Negative attitudes toward collaborative writing are common, especially in the humanities, and some people view it as a form of plagiarism or cheating. Plagiarism, or the borrowing of ideas from other writers, can be both conscious and unconscious, and can stem from a variety of motives. Even single-authored works are products of many minds, representing a web of "intertextual traces," as numerous critics have argued. Most writers, in fact, admit explicitly or implicitly that they have had lots of help with the writing. Since consciousness and language are social constructs, individual utterance is never entirely original, so that to some degree all writers are plagiarists. The case of Carl Rogers, his influence on subsequent theorists, and the failure to acknowledge Rogers' great influence, although unintended, illustrates the extent of plagiarism. Such lapses in attribution mark recent feminist scholars working in the field of composition theory. Scholars have too often viewed their ideas as a kind of intellectual private property which they alone own, an idea, as Karl Mannheim argues, that makes those who adhere to it "stupid" in the sense that it objectifies the scholar's ideas and leads him/her to take a rigidly defensive stance about them. Also scholars often evade references to collaboration by writing without a sense of location, as if their assumptions were self-evident. Part of the solution to these problems is a stronger sense of true collaboration, in which ideas are everyone's, not just one person's. Focus would then be placed on connections, or "reciprocal interrelationships," thus emphasizing social utility as against private and exclusive gain and bringing about harmony between individual minds and the civilization in which they think. (Notes and 62 references are attached.) (HB)
Collaboration as Plagiarism--Cheating Is in the Eye of the Beholder
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Collaboration as Plagiarism

Cheating Is in the Eye of the Beholder

"Before ideas come to fruition, they must germinate. The most important direct consequence of an idea is that it gives rise to more ideas" (Anatol Rapoport, 360).

"What matter who's speaking, someone said, what matter who's speaking" (Samuel Beckett, 16).

Negative attitudes toward collaborative scholarship, writing, and learning are common--especially in the humanities. The expected norm is what Linda Brodkey describes in the opening to her 1987 *College English* essay, "Modernism and the Scene(s) of Writing": "When I picture writing, I often see a solitary writer alone in a cold garret working into the small hours of the morning by the thin light of a candle" (396). Of course, Brodkey's picture is familiar to most of us who have lived in English departments for much of our adult lives. For Brodkey and for us, "The writer-writes-alone is a familiar icon of art and is perhaps most readily understood as a romantic representation of the production of canonical literature, music, painting, sculpture" (396). This image, this "romantic notion of single authorship is so widespread," says Jack Stillinger, "as to be nearly universal" (183). It is also, as Ede and Lunsford note, "the traditional valorization of autonomous individualism, competition, and hierarchy" (*Singular Texts*, 112). Rapoport
Collaboration as Plagiarism describes this icon as very American—"as tightly associated with the entrepreneur economy, which developed in the the capitalist system" (349). Of course, Walter Ong explains this notion of individual ownership of knowledge or ideas—as individual authority—as a necessary product of moving from an "oral-aural economy of knowledge" to a literate economy. In the former, a person considers knowledge "our possession"—as communal; in the latter, a person considers knowledge my possession" (233). George Dillon explains it as "a desire for power and authority" (111).

There is ample evidence that some people view collaborative work as a form of plagiarism or cheating. One need look no farther than the omnipresent American Heritage Dictionary (see Morris) to be reminded how negatively collaboration can be perceived. There, the second definition of collaborate reads, "To cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupying one's country" (260-61), a definition that is often applied, as John Schilb reminds us, to Paul de Man, who collaborated with the Nazis occupying his native Belgium in the early 1940s. It is possible that de Man may well wish that the origin and meanings of texts were indeterminate since his collaboration with the Nazis is something otherwise difficult to hide.

Certainly the experience of Miriam May and Jamie Shephard, when they reflect on their collaborations as poets, attests to the reception of collaboration as a dishonorable and treasonable act. As they point out, "Institutionally at least, collaboration [within the university] to some extent suggests cheating and sneakiness. So we're not doing 'real work'; we're not slaving alone in our little cold garret suffering to write poetry in
isolation" (quoted in Ede and Lunsford 104). The same assumption holds true throughout the publishing world, where efforts to invalidate collaboration often cause writers to misrepresent collaborative acts as single authorships. John Gardner, for instance, indicated his reluctance to credit his wife Joan in her role as a collaborator and consultant. "[S]uch work is regarded as not really art," he explained in an interview (quoted in LeFevre 30).

The poet and essayist Wendell Berry holds a similar view of his wife's contributions to the work that bears his name as sole author. He makes clear, in his essay "Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer," which appears in his book--ironically titled--What Are People For?, that his wife, unnamed in the essay, "types my work . . . . As she types, she sees things that are wrong and marks them with small checks in the margins. She is my best critic because she is the one most familiar with my habitual errors and weaknesses. She also understands, sometimes better than I do, what ought to be said." He adds, "I do not see anything wrong with it [his working arrangement with his wife]" (170). In another of his essays, "Feminism, the Body, and the Machine," which appears in the same collection, Berry defends himself against "feminists" who have written to him to say that he exploits his wife, who, incidentally, is still nameless: "[T]he feminist attacks on my essay implicitly deny the validity of two decent and probably necessary possibilities: marriage as a state of mutual help, and the household as an economy" (180). He may be justified in making his defense, but he still does not promise that he will adequately recognize his nameless wife's
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contributions by offering her co-authorship. He implies an
answer to the question posed by the title of his book, What Are
People For? If they are wives, they are, as feminists have
already observed about Berry, to be exploited.

Even more so than the in the world of publications,
collaboration in the humanities is either grudgingly acknowledged
or viewed with suspicion. As Anne Ruggles Gere notes, "[M]any
pre-tenured professors are advised to avoid collaborative
projects because they will not 'count' in promotion and tenure
review" (56). This is evident as well in the advice that Andrea
Lunsford and Lisa Ede received from their colleagues. In their
review of common perceptions toward joint authorship, they
describe the initial reception of their work: "Some of our
friends cautioned us . . . that we would never receive favorable
tenure decisions or promotions if we insisted on publishing
coauthored articles" (Ede and Lunsford 6). And indeed, when Ede
stood for tenure review in the mid 1980s, she experienced first-
hand the prejudices against collaborative scholarship and
publication. Tenure committees at her university asked both Ede
and her frequent collaborator, Andrea Lunsford, independently, to
give word counts for Ede's contributions to each of their co-
authored publications. Of course, they were unable to give such
quantification because of the nature of their collaborations.
(See Ede; Lunsford, Panel.)

There are other similar scenarios. In one case that
Lunsford and Ede report, a well-known English department withdrew
its undergraduate poetry prize when the anonymously written
winning poem turned out to have three coauthors ("New Key" 237).
Lunsford and Ede also report that when they surveyed MLA membership about collaborative work, those members "did not in their responses to us embrace ANY concept or mode of collaboration but rather seemed suspicious of work that was produced in concert with others" ("New Key" 237).

Of course, as one psychoanalyst, Edmund Bergler, points out, plagiarism or the "'borrowing' [of] ideas . . . from other writers" (183) can be both conscious and unconscious, with motives ranging from literal emulation as a means of flattery to a cynical plagiarism, in which the plagiarizer knowingly appropriates the work of another and then accuses the originator of the offense, as in the famous case of Standahl and his "borrowing" of Carpani's book on Haydn (192). Altogether Bergler lists twenty-four motives for plagiarism, a compendium that quickly convinces the reader that plagiarism is commonplace, often unintentional, and diverse in its manifestations. As Bergler puts it, "A man presenting his own views only and who has never caught himself trying to plagiarize is a priori suspicious of plagiarizing too much" (208).

Anyone who has read Bakhtin or Vygotsky realizes that even single-authored works are products of many minds--both living and dead because, in Virginia Woolf's words, ".... books have a way of influencing each other" (113). As James Wertsch, the well-known Vygotsky scholar, puts it, "the fundamental Bakhtinian question" is "Who is doing the talking?" (67). Michael Holquist puts it in slightly different terms. In his view, it's a matter of "Who owns meaning?" (164). His answer to that question is that no one owns meaning. Rather, language users "rent" meaning.
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(164). Bakhtin, himself, saw it not so much a matter of ranting as much as a matter of sharing: "The word in language is half someone else's" (Dialogic 293). Further, "Our speech, that is all our utterances (including creative works) is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness,' varying degrees of awareness and detachment" (Speech Genres 89). Wertsch notes that this sharing, this "ventriloquation," "presupposes that a voice is never solely responsible for creating an utterance or its meaning" (70). For example, the poet John Ashbury, in a recent visit to Tucson, commented on the polyphony of voices that he hears when he sits down to write. When asked about the voice and persona of his poetry, Ashbury replied: "I feel as if I’m a microphone grabbed by various people and spoken through."

Another way of seeing this is through the web of "intertextual traces" (861) that Jim Reither and Doug Vipond note permeate all written works, and which James Porter defines as "the bits and pieces of Text which writers or speakers borrow and sew together to create new discourse" (34). Charlotte Thralls describes them as "traces of others' worldviews and meanings" (67), while Doug Brent ascribes to the view that "every text is informed by, and is a reply to, countless others that have gone before" (464). In scholarly writing this occurs because each scholar has an "intellectual poaching license," as Clyde Kluckhohn puts it, to appropriate such traces (quoted in Geertz 21). Jack Stillinger, who examines collaborations involving Keats, John Stuart Mill, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Pound, and others, muses: "A relevant question at the outset is whether
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'pure' authorship is possible under any circumstances—single authorship without any influence, intervention, alteration, or distortion whatsoever by someone other than the nominal author" (183). Joel Haefner, in an essay in the February 1992 issue of College English, argues that we should view even the so-called personal essay "as a cultural product, as a special kind of collective discourse" (127).

The inevitability of collaboration in scholarly enterprises has been further recognized by the Association of American University Professors in its "Statement on Multiple Authorship" when its committee on professional ethics urged a rethinking of collaboration. Not least among the considerations of promotion and tenure committees, they argue, should be the acknowledgement of the many ways in which scholars collaborate. To uphold both ethical and scholarly integrity, P and T committees must be more flexible in granting credit to joint authorships, especially in "cases [where the collaboration is so intimate as to defy disentangling: the creativity is embedded in, and consequent upon, constant exchange of ideas and insights" (41). To do otherwise would be a denial of the social and psychological reality of collaboration. On another level, the denial of collaboration constitutes an inadvertent form of plagiarism.

More than a decade ago, Thomas Hilgers and Michael Molloy, who were then young graduate students, conducted an interview with the Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama. When they asked the Dalai Lama if there were any people who had influenced him in important ways, he replied, "Oh, those Indian pundits. Many centuries back." When they explained to him that they meant
living persons who had influenced him in his earlier life, the Dalai Lama responded, "No, you see those living persons, they [are] just carrying these Indian pundits' message, just repeating that message" (195). Roland Tharp and Ronald Gallimore, who were then teachers of Hilgers and Molloy, comment on the Dalai Lama's observation: "Through text, the pundits speak to us through many centuries. More important, they speak with us. We venture to say that the conversation among the pundits and the Dalai Lama continues and grows in depth" (160). And even if the Dalai Lama simply repeats the words of the pundits, he is doing more than engaging in an act of verbal repetition. When he uses the words of the pundits, he is, as Polanyi suggests, modifying those words to impose his own world view on a consensus view: "Every time we use a word in speaking and writing we both comply with usage and at the same time somewhat modify the existing knowledge" (208). In each use of those words, utterances can be "re-accentuated" or "reinterpret[ed]" (Bakhtin, Speech Genres 91). In a recent Bitnet message that was part of an electronic-mail Vygotsky conference to which Duane Roen subscribes, Tharp notes that the Dalai Lama anecdote illustrates that texts can serve to assist learners in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Mind 86).

In some contexts rhetors borrow the words of the great ones from the past in highly conventional ways. For example, Robert Smith describes formulaic closures, such as timiavi ("it was said") that the Shuar Indians use as they tell stories in the tropical rain forests along the Amazon in eastern Ecuador. Such closures make it clear to listeners, even children, that "the storyteller's] words are not his own but yaunchu chicham,
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'ancient words'—that fact itself carrying with it all the persuasive power of a special Shuar authority" (138-9). In the same way, we invoke that authority of our ancients through our constant references back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, to Aristotle, Plato, Quintilian, and Cicero, among others.

Most of us who write books and articles admit explicitly or implicitly that we have had lots of help with the writing. In the most explicit cases, two or more names appear on the by-line, the acknowledgements page includes lots of names, and the works-cited section contains scores of entries. But even in those cases where we list many names of those whose thinking or words we are renting, we still fail to acknowledge all of the people who influenced the text. Many authors of journal articles, for example, fail to acknowledge the influence of the journal's editor and the referees who read and commented on earlier versions of their papers. In many other journal articles, you will find nary a word of thanks to those who may have responded to drafts of those texts.

A journal editor recently told us a story that illustrates the ethical imperative to acknowledge those who help us think and rethink as we compose. The editor returned a manuscript to an author with four pages of very precise suggestions for revising the manuscript before resubmitting it. The author subsequently followed those suggestions religiously—probably because they were sound ones. The author then sent the revised manuscript, not to the same editor, but to another one, who accepted it for publication. The article was later judged to be the best one published in the second journal that year. The punchline: The
author did not acknowledge the helpful suggestions that the first set of referees and the first editor had offered, not did the author note that the earlier comments had helped to make the essay into a prize winner.

In other cases authors feel that an idea is such a part of the field that there is no need to acknowledge those who have previously written or spoken about those ideas. If one wanted to thoroughly scrutinize authorship, one could argue, as Michel Foucault and Martha Woodmansee do, that we are all plagiarists when we do our intellectual poaching; it's simply a matter of degree. Charlotte Thralls conjurs when she observes that "individual utterances are never entirely original because individual consciousness and language are socially constructed" (77)—the same argument that Vygotsky makes in both Thought and Language and Mind in Society. In this regard, language use is much like technology. As James Burke observes, "[N]o inventor works alone. The myth of the lonely genius, filled with vision and driven to exhaustion by his dreams may have been deliberately fostered by Edison, but even he did not invent without help from his colleagues and predecessors" (291). Of course, Roland Barthes goes even further to declare that individual genius is an obsolete concept, for the author is dead; only the text matters (Pleasure 27; "Death").

Almost two millennia ago, C. Plinius Secundus, better known to us as Pliny the Elder, mentions in his dedication to Titus Vespasian at the beginning of Natural History (Bostock and Riley translation) that good manners dictate that we explicitly announce whose work has influenced our own writing:
You may judge of my taste from my having, in the beginning of my book, the names of the authors that I have consulted. For I consider it to be courteous and to indicate an ingenuous modesty, to acknowledge the sources whence we have derived assistance, and not act as most of those have done whom I have examined. (7)

And, indeed, Pliny does acknowledge those "authorities" (ex auctorisibus), whom he consulted. Rackham’s edition of Pliny’s Natural History includes Book I, which is a complete "Table of Contents and Authorities" for the remaining thirty-six books. The list of names of authorities, which appears as scattered chunks throughout Book I, occupies approximately one-fourth of the annotated table of contents, which is just over seventy-one pages long.

To illustrate our point about the extent of plagiarism—to a greater or lesser degree—we will use Carl Rogers as an example. It is appropriate that we choose Rogers’ work here because it is built on the premise that people need to work dialogically, cooperatively, collaboratively. As Doug Brent explains in his recent College English essay, Carl Rogers’ work became part of our field when Anatol Rapoport appropriated parts of it in Fights, Games, and Debates. It later became part of “Rogerian Rhetoric” when Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike published Rhetoric: Discovery and Change in 1970. As Young, Becker, and Pike label and describe “The Rogerian Strategy,” they explain, “The primary goal of this rhetorical strategy is to reduce the reader’s sense of threat so that he is able to consider alternatives to his own beliefs. The goal is thus not
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to work one's will on others but to establish and maintain communication as an end in itself" (original emphasis) (8). They go on to say, "You seek to gain your opponent's trust, even at the cost of acknowledging your own inadequacies" (282). Their 1970 rhetoric, says Brent, "is more dialogic, more cooperative with its Rogerian influence than it would have been without it" (457). Their rhetoric fits nicely into the "new" rhetoric, which according to Richard Ohmann, "shifts the emphasis toward cooperation, mutuality, social harmony. Its dynamic is one of joint movement toward an end that both writer and audience accept, not one of an insistent force acting upon a stubborn object" (19).

Many scholars acknowledge Rogers' influence on the work of Young, Becker, and Pike, as well as other rhetoricians of the last twenty years. In The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing, for example, Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg devote a chunk of their abstract of Rhetoric: Discovery and Change to the influence of Rogers. However, references to Rogers' work are noticeably absent from some scholarship that seems to have been influenced by Rogerian rhetoric. Some notable examples, it seems to us, are Marilyn Cooper and Michael Holzman's Writing as Social Action and Karen Burke LeFevre's Invention as a Social Act, which do not include Rogers' work in their "Works Cited" sections.

The failure to acknowledge influences like Rogers, even when unintended, only strengthens the perception of the insider/outsider dichotomy frequently discussed in Rhetoric Review's "Burkean Parlor." In a recent issue, T.S. discusses the effects of jargon-laden prose that goes unexplained and uncited
in many professional journals. The result is often an alienated readership that quickly loses interest in what is perceived as elitist abstractions that fail to address more than a limited inner circle. In our own field of rhetoric and composition, the distance is further exacerbated by the split between practitioners and scholars, a distinction that disrupts the necessary complementarity of theory and practice. As with any discipline that hopes to make a difference in students' lives, writing instruction requires the grounding that practice and theory lend to one another. To ignore the precedents often leads to a misrepresentation of the field and its contributors. As Gregory Clark points out, "Only when we understand that using language is necessarily an act of collaboration through which we create the meaning we share, a socially constructed meaning that is inherently incomplete, only then can we speak and listen, write and read, responsibly" (17).

Such lapses in attribution have been the case with feminist scholars who have recently contributed to composition theory. Olivia Frey and Catherine E. Lamb come to mind as two scholars whose useful critiques of agonistic discourse in both professional and instructional contexts have been weakened by their failure to acknowledge their predecessors. The contributions of Carl Rogers, Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth, and Jim Corder, in both cases, would locate feminist theory within composition and rhetoric scholarship, enhancing their ethos and thus strengthening and extending their critique.

Scholarly beings, as Karl Mannheim argues (155-7), have too often come to view their ideas in much the same way that Marx
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says the capitalistic, bourgeoisie views private property. The result is that our intellectual "private property has made us so stupid" ("Private Property" 159). The intellectual "objects," the ideas, that the scholar claims to own individually, privately, make him dependent on them to "confirm and realize his individuality, they are his own (original emphasis) objects," and, as a result, he "becomes the object" (161). It is only when we view ideas as such private property that we become preoccupied with their being stolen, plagiarized. The solution, says Marx, is "the supersession of private property," an act that leads to "complete emancipation" (original emphasis) (160) and to a fully "human, i.e. social life" (156).

In other instances, scholars often evade references to implicit collaborations, such as those with other writers, editors, and colleagues, by writing without a sense of location. Instead, they write from the unmarked category, as if their assumptions were self-evident. In this situation, the danger lies in assuming a totalizing authority that need not acknowledge its origins. But, as Donna Haraway points out, such a stance too easily degenerates into a hegemonic presumption, in which "totalization and single vision are always the unmarked category" (584). From this assumption, Haraway notes, it often follows that "Only those occupying the positions of the dominators are self-identified, unmarked, disembodied, unmediated, [and] transcendent" (586). By failing to acknowledge the situated nature of our knowledge, arising as it does from our political, social, personal, and embodied locatedness, we as writers place ourselves above the demands of accountability and responsibility
for our work. Certainly part of that location is deeply embedded in the colleagues whose works we draw on, both explicitly and implicitly. Moreover, rational knowledge proceeds from that sense of engagement, as the knowers embrace the known and offer it, in the Bakhtinian sense, as their own. As Haraway suggests, "rational knowledge does not pretend to be . . . from everywhere and so nowhere, to be free from interpretation, . . . to be fully self-contained or fully formalizable" (587). Such claims would rightfully be suspect. Part of our responsibility, then, lies in our recognition of our situatedness, in which we acknowledge ourselves as subjects: interested, embodied, curious, and locatable, hence accountable, within a complex network of identifications. In identifying those allegiances, how much better can we establish the "consubstantial" basis (Burke 21) for reaching our readers and allowing the dynamics of that participation to shape our writing?

Part of the solution to the scholarly problem, then, is collaboration, where ideas are ours, not mine. When they are mine, they are hoarded, jealously guarded against thieves, against plagiarists. When they are ours, they can, as Jan Swearingen suggests, lead to the "crossing and blending of voices" and to "evolving coknowledge" (50-1).

Under the most ideal conditions, the dialogic collaboration among authors of different scholarly texts might approximate Kenneth Burke's "ultimate dialectic" (189). In such circumstances a body of texts is brought together in a culminating or ultimate text, one that represents the ideas, principles, or theories of the preceding texts. Further, we
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might wish that this body of texts be characterized by Karl Mannheim's "relationism." That is, fellow scholars should be able to develop a collection of knowledge about the ideas, principles, and theories represented in the texts. This collection would focus on connections, on "reciprocal interrelationships" among ideas (86), rather than merely variety or diversity, as is the case in Mannheim's "relativism" (78-9). A relational collaboration among texts represents the kind of harmony that John Dewey claims leads to the greatest creative and constructive mental activity (142-3).

Relational knowledge takes into account the observers' ideological positions. It is situated knowledge. As different observers' relational knowledge enters into a dialectic, greater truth "emerges . . . out of the complex social process" (84). The process assumes that participants adopt a Rogerian approach to sharing ideas, a free-flowing exchange between people willing to modify or even abandon their ideological positions. As Marilyn Cooper notes, "whenever individual and group purposes cannot be negotiated someone is shut out" (quoted by Evelyn Ashton-Jones iv). There is no absolute truth as there is in relativism (Rorty 305-11, 373-9).

Scholars too often subscribe to romantic individualism, what John Dewey calls the "old" individualism, in which "initiative and invention are bound up with private and exclusive gain" (71), bound up with "private pecuniary profit" (90). In the "new" individualism, there is concern with "social utility" (134). There is a "harmony" (142) between individual minds and the civilization in which they think. Under ideal conditions, "all
individuals . . . share in the discoveries and thoughts of others" 154). If Dewey were to speak to us explicitly about collaborative scholarship, he would argue, we think, that collaboration does not preclude individual scholarly contributions. But the contributions need to cross-pollinate freely: "[E]ach of us needs to cultivate his own garden. But there is no fence about this garden" (171).

It seems clear, then, that scholarship is imbued with the resonances of the work of other writers and intellectuals. The very nature of our work as scholars demonstrates the integral part that collaboration, whether implicit or explicit, plays in our writing and thinking. In many ways, plagiarism haunts our work. Some influences we acknowledge; others we don’t. And yet, the influence of all that we have ever read or written echoes in our words, carrying on what Kenneth Burke so fondly characterizes as a conversation into which we plunge, given an adequate sense of the context. It is that sense of context, then, that invariably saves our words from becoming old and worn out, that fills them with Bakhtin’s "dialogic overtones" (original emphasis) (Speech Genres 92). Ever aware of the contingency of our utterances, we plagiarize anew, borrowing this from one source, that from another, and fitting them into a constellation of meanings always confronted by their own ironic nature—used yet new, borrowed yet never really heard in quite that way before.
Notes

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