

Plagiarism Exercise

Read source texts A and B (attachment 2.pdf) to get a picture of the source information. Make notes if you like. Then read the student texts one by one (starting with Text 1) (attachment 2.pdf). Answer the following questions for each of the student texts based on your review of the source texts:

- Does the student text represent plagiarism?
- If so, what exactly is wrong and what is right?
- How could you correct any problems you identify?

Before you begin, read the following description of plagiarism.

“Plagiarize \ˈplɑ-je-,rɪz also j - -\ *vb* **-rized; -rizing** *vt* [*plagiary*] : to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (a created production) without crediting the source *vi*: to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source - **plagiarizer** *n* “

FROM: *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 9th ed*, (Springfield, Ma: Merriam 1981, p. 870).

Plagiarism takes in different forms. From the literature survey I found the following plagiarism behaviors.

“The Gust Writer” - *The writer turns in another's work, word-for-word, as his or her own [1].*

“The Photocopy” - *The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration [1].*

“The Potluck Paper” - *The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing [1].*

“The Poor Disguise” - *Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source, he or she has altered the paper's appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases [1].*

“The Labor of Laziness” - *The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and make it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work [1].*

“The Self-Stealer” - *The writer “borrows” generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions [1].*

"The Forgotten Footnote" - The writer mentions an author's name for a source, but neglects to include specific information on the location of the material referenced. This often masks other forms of plagiarism by obscuring source locations [1].

"The Mis informer" - The writer provides inaccurate information regarding the sources, making it impossible to find them [1].

"The Too-Perfect Paraphrase" - The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information[1].

"The Resourceful Citer" - The writer properly cites all sources, paraphrasing and using quotations appropriately. But the paper contains almost no original work! It is sometimes difficult to spot this form of plagiarism because it looks like any other well-researched document [1].

"The Perfect Crime"- Well, we all know it doesn't exist. In this case, the writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his or her own analysis of the cited material [1].

SOURCE A

Mickey Mouse is a well loved symbol of the greatness of America. He represents a long carefree era when everything in the world has gone well for the most prosperous nation on earth. He symbolises the prosperity of Americans throughout a period when they have dominated the world both economically and politically.

It is significant that a creature often viewed in other countries as a pest to be eradicated can rise in the United States of America to become a movie star and a household name. This symbolises the American dream where everyone (including apparently rodents and quite possibly many other non-human personalities) can expect freedom of speech, freedom of actions and freedom to make an honest living. It is important to note in this context that the rise to fame and/or riches of an underdog has long been a popular theme in the folk lore of western countries in general but of America in particular.

Not content to make a hero out of one rodent, the American public has also idolised Mickey's partner Minnie. It is interesting to note that Mickey and Minnie frequently demonstrate behavior not unlike human courtship behavior. It is also interesting to note that this happily unmarried couple remain perpetually in this state of innocent bliss. This state seems to capture the innocence of childhood that children do not know they have and adults reminisce about incessantly.

In addition to their role as a platonic couple Mickey and Minnie demonstrate socially acceptable inter-personal behavior with their collection of animal friends. These characters have developed as vehicles for teaching young children the key elements of social behavior. Parents of today have grown up on the antics of Mickey Mouse and his friends and are happy for their children to do so.

It is quite likely that Mickey Mouse originated from a lucky idea by Walt Disney with no intention to create role models for the young (or the young at heart). However, he has developed into an important figure in American, and perhaps global, society. He has played and continues to play an essential part in the formation of well balanced members of society both through film and the now international Mickey Mouse Club.

Extracted from: Symbols of America by R.O. Dent 1988, page 53

SOURCE B

Mickey Mouse, the charming little mouse from Walt Disney, is known around the world. He is considered a playful character who often gets into trouble but inevitably comes out on top. His resourcefulness and wit are regarded as symbolising all that is best about America and the Americans (Dent 1988). While it is true that Mickey Mouse symbolises America this should not be regarded as a positive but rather a negative feature of the small rodent's character.

The fame of Mickey Mouse has spread around the world in the same way that Coca Cola and MacDonaldis have arrived in even the most obscure corners of the earth. It has been promoted by the American publicity machine. This is a form of insidious colonialism that is far more evil than the European colonialism of the past. In their era the Europeans were unstoppable just as Mickey Mouse and all that follows is unstoppable. The important difference is that European colonialism was immediately noticeable and, therefore, more possible to resist.

It is true that European colonialism was not easy to defeat in the short term simply because it had behind it what was at the time the world's strongest military powers. Mickey Mouse colonialism has an equal, if not greater, power supporting its advance. However, it is infinitely more difficult to defeat in the short or long term because it becomes part of the social fabric of its colonies in a way that earlier versions of colonialism never could.

For nine tenths of the world Mickey Mouse is not, in fact, the loveable underdog who manages to succeed in the land of plenty. He is not the role model who shows children how to interact socially with groups of friends and with individuals of the opposite sex. He is, by contrast, a dictator who moulds children to social behaviour patterns which are alien to their society. He fosters rampant consumerism among nations who are economically unready for it, thus, creating bankrupted dependent client states. He also contributes to linguistic colonisation.

Despite the claims from within the United States of America it is necessary to view the effect of Mickey Mouse, and all that followed after him, in a global sense. It is clear that his role has been as a forerunner for the American colonisation of much of the world. There are many parts of the world today where culture and society have suffered irreparably as a result of this colonisation.

Extracted from: *Insidious Icons of Our Times* by Michel Souris 1990, page 109

STUDENT 1

Mickey Mouse is a well loved symbol of the greatness of America because he represents a long carefree era when everything in the world has gone well for the most prosperous nation on earth. The fame of Mickey Mouse has spread around the world in the same way that Coca Cola and MacDonaldis have arrived in even the most obscure corners of the earth. He symbolises the prosperity of Americans throughout a period when they have dominated the world both economically and politically. Mickey Mouse has become a movie star and a household name. This symbolises the American dream where everyone (including apparently rodents and quite possibly many other non-human personalities) can expect freedom of speech, freedom of actions and freedom to make an honest living.

While it is true that Mickey Mouse symbolises America this should not be regarded as a positive but rather a negative feature of the small rodent's character. He has been promoted by the American publicity machine. This is a form of insidious colonialism that is far more evil than the European colonialism of the past. In their era the Europeans were unstoppable just as Mickey Mouse and all that follows is unstoppable. The important difference is that European colonialism was immediately noticeable and, therefore, more possible to resist.

Mickey and Minnie Mouse demonstrate socially acceptable inter-personal behavior with their collection of animal friends. These characters have developed as vehicles for teaching young children the key elements of social behavior. Parents of today have grown up on the antics of Mickey Mouse and his friends and are happy for their children to do so. However, some people think he is not the role model who shows children how to interact socially with groups of friends and with individuals of the opposite sex. But he is a dictator who moulds children to social behaviour patterns which are alien to their society. He fosters rampant consumerism among nations who are economically unready for it, thus, creating bankrupted dependent client states. He also contributes to linguistic colonisation.

STUDENT 2

R.O. Dent says that Mickey Mouse is a well loved symbol of the greatness of America. He represents a long carefree era when everything in the world has gone well for the most prosperous nation on earth. He symbolises the prosperity of Americans throughout a period when they have dominated the world both economically and politically.

Michel Souris says Mickey Mouse, the charming little mouse from Walt Disney, is known around the world. He is considered a playful character who often gets into trouble but inevitably comes out on top. His resourcefulness and wit are regarded as symbolising all that is best about America and the Americans. While it is true that Mickey Mouse symbolises America this should not be regarded as a positive but rather a negative feature of the small rodent's character.

R.O. Dent also says that it is significant that a creature often viewed in other countries as a pest to be eradicated can rise in the United States of America to become a movie star and a household name. This symbolises the American dream where everyone (including apparently rodents and quite possibly many other non-human personalities) can expect freedom of speech, freedom of actions and freedom to make an honest living. It is important to note in this context that the rise to fame and or riches of an underdog has long been a popular theme in the folk lore of western countries in general but of America in particular.

Michel Souris also says that the fame of Mickey Mouse has spread around the world in the same way that Coca Cola and MacDonaldis have arrived in even the most obscure corners of the earth. It has been promoted by the American publicity machine. This is a form of insidious colonialism that is far more evil than the European colonialism of the past. In their era the Europeans were unstoppable just as Mickey Mouse and all that follows is unstoppable. The important difference is that European colonialism was immediately noticeable and, therefore, more possible to resist.

He also says that for nine tenths of the world Mickey Mouse is not, in fact, the loveable underdog who manages to succeed in the land of plenty. He is not the role model who shows children how to interact socially with groups of friends and with individuals of the opposite sex. He is, by contrast, a dictator who moulds children to social behaviour patterns which are alien to their society. He fosters rampant consumerism among nations who are economically unready for it, thus, creating bankrupted dependent client states. He also contributes to linguistic colonisation.

STUDENT 3

Dent (1988) has said that Mickey Mouse is 'a well loved symbol of the greatness of America' (p53) who symbolises the best aspects of life from the American viewpoint. In defining this symbolism he refers to the prosperity and the power, both political and economic, of the United States of America and its people throughout the last fifty years. He also mentions the fact that the rise to fame and fortune of a cartoon character, particularly of such a weak figure as a mouse, is a phenomenon unique to American culture. He links this symbolism to the aspects of the way of life in America which offer its citizens the freedom to lead their lives as they please.

Souris (1990) is aware of earlier arguments (Dent 1988) regarding the symbolism of Mickey Mouse and also comments on this aspect of the cartoon character. He says that the power of this symbolism when released globally is 'a form of insidious colonialism that is far more evil than the European colonialism of the past' (p109). It is also much more difficult to overcome because it integrates itself more fully into the society it invades. Souris (1990) says that, when taken outside the American context, Mickey Mouse is not a good role model for children but, in contrast, encourages behaviour which is unacceptable in their own societies. It is also opined that Mickey Mouse encourages consumerism and facilitates the establishment of English as a universal language to the detriment of local languages.

STUDENT 4

Dent (1988) says that Mickey Mouse is 'a well loved symbol of the greatness of America' (p53) who symbolises the best aspects of life from the American viewpoint. In defining this symbolism he refers to the prosperity and the power, both political and economic, of the United States of America and its people throughout the period of Mickey Mouse's existence (approximately the last fifty years). During this period America has increase its status as a world power through participation in wars and the space race as well as through generous overseas aid and maintenance of a strong dollar.

Souris (1990) agrees that Mickey Mouse is symbolic of certain features of American life, however, he takes a more negative view of this symbolism which he sees as 'a form of insidious colonialism that is far more evil than the European colonialism of the past' (p109). He argues that the European colonialism of the nineteenth century was easier to combat whereas the insidious 'Mickey Mouse colonialism' (p109) is much more difficult to overcome because it integrates itself more fully into the society it invades. It is important to note that while Dent (1988) refers only to the American context Souris (1990) extends his arguments to a global context.

Dent (1988) says that the rise to fame and fortune of a cartoon character, particularly of such a weak figure as a mouse, is a phenomenon unique to American culture. He links this symbolism to the aspects of the way of life in America which offer its citizens the freedom to lead their lives as they please. This freedom is guaranteed under the American constitution and is, therefore, an important feature of life in America. Souris (1990) does not dispute this argument but says that, when taken outside the American context, Mickey Mouse is not a good role model for children but, in contrast, encourages behaviour which is unacceptable in their own societies. Souris (1990) also says that Mickey Mouse encourages consumerism and facilitates the establishment of English as a universal language to the detriment of local languages.

STUDENT 5

Dent (1988) claims with little evidence that Mickey Mouse is 'a well loved symbol of the greatness of America' (p53) who symbolises the best aspects of life from the American viewpoint. In attempting to define this symbolism he refers to the prosperity and the power, both political and economic, of the United States of America and its people throughout the period of Mickey Mouse's existence (approximately the last fifty years). During this period America has increase its status as a world power through participation in wars and the space race as well as through generous overseas aid and maintenance of a strong dollar.

Souris (1990) agrees that Mickey Mouse is symbolic of certain features of American life, however, he takes a more negative view of this symbolism which he shows is 'a form of insidious colonialism that is far more evil than the European colonialism of the past' (p109). He demonstrates that the European colonialism of the nineteenth century was easier to combat whereas the insidious 'Mickey Mouse colonialism' (p109) is much more difficult to overcome because it clearly integrates itself more fully into the society it invades. It is important to note that while Dent (1988) refers only to the American context Souris (1990) shows that the arguments extend inevitably to a global context.

Dent (1988) suggests that the rise to fame and fortune of a cartoon character, particularly of such a weak figure as a mouse, is a phenomenon unique to American culture. He attempts to link this symbolism to the aspects of the way of life in America which appear to offer its citizens the freedom to lead their lives as they please. This freedom seems to be guaranteed under the American constitution and is, therefore, considered as an important feature of life in America. Souris (1990) does not dispute this argument but makes clear that when taken outside the American context, Mickey Mouse is not a good role model for children but, in contrast, encourages behaviour which is unacceptable in their own societies. Souris (1990) also shows that Mickey Mouse encourages consumerism and wider use of the English language. It seems likely that Mickey Mouse has contributed to the establishment of English as a universal language to the detriment of other national languages.