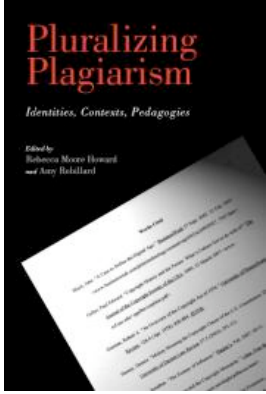


<b>Pluralizing Plagiarism: Identities, Contexts, and Pedagogies</b>			
<b>Author:</b>	Rebecca M. Howard & Amy E. Robillard, Eds. (2008)		
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Over the past few decades, scholars in higher education have been rigorously studying plagiarism and this momentum shows no signs of slowing down. Many would agree that plagiarism loiters in higher education, urging educators, administrators, and policy makers to develop prevention methods while infusing fear and anxiety in students who may or may not intend to be academically dishonest. In the scholarly literature, several differing explanations have been offered as to why plagiarism occurs. It seems, however, that the only point on which scholars agree is the complexity surrounding these issues.

As Howard and Robillard suggest in their latest edited volume, *Pluralizing Plagiarism: Identities, Contexts, and Pedagogies*, a different conceptualization of plagiarism may move scholarship on this issue forward. In this collection of ten essays, experts from wide-ranging contexts bring fresh perspectives to this on-going discourse and reveal the hidden intricacies inherent to plagiarism. For example, the first essay by Michele Eodice describes how the media perpetuates widespread sensationalism of plagiarism. A particularly effective point is her call for educators to leave the “plagiarism police force” and engage with the media to dispel the myths about plagiarism that circulate amongst the public. The following chapter by Amy Robillard shifts the conversation to the higher education context, where the focus of the rest of the book remains. She offers a pedagogical technique for teachers in first-year writing courses to use in addressing plagiarism with inexperienced writers. Central to her approach is “co-investigation”, or engaging students in conversations to which the teacher has no prescribed answers (p. 28). The primary objective here is the construction of an open and

creative dialogue about plagiarism, in which teachers and students reach mutual understandings.

Chapters 3 and 4 address the challenges of instructors in the community college and university writing centers, respectively. Kami Day paints a picture of a typical community college writing instructor, who juggles a tremendous workload, office hours, and teaching responsibilities and is left with little time to stay tuned into current scholarship on plagiarism issues. Nonetheless, Day suggests that they may openly address plagiarism in their classes by emphasizing the value of academic dishonesty and building a classroom atmosphere of respect and trust. In Chapter 4, Tracy Hamler Carrick illustrates how co-authorship in the writing center blurs the thin line between plagiarism and appropriate writing help for students who visit the center. Similar to Day, she suggests that writing tutors explore notions of authorship with their tutees and transform collaborative writing into collaborative learning.

In Chapter 5, Sandra Jamieson sheds light on a critical aspect of the plagiarism problem; citation practices across the disciplines. She raises a critical point that has been echoed by others, that focusing on “how sources are cited, rather than why they are cited” (p. 86) may help students in all disciplines gain membership to academic discourse communities. Howard tackles graduate student plagiarism in Chapter 6 and addresses two sides of one (complicated) coin. First, she explains how graduate students may be both plagiarists and victims of plagiarism, the latter referring to the exploitation of graduate students by faculty members. Howard notes that graduate students need mentoring in their academic writing and an awareness of their intellectual property rights. And while morality is a fundamental element of the plagiarism problem, T. Kenny Fountain and Lauren Fitzgerald relay the importance of classroom community building in both religious and secular institutions, in which everyone shares ideals and values regarding honesty in academic writing.

Chapter 8 is devoted to notions of culture and intertextuality, and Celia Thompson and Alastair Pennycook are the sole authors in this volume who address plagiarism in multicultural classrooms. The experiences of three international students at an Australian university are intertwined in the chapter to support Thompson and Pennycook’s claim that textual borrowing “can be best understood as one aspect of textual construction that is deeply embedded in a wide variety of cultural, textual, and academic practices that are centrally concerned with questions of language, education, knowledge, and identity” (p. 128). In Chapter 9, Chris Anson reminds us that plagiarism detection does not equate plagiarism pedagogy and calls on faculty to effectively teach, rather than punish students. Anson offers an approach to plagiarism that accounts for learning goals, course outcomes, informal and formal writing, and writing instruction. And lastly, Kathleen Blake Yancey’s essay invites the scholars to guide students in imagining research as a conceptual “space”, to which new knowledge is contributed and added.

Overall, Howard and Robillard produce a solid, cohesive volume that supports the notion that simplistic, binary perspectives of plagiarism no longer suffice. The authors convince the reader that because plagiarism is a complex issue in the contexts discussed throughout the

book, it is neither practical nor useful to determine a “one size fits all” approach to policy and pedagogy. Another strength of this book is the pedagogical implications addressed in each essay, making this volume a critical resource for faculty, writing center tutors, and first-year composition teachers. Graduate students interested in this issue would also benefit from the unique perspectives presented and gain a broad understanding of how plagiarism is implicated in contexts that have received less research attention.

On the other hand, what is lacking is a deeper explanation of the identities component listed in the title. If the aim of effective pedagogy is to help students understand the literacy practices of academic discourse, then it is crucial to examine how students’ identities influence entrance to this discourse. In addition, it is necessary to consider how identity is regulated through intentional and unintentional plagiarism (Valentine, 2006)—an element that may be addressed in future scholarship. Nonetheless, Howard and Robillard elevate the plagiarism dialogue to a new level and enrich current study of plagiarism across all contexts in higher education.

## **Reference**

Valentine, K. (2006). Plagiarism as literacy practice: Recognizing and rethinking ethical binaries. *College Composition and Communication*, 58(1), 89-110.

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