

Cases of plagiarism and its consequences

Literature



Cases of plagiarism and its consequences Mouton and Robinson (2002) d that plagiarism is an act “ depriving authors of profit that is rightfully theirs [, which] is theft. Depriving authors of credit might also be a form of theft” (qtd. in Shahbuddin 353).

Dorris Kearns Goodwin, a well known historian and professor in Harvard University, had been accused of plagiarism for her novel “ The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys” which was released in 1987. It was found she had explicitly borrowed numerous sentences from Lynne Mc Taggart’s book “ Kathleen Kennedy: Her life and times”. However she never took the effort to put the copied sentence in quotation marks nor did she refer to Taggart as a source in the first edition of her book. Also, it was detected that only the last edition of her book contained a thanksgiving paragraph for Taggart’s in the preface although nothing was written about him in the preface of the first edition. Goodwin had been ousted from the university but the matter was settled very quietly between Goodwin and Taggart with the latter taking no strict action against the accused (Crader).

There had been a similar case of plagiarism two years back where Stephen Ambrose, a historian was accused of copying in his book “ The Wild Blue”. He had copied innumerable lines including some entire texts from Thomas Childers “ Wings of Morning”. Some important phrases from Childers book like ‘ glittering like mica’ and ‘ up, up, up’ has been repeated word by word in “ The Wild Blue” and not been put in quotation marks. Also he has not done proper referencing and mentioned Childers only in bibliography and footnotes. However Ambrose escaped the accusation unscathed as Guilders didn’t take any action against him for plagiarism (Barnes).

The consequence of plagiarism can be judged only on the basis that whether
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it was intended or unintended. The above articles indicate that the works done by Ambrose and Goodwin revealed intended plagiarism since the subjects were similar to the books they plagiarized. However, no action was taken against them and such a result sounds unfair as strict actions should be taken against such people. Although Goodwin was ousted from her University, she received several accolades for her work later on from the same university. So it can be said that justice had not been done and created a wrong example for students and authors alike. Before performing any act of plagiarism, one should remember that it can lead to serious consequences of plagiarism like expulsion or suspension from the university, failing grades in case of students; degrees might be cancelled, loss of jobs and most importantly a person's career is ruined forever. However many ways have been evolved to stop plagiarism for example, invention of software like Turnitin. com, which can detect plagiarism in the submitted articles. As Hoover has suggested that any act of plagiarism should be publicized and brought to the notice of superiors. The academic community is facing the severe problem of plagiarism which cannot be overlooked and it is the duty of the community to make serious efforts to put an end to this malpractice (qtd. in Shahbuddin 358).

Work Cited

Barnes Fred. " Stephen Ambrose, Copycat". The weekly standard. The weekly standard, 14 January 2002. Web. 19 July 2011
Crader Bo. " A Historian and Her sources". The weekly standard. The weekly standard, 28 January 2002. Web. 19 July 2011