

**The Plague of Plagiarism:
Academic Plagiarism Defined
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How serious a problem is academic plagiarism?

Numerous studies show that plagiarism and other types of academic fraud is increasing among undergraduate students. For example in a recent article published by the *Center for Academic Integrity* (CAI; <http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/home.php>) Don McCabe claims that "On most campuses, 70% of students admit to some cheating" while "Internet plagiarism is a growing concern" because although only "10% of students admitted to engaging in such behavior in 1999, almost 40%" admitted to it in 2005" (CAI 2005). To date no one has measured the extent of plagiarism among established academics although the indications are that between 10% and 15% of books and theses in the Humanities and Social Sciences contain unacceptable levels of plagiarized material (*Daily Lobo*, 5/3/2000; *Kansas City Star*, 02/15/2002; *National Post*. August 30, 2003. page. A.6).

The practice of plagiarism is a form of academic high treason because it undermines the entire scholarly enterprise. How else do professors decide between a good and a bad student, evaluate a candidate for an academic position, or grant promotion to a fellow faculty member, if not on the basis of the belief that their written work is actually their own work?

Therefore, plagiarism must be prevented at all levels of academic life from student papers to academic books. Nevertheless, care must be taken whenever one suspects a writer of plagiarism. It cannot be stressed enough that everyone makes a few mistakes and that genuine cases of similar use may occur. Consequently, what must be identified are patterns of behavior, repetitive practices, and clear indications of an attempt to deceive. The following paper attempts to identify plagiarism and show how plagiarists weave their web of deception.

2. So what is plagiarism?

Defining plagiarism is actually fairly easy. The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (COED) says that plagiarism is:

1. The action or practice of plagiarizing; the wrongful appropriation or purloining, and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc.) of another.
2. A purloined idea, design, passage, or work. (COED 1971:2192)

According to the same dictionary, to purloin means:

2. To make away with, misappropriate, or take dishonestly; to steal, esp. under circumstances which involve a breach of trust; to pilfer, filch;

And a purloiner is:

a petty thief, a pilferer. (COED 1971: 2365)

Hence the common definition of plagiarism is theft. All of this seems straightforward enough, but, experience teaches that both students, and many faculty members, are very apt at excusing misdemeanors. The problem is that while some people are genuinely confused, many have a vested interest in muddying the waters because plagiarism can be a very profitable business that can lead to employment, promotion and regular salary increases all at the taxpayer's expense costing millions of dollars every year.

Unfortunately, while there are some good books on plagiarism generally, such as Thomas Mallon's *Stolen Words: Forays into the Origins and Ravages of Plagiarism* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989), very little has been written about academic plagiarism. Therefore, it is important to provide clear examples of what counts as plagiarism. To help clarify the situation the following definition is proposed:

Plagiarism is the deliberate attempt to deceive the reader through the appropriation and representation as one's own the work and words of others. Academic plagiarism occurs when a writer repeatedly uses more than four words from a printed source without the use of quotation marks and a precise reference to the original source in a work presented as the author's own research and scholarship. Continuous paraphrasing without serious interaction with another person's views, by way or argument or the addition of new material and insights, is a form of plagiarism in academic work.

How this definition works in practice is explained below. First, however, it is necessary to remind readers that the successful academic plagiarist is like the undetected embezzler. A bank clerk who takes \$100,000 from one account is clearly likely to be caught fairly quickly. Therefore, the skilled embezzler steals \$100 from 1,000 accounts over a ten year period on the assumption that few people will notice the loss of \$10 a year. The successful embezzler attempt disguises illegal transactions so that they look like genuine mistakes, or appropriate bank charges, rather than theft. Academic plagiarizers act in a similar manner and are unlikely to copy entire books. Instead they take sentences and paragraphs from many books while at the same time providing false leads that make their borrowings look like genuine mistakes or poor footnoting.

3. Types of plagiarism:

The following forms of plagiarism were found in various academic books and manuscripts, some of which were written by established authors. The specific examples used in this paper were created using citations from my own book *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981) to avoid possibly embarrassing some well-known scholars whose work readers might recognize. Each section begins with an original statement from my book. The statement is then plagiarized to provide examples of the different ways a text may be misappropriated. The nature of the offense is explained and an example of correct usage is provided. The examples they may seem repetitive and boring, but this is the only way one can stimulate the necessary debate.

3.1. Straight plagiarism:

This occurs where only capitalization and sentence structures are changed and the odd word is added or deleted. But, the original author is not acknowledged nor are quotation marks used. The minor change in wording, changed capitalization, sentence structure and other visible features alter the appearance of the passage giving the appearance that it is original work. The following examples illustrate this technique:

Original:

But Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, unquestionably Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian people, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian. (Source: Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981, p. 185).

Plagiarism:

But General Hertzog recognized the danger and fought for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the Nationalists, were in the view of the newspaper *Het Westen*, thoroughly Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian People, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian.

Correct usage:

Hexham writes "But General Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, unquestionably Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian people, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian."¹

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 185.

3.2. Plagiarism citing the original author but without adequate quotation marks or references:

Here although the real author is acknowledged plagiarism takes place because the original text is reproduced with only minor changes without using either quotation marks or footnotes:

Original:

But Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, unquestionably Christian. The Afrikaner People

were a Christian people, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian. (Source: Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981, p. 185).

Plagiarism:

Professor Hexham brilliantly observes that Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, unquestionably Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian people, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian.

Note: this is an example of plagiarism even though the author acknowledges a debt to "Professor Hexham," because appropriate quotation marks are not used nor are we given a page reference to the source. Note also the use of the word "brilliant." In practice, plagiarists often use exaggerated descriptions of someone's work before plagiarizing it. This is probably because we are all flattered when someone says we are "brilliant." Therefore we are unlikely to look to closely at a work or complain about the misuse of our own work by someone who clearly likes us. Therefore, such terms are often triggers that warn us we are about to encounter plagiarism.

Correct usage:

Professor Hexham observes that "Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, unquestionably Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian people, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian"¹

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 185.

3.3 Simple plagiarism using a footnote:

A reference is provided but quotation marks are still not used when academic rules for citation demand their use and some words are slightly changed to make the passage appear to be different from the original.

Original:

But Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, unquestionably Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian people, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian. (Source: Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981, p. 185).

Plagiarism:

In his insightful book *The Irony of Apartheid* Dr. Hexham observes that Dr. Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up against the British for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the Nationale Partie offered a real solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of Afrikaner Nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, entirely Christian. The Afrikaner Volk were a Christian People, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian.¹

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, chapter 7

Note: the flattering use of "insightful", and minor changes to the text such as the substitution of "Dr" for "General", and "Volk" for "People." Note also that quotation marks are still not used even though they are required, nor are we given an exact page number.

Correct usage:

In his book *The Irony of Apartheid* Dr. Hexham observes that "General Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up against the British for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a real solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the Nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, entirely Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian People, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian."¹

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 185.

3.4. Complex plagiarism using a footnote:

This happens when various changes and paraphrases, from more than one page, are used with a footnote but without appropriate quotation marks. Thus a reference is given, although it may not be to exactly the correct page, and many words and phrases are taken from the original text. Paraphrasing is used to condense lengthy arguments. But, little or no indication is given that the passage is paraphrased, nor are quotation marks used when needed. Another technique, found in this type of plagiarism is a deliberate attempt to change the appearance, but not contents, of the sentences, thus making the plagiarism less noticeable. For example:

Original:

Such views articulated in the student magazines, also received clear, though less detailed treatment in *Het Westen*. Afrikaners were reminded that they were a Calvinist People with a duty to retain their nationalism. In the view of *Het Westen*, ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church like General Botha's friend Herman Bosman were mistaken in arguing, like their leader Andrew Murray, for the separation of religion and politics. (Source: Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981, p. 185 and 187).

Plagiarism:

Such views articulated in the student magazines, also received clear, though less detailed treatment in *The Westerner* which reminded Afrikaners that they were a Calvinist Volk with a duty to retain their nationalism.¹ In the view of this newspaper, ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church like Herman Bosman, General Botha's friend, were "mistaken in arguing, like Dr. Andrew Murray for the separation of religion and politics" even though he was their mentor.²

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), 182.

(2) *The Westerner*, 4/12/1912.

Note: in the last example *Het Westen* becomes "*The Westerner*" giving the impression that the author is translating from the original Afrikaans text. Note also the way the order of certain short phrases, like "General Botha's friend," are changed around. This type of alteration to the text disguises the extent of the plagiarism making it less easy to spot. Finally, although part of the quotation is placed in quotation marks it is done in such a way that the reader is led to believe that the writer is directly quoting from the newspaper and not from *The Irony of Apartheid*.

Correct usage:

Hexham writes "Such views articulated in the student magazines, also received clear, though less detailed treatment in *Het Westen*. Afrikaners were reminded that they were a Calvinist People with a duty to retain their nationalism."¹ Later he adds that "In the view of *Het Westen*, ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church like General Botha's friend Herman Bosman were mistaken in arguing, like their leader Andrew Murray, for separation of religion and politics."²

1Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 182
2Ibid., p. 187.

3.5 Plagiarism with hanging quotations:

Here the plagiarist begins by using a quotation but continues to quote after closing the quotation marks.

Original:

Hertzog's policies were also seen as an expression of the myth of apartheid. He and he alone, was represented as holding a realistic racial policy by which was meant one which segregated black from white. "Natives have to learn that they are not equal to whites," *Het Westen* declared. The native must learn to recognize that white technology and industry has raised them from barbarism. Too many people reacted emotionally to the race question and assumed colored people could be given a greater say in the government of South Africa. (Source: Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981, p. 184).

Plagiarism:

According to Hexham "Hertzog's policies were also seen as an expression of the myth of apartheid."¹ He, and he alone, was represented as holding a realistic racial policy by which was meant one which segregated black from white. The Afrikaans newspaper, *Het Westen* declared "Natives have to learn that they are unequal to whites."² Hexham says this meant that "the native must learn to recognize that white technology and industry has raised them from barbarism." Clearly, in view of *Het Westen* too many individuals reacted emotionally to the race question. Only radicals assumed Colored People could be given a greater say in the Government of South Africa.³

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 184.

(2) *Het Westen*, 7/27/1906.

(3) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 184.

Note: the plagiarized passages are sandwiched in between genuine quotations while yet again the reader is led to believe that the author is citing directly from *Het Westen* when, in fact they are still citing *The Irony of Apartheid*.

Correct usage:

According to Hexham "Hertzog's policies were also seen as an expression of the myth of apartheid. He, and he alone, was represented as holding a realistic racial policy by which was meant one which segregated black from white."¹ The Afrikaans newspaper, *Het Westen*, declared "Natives have to learn that they are not equal to whites."² Hexham says this meant that "the native must learn to recognize that white technology and industry has raised them from barbarism."³ Clearly, in view of *Het Westen*, "Too many people reacted emotionally to the race

question and assumed colored people could be given a greater say in the government of South Africa."⁴

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen), 1981, p. 184.

(2) *Het Westen* 7/27/1906, cited in Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 184.

(3) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 184.

(4) *Het Westen* cited in Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 184.

3.6. Paraphrasing as plagiarism:

Paraphrasing without reference to the original source, extensive or continuous paraphrasing, even when the source is mentioned but without the addition of new material that seriously interacts with the paraphrased passages, or adds significant new information, is plagiarism. This type of plagiarism is more difficult to prove. Nevertheless, it is plagiarism. Legitimate paraphrasing takes place only where the source is acknowledged and where the paraphrasing is limited to material that is then discussed, explained, and argued about. Acceptable paraphrasing takes place when:

- 1) The paraphrasing does not dominate a writer's work
- 2) Where the paraphrase is made to allow the author to interact critically with another person's views
- 3) When the argument of the original text is re-written in different words.

When an academic article, chapter, or book, that purports to be original scholarship, as demanded in a Ph.D. thesis, contains introductory and/or closing pages or paragraphs written by an author followed by a paraphrase or paraphrased *passages that make up the bulk of the work* then that article, chapter, or book is plagiarized. Compiling the views of other people and passing them off as one's own research is not scholarship. Nor can such works claim to be original even though nobody else has produced exactly the same collection of compiled opinion.

Originality in scholarship demands original thought and critical reflection on the views of others not mere repetition preceded or followed by inane comments. Only when an author adds significant and original insights is paraphrasing justified. Even then the norms of scholarship demand that all paraphrased passages are clearly identified as paraphrases. For example:

Original:

But Hertzog recognized the danger and stood up for the rights of the Afrikaner. Only the National Party offered a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems. The politics of the nationalists, were in the view of *Het Westen*, unquestionably Christian. The Afrikaner People were a Christian people, therefore their politics must of necessity be Christian ... Such views articulated in the student magazines, also received clear, though less detailed treatment in *Het Westen*. Afrikaners were reminded that they were a Calvinist People with a duty to retain their nationalism. (Source: Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981, p. 185 and 182).

Illegitimate paraphrase:

Standing up for the Afrikaner's rights because of the dangers he saw looming, Hertzog argued that a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems was to be found in the policies of the

National Party. Nationalist politics were according to *Het Westen* undoubtedly Christian and he Afrikaner People must support them because they were a Christian People. Views like these were expressed by students in their magazine ...

Appropriate paraphrasing:

Hexham argues that standing up for the Afrikaner's rights because of the dangers he saw looming, Hertzog argued that a Christian solution to South Africa's racial problems was to be found in the policies of the National Party. Nationalist politics were according to *Het Westen* undoubtedly Christian and he Afrikaner People must support them because they were a Christian People. He also observes that views like these were expressed by students in their magazine. The problem with Hexham's argument is that he pays far too much attention to the views of Hertzog and the students who supported Hertzog's views. He also fails to explain exactly what Hertzog meant by "Christian" thus overlooking the fact that Hertzog was actually an agnostic inspired by Bismark's son-in-law Count Keyserling. Consequently his argument fails to convince.

(1) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), p. 185.

(2) Irving Hexham, *The Irony of Apartheid* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1981), 182.

In the passage provided above Hexham's understanding of Hertzog's position is paraphrased for the purpose of criticizing it and showing its weakness. To do this the critic first points out weaknesses in Hexham's general approach, then draws attention to his failure to adequately define a key term, finally new information about Hertzog's views are introduced. Thus the paraphrase serves a greater purpose than simply repeating Hexham's views in different words. It actually adds new information that increases the understanding of the reader.

When an entire academic monograph consists of paraphrased passages, with only a few explanatory comments framing the paraphrasing, the book is plagiarized. This is true even if the author continually refers to the original author of the material cited and does not quote the author without quotation marks.

Here it is important to note that despite these examples some academics attempt to argue that provided footnotes are given plagiarism cannot be said to have taken place. This view is completely wrong.

In both the *Napolitano v. Princeton University Trustees* case and the *Texas Tech in Lubbock* case the use of footnotes to mask a plagiarized text was judged to prove the deliberate nature of the fraud (Cf. Mawdsley, 1985:6-7; and Mallon, 1989:159). Thus academic authors who give the impression that they are following standard procedures by their use of footnotes etc. when they are actually borrowing the words and ideas of others without appropriate references or quotation marks are plagiarizing. This must be made absolutely clear in any discussion of plagiarism.

3.7. So-called "self-plagiarism" and recycling fraud:

Legally it is impossible under American law to steal from oneself. Therefore, because plagiarism is defined as theft some people argue that self-plagiarism is impossible by definition. This is because people cannot steal their own work. There are, however, circumstances such as insurance fraud when people defraud others by claiming that something they owned was stolen when it was not.

On the Internet *Humanist Forum*, professor Paul Brian of the University of Montreal argued that "self-plagiarism," or the recycling of an old work in a new guise, "is also a theft since the author leads the book-buyer to think that there is a new book of his on the market. The author is misleading her/his readers: to me, it is just the same thing as to sell a secondhand car while claiming it's a brand new one" (*The Humanist Forum* 7/13, 16 April 1992).

Perhaps a better analogy is the used car dealer who changes a car's odometer to make it appear much less used than it really is. Such a practice is recognized to be illegal. So too "self-plagiarism" is fraud if not outright theft (Brogan 1992:453-465). To avoid confusion here perhaps it is better to drop the term "self-plagiarism" and simply call it recycling fraud.

Recycling fraud must be carefully distinguished from the legitimate recycling of a writer's own work that to a greater or lesser extent everyone does. Although recycling fraud in academic publications is a gray area many universities implicitly recognize the practice as fraudulent by publishing rules preventing students from submitting essentially the same essay for credit in different courses. There are also rules against someone submitting the same graduate thesis to different universities.

Among established academics self-plagiarism is a problem when essentially the same article or book is submitted on more than one occasion to gain prestige, additional salary increments, or for purpose of promotion. Such practices are wrong.

Like plagiarism the essence of recycling fraud is the author's attempt to deceive the reader. This happens when no indication is given that the work is being recycled and an effort is made to disguise the original text. The issue is one of the extent of the deception. Disguising a text occurs when an author makes cosmetic changes that cause the same article, chapter, or book to look significantly different when in reality it actually remains unchanged in most of its wording and its central argument. Changing such things as paragraph breaks, capitalization, or the substitution of technical terms using different languages *that leads readers to believe they are reading something completely new* is recycling fraud when such changes are the only ones an author makes to a text.

The extent of recycling is also an indication of recycling fraud. Academics normally republish revised versions of their Ph.D. thesis. They also often develop different aspects of an argument in several papers that require the repetition of key passages, sometimes quite long ones, from an original work. This is not recycling fraud if the work develops new insights. It is recycling fraud if the argument, examples, evidence, and conclusions remain the same without the development of new ideas or presentation of additional evidence. In other words *it is recycling fraud when two works only differ in their appearance* but are presented as separate and distinct works.

4. Indications of plagiarism:

The most common indication of plagiarism is when someone writes something that contains clearly different styles, such as a student essay with grammatically incorrect opening and closing paragraphs enclosing a body of text containing near perfect prose. In practice many plagiarists give themselves away in this way by copying mistakes found the source they are plagiarizing. For example suppose an author says that A.J. Ayer described someone as "a literary gadfly whose ideas are not to be taken seriously" and gives A.J. Ayer, *Wittgenstein*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984, p. 159, as a reference. Then, when you check the reference in A.J. Ayer's book, you find that the words "literary gadfly" and not used and that the book was first published in 1985, not 1984, and has only 155 pages the question of possible

plagiarism must be taken seriously. If it is discovered that an earlier book attributes the use of the expression "literary gadfly" to Ayer along with the same false date and page number that then it is safe to conclude the author of the later book plagiarized the earlier writer's work without actually reading Ayer's book.

In such cases plagiarism is proven because the impression given to the reader is that the author of the later book was working with original texts when in fact they based their work based on a secondary source. In these and similar cases plagiarism can be shown to have taken place because the author's text contains printing and other mistakes found in an earlier source which they did not cite.

For example, suppose someone wrote a book on Kant claiming that he based his ethics on St. Paul's argument about love found in 1 Corinthians 13.13.1-13. It would be natural to assume that the repetition of the chapter number "13" in the reference to St. Paul was a printing error. The correct reference ought to read 1 Corinthians 13.1-13.

If, however, it can be shown that several years earlier another book, or academic article, on Kant contained an identical mistake then the reader ought to look more closely at the two texts to see if there are other indications of plagiarism. When the later author uses identical arguments, including the repetition of the same words, as the earlier author then plagiarism is clearly proven. In practice many plagiarists give themselves away in this way.

5. Discussion and caution:

In making the judgment that an author is a plagiarist great care must be taken to ensure that careless mistakes, printing errors, inexperience, and even editorial changes made by a press are not used as accusations against an innocent person. Further, it is necessary to recognize "common usage" and the nature of the writing itself.

For example many basic textbooks contain passages that come very close to plagiarism. So too do dictionaries and encyclopedia articles. In most of these cases the charge of plagiarism is unjust because there are a limited number of way in which basic information can be conveyed in introductory textbooks and very short articles that require the author to comment on well-known events, issues, and people. For example, commonly discussed issues like the outbreak of the French Revolution, or the conversion of St. Augustine, require the repetition of certain key words and ideas. Further, in the case of some textbooks, dictionaries, newspaper articles, and similar types of work both space and the demands of editors do not allow the full acknowledgment of sources or the use of academic style references.

It should also be noted that many more popular short pieces, like oral lectures and magazine articles, are produced from old notes and memory. Academics and other writers often do not know from where they got a particular definition or description of a well-known figure or event. As long as such writing deals with things that are in the public domain, even though at times specific wordings may be very similar, this is not plagiarism because it does not involve deliberate fraud.

For example, it is almost impossible to describe the origins of something like the Watergate Affair in 300 words without using almost identical words to anyone else that attempts to describe the same event in

roughly the same number of words. This is because it is a public event that is discussed by countless writers and speakers who of necessity have to compress a complex issue to a few hundred words. In such cases repetition and seeming plagiarism is bound to occur.

The intent of the writer is the key issue in recognizing plagiarism. For example in the early years of the twentieth century the best-selling German author, Karl May (1842-1912) was accused of plagiarism because his adventure stories contained descriptions of landscapes and urban settings which were clearly culled from travel books. May did not deny this. He simply argued that to judge his works as plagiarized because he borrowed geographic descriptions in which to set his stories was to totally misunderstand the function of the storyteller. Someone spinning a yarn may borrow freely if they reuse the material in an original way so that the final product is not dependent on what was borrowed to create the setting.

It is therefore necessary to distinguish between academic and other types of writing and to ask what is the reader led to believe an author is doing. If a book or thesis contains academic footnotes, is written in an academic style, and is presented as a work of original scholarship, then it must be judged as such and measured against the accepted rules for citation found in sources such as the *Chicago Manual of Style*. If it does not measure up to such standards then it is possible that plagiarism has occurred. On the other hand if the writing is a novel or some similar piece that uses old and fairly widely known material to create something new then it should not be viewed as plagiarism.

6. Correct citation and quotation:

To avoid plagiarism it is necessary to know how to cite works correctly and use quotations. For this the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and similar works are invaluable. The *Chicago Manual of Style* states:

10.1 Ideally, authors of works of original scholarship present their arguments in their own words.

10.2 Whenever authors paraphrase or quote from sources directly, they should give credit to the words and ideas taken from others.

10.3 Commonly known facts, available in numerous sources, should not be enclosed in quotation marks or given a source citation unless the wording is taken directly from another. Also not treated as quotations are proverbial, biblical, and well-known literary expressions used as part of the author's text. (*Chicago Manual of Style*, 1982: 282)

Although these comments are very helpful, many people might be left wondering when they ought to use quotation marks. The accepted rule of thumb is after four words.

That means you must use quotation marks for any passage copied from another work containing five or more words. To help students avoid such problems many university departments publish essay guides. These should be carefully read. For example, the Department of Politics at the University of Calgary publishes an essay guide: *Write On: A Reference Manual for Students Research and Writing*. It states:

If you use more than four words from any source, put them in quotation marks and identify the source with a reference mark. (*Write On*, Calgary, Department of Politics, 1989: 20)

Exactly which reference system, and several are available, a writer chooses to use is not important. What is essential is that the reader knows exactly which sections of the work are original to the author and which depend upon the thoughts and words of others. All sources must be documented and every quotation has to be placed within quotation marks.

Anyone wanting more help on this topic should read books like the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2003, first edition 1949) , Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual of Style for Writers* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1996, first edition 1963), *The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing* (Secretary of State, Toronto : Dundurn Press, 1985), or one of the many other texts available in academic bookstores.

7. Conclusion:

Finally, it is important to stress that plagiarism must be taken very seriously indeed. Academics need an agreed definition, examples, standards, and punishments. As Professor Hoke Robinson argued on *The Humanist Forum*:

A single fraudulent grade could in practice make the difference; a series of them certainly could. In this case some other, presumably honest student who would otherwise have gotten the scholarship, admission or job has been wronged. And the higher the level, the greater the wrong, from the plagiarized intro-course essay to the term paper to a masters and doctoral dissertation. The misrepresentation gets you on the bench, and somewhere in the end, in the dark, somebody falls off.

Another wrong that's seldom noted in cases like this is the wrong to those served by the people who obtained their position through fraud. The professor...who faked his way through school presumably serves his students...less well than the one whose credentials were gained honestly ... there is a collateral effect ... (*The Humanist Forum*, message 8/8, 2 April, 1992).

If academics do not take control and apply professional standards other people will do it for them. Granting agencies and government bodies will eventually ask where their money is going and why academics did nothing when clear fraud occurred. Therefore, now is the time to act by clearly identifying what plagiarism is and how it should be dealt with among both students and faculty.

Bibliography

Note: these works are clearly dated to make the point that plagiarism is not a new issue that came in with the Internet. Therefore, no one has the excuse that "these standards did not apply when I was writing."

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Afterthought: Is plagiarism ever justified?

Finally, the question has to be asked whether plagiarism is ever justified. The answer, which may surprise some people, is yes. There are circumstances when authors have no choice but to plagiarize if, for example, a State or powerful professional body outlaws all reference to an author making it impossible to publish something that cites a particular author. Historically, this appears to have taken place when Ludwig Feuerbach published his *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841; English translation *The Essence of Christianity*, 1854). In this work Feuerbach uses words and phrases that echo Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1794-5) to the extent that he appears to have plagiarized large sections of Paine's work. Further, we know from his private correspondence he referred to Paine as a "famous American philosopher" (Ludwig Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke*, Stuttgart, Günther Holzboog Verlag, Vol. 8, p. 173).

The question then is why not expose him and label Feuerbach a plagiarist? The answer is simple. Feuerbach was writing in the State of Prussia at a time when Paine's work was banned. Directly citing Paine or making any reference to him meant a total ban the publication of someone's work. Therefore, Feuerbach could not publically refer to Paine and expect to get his work published. Consequently, he makes no reference to Paine in his published works.

Should anyone doubt this explanation all they have to do is take a look at the writings of Feuerbach's fellow Prussian Karl Marx who makes no reference to Paine in any of his writings published in Europe. But, as soon as he settled in England, where Paine was not banned, his writings are full of references to Paine whose works were translated into German published early in the nineteenth century in free cities like Hamburg. Therefore, there is a good reason why neither Feuerbach nor Marx mentioned Paine in their publications that appeared in Prussian ruled territories where they sought to avoid censorship. Under such circumstances plagiarism may be the only possible way to introduce the ideas of an author.