff notes that scholars

...have called for a closer examination of the role of power and privilege in concepts of plagiarism – of the subtle and not-so-subtle ways that people in positions of authority have had their plagiarism excused away, and the ways that student writers, especially students of color and first-generation students, have had their legitimate claims to authorship called into question, doubted, and challenged. (*Kairos*)

Furthermore, “Accusations of plagiarism within an understanding of the hybrid nature of all discourse, then, can be viewed as hegemonic and derogatory positioning” (Scollon 189). Ratliff and Scollon both appear critical of how public figures or those who occupy a place of social privilege for one reason or another might escape accusations of plagiarism or have the resulting negative effects of it be incongruently light when they appropriate the words of others without giving credit where credit is due. While some writing roles are anticipated to be egoless (i.e., the authors do not expect credit to be given), the practices of ghost- and speechwriting enable people to claim what they themselves did not compose. This becomes a question of authenticity: the original authorship belongs to someone else but with the intention of representing the intellectual property or stance of the “borrowing” individual. In this case, the audience is more likely to accept the practice. With the modern presence of AI, however, there is fear of these jobs becoming obsolete; if AI can produce an entire speech with a few keystrokes, where do these individuals fit into the future landscape? I call attention to this because it is a reality faced also by those people who have

churned out academic papers for third parties in a more traditional form of plagiarism—the utilization of a human writing service to complete work in a student’s stead.

Ratliff remarks on how expectations held by student and audience can affect the perception of the text: “The goal is to produce belief in the reader (teacher) that the writer is a legitimate academic . . . Students are in a double bind: the teacher wants to hear something, and the student tells him what he wants to hear but is penalized for it” (*Kairos*). This shows a fundamental misjudgment on the part of the student, where they fail to understand (or at least to care) that their writing should be their own original work representative of their authentic ideas and interpretations of the assignment. Students who plagiarize sacrifice this authenticity for the sake of a grade and can only hope that they are not caught in the process. AI complicates this relationship between students and original authorship significantly, particularly when programs like ChatGPT can be utilized effectively in that it both generates a paper and is largely undetectable as inappropriately gained and used.

The seeming moral failing that plagiarism represents makes it a heated issue in the world of academic writing. False participation in the scholarly landscape, and the potential problems caused by disruption to the field(s)’s body of literature, has colored the way adjudicating bodies view and respond to plagiarism. Because of this perception, “The prosecution of plagiarism, in his [Drummond Rennie] description, is the last line of defense for academic

standards” (Howard 793). When standards are ignored, there is a degree of fear associated with the possibility of scholarship being undermined and an ultimate breakdown of the scholarship in a given discipline; the scholarship becomes unreliable, the pool of resources polluted by ill-gained and often misinformed AI-generated text.

Another way of looking at acts of plagiarism, however, has it that there was, somewhere along the line, a failing in mentorship—that the instruction that would lead a student to not consider using text generated by AI as a viable option was somehow lacking. While the moral failing outlook finds fault with the personhood of the plagiarizing individual, this other view imagines a degree of negligence on the part of the educator to sufficiently prepare students for the rigors of participating in academic conversations. Ultimately, these views which look for who can be blamed are reductive and do not properly acknowledge the larger question of agency, of which AI like ChatGPT has none and, at least for the purposes of punishing the commission of plagiarism, the student who used the text produced by ChatGPT has all. Still, as Ratliff notes, in the end it is left up to the educator to determine, accuse, and report acts of plagiarism, and these reports may be inconsistent with the type or number of plagiarizers in a given setting (*Kairos*).

According to Howard, expulsion et alia may not be the appropriate response to an act of plagiarism: “often a pedagogical rather than judicial response is appropriate” (801). Although plagiarism can and should be criticized,

educators face the difficult decision of whether or not to make the act of plagiarism a teaching moment from the classroom or from an office of institutional conduct. Fyfe states that, “[w]hen instructors strategically decriminalize plagiarism, they also open opportunities for creative and critical exploration” (1397). Of course, in Fyfe’s case, this notion is couched in a classroom setting where he explicitly encouraged students to “cheat” using ChatGPT, and therefore this view may not be applicable to all situations, but it is worth entertaining on the grounds that, when students find themselves less stressed about the prospect of failing, they will hopefully be less driven towards plagiarism as a last ditch effort to save their grade. Room must be left to criticize plagiarism and to mete out just punishments of it but, currently, in spite of a general distaste for the act, there is not a set standard response for all acts of plagiarism and all student plagiarists.

#### FUTURE DIRECTIONS: WHAT MEASURES CAN WE AND SHOULD WE TAKE?

Based on the research I compiled and discussed in this paper, as well as other research consulted but not included herein, I hope to provide a perspective on the future direction those in academia should take when addressing plagiarism.

## What Institutions Should Do

I would like to put forth a claim by East here: “The need to define plagiarism and explain its impropriety indicates that while some experience it as a transgression this is not universal. In contrast, cheating is not defined for new university students, because cheating is assumed to be universally understood” (71). This idea of universality is problematic and could even be seen as hegemonic because it neglects the reality experienced by many latecomers to the anglophonic and westernized expectations of higher education; not all cultures hold the same actions as being transgressive and therefore this should be kept in mind when taking the initiative to educate incoming students to such an institution. Pennycook gives a very explicit example of a clear and concise approach one university took:

‘If you copy other writers’ words,’ teaching materials for first-year Arts Faculty students at Hong Kong University warn, ‘pretending they are your own, you are engaging in what is known as plagiarism. *If you plagiarise in this way, you are guilty of intellectual dishonesty. You will be penalised heavily for this. Take care to avoid it, therefore.*’ (220, emphasis in original)

If students are educated by their institution with its expectations, regardless of their cultural background, they will have been warned against it in a straightforward manner. This information should not simply be embedded on a webpage or a syllabus, however; it should be addressed explicitly during an



orientation to the institution, either as Freshmen, transfer, or international students. People come from many different backgrounds and have had varying experiences in their scholastic career and therefore may not be arriving to the university prepared for the ideologies of that system. “If plagiarism is understood as an act of deliberate wrongdoing,” states Pecorari, “then reputational damage is a reasonable outcome for what one would hope are a small group of individuals who choose to perpetrate it” (367). In other words, if a student plagiarizes after the fact, the institution can more readily regard them as having done so knowingly and/or willfully and the question of intent is, if not settled, then more removed from the adjudication process.

Scholars like Pennycook are interested in the language used to inform students of what plagiarism is and of the dangers of committing it while Poland and Kennedy, in their article, offer a way forward as AI makes leaps and bounds in and out of academic writing. It is important that the approaches institutions take acknowledge that AI is already being incorporated into the writing process in small ways: autocorrect, predictive text, grammar checking, and more. It is not useful to go after AI used in such ways as they are widespread and largely innocuous. While arguments can be made for eliminating predictive text as it generates language that the student may not have come up with on their own, this is accomplished only a few words at a time, automatically, and can be easily dismissed. As for autocorrect and grammar checking, these are used in an editing capacity, not a production one, and so can be regarded as assisting the

human writer rather than writing a manuscript in their stead. Institutions can address the issue of AI-supported text production in a few ways; either they could make explicit their intolerance of its use, defining it in terms of plagiarism or other such cheating practices, or they could come up with language like that in Poland and Kennedy's article, directing writers to credit the use of AI for specific purposes. This said, these purposes should be limited in order to maintain the academic integrity of the pool of scholarship the presumed writer is adding to, which could look like banning the wholesale generation of an entire manuscript versus the use of AI to create portions of a document that are not text-heavy but instead are comprised of tables and charts. I am not arguing for the elimination of AI from the writing process—in modern times, this is unrealistic and unmerited—and room might be left for students working in technology to incorporate AI more generously at the behest of their instructors (see Fyfe's work on NLP and ChatGPT in the classroom). What I suggest is rejecting from the body of literature manuscripts that were not only written by AI like ChatGPT but were also not credited as such. It is in passing off AI-written work as the student's own work that constitutes an act of plagiarism. AI is not plagiarizing, the humans who submit its work under their name are.

Another means by which institutions could deter students from plagiarizing is to create and highlight resources that students have access to on many campuses: style guides and their textual and online availability, handbooks/pamphlets on different forms of texts, and on-campus or online

writing centers. When students become more aware of resources and familiar with how to find them, they may also become more inclined to utilize them. Writing centers especially are capable of supporting writers with any iteration of writing and at any stage of the writing process and should be developed to enhance their outreach. Workshops and information sessions could be conducted, and individual and small group tutoring could be arranged to help students learn and become more comfortable with putting texts they have written in conversation with the work of other people. There is an unfortunate gap in statistics where writing centers are encountering AI-supported text generation and so, while it is a reality, across-the-board formal guidelines are not yet in place to address the use of artificial intelligence to write in place of humans. While plagiarism has troubled the field of writing for centuries, AI is introducing new and interesting problems. Students should be discouraged from using text generators like ChatGPT's iterations, but we should ask how to adjust their practices away from something that currently cannot be reliably caught. If students feel that the reward outweighs the risk, and they are knowledgeable about the fact that plagiarism detection technology has not kept up with text-generating AI, it is difficult to dissuade students from using it unless on moral/ethical grounds. This highlights the need for institutional intervention.

### What Students Should Do

It is all well and good to tell students simply do not plagiarize, but that neglects the very real and less sinister logic behind doing something that can be

construed as plagiarism. What measures should students take to avoid accusations when they did not intend to commit it but may have been aware that they were treading a line? (One such line, for example, being the siren song of unskillfully incorporated paraphrase.) Howard describes two things that students should come into research and writing bearing in mind: “When in doubt, cite; over-citation is an error, but under-citation is plagiarism” and “Students should learn that the wrong question to ask is ‘How else can I say this?’” (Howard 800-01). Ideally, students would be encouraged by tasks that require their own voice to be heard. While analytical papers and reports are great indicators of how well students are mastering critical thinking, data, and formatting, they are less representative of a student’s sense of connection to the content; therefore, allowing students to explore personal narrative might enhance their understanding of the importance and their ability to give insight without relying on others (including AI) to say something for them. That said, it should be noted that scholarship is collaborative by nature, and it cannot be disregarded that students are entering into conversations that other minds (who are generally greater subject matter experts than they are themselves) have already been having. It is important to establish what informed their perspective in order to bolster any claims they make intertextually. Using AI for the purpose of source-searching should be avoided as AI is unreliable in its efforts to produce text and sources that sound authentic but are, in fact, not. The burden is on the student writer to make claims and support them if they want to be certain of two things: that they

are not plagiarizing and that they are not presenting misinformation. Students should avoid putting themselves in a position where it feels acceptable to plagiarize, especially when the text they would be copying is incorrect.

At any given time, students are members of multiple discourse communities and should embrace that richness of identity whilst simultaneously learning which identities are most applicable to the writing assignment before them. Pecorari asserts that “an imperfect understanding of the expectations of the disciplinary discourse community” is one reason students may plagiarize, whether intentional or not (368). As students make their way through their academic career, they will further develop their identity within a given discourse community and their understanding of that community will likewise improve. With this improvement, students will be able to better navigate intertextual relationships and to steer clear of plagiarism via proper use of attribution.

With the writing process and product, Ratliff recognizes, “The goal is to produce belief in the reader (teacher) that the writer is a legitimate academic . . . . Students are in a double bind: the teacher wants to hear something, and the student tells him what he wants to hear but is penalized for it” (*Kairos*). When students feel there is a certain expectation for what they need to write to succeed (or, at least, to not fail), there is a greater drive to fulfill that expectation by any means necessary. This does not mean that all students are willing to plagiarize, but it should be noted that each assignment presents the opportunity to commit plagiarism and yet not all students choose to take it.

## What Educators Should Do

Along similar lines to institutional action to orientate entering students, Pecorari suggests that rubrics which “describe the relationships between new texts and their sources” should be created with such students in mind (365). Such a text would act as both a refiner and a reminder of the terms of plagiarism and would give the students ample opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification on expectations at the beginning of the course and not when it feels too late (e.g., they have written the paper and are less willing to do extensive revision). This is in line with Pecorari’s assertion that “more attention should be given to prevention (including teaching the skills that allow writers to use sources in less controversial ways) and/or to gatekeeping than to retrospective criticism” (367). Pedagogically speaking, adjustments might be made to the ways in which plagiarism is presented and discussed; perhaps examples of what students should not be doing could be incorporated into this instruction.

Scholars in composition and in linguistics offer different takes on how students’ written activities should be perceived and dealt with. There are, however, similarities between the two concentrations as well. We see this in Howard, whose remarks on patchwriting and culture combine composition with actions taken by nonnative users of English:

Finally, faculty should be alert to the possibility that students may not be attributing sources or may be patchwriting because of their own cultural traditions. Students from some non-Western societies, for example—as

well as those from some Western subcultures—may have been taught to adopt the voice of an authoritative source or to blend the voice of that source with their own, without citing it. The instructor can help students realize that expectations of attribution—and non-attribution—are culture-specific. The instructor can also assist students not only in learning the ‘rules’ of Western academic culture but also in engaging the often slow process of becoming experienced in writing according to Western academic conventions. (801-02)

In this case, it may be unfair to those for whom a traditional Western academic university setting is less familiar. Educators should therefore aid such students by familiarizing them with the writing conventions expected of them so that they do not fall into the trap of using someone else’s words to write to a specific audience. Returning to Howard, it is posited that educators might therefore aim “to teach writing as discovery and to help writers express themselves in their own authentic language” (794). This is not to say that students are not already being encouraged to write with their own voices—indeed, warnings against committing plagiarism would be useless without providing them with a safer alternative. Instead, assignments might be given early in the students’ academic career that are low-stakes in nature. “When instructors strategically decriminalize plagiarism,” states Fyfe, “they also open opportunities for creative and critical exploration” (1397). Fyfe, who wrote this as part of his observations of the aforementioned chaotic assignment he gave his own students (regarding

cheating with AI), is a proponent of assisting students to find creative ways to solve writing problems, and by implementing AI those selfsame students found that AI was not the answer to their hopes for an easy A. Overall, students should learn that the wrong question to ask when it comes to their writing is how else they could say what someone else—including AI—has said before them, and to instead consider how their own capabilities can be strengthened and expanded through practice (Howard 801).

Because students may have “an imperfect understanding of the expectations of the disciplinary discourse community” they are entering, mistakes may be made (Pecorari 368). This returns to a discussion of intention when it comes to plagiarism. As Joseph Harris states, nobody belongs to any one discourse community (Howard 793). As a result, confusion and misunderstanding should not be unexpected as the rules that are dictated by one may be forbidden by another community.

What, then, is the place of educators in the question of plagiarism? Pecorari asserts that “more attention should be given to prevention (including teaching the skills that allow writers to use sources in less controversial ways) and/or to gatekeeping than to retrospective criticism” (367). This would mean that educators fill a particularly important role in the growth and development of their students’ writing, and that by nurturing in these students feelings of self-sufficiency when it comes to completing assignments, they are preventing them from harmful behaviors in that class or in those to follow, behaviors like relying



upon AI to write their papers for them. Ratliff reminds us that “it is ultimately left to individual teachers’ judgment, and reporting of plagiarism cases is inconsistent” (*Kairos*). In not having a set standard definition of plagiarism, particularly in the presence of AI, as well as not having an explanation for what this definition means in the scheme of text production, educators are in a poor position wherein they must deliberate over who should be reported and for what exactly, and then face ostracization if an accusation of plagiarism ends up being unfounded. That said, “The prosecution of plagiarism, in his [Drummond Rennie, MD] description, is the last line of defense for academic standards” (Howard 793). This viewpoint is understandable; while there should be a standard definition of plagiarism, and a way to uphold it, it can be argued that options regarding intentionality and support are to be taken into consideration when deliberating an appropriate punitive response.

## CONCLUSION

With the growth of technology and development of artificial intelligence as a tool by which text can be generated comes interesting and complex challenges to academic writing for institutions, students, and educators. According to Woodmansee (cited in Howard), “the computer is ‘dissolving the boundaries essential to the survival of our modern fiction of the author as the sole creator of unique, original works’” (791). Scholarship itself is a collaborative effort through which contemporary writers build off of the writing of their forefathers and their

contemporaries both, quoting and citing from the texts that came before them. At least, this is how it should be. Plagiarism is a nefarious practice that cheapens the intellectual process and taints the pool of scholarship, undermining present teachings and future research. We find ourselves in an age of AI that allows people to request and receive textual products not created by themselves, but instead generated by an inhuman entity—one that, currently, is exceptionally difficult to trace. With plagiarism-detection technology falling behind the advancements of things like OpenAI's ChatGPT, we become increasingly reliant upon our abilities to intuit when someone is not submitting work they have written themselves, which opens up many complications for fair and reasonable accusations of plagiarism to be made, let alone properly adjudicated.

While the content provided in this paper's section on measures we should take as we enter increasingly murky waters is well-informed, it is important to note that the ideas represented there are incomplete. There is no quick and easy answer to the problem of plagiarism with the advent of AI-supported text generation, and we can only do our best to guide students in the direction of self-creation rather than relying on the seeming answer of cheating with AI. Using AI is not in and of itself an evil, and its implementation can be beneficial when seeking clarification or guidance. What complicates its use, however, is that students have the ability to rely upon it to speak on their behalf and enter into conversations they themselves should be having. Without a way to hold students accountable reliably, it falls on others to foster in these students a sense of

writerly self, an identity they feel confident, or at least comfortable, in sharing. In all, higher education must confront what it means for a work to be authentic, and how we determine original authorship and through this create intellectual and academic space for the reasonable use of AI. It would be misguided to expect generative AI to disappear; the pattern of technological development suggests a more sophisticated AI presence will emerge as time goes on, and academia must be ready for it.

#### Post-Script

“Dignity consists not in possessing honors, but in the consciousness that we  
deserve them.”

(Aristotle, attributed in Reilly, Pry, and Thomas 280)

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