

Possibility of redefining fabrication and falsification in humanities

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Objective

- to extend and enrich the notions of fabrication and falsification so that we can properly deal with certain kinds of research misconducts in humanities.
- By locating fabrication and falsification properly within the context of humanities, I want to show the way to make the efforts to promote research integrity, which have been driven mainly by natural science disciplines (especially biomedical science disciplines), truly interdisciplinary.

Castaneda case

- Carlos Castaneda was a popular author who wrote several best-selling books (including *The Teachings of Don Juan*) on Native American rituals in 1970s.
- His books were supposed to be anthropological work, but several scholars (mainly Richard de Mille) found out that the informant (Don Juan) does not exist at all, and some quotes from him are taken from various authors. There are mistakes in basic facts in Castaneda's book.
- As a work of fiction, this is acceptable, but Castaneda never made that claim.
- Robert Marshall (2007) "The dark legacy of Carlos Castaneda"
<https://www.salon.com/2007/04/12/castaneda/>

Tomoaki Fukai case (1)

- Tomoaki Fukai is a leading scholar in Protestantism in Germany. He is author of numerous books, both academic and popular, and became the president of Toyo Eiwa Jogakuin, a Japanese private educational entity that run university, high school and so on, in 2017.
- In October 2018, an article on Fukai's writings were put on the website of a Christian Newspaper. The article reported that there were accusation on two of Fukai's writings (a book published in 2012 and an article published in 2015), and that Fukai's replies were unsatisfactory.
- An investigation committee was organized in Jogakuin soon after the publication of the newspaper article.

Report of the investigation by Jogakuin, May 10, 2019

http://www.toyoeiwa.ac.jp/daigaku/news/news_201905100101.pdf

Tomoaki Fukai case (2)

- The investigation committee conclusions:
 - The 2012 book contains a reference to a person Karl Loeffler (spelling is uncertain), but Fukai failed to demonstrate the existence of the article he refers; the committee concluded that the person and the supposed writing of the person do not exist. The person is fabricated.
 - The book also contains plagiarized material.
 - The 2015 article is on Ernst Troeltsch's household account book. However, Fukai could not submit a photocopy of the account book to the committee, and the photocopy actually submitted was totally unrelated material. The committee concluded that the descriptions of the account book in the article are fabricated.
- The committee issued the final report on May 2019 that the misconduct is very serious, and Fukai was fired from Jogakuin.
- The publisher (Iwanami publishing co.) is now recalling the book.

Comments on the above cases

- The Castaneda case and the Fukai case are similar in that the person they refer to do not exist (at least in the way they claim).
- Similarity between these cases and fabrication of data in natural science is obvious, so many people would agree that these are cases of fabrication in humanities (and social sciences, depending on how we classify fieldwork type research)
- However, people may think that these are extraordinary cases, and FF of FFP hardly exist for humanities in general.
- My main thesis in this talk is that those cases are extreme, but not isolated; there are less extreme cases of fabrication and falsification in humanities, and they are quite common.

Convenient mistranslation case

- This is a (still unofficial) anecdotal case which I have been advising personally.
- A Japanese scholar working in a university in the U.S. published a book on Japanese culture in English.
- It utilizes many obscure materials from pre-WWII magazines in Japanese, hard to access even for Japanese speaking people living in Japan (not digitalized yet).
- Because of the fame of the book, a Japanese version of the book was planned, but the author somehow refused to translate it by him/herself.

Convenient mistranslation case

- So other scholars started to translate it (with the consent of the author); since many quotes are originally in Japanese, they had to check the original text to translate back correctly.
- They found that the translations are very sloppy, to say the least.
- Some inappropriate translations are such that the quotes in translation support the thesis of the book, while the original Japanese texts do not. (such as the key term appears in the translation but not in the original, if translated straightforwardly).

Convenient mistranslation case

- analyzing this case:
- Something similar to this happens all the time, but usually not regarded as a case of academic dishonesty.
- Indeed, it is hard to distinguish incompetency from dishonesty in the case of inappropriate translation; it is inappropriate if the translation is a result of incompetency.
- However, if we know that the author is competent enough and the mistranslation plays an essential role for the thesis of author, I think we can conclude that the translation is purposive one, a result of dishonesty.

Unfair quotation case

- Kristine Shrader-Frechette, a leading philosopher of science, criticized cultural relativists on risk in her now classic *Risk and Rationality*. on page 33 of the book:

- Is Risk Evaluation **Purely** Aesthetic?

... Others claim that risk and its acceptable levels are like judgments in aesthetics: “public perceptions of risk and its acceptable levels are collective constructs... like language and ... aesthetic judgment... [P]erceptions of right and truth depend on cultural categories created along with the social relations they are used for defending... **there is no reasoning with tastes and preferences.**”³⁵ This argument also has the “all-or-nothing” form.

Unfair quotation case

- The quotation is from M. Douglas and A. Wildavsky's *Risk and Culture* (1982).
 - The argument pursued here is not easy however. The idea that public perception of risk and its acceptable levels are collective constructs, **a bit** like language and **a bit** like aesthetic judgment, is hard to take. The central thesis that the selection of dangers and the choice of social organization run hand in hand goes against the grain of contemporary thought.
 - That perceptions of right and truth depend on cultural categories created along with the social relations they are used for defending has been recognized by a philosophical tradition since the nineteenth century (pp.186-187)

Unfair quotation case

- When we compare Shrader-Frechette's quote and the original, the original is much more cautious, saying 'a bit' like aesthetic judgement".
- Shrader-Frechette gives the impression that cultural relativists are claiming that risk evaluation is **purely** aesthetic (in the section title), and deliberately omitted 'a bit' part from the quote, because that clearly show that Douglas and Wildavsky do not think that risk evaluations are purely aesthetic.
- The argument in the latter part of the quotation is also misrepresented; the supposed conclusion "there is no reasoning with tastes and preferences" appears several pages after the main body, in a different context.
- Her criticism that cultural relativists are making all-or-nothing argument is based on those misrepresentations.

Unfair quotation case

- Analyzing this case:
 - Again, something similar to this happens all the time (at least in philosophy; how about other areas?)
 - In this case, both the quoting book (Shrader-Frechette's *Risk and Rationality*) and quoted book (Douglas and Widavsky's *Risk and Culture*) are both popular, at least among academics interested in risk policy. Any interested person can check the fairness of quotation with a bit of effort.

Differences and similarities among the cases

- Of course there are important differences between the total fabrication cases like Castaneda and Fukai on the one hand and more common latter cases on the other.
- One important difference is that for the latter cases, it is in principle possible for anybody to check the accuracy of the translation and quotation by consulting the original, while in the total fabrication case, people do not have a clue where to look for the source (of course, the author should be able to show the way to approach the original, but in those cases the author simply refuses to do so, unless accusation is filed, like in the Fukai case.)

Differences and similarities among the cases

- Nevertheless, as we can see in the mistranslation case, a public source can be extremely hard to access (for non Japanese speakers living outside of Japan, it is virtually impossible to check the accuracy of translation from an old article appearing on a magazine which is owned by only a few libraries).
- Even in the unfair quotation case, there are obstacles for those who want to check the accuracy of the quotation (not everybody own the book in their bookshelf, and the book may be out of print).

How to classify those cases?

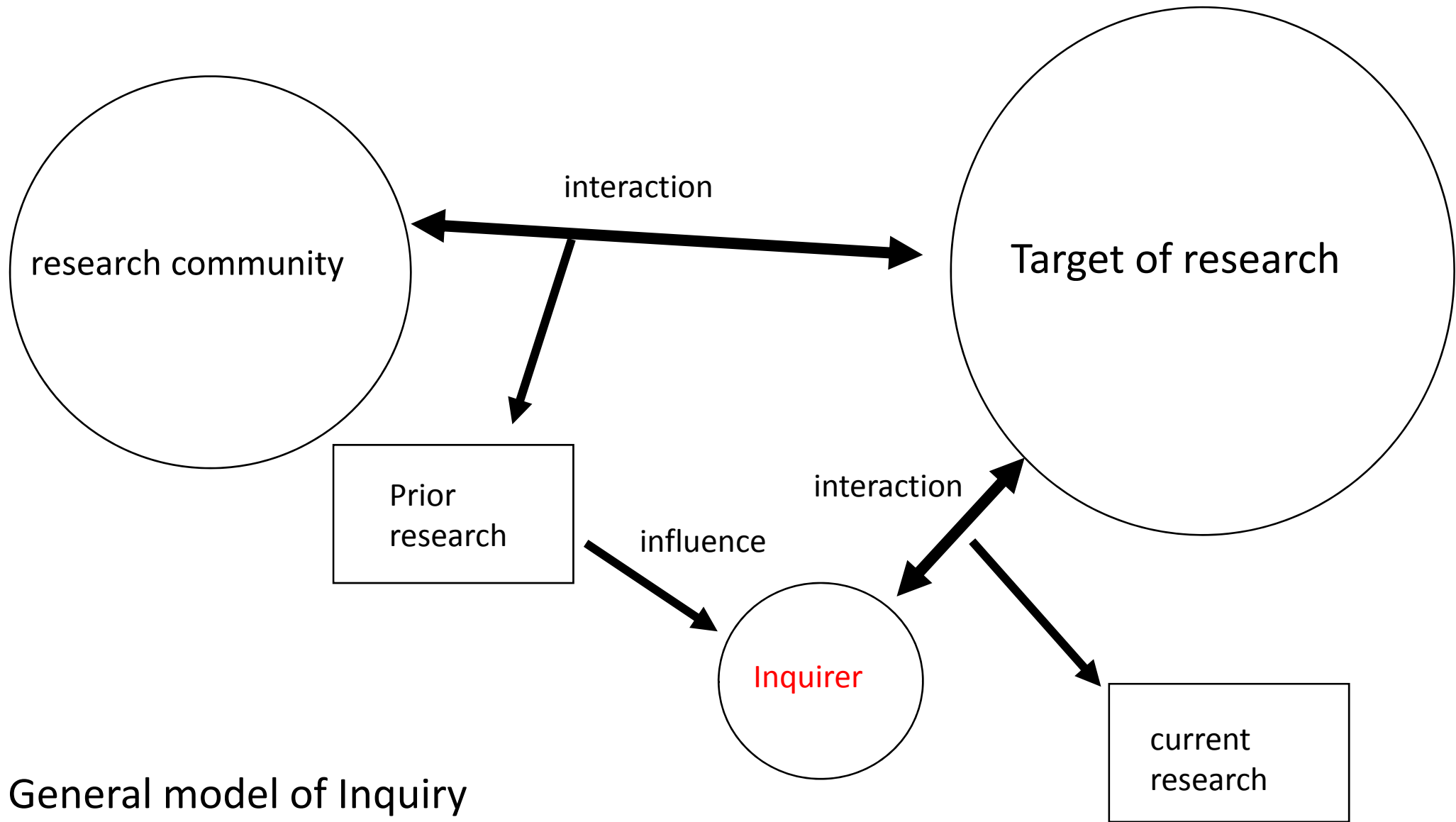
- In humanities, the latter two types of cases are not classified as misconducts; they are bad scholarship, and need to be criticized, but not something that should be institutionally punished.
- Indeed, there is a large gray area in which incapacity and mal intention are not easily distinguishable.
- However, if we have some evidence that the mistranslation or misquotation is not a matter of incapacity, we should treat these cases as a kind of falsification/fabrication.

FF in empirical studies and those in humanities

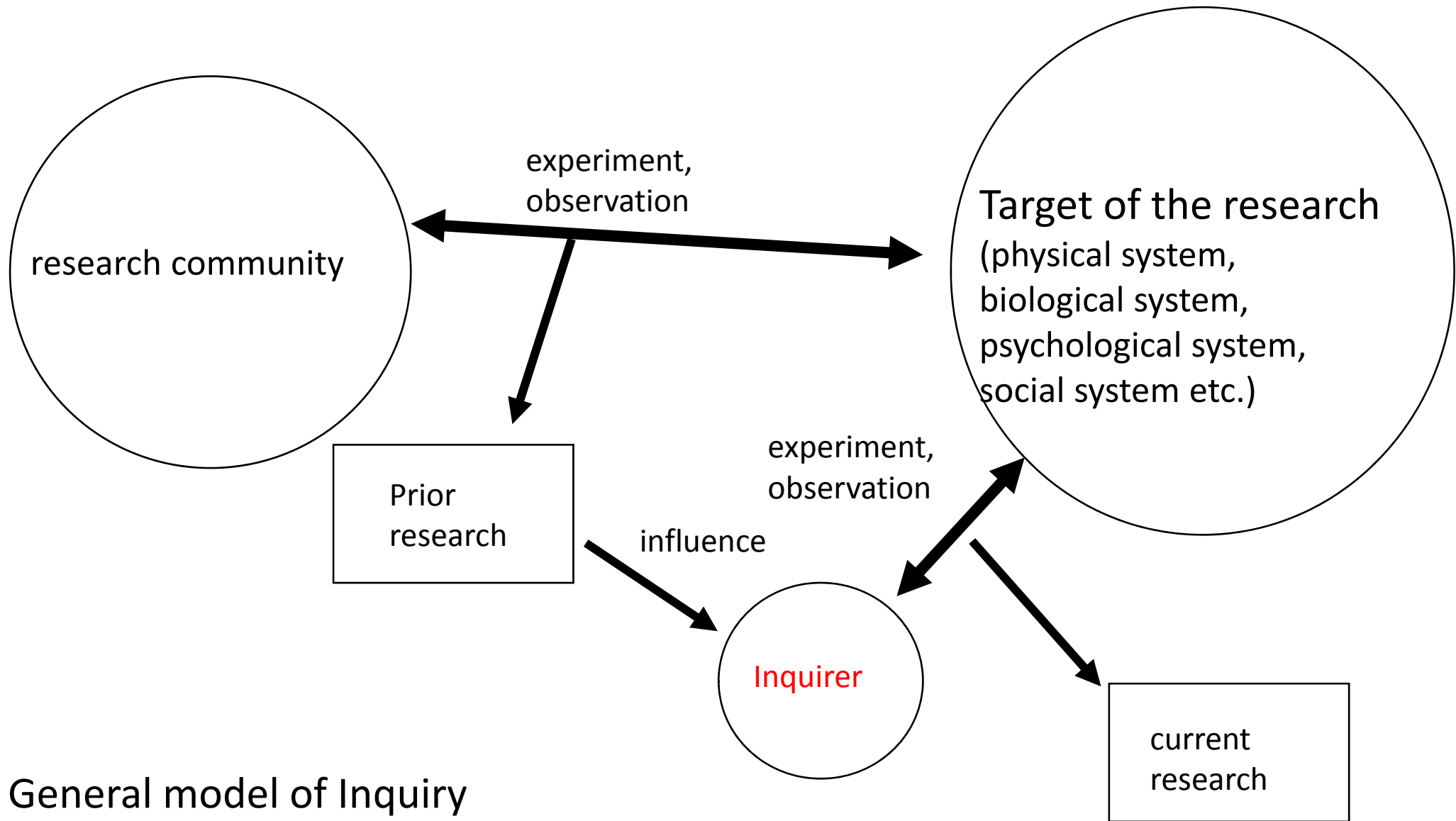
- When we compare the structure of empirical studies (including both natural and social sciences) and humanities, the role played by data in empirical studies is roughly played by certain kind of written texts, which is often called primary texts or primary source.
- Some of the improper uses of primary texts have analogous effects as fabrications and falsifications of data in empirical studies.

Confusion with Plagiarism

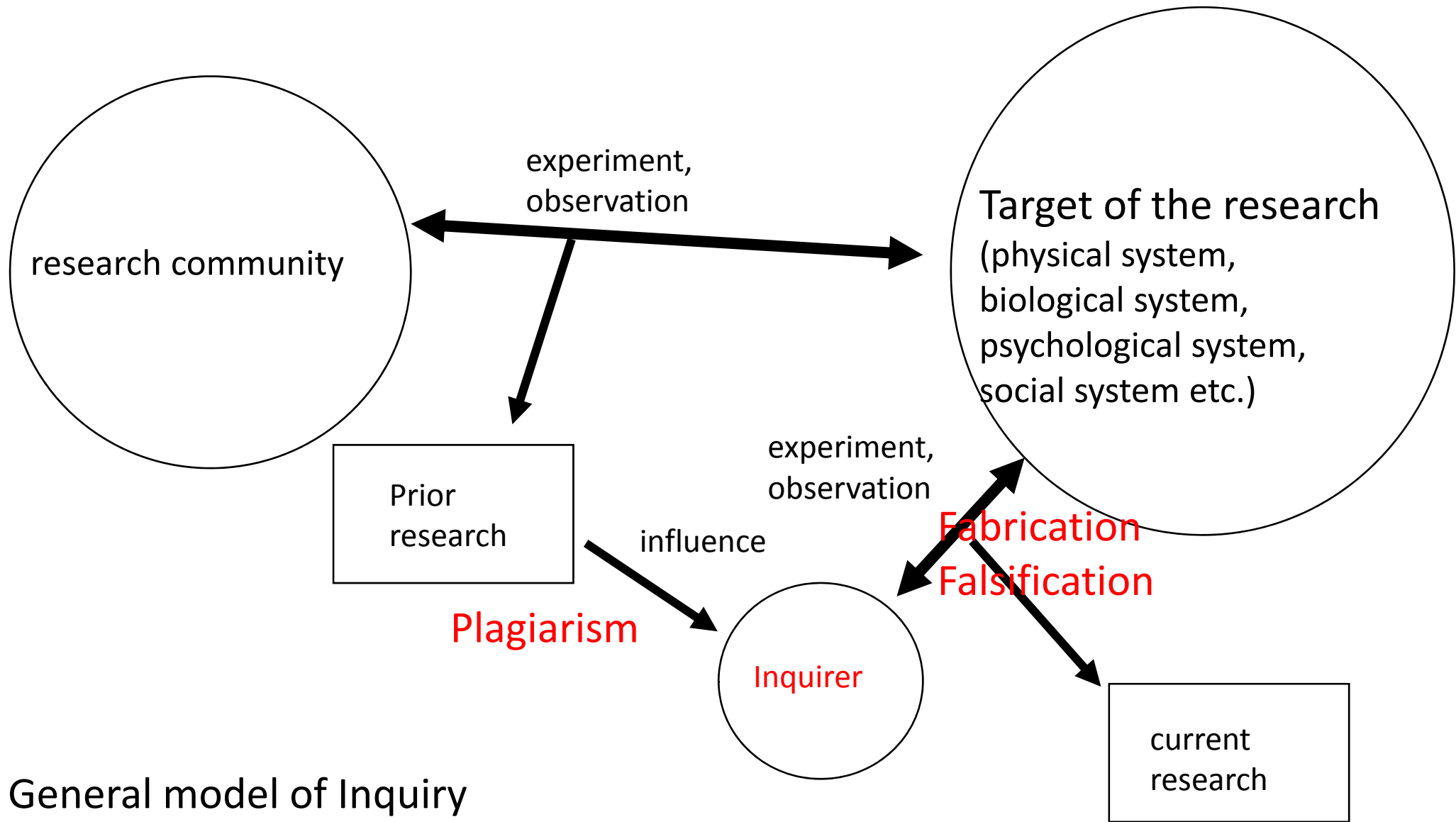
- Another reason why this category of misconduct has been overlooked is that it is easily confused with plagiarism-type misconducts.
- However, epistemically negative effects of improper use of primary texts are closer to those of fabrication and falsification in empirical studies than to plagiarism.
- In the case of plagiarism, we can still trust the result presented there; what is wrong is the attribution of the credit. In the case of FF, the result itself is untrustworthy.



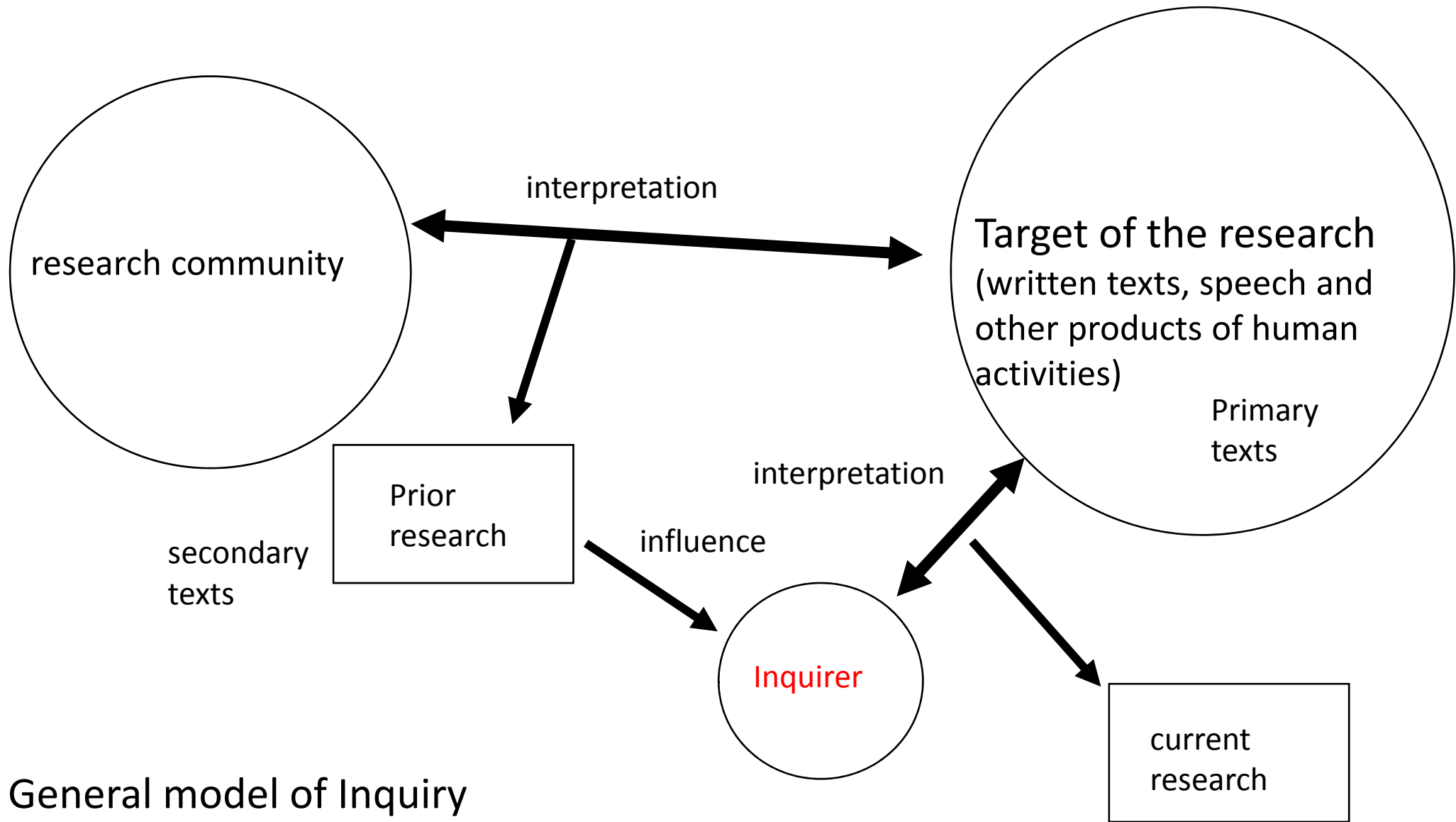
General model of Inquiry



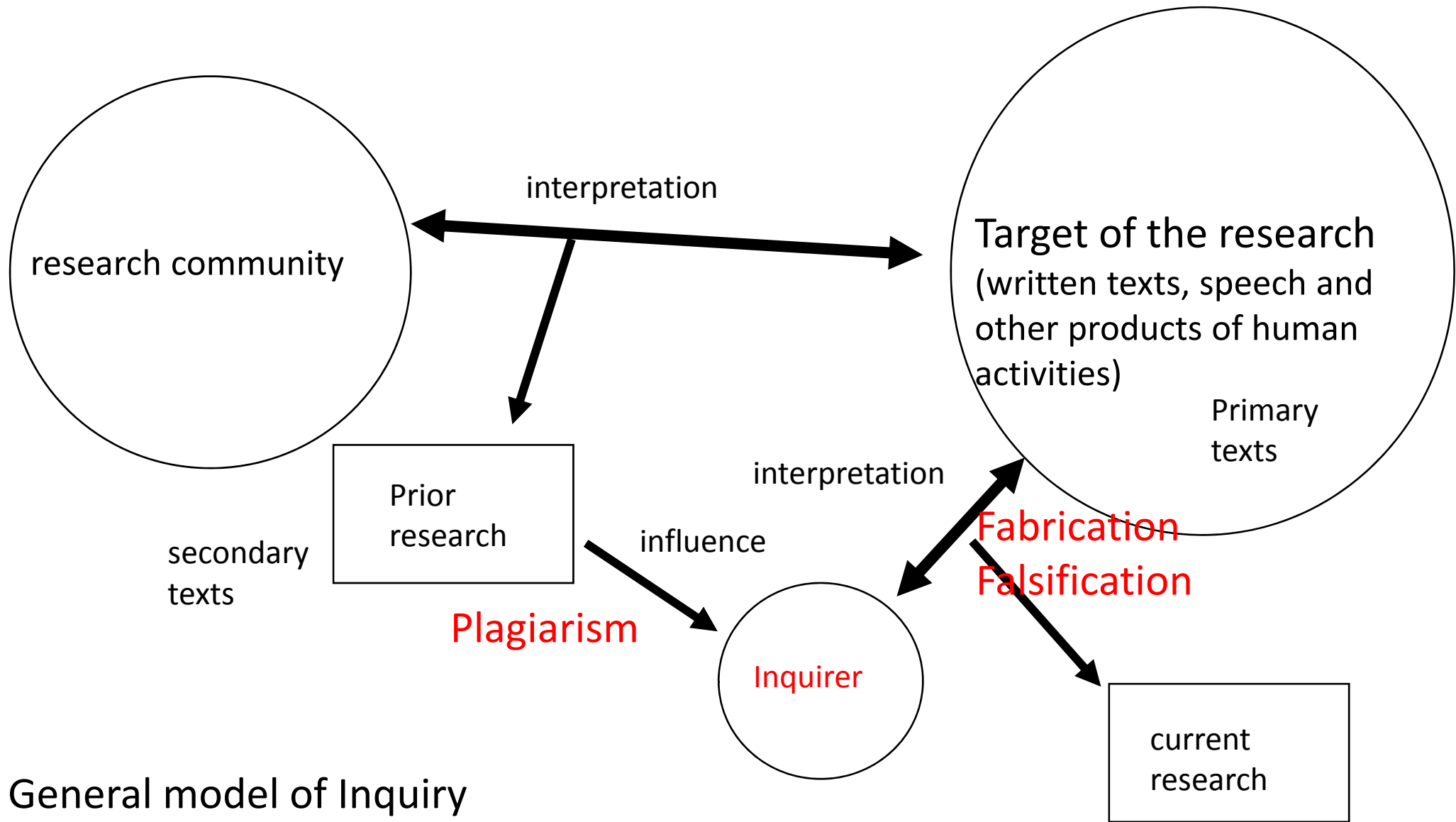
General model of Inquiry
for empirical studies



General model of Inquiry
for empirical studies



General model of Inquiry
for humanities



General model of Inquiry for humanities

Generalizing FF

- Fabrication: knowingly presenting non-existing data about the target of research as if it exists to support one's own claim.
- Falsification: knowingly presenting data about the target of research erroneously to support one's own claim.
- These definitions cover FF in both empirical studies and humanities which deal with written (and often published) texts.

Does public accessibility undermine the charge of FF?

- One reason why this structural similarity has been overlooked is that primary texts used in humanities are usually publicly accessible.
- However, physical accessibility does not imply content-wise accessibility.
- Moreover, speaking of accessibility, experimental/observational results are also publicly accessible in different degrees, depending on the ease of replication.
- Just like a publicly checkable plagiarism is a misconduct, publicly checkable FF also consists a misconduct.

Does the importance of interpretation undermine the charge of FF?

- Another likely reason why fabrication/falsification charges are rare in humanities is that there is always a room for different interpretations of texts.
 - It is hard to be sure that a translation is a mistranslation, or a quote is unfair, because they may be correct/fair under a different interpretation which you do not notice.
- However, again this is a matter of degree. Experimental/observational results also call for interpretations.
- There are situations in which we are reasonably sure that a translation or quotation is fabricated/falsified, under any plausible interpretation.

What's next?

- If we identify certain current practices in humanities as fabrications or falsifications, what's next?
- First thing we should do is to share the awareness.
- Then we (in each humanity discipline) need to discuss where to draw a line between clear misconduct and other undesirable practices that need not be regarded as misconduct (without the implication that the line is fixed).
- We need also to figure out what is the best way to promote research integrity (including FF in the sense defined above) in humanities.

Conclusion

- Calling some improper uses of primary texts 'fabrications' and 'falsifications' reveals some essential features of research misconducts in humanities.
- In particular, seriousness of improper treatments of textual sources is highlighted by classifying such bad scholarship in humanities as research misconduct.