

PLAGIARISM VS PARASITISM: A SYNTHESIS OF CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

This short paper is an attempt to compare and contrast plagiarism and parasitism – two widely prevalent scientific as well as social phenomena. The two terms and their associated cases are discussed with respect to their academic and social implications accompanied by the author's observations and perspective.

Keywords : host-parasite relationship, plagiarism, symbiosis

Introduction

Terminologically, in academic and scientific arenas, both plagiarism and parasitism are widely surfaced these days. Plagiarism stands for copying words, ideas, or information from someone's work without citation (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>), while parasitism vouches for relationships between two individual organisms or species, in which ideally one organism (the parasite) is benefitted at the expense of other (the host) which serves as habitat for the former, the parasite (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parasitism>). In fact, in both the terms or cases, relationships usually act, interplay and exert their influences to the individual in authority and also to the community at large. The broader perspectives of these two terms are highlighted here under along with their basic types, academic and educative extensions, and author's own observations.

Conceptual Context

Plagiarism may commonly be categorized as: (i) Copy-and-paste plagiarism, (ii) Mosaic plagiarism (from different sources), (iii) Self-plagiarism (reuse of own work) and (iv) Global plagiarism (total lying or buying work online), *vide*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>. To these four categories, three additional types are suggested to include from observable incidences encountered in the written academic, institutional or service sector examinations like – (v) Hall collections, (vi) Copying (with or without consent) from others, and (vii) Note carrying and/or cheating in the Examination hall.

Parasitism (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parasitism>) can also be variously categorized based on locations of parasite in the host body (ectoparasite or endoparasite), larval dependency (Parasitoids, occurring in insect species) and on parasitic strategies, such as: (a) Hyperparasitism (Dissanaïke, 1957) - a parasite feeding on another parasite, (b) Social parasitism (Thomas *et al.*, 2010) - when a young individual is nursed or taking milk from unrelated females, (c) Brood parasitism (Payne, 1997) - host serving as parent to raise the young as their own, (d) Kleptoparasitism (Slater *et al.*, 2005) - stealing of food gathered by the host, (e) Sexual parasitism (Pietsch, 2005) - females adopting or requiring reduced males

for sperm to produce offspring, and (f) Adelphoparasitism (Rochat and Gutierrez, 2001) – also known as Sibling parasitism, when the host species is a relative to the parasite species).

Host-parasite relationship: This is an ecological entrepreneurship or relationship, rather than parasitological enterprise. As a matter of fact, host-parasite relationships (Host_Parasite_Relationships_f125c151-a29a-43cd-8e91-93da7dcaf1cd.pdf) promise adjustable association to coevolution. In general, animal associations are commonly classified as **Commensalism** (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commensalism>) – a heterospecific association (ecto- or endo-) in which one partner is benefitted, while the other neither benefitted or harmed, **Mutualism** [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutualism_\(biology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutualism_(biology))] - heterospecific association in which both partners are benefitted, and **Symbiosis** (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbiosis>) - heterospecific association in which both partners are so dependent on each other that life apart is impossible under natural conditions.

Observations

Some observations, cases and/or trends of plagiarism in researches and publication of papers are briefly reflected hereunder:

- i) A Ph. D. thesis dealing with a molluscan species from West Bengal, which was not known to occur in the State.
- ii) Two papers based on Indian materials dealing with taxonomic and ecological works on mollusc and zooplankton species which were not recorded in India.
- iii) Several manuscripts received for publication showed 20% to 80% plagiarism in recent years.
- iv) A tendency of half-hearted submission of articles for publication is noticed.
- v) Original research work has taken back gear with a surge of review work without expertise on the subject for career advancement.

Synthesis

Both plagiarism and parasitism are dependency related traits of individuals or organisms, indicating a tendency of behavioural specialisation, light or strong, and thus adopting ways to stay afloat. In plagiarism, it depends of the mental faculty of the person concerned and also on the surge of circumstances, competitions as well as societal swing. Parasitism seems to reflect the availabilities of opportunity which turn into some sort of manifestation of dependency. This is something like a tiger turning into maneater, as a chance factor or easy options. It is believed that adopting to plagiarism by individuals or opting to parasitism by organisms is initially like '*chance pe dance*'. Subsequently, it becomes a 'use to approach' or ethology, evolving with times and eventually showing significant co-evolution in termite flagellates (Das, 1990).

Measures

Mitigation measures are mainly indicated herein towards plagiarism reduction. It is suggested that while publishing a paper, students and researchers should try to follow certain basic approaches as follows: (i) To write the introductory and result parts in one's own language, (ii) Literature review and discussion be amply cited for status and statements, (iii) Research materials (plants or animals) be identified from a recognized taxonomical institute like BSI

and ZSI, (iv) Language needs to be authors' own, and if taken as such, a source citation is a must, (v) One should first write, then check the draft manuscript as many times as possible to become error-free, (v) Manuscript needs to be prepared based on 'Guidelines to contributors', including style, text and references, (vi) And, scientific ethics and publication ethics need to be adhered to during the course of research work as well as while writing it for publication purpose.

Concluding Remarks

Towards publication of a manuscript, editors are entitled to make queries for satisfaction, and there are cases where queries surpass the length of the manuscript text. And, an observation even without photographic evidences can be published, if the situation, circumstances or text, is satisfactory.

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