

Shadow Scholar

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A few months ago, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published an expose written by a man who makes his living writing papers for a custom-essay company. His article is getting even more attention now that *Readers Digest* has printed an edited version. He has written roughly 5,000 pages of scholarly literature for students in college and graduate school. You won't find his name on a single paper.

The article follows his experience with one student who wants him to write a 75-page paper on business ethics. It later became part of a 170-page graduate school thesis. Her e-mail reads as follows: "You did me business ethics propasal [sic] for me I need propasal got approved pls can you will write me paper?" Yes, her English and grammar are that poor. I will spare you all the other e-mails she writes to him.

He has found there are three demographic groups that seek out his services: the English-as-second-language student, the hopelessly deficient student, and the lazy rich kid. He admits that he lives rather well "on the desperation, misery, and incompetence" that our educational system has created. He remarks that "my company's staff of roughly 50 is not large enough to satisfy the demands of students."

Perhaps the greatest irony in his work is that he does lots of work for seminary students. He says: "I like seminary students. They seem so blissfully unaware of the inherent contradiction in paying someone to help them cheat in courses that are largely about walking in the light of God and providing an ethical model for others to follow. I have been commissioned to write many a passionate condemnation of America's moral decay as exemplified by abortion, gay marriage, or the teaching of evolution. All in all, we may presume that clerical authorities see these as a greater threat than the plagiarism committed by the future frocked."

Anyone looking for evidence of moral decline in America need look no further than the willingness of students (including seminary students) to hire ghostwriters to do their work and then claim it as their own. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.