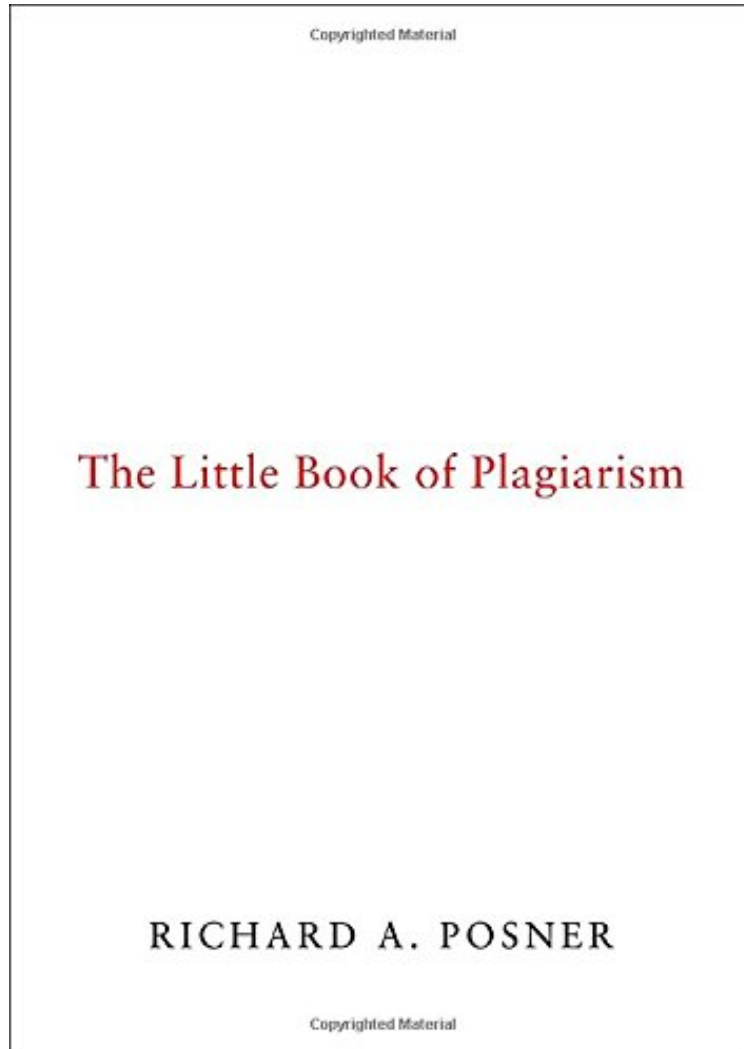


## The Little Book of Plagiarism

*Richard A. Posner*

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#861969 in Books Posner, Richard A. 2007-01-16 2007-01-16Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.50 x .70 x 4.70l, .39 #File Name: 037542475X128 pages | File size: 37.Mb

**Richard A. Posner : The Little Book of Plagiarism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Little Book of Plagiarism:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Brief overview of the subject from an economist/federal court judgeBy Hal JordanRichard Posner is an extraordinarily prolific economist and federal court judge. He has written widely in the field of law and economics, which I think he actually helped to create as a distinct academic discipline. His writing has been so extensive, as well as so stimulating and often controversial, that rumor has it that he missed a Supreme Court nomination some years ago because White House aides were afraid that his writings provided too much fodder for Congressional opponents.If Posner has a fault, it may be that he falls into the "think it, write it" trap; that is, he's too prolific. This book does a decent job of discussing definitions of plagiarism and the possible legal

consequences of plagiarism. It also has some interesting, if very brief, discussions of recent plagiarism cases, including that of Doris Kearns Goodwin and the Harvard undergrad who was caught swiping parts of her teen lit best seller. But the whole discussion seemed way too brief for me. He should probably have published it as a magazine article or an entry on the blog he publishes with Gary Becker. Or, he should have taken the time to write a more extensive book on this subject. So, while the book is interesting enough, take very seriously the label "Little Book" before plunking your money down on this one. Finally, as the gap between Kindle prices and print book prices shrinks -- in this case, the gap is negative, with the hardcover selling for less than the Kindle version -- I think it is fair to point out when the conversion to an e-book has been sloppy. While there are no major glitches here, there are a number of misplaced hyphens in the middle of words. Presumably, in the print book the words were hyphenated at the end of lines. It wouldn't be acceptable to have random hyphens sprinkled through the text of a print book, so it shouldn't be acceptable to find the same problem in an e-book -- particularly this far along in the history of e-publishing.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Meh-PlusBy Allen SmallingThere's an old Midwestern joke about a small-town cop sent out to make a report of a dead horse at the corner of Fourth and Vercingetorix. He couldn't spell "Vercingetorix," so he dragged the horse over to the corner of Fourth and Elm. I was reminded of that once I got well into Justice Posner's LITTLE BOOK OF PLAGIARISM, a book so well-written I did not regret the reading, even though I felt I was dragged from the corner of understanding and plagiarism to something more like the better-known spot where precedent meets intellectual rights. Plagiarism appears to be something largely like an earlier Supreme Court Justice's definition of "pornography" in that it may be difficult to define, but you know it when you see it. Richard Posner starts out with a dandy example of literary Grand Theft Auto -- a deliberately concocted "chick lit" novel based shamefully (and, it was decided, illegally) on another person's prior novel. After that, though, the topic gets dragged. Posner gets into serial considerations of rights, copyrights, fraud, and other well-defined subjects that largely do not concern plagiarism but that occasionally wind up in the same muddle. He concludes, as perhaps many of us would have without the benefit of this small book, that plagiarism is a moral outrage, but one whose affront has altered over the centuries. It is difficult to make "pure" plagiarism illegal because it belongs to the category of things that are wrong but difficult to attach damages to, be they pecuniary or ethical. I agree with Posner that it is wrong to try to make everything that is offensive punishable -- I disagree somewhat with his assessment that author/historian Doris Kearns Goodwin was partially rehabilitated in the public's eyes of her own copyism by the efforts of blithely communistic liberal academics two generations her junior who tried to define literary theft as a non-event. For all Posner's apt drawing on popular culture for his examples, he seems to have ignored a standard high-profile "charm offensive" at its efficient best. This makes me think the author is at times more adept at parsing popular culture than dealing with the politicization of culture, though perhaps he overestimates the enculturation of academic politics.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful, entertaining read. By Aphrodite K. Konduros Wonderful book. Historical explanations as well as practical tips. I bought it to teach a class and, yes, I gave Posner full credit for the whole speech!

A concise, lively, and bracing exploration of an issue bedeviling our cultural landscape: plagiarism in literature, academia, music, art, and film by one of our most influential and controversial legal scholars. Best-selling novelists J. K. Rowling and Dan Brown, popular historians Doris Kearns Goodwin and Stephen Ambrose, Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree, first novelist Kaavya Viswanathan: all have rightly or wrongly been accused of plagiarism: theft of intellectual property provoking widespread media punditry. But what exactly is plagiarism? How has the meaning of this notoriously ambiguous term changed over time as a consequence of historical and cultural transformations? Is the practice on the rise, or just more easily detectable by technological advances? How does the current market for expressive goods inform our own understanding of plagiarism? Is there really such a thing as cryptomnesia, the unconscious, unintentional appropriation of another's work? What are the mysterious motives and curious excuses of plagiarists? What forms of punishment and absolution does this sin elicit? What is the good in certain types of plagiarism? Provocative, insightful, and extraordinary for its clarity and forthrightness, *The Little Book of Plagiarism* is an analytical tour de force in small, the work of one of the top twenty legal thinkers in America (Legal Affairs), a distinguished jurist renowned for his adventuresome intellect and daring iconoclasm.

From Publishers Weekly Not all plagiarized authors will agree with Posner's conclusion that plagiarism is an "embarrassingly second-rate" offense, "its practitioners... pathetic," and that plagiarism should remain an ethical rather than a legal offense, punished by public shaming. But in a fascinating historical tour of the subject, he dismisses the idea that good art must be totally original. Shakespeare stole the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*, and Manet's *Olympia* is a reworking of Titian's *Venus d'Urbino* both examples of what Posner calls "creative imitation." But focusing on Kaavya Viswanathan novel, *How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild, and Got a Life*, Posner (Uncertain Shield), a judge on the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and expert on intellectual property, says this was a particularly modern, market-driven form of plagiarism: Viswanathan was attempting to compete against Megan McCafferty in the chick lit market by appropriating her competitor's own words. Posner focuses a lot on student plagiarism and seems to think all

students should be considered suspect; schools that don't subscribe to detection software like Turnitin, he says, are "nave." Indeed, he believes publishers should, and will, begin to use such programs, concluding, optimistically, "We may be entering the twilight of plagiarism." It's unfortunate that Posner briefly brings politics into this important and timely discussion, superciliously accusing the so-called academic left of being "soft on plagiarism." (Jan. 16)

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From Bookmarks Magazine

Legal scholar Richard Posner has written books on many newsworthy issues, including President Clinton's impeachment, the 2000 election, and 9/11. The Little Book is trademark Posner: smart, concise, elegant, topical and a little smug. Although he never exactly excuses plagiarism, Posner does illustrate how in Shakespeare's and Rembrandt's times, the public condoned copying since it considered art a more collaborative venture than we do today. Posner, who delves into the legal, economic, and ethical implications of plagiarism, entertains with smart, pointed examples. But some of his arguments—for example, that plagiarism must be materially harmful to be considered a crime—raised questions.

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From Booklist

Posner here seeks to define plagiarism, a crime that proves elusive on close inspection. The high-profile federal judge asserts that plagiarism conceals the true author and that the deception induces "reliance" on the part of readers; in other words, readers buy books they would not have if they had known the books contained unauthorized copying. Posner cites as an example Kaavya Viswanathan's chick-lit debut, *How Opal Mehta Got Kissed* (2006), which appeared to lift passages from novelist Megan McCafferty. But, asks Posner, are readers of ghostwritten books, textbooks, team-written formula fiction, judicial opinions, and Shakespeare also consuming plagiarized works? Posner's counterintuitive strategy of investigating readers' expectations, and weighting them at least equally to the writer's intentions, turns up various ambiguities in distinguishing copied writing from created writing. Yet society viscerally recognizes the literary rip-off and imposes severe penalties for it: expulsions for students, firings for journalists, ruined reputations for authors and politicians. Pleading for cool thought about plagiarism, Posner's analysis will enlighten all who work with words.

Gilbert Taylor

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