What's Love Got to Do with It? Scholarly Citation Practices as Courtship Rituals

Shirley K. Rose
Purdue University

Inexperienced academic writers, would-be members or initiates of scholarly disciplines, deviate from accepted practices for citing the literature of a particular area of study in a number of ways familiar to teachers of undergraduates and beginning graduate students. They often rely too much on their sources; they often do not provide necessary citations, do provide unnecessary citations, or provide incomplete ones; they are unlikely to integrate these cited sources into the context of their own work adequately or effectively; and they frequently use an unconventional citation style. Teachers of these inexperienced writers may find it difficult to explain precisely why these deviations from the conventions of their discourse communities are so troubling or exactly how they might be corrected to conform to the expectations of experienced readers in the discipline.

In this essay, I argue for adopting a rhetoric of identification for explaining citation practices, viewing scholarly citation as a courtship ritual designed to enhance a writer's standing in a scholarly discourse community. The terms of this rhetoric challenge, without completely displacing, the capitalistic economic terms that currently prevail in textbook discussions of quotation, paraphrase, and other means of incorporating ideas from one or more texts into another. Adopting this rhetoric of citation practice has a number of implications for teachers of writing across the disciplines.

Inadequacies of Typical Handbook Advice

Faced with student writers' deviations from typical scholarly citation practice, teachers might refer students to style manuals such as those of the American Psychological Association or the Modern Language Association to remedy unconventional formatting, punctuation,

and abbreviation practices, but these manuals rarely address the most significant deviations from accepted citation practice. The advice offered in college writing handbooks and research manuals is usually inadequate as well. These texts, which are typically designed for use in introductory writing courses enrolling students from diverse areas of study, are not only short on guidelines for making informed choices about when, where, and how to refer to which existing literature in any field of study; they also, in their attempts to be comprehensive, are limited to offering only the most generalized advice. Further, as I will demonstrate below, these handbooks often present scholarly citation in terms limited to a view of ideas as intellectual property and of scholarly productivity as a factor in a capitalistic economy. Though these terms are familiar to educators, they are nonetheless troublesome to those who are themselves involved in research projects more compatible with post-modernist and post-structuralist critique.

In the section which follows, I've provided an illustrative sampling of the explanations of citation practices from several widely-used handbooks designed for college student writers. After briefly reviewing what is said about citation in general and about plagiarism, I will concentrate on discussions of word-for-word quotation, as space constraints for this essay do not allow examination and discussion of paraphrasing and summarizing sources[0] (see Arrington, 1988), introducing and framing citations, providing footnotes versus parenthetical citations, or following conventions for punctuating and abbreviating documentation. (In the following passages I have italicized words and phrases for emphasis.)

On the nature of citation in general, the following statement is typical:

> A research paper requires a thoughtful balance between *your own* language and the words and sentences you *borrow* from other sources. (Marius and Wiener 422)

Because words and ideas are widely regarded as property in our capitalistic economy, our college handbooks for writers often place somewhere near the section on citations a few choice words about plagiarism:

> You commit **plagiarism** whenever you present words or ideas *taken from* another person as if they were your own. . . . The prose

we write ourselves is so individual that when we write something in a striking way or express a new idea, we have produced something that always *belongs to us*. To call someone else's writing your own is wrong and foolish. (Marius and Wiener 464-465)

Plagiarism can result from not *giving credit* to the person who thought of an idea, calculated statistics, made a discovery. You cannot pass off as you own another person's work. (Carter and Skates 482)

[T]o plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact *borrowed from* someone else, and to do so is considered a violation of the professional responsibility to acknowledge *"academic debts"* ("Statement on Professional Ethics," *Policy Documents and Reports* 1984 ed., Washington: AAUP, 1984, 134.) . . . Even without considering the penalties of plagiarism, the best scholars generously acknowledge their <u>debts</u> to others. By doing so they not only contribute to the historiography of scholarship but also help younger scholars understand the process of research and discovery. (Achtert and Gibaldi 4-5)

Handbook advice about what ideas and information must be cited presents quotation as a strategy for *borrowing* authority:

[Reserve] direct quotation for material that is especially well stated or for points that might require the clout of a respected authority's exact words. (Leggett, Mead, and Kramer 486).

You should depend on other people's words as little as possible, limiting quotations to those *necessary* to your argument or *memorable* for your readers. Reasons to use direct quotations include the following.
    *To incorporate a statement expressed so effectively by the author that it cannot be paraphrased without altering meaning
    *To contribute to your own credibility as a writer by quoting an authority on your topic
    *To allow an author to defend his or her position in his or her own words

            *To use a striking quotation for effect
                                        (Lunsford and Connors 588)

        If individual knowledge is capital, according to the handbooks, group knowledge is not. For example, in explaining what information does not need to be cited or "common knowledge," *The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers* offers an elaborate discussion which employs terms suggesting the notion of "public property." Authors Hairston and Ruszkiewicz explain that there is no need to cite

> facts, dates, events, information, and concepts that belong gener-
> ally to an educated public. No individual owns the facts about
> history, physics, social behavior, geography, current events, popular
> culture, and so on. . . . What the experts know collectively
> constitutes the common knowledge within the field about the
> subject; what they assert individually—their opinions, studies,
> theories, research projects, and hypotheses—is the material you
> must document in a paper. (546-47)

        Metaphors of property and product are used to talk about the nature of language and thought. Words and ideas are "owned" and "borrowed" as though they were capital. Writers "give credit" to other writers. This handbook version of the nature of responsible scholarly citation practice seems to have made an impression on students: Barry Kroll's study of 150 college freshmen's attitudes toward plagiarism identified fairness, individual responsibility, and ownership as the three major ethical issues.[1] "Credit," "credence," and "creed"—property, authority, and belief—are obviously closely bound together in the prevailing set of values.[2] Treating language and thought as *object*, as a product of individual labor, is therefore certainly legitimate in an academic culture deeply imbedded in a tradition of capitalistic eco- nomic values. However, explanations such as these obscure an under- standing of language and thought as collaborative *action* as well. Teachers who hope to offer explanations and advice more consistent with their own ideological positions and writing practices in post- structuralist, post-disciplinary academic cultures at the end of the twentieth century will need to draw on the resources of a rhetoric of citations that accounts for intertextuality in the construction of knowl- edge.

De-termining a Rhetoric of Citation

While there is a large and growing body of scholarship in citation studies,[3] relatively little of it until recently has addressed developing a rhetoric of citation practice.[4] Of this recent work, Charles Bazerman's 1988 work, *Shaping Written Knowledge* is probably the most familiar to readers from disciplines other than library and information science. In *Shaping Written Knowledge* Bazerman examines the ways citations in scientific articles refer to, invoke, or respond to the context of the already existing literature of a field in order to establish a relationship with that literature. For Bazerman, citation practices are clues to the "cognitive structure" of knowledge in a discipline. The length of a literature review, the specificity of summaries of earlier work, evaluations of connections between the current work and previous work, and the distribution of references throughout a scientific article are all indicators of the size, structure, and maturity of the discipline of which it is a part (166-67).

Bazerman's constructivist project has gone a long way toward demonstrating that scientific knowledge is discursively constructed, and his conclusions are easily generalized to include other disciplines, since the sciences have been assumed to be the disciplines least susceptible to or dependent upon rhetoric for the creation and dissemination of shared knowledge. However, given that his analytical approach best suited to exploring textual and contextual features, Bazerman's exploration of writers' motives is necessarily limited. A complete rhetoric of citations must be able to address writers' motives and purposes, for these cannot be taken for granted without risk of reducing them to simplistic terms.

Such a rhetoric of citations is suggested by Kenneth Burke, whose language philosophy has influenced a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. For Burke, reality is linguistically "determined"—that is, the terms which describe a situation delimit and define the way that situation can be understood. Yet Burke's brand of linguistic determinism does not discount the importance of the human will, for, according to his rhetoric, human motives have governed the choices of the terms. As the "symbol-abusing" animal, humans' use of language is what gets us into trouble, but it is also our chief resource for getting out of that trouble.

In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke argues that a rhetoric of identification is better suited than a rhetoric of persuasion to describing those "ways in which the members of a group promote social cohesion by

acting rhetorically upon themselves and one another" (xiv). In the following passages from *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke has developed this rhetoric of identification by playing with the terms "cooperation" and "cooperative":

> [Rhetoric] is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols. (43)

> In society, as a going concern, the network of cooperative practices is matched by a network of communicative symbols. "Communication" involves the interdependence of people through their common stake in both cooperative and symbolic networks. (234)

Working with these two terms, Burke explains his earlier assertion that communication is "the area where love has become so generalized, desexualized, 'technologized' that only close critical or philosophical scrutiny can discover the vestiges of the original motive" (19). If love—pure identification—is the original motive, discourse can be viewed in terms of *courtship* in a rhetoric of identification that represents discourse as essentially collaborative action.

Burke's rhetoric of identification, providing the terms for viewing discourse as collaborative action, suggests that the ultimate discourse enables us to achieve the "good life," characterized by "construction, to channelize the militaristic by 'transcendence' into the co-operative" (256). This cooperative or collaborative rhetoric has important implications for a study of academic discourse—especially the practice of scholarly citation. Just as we can speak of the rhetoric of citation (a microcosm of the academic discipline as a scene of collaboration) in a Burkean rhetoric's terms of "Love," "Knowledge," and "Authority," we can understand academic discourse in general (a macrocosm of discursive collaboration) in these same terms:

> Love, Knowledge, Authority: three basic ideals, variously embodied in structures of power, and all liable to such transformations as make of them a mockery. As translated into the terms of social organization, they are necessarily somewhat at odds. But in moments of exaltation, ideally, we may think of them as a trinity, standing to one another in a relation of mutual reinforcement. (*Grammar* 124)

If we recognize academic disciplines as more or less cohesive social groups, we can view activities that promote the cohesiveness of these groups as courtship rituals. Burke has thus provided a rhetorical theory of disciplinary discourse that views academic disciplines as not only scenes of collaborative actions, but also outcomes of collaborative action that is substantially discursive. For Burke, the substance of rhetoric is the collaborative work of language: "substance, in the old philosophies, was an *act*; and a way of life is an *acting-together*; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial*" (p. 21). Thus, while discursive interaction is the *sub*-stance of scholars' collaborative action—that is, an essential condition of their work—their collaborative action is the substance or subject of their discourse. Scholarly writers' implicit understanding of the correlative nature of these two processes, discourse and collaboration, informs the choices they make when citing other scholarly works, incorporating others' texts into their own.

If the process of scholarly citation is, then, a microcosm of the academic discipline understood as both scene and outcome of cooperative action, the act of citing—collaboration between the author and other authors and between author and reader—serves as a representative anecdote of all written discourse as collaboration. The use of the terms "collaboration" and "love" does not imply a vision of the discourse community as a context without conflict. Indeed, discourse arises out of conflict. As Burke notes,

> In pure identification there would be no strife. Likewise there would be no strife in absolute separateness, since opponents can join battle only through a mediatory ground that makes their communication possible, thus providing the first condition necessary for their interchange of blows. But put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have a characteristic invitation to rhetoric." (*Rhetoric* 25)

Such ambiguity is especially evident in citation practices.

Adopting this Burkean perspective, the scholarly use of citation can be understood in terms of *identification* and *division* or *courtship* and its partner term *battle*. Though it is tempting to elaborate this discussion of citation practices as courtship rituals by exploring the metaphorical potential of "love notes," "tokens of affection," "strokes,"

and "lovers' quarrels," or "identifying and eliminating potential rivals" and "establishing compatibility," I will rely instead on the less fanciful but ultimately more suggestive terms "identification" and "division" in the following discussion.

The scholarly writer's rhetoric builds her identification with both her readers and the other writers she cites in her text as she negotiates for a place in a relatively small and well-defined community. When she incorporates words, ideas, and conclusions which have already appeared elsewhere, she does not present these because they are unfamiliar to her readers so much as she presents them as a reminder to the disciplinary colleague of knowledge they presumably have in common. Thus the citation is a means by which the reader may identify more fully with the writer. The writer, by citing other literature, implies a narrative of the process by which she has arrived at her own ideas or new information,[5] suggesting (perhaps with a hint of coercion), "this is what we already have believed, this is how I propose to challenge or further develop our belief, and you, dear reader, will believe this new way too."

This Burkean rhetoric of citation practice implies a particular way of reading citations. When a reader of scholarly literature encounters citations of work with which she is not familiar, the citation promises her that she can achieve closer identification with the author and the rest of the disciplinary community by reading that source. If a reader is already familiar with the cited literature, the author's reference to that work serves to reinforce his identification with his scholarly community. If readers are in a critical, gate-keeping frame of mind, they may dismiss a writer (whether they do so legitimately or not) as "not of the community" if he or she fails to cite a work they consider important or does cite a work they do not respect. Thus the citation choices meant to foster identification have the potential for creating division.

The number and scope of citations introduced also contribute to the process of identification. Profuse citation implies depth or breadth of familiarity or both: the author who is able to create identification with a large number and a variety of sources makes a strong claim for membership in one or more disciplinary communities. At the same time, however, a reader may infer from profuse citations that the author is not familiar enough with the community to make the necessary discriminations and distinctions about what is theoretically hip, politically correct, or factually relevant that characterize the community insider. Or the reader may suspect that the writer is simply showing off. In either case, the gesture intended to create identification becomes instead a gesture of division.

Other characteristics of citation practice are equally ambivalent. For example, reliance on citations that are all relatively recent may indicate an author who is up to date. But it can also betray an author who is not aware of the tradition or history of the community's inquiry. Conversely, reliance on citations which are all relatively old might suggest that the author is not familiar with the current "work" and thus is not able to identify with the community's ongoing efforts.

The more elaborate the attribution—that is, the more data that is presented as new information to introduce the source—the less authority conferred upon the source. For example, only an inexperienced writer in English would take pains to explain that Shakespeare was an Elizabethan poet and dramatist or that *Romeo and Juliet* is a play. Such elaboration suggests that the recognition of the source and acceptance of his or her authority will not be shared among the readers, since the more widely shared the knowledge of the source, the greater its authority.

Thus, our concepts of authorship and authority are intricately entwined. Burke, noting that the sense of *auctor* as "ancestor" and as "maker" contributes to the sense of *auctor* as "head" or "leader," has called authority the "principle of group cohesion, and of cohesion among groups pitted against the group" (*Grammar* 23). Authorship binds the groups together, for employment of a common language creates group cohesion.

Deviations from accepted citation practice by inexperienced academic writers demonstrate that this process can go wrong in several ways. When they rely too much on their sources to develop ideas and support points, they are attempting to achieve identification with the community exclusively by calling upon other members; their sources' standing is enhanced rather than their own. When inexperienced academic writers provide unnecessary citations, they demonstrate that they do not recognize what is shared knowledge, thereby dividing themselves from the community they wish to join by revealing that they do not know what everyone knows and therefore possibly do not know what they need to know to function within and contribute to the community. Conversely, when they do not provide necessary citations or provide incomplete citations, they create a division from the community because they do not know what everyone does *not* know, essentially failing to establish the context for their work that would identify it as a valuable contribution to community life. Likewise, they fail to compose an identity in the scholarly community when they ineffectively integrate

cited sources into the context of their own work. Inexperienced academic writers' sources are not integrated into their texts, just as they themselves are not integrated into the academic community. Similarly, inexperienced writers create a division from the community with which they seek to identify when they use an unconventional citation style, betraying either their lack of familiarity with the customs of the community or their lack of regard for those customs.

Perhaps all of these "failing" citation practices, typical of many student writers, could be read as intentional gestures toward establishing division from, rather than identification with, the scholarly community. Indeed, feminist writers such as Luce Irigaray and Rachel Blau DuPlessis have exploited unconventional citation styles to signify their rejection of some traditional values in scholarly writing. Irigary's extensive quoting of Plato without commentary in "On the Index of Plato's Works: Women" and DuPlessis' collage of quoted material and her own words in her essay "For the Etruscans" function as emblems of their alternative perspectives on the community of literary criticism and its discourse conventions. When academic readers assume writers have not used these divisive citation practices intentionally, they tend to interpret them as failures to identify with the scholarly community.

The Research Paper

Seen from the perspective of a rhetoric of identification employed to collaboratively construct community, the obligatory college research paper can be understood as a courtship ritual. This traditional assignment, long used by teachers across the curriculum to teach students to evaluate and synthesize information and ideas[6] is also a way to familiarize students with the shared values of their disciplinary communities. Within the context of disciplinary community discourse, rules for paraphrasing and summarizing, like those for quoting, do not seem so arbitrary as they necessarily are when the research paper is taught in the isolation of a composition class that is not integrated with the rest of the student's curriculum. In order to learn how to select effective strategies for incorporating others' writing into their own, students must have some stake in the community, some motive for rhetorically negotiating identification with the disciplinary community. The best guide and model for learning how to do this negotiating is a teacher who is herself a member of the disciplinary community, with a record of successful courtship as demonstrated by her own writing.

Since teachers of the introductory composition courses for which "the research paper" is a required curricular component[7] cannot hope to be simultaneously members of all the various disciplinary communities their students are presumably preparing to join, they cannot themselves offer such a model for every student. However, students and teachers in lower-division writing courses do have a number of options that will allow them to nevertheless productively study rhetorical strategies for research writing. Students in these courses can write for an audience of other students in the same major or related disciplines and teachers can include peer review by these readers in their evaluation measures; or students and teachers might invite faculty in various disciplines to offer "second readings" of research papers. Both of these options provide student writers with readers who represent, to varying degrees, disciplinary communities other than the composition teacher's.

Teachers and students can exploit a composition class' potential for becoming a mini-discourse community by using a set of shared readings—sometimes called a "casebook"—that serves as the principle sources for research papers. Students can then compose research papers that argue genuine positions on real issues for an actual audience of their peers rather than an imagined one. As a further refinement, these casebooks readings could be selected from the disciplinary discourse of composition studies, thus providing a set of materials that clearly address relevant "content" for a writing class, illustrate some of the important points about scholarly writing, and represent the composition teachers' area of disciplinary expertise.[8] Each of these approaches allows teachers and students to examine scholarly citation practice as a matter of making strategic decisions about "siding with" or "opposing" other members of a disciplinary community.

In closing, I will offer an initial contribution to developing a set of citation practice guidelines based on a rhetoric of identification. The following rule of thumb for one citation practice, quotation, while still very general, may be more useful than the standard handbook advice: repeat another writer's words only in order to achieve the maximum degree of identification with the writer or to secure maximum division from that writer. In quoting to identify with another writer, one constructs a bond of mutual support by both speaking the others' words and allowing the other to speak for oneself. Quotations which divide writer from writer allow each to speak for himself or herself, thus the quoting writer need not use her voice to articulate the ideas of the quoted writer. The difference in these two rhetorical motives and desired

outcomes indicates the critical importance of effectively introducing and commenting on quoted materials.

My own citation practice in this essay has followed the Burkean rule of thumb I've proposed. I have used direct quotation extensively, both for maximum identification with Burke and for maximum division from the textbooks and style manuals. The corollary to this rule of thumb, of course, is that over-reliance on quotation undermines the author's authority, suggesting that she has no independent identity, is unable to use her own voice to articulate and shape her community's values.[9]

Credible citation practice is more than a matter of selective quotation, fluent paraphrase, accurate summary, avoidance of plagiarism, and precise punctuation. It is an act of building community, collaboratively constructing shared knowledge. The rhetoric of disciplinary discourse in the Burkean terms of *identification* views disciplinary discursive practices as rituals of love and courtship that work to create group cohesion in academic disciplines. Though "courtship" is not a dimension of discourse we customarily consider from a scholarly point of view, and "love" is a motive infrequently ascribed to professional academics' interaction, these may be terms that make good sense to those whose role as students positions them as outsiders longing for the embrace of the disciplinary community and to those whose role as teachers positions them at the gate, empowered to grant or withhold access to that embrace.

Notes

[0] For a discussion of the rhetoric of paraphrasing, see Arrington.

[1] Kroll's results may have been affected to some degree by the definition of plagiarism the student participants were given at the beginning of the questionnaire: "As you probably know, plagiarism involves presenting another person's words or ideas as if they were your own, without acknowledging the source" (205). Kroll classified students' written responses to the question "Why is plagiarism wrong?" according to a "set of categories that emerged during the process of examining the responses and formulating categories that accounted for the majority of reasons students gave" (206).

[2] In "What Do Citations Count?" Susan Cozzens argues that citation is only secondarily a reward system. Primarily, it is rhetorical—

part of persuasively arguing for the knowledge claims of the citing document.

[3] For a recent review of bibliometric approaches to citation studies, see White and McCain.

[4] See Gilbert, Latour, Cozzens, Small, Swales "Citation Analysis," and Berkenkotter and Huckin.

[5] See Berkenkotter and Huckin's account of one writer's use of citation to construct a narrative of her research and reasoning process.

[6] See Kantz's discussion of the tradition of the research paper.

[7] In 1982, Ford and Perry reported that instruction in writing research papers was included in 84% of lower-division composition programs and in 40% of upper-division composition programs.

[8] See John Swales' recommendations for a set of reading and writing assignments for graduate students who are non-native speakers of English, "Utilizing the Literatures."

[9] George Dillon's Bakhtinian explanation of the use of scare quotes or shudder quotes, "My Words of Another," provides a parallel to my Burkean explanation of the use of extended quotations. Dillon observes that shudder quotes, which iterate a key word or phrase used by someone else and enclose it in quotation marks, allow one to use the language of another without actually making it one's own: "Finding one's voice is thus not just an emptying and purifying oneself of others' words, of the perverted commas, an askesis, but also an admitting, an adopting, an embracing of filiation, communities, and discourses" (p. 71).

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