

tion, J. Edgar Hoover's FBI spied extensively on the anti-war movement and the bureau reported to Johnson again and again that there was no substantial foreign or Communist connection. But these reports did nothing to relieve the President's paranoia.

As the White House staff recognized, by 1967 Johnson had become so mentally unbalanced as to call into question his fitness to continue to serve in office. He was frequently depressed, and often lapsed into frightening paranoid rants.

Dallek's revelations about the 1968 presidential campaign are particularly interesting. Right up until the riots broke out at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Johnson had hopes of being drafted as his party's nominee, even though he had withdrawn from the race half a year before. Afraid that Hubert Humphrey would not toe Johnson's line in Vietnam, LBJ (who would have preferred to be succeeded by Nelson Rockefeller) bugged Humphrey's campaign and for most of 1968 made only half-hearted efforts for the Vice President who had served him so loyally.

During the general election race, Johnson discovered but did not disclose that Richard Nixon's campaign had received a \$500,000 contribution from the military junta running Greece. LBJ kept his knowledge of this crime secret until 1973, when the Nixon administration attempted to blackmail Johnson into convincing Congress to shut down the Watergate investigation. LBJ let Nixon know that Johnson knew about the bribe from the Greeks; the White House pressure abruptly ceased.

The Dallek book is considerably more evenhanded than Robert Caro's volumes, which treat Johnson as a monster. Dallek's orientation is that of a conventional liberal—praising Johnson's domestic accomplishments and bemoaning the distraction of the Vietnam War—yet the author's domestic policy evaluations are so brief that their liberal slant provides no impediment to a conservative's enjoyment of the book.

Dallek is not afraid to show Johnson's arrogance, megalomania, and insecurity, all of which kept Johnson stuck in Vietnam long after a more rational man would have begun exploring alternatives. But Dallek gives scant attention to Johnson's numerous extra-marital affairs, or to

his family life. Thus, while *Flawed Giant* thoroughly documents Johnson the President, the book provides less insight into LBJ's character than does Jeff Shesol's *Mutual Contempt*, a study of the relationship between Johnson and Robert Kennedy.

American historians will continue to puzzle over how one man of humble origins could combine such prodigious quantities of good and evil, insight and self-delusion. But the American people must answer another question: Since FDR created the modern imperial presidency, why do we so often elect Presidents like Johnson, talented men with no regard for the truth; men with so much assurance of their own righteousness and so much personal arrogance that they violate federal statutes the way ordinary people violate speeding laws, ignore the Constitution, and lie to the American people?

The presidencies of FDR, LBJ, Nixon, and Clinton collectively suggest that the office of President, as it currently exists, attracts gluttonously ambitious men who pose dangers to constitutional government. Perhaps the next time the American people vote, they should pay less attention to the candidates' platitudes and instead insist that the next President do what any President could easily do, but none has seriously considered in the last six decades: Shrink the executive branch of the federal government, and the presidency itself, back to constitutional dimensions.

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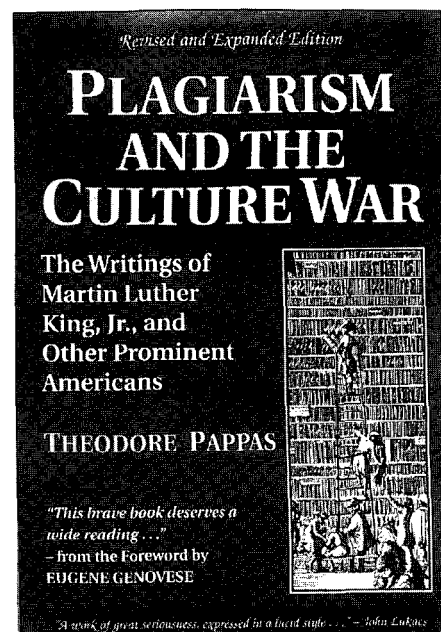
## COPY CAT

By Nicholas Stix

*Plagiarism and the Culture War:  
The Writings of Martin Luther  
King, Jr., and Other Prominent  
Americans*

By Theodore Pappas  
Hallberg, 212 pages, \$16.95

For the past eight years, intellectual sleuth Theodore Pappas, longtime managing editor of *Chronicles*, has hunted down prominent incidents of plagiarism, most notably those involving the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. His

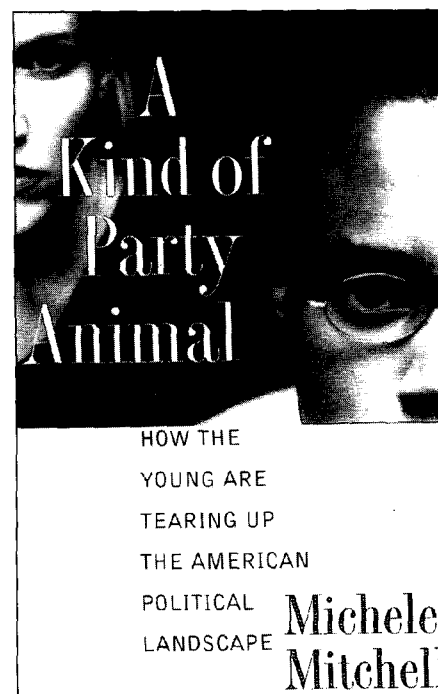


book, *Plagiarism and the Culture War*, operates on four levels: as a scholarly investigation into whether King plagiarized his 1955 Boston University doctoral dissertation; as an inquiry into the conduct of the guardians of the King legacy (Stanford University historian Clayborne Carson, the King family, et al.); as a study of the academic-publishing-media image complex that connived with the guardians to cover up the scandal; and as a brief history of plagiarism, from its 18th century origins to its present status in an academic world lacking intellectual integrity.

Pappas emphasizes that Martin King, as the younger King was known, was a great and courageous though flawed human being. However, in recent years an idolatrous movement has developed that has implicitly removed King from the ranks of the human.

Pappas shows that King's compulsive coveting of other men's words went back at least to his undergraduate days at Atlanta's Morehouse College, and continued at Crozer Theological Seminary and Boston University. "King's plagiarisms grow more sweeping with each year he progresses in higher education." Ultimately, King stole the most dramatic passages of his speech, "I Have a Dream," from an address by the Rev. Archibald Carey at the 1952 Republican Convention.

Pappas prints extensive parallel excerpts from King's student papers at Morehouse, on through his Boston University doctoral dissertation, and their



sources. BU officials eventually admitted that King had pilfered one-third of his dissertation from Jack Stewart Boozer's 1952 Boston University dissertation. But first the predominantly white, politically diverse Friends of Martin went on the offensive: They lied, denied, and sought to silence the whistleblowers.

From 1987-90, Clayborne Carson, director of the King Papers Project, deliberately misled journalists. And instead of simply comparing the dissertations in his own school's library, Boston University President Jon Westling unquestioningly accepted Carson's claims, insisting in 1990 that "not a single instance of plagiarism of any sort has been identified."

Mainstream media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *New Republic*, *Washington Post*, and *Atlanta Journal/Constitution*, sat on the story for a year, and only ran it after a mealy-mouthed report appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, one year after the British *Sunday Telegraph* had told the entire story.

And then there is Keith Miller. A white composition instructor at Arizona State University, Miller espouses a theory of "voice merging," which holds that blacks cannot commit plagiarism, because the black oral tradition does not recognize intellectual property rights, and that King merely took the words of white men in order to make himself intelligible and acceptable to white audiences.

As Pappas points out, MLK believed in intellectual property rights; he had taken a course at BU devoted to plagiarism and scholarly standards; he copyrighted his plagiarized speeches; and Miller provides no evidence that King saw himself as part of the "tradition" that Miller has posited. There is no "voice merging" tradition; Keith Miller made it up, with its attendant revision of black American history, with the sole and explicit purpose of rescuing King's scholarly reputation.

Pappas suggests that the young King escaped apprehension due to either an early form of affirmative action or his professors' laziness and incompetence. And that was back in the good old days. As Thomas Sowell recently noted, the title "full professor" may need to be replaced with "empty professor." After spending my first year teaching college (1992-93) buried in pla-

giarized term papers, I stopped assigning take-home papers. In six years as an instructor, I have never heard of a student being disciplined for plagiarism. Many students fail to comprehend the very concept. They understand only that copying from influential authors without attribution brings As from most instructors, while angering others. Today's colleges have in effect institutionalized a "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding plagiarism.

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## A HALF-BAKED GENERATION

By Clay Waters

*A New Kind of Party Animal*

By Michele Mitchell

Simon & Schuster, 224 pages, \$23

At 28, Michelle Mitchell is already a veteran political writer: the youngest person to serve as a communications director on Capitol Hill, the youngest to write for the *New York Times* editorial page. *A New Kind of Party Animal*, Mitchell's first book, deserves credit for shunning that awful "Generation X" sobriquet (she prefers the term "18-35"). She doesn't indulge in the usual marketing clichés of the Xers: No cigar poses or leopard miniskirts here, just a too-hip title that is guaranteed to age gracefully.

Mitchell identifies the 18-35 age group as a fiscally conservative, socially inclusive (read: pro-choice) bunch, savvy, technoliterate, and resistant to hype. In this brief book she follows seven of them from across the country, working around bureaucracies, eschewing partisanship, getting things done. In Chicago, Jerry Morrison tries to break that city's notorious political machine. In California, Kim Alexander sets up a Web site listing the campaign donations made to the state legislature.

*Party Animal* suffers from a jumpy style that reads like a screen of Internet hotlinks, skipping from point to point. Statements are followed by anecdotes that sometimes veer far off the subject. But the book is refreshingly free of dark warnings of intergenerational warfare that make others in its

genre, like *Revolution X*, look so ludicrous now. Sometimes Mitchell's cynical shots achieve sublime wisdom, as in this snapshot of the pre-Internet media: "National news was what Cronkite chose to pass along to everyone else from his hometown newspaper (the *New York Times*)."

But the book's policy goofs show that in some areas Mitchell is still in thrall to Washington's conventional wisdom: She claims California's property tax-limiting Proposition 13 devastated public schools, when in fact spending per student has since risen by one-third (from \$3,046 to \$4,200 in constant dollars). She calls welfare reform "draconian" and claims the Republicans' 1994 budget plan "sold children out" by converting the school lunch program into block grants, ignoring that the plan would have increased lunch funding.

Mitchell goes out of her way to make her generation look good. She notes approvingly that the 18-35 group is the most skeptical about Bill Clinton as a role model. She demands her peers be respected both because they turned out in record numbers in 1992 and because they didn't turn out in 1996. In the end, Mitchell is no more sure about this age group than we are. Perhaps in the future the people she chronicles will have compelling stories to relate. As of now, this book seems half-baked, unfinished. Maybe it's just too early to write a history of her generation.

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