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Documentation Style as Rhetorical Device:
A Comparative Analysis of Two Bibliographic Systems
Gregory A. Smith

The documentation styles developed by the Modern Language Association and the American Psychological Association reflect divergent assumptions regarding the apprehension and communication of knowledge. Each system expresses its rhetorical character through the aims it articulates, the sources it values, and the formats it prescribes for in-text citations and bibliographic references. Like other scholarly writing conventions, documentation styles are not arbitrary, but both shape and are shaped by the discourse communities that they serve. Emerging scholars need to be acculturated purposively to the conventions of their respective communities, while authors should consciously select bibliographic systems that support their rhetorical aims.

Keywords: Modern Language Association style, American Psychological Association style, publication manuals, bibliographic references, citations, rhetoric, epistemology

According to historians Jacques Barzun and Henry Graff, bibliographic references "form the main part of the 'apparatus' that is said to distinguish a 'work of scholarship' from a 'popular work.' They give us confidence in the book that displays them by announcing to the world that the 'report' is open to anyone's verification" (359). While the scholarly apparatus entails much more than bibliographic references, especially where scientific research is concerned, the acknowledgment of sources is certainly one of the defining features of modern scholarship.

As anyone who has paid close attention to scholarly writing can attest, there is no universally accepted system for referencing sources. In fact, just the opposite is true. Over the course of decades, numerous academic, professional, and technical communities have developed specialized conventions governing what information sources to cite, when to cite them, and how to cite them. John Howell's *Style Manuals of the English-Speaking World*, published in 1983, describes 231 publication guides in use within various fields.[1] Perhaps a more accurate gauge of the diversity of bibliographic styles is the fact that Thomson's *EndNote*, possibly the leading reference management software package, is capable of formatting references in more than 2,300 distinct styles (*EndNote Information*).[2]

According to Diane Dowdey, in many—perhaps most—disciplines, there are several bibliographic style alternatives (330). It is easy to assume that the differences between these styles are insignificant; in fact, that is the message conveyed by many within the academic community. For example, research handbooks tend to minimize the rhetorical differences between bibliographic styles by portraying them as equally applicable to a variety of subjects and purposes—often across major disciplinary lines (344-46). Barzun and Graff, the respected authors cited at the beginning of this article, contribute to the notion of stylistic interchangeability with the following statement: "Whatever the style—and the variations from one publisher to the next are slight—the principle underlying all the forms is the same; it is implicit in the purpose of the reference footnote, which is to refer you to sources. The note must be so framed that the reader can tell unfailingly the type of source cited [. . .]" (360).[3]

In Dowdey's judgment, the failure to understand bibliographic style as a rhetorical device is nothing short of an egregious error that writing instructors must seek to correct (346-47). Susan Mueller echoes this theme, decrying "the tendency of students and sometimes faculty to think that [. . .] documentation styles are all an interchangeable hodge-podge, and no one can benefit by using one style above another" (6).

According to Robert J. Connors, "The rhetoric of citation systems is fascinating because it has so silently undergirded the enterprise of Western intellectual activity. Though these systems constrain many of the ways we deal with each other and each other's work, *they have largely gone unremarked*" (242; emphasis added). Concurring with Connors, Robert Hauptman asserts, "Most serious readers either ignore or take for granted the ways in which scholars traditionally document or tangentially gloss or clarify" (179).

In this article I aim to remedy in part the deficiencies noted by Connors, Dowdey, Hauptman, and Mueller. Specifically, I will compare the rhetorical values conveyed by the bibliographic style conventions of two major publication handbooks: Joseph Gibaldi's *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (2nd ed.)—hereafter *MSM*—and the *Publication Manual of*

the American Psychological Association (5th ed.)—hereafter *PM*. Since the protocols for documenting electronic sources are subject to relatively frequent change, when discussing MLA's treatment of such sources I will interact primarily with the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (6th ed.)—hereafter *MH*—rather than the less current *MSM*.[4]

Sirpa Leppänen, who published a comparative analysis of the discourse of four writer's handbooks, articulated the importance of her research as follows: "Writing handbooks [. . .] can simultaneously be very useful as a source of information on the conventions of academic writing, and problematic in constraining and delimiting the possibilities and options that writers have. In short, they can have a great deal of influence on both writers and their texts. *Because of their universal popularity and considerable power in marketing particular types of writing and styles as the preferred ones, they also merit critical investigation*" (54; emphasis added).[5]

MLA and APA documentation styles are among those most commonly taught to American undergraduate college students. And, says Connors, "The interesting fields to examine in terms of citation rhetoric, of course, are the social science and humanities fields, and it is in the history of these fields' choices that we see social and disciplinary affiliation dreams acted out most obviously" (228). Therefore, the selection of MLA (humanities-oriented) and APA (prevalent in fields such as psychology, education, and management) as the styles to be compared is quite advantageous.

Much has been published on the use of sources in scholarly research; however, a very small fraction of the literature is directly antecedent to this article. Most documentation-related literature belongs in the category of citation analysis, which may be defined as "[a] bibliometric technique in which works cited in publications are examined to determine patterns of scholarly communication, for example, the comparative importance of books versus journals, or of current versus retrospective sources, in one or more academic disciplines" ("Citation Analysis"). For the purpose of this study, citation analysis proves to be of almost no value in that it examines the relationships between citing and cited documents but does not concern itself with the stylistic conventions that govern the formatting of citations and references.

It is worth noting that the act of citing a source is, in the judgment of many researchers, including this author, deeply rhetorical.[6] According to Susan Cozzens,

citations stand at the intersection between two systems: a rhetorical (conceptual, cognitive) system, through which scientists try to persuade each other of their knowledge claims; and a reward (recognition, reputation) system, through which credit for achievements is allocated. The two systems are analytically distinct; that is, by abstracting from reality, analysts can discuss one at a time if they want to. But they are concretely indistinguishable; they are both present as impetus and constraint in any given act of citation. (440)

Cozzens actually acknowledges a third dimension of citation counts, the communication system, within which she considers "citation inflators and deflators, journal characteristics, language of publication, and other measures of audience size" (444; see also Håkanson 314). Therefore, while authors presumably cite sources following the norms of their discourse communities (Dowdey; Rose), such behavior is not regulated by the APA and MLA manuals, and thus falls outside the scope of this article.

Further complicating the identification of antecedent literature is the fact that the nomenclature associated with documentation is quite ambiguous. Many different terms are associated with the acknowledgement of sources.[7] In some contexts these terms are used in highly specific senses. For example, in citation analysis, "The difference between 'citation' and 'reference' is only one of perspective on the linkage between citing and cited documents: if one is looking from the citing document to the cited document, it is a 'reference'; if one is looking from the cited to the citing, it is a 'citation'" (Small 339). For the purposes of this study, a *citation* will usually signify an in-text reference, whether in note or parenthetical form; a *bibliographic reference* will denote a full entry within a list of sources displayed at the end of a work; and *documentation* will denote the whole enterprise of source acknowledgment. Of course, quotations reproduced from other sources will use terms differently, but context or explanation will make intended meaning clear.

As stated above, the substance of this article will consist of a comparative rhetorical analysis of documentation protocols set forth in the MLA and APA style manuals. To set the context for that analysis, I will first examine the rhetorical character of publication styles in general, neither limiting my focus to the two manuals in question nor confining my attention solely to the matter of documentation.

Publication Style as Rhetorical Device

Over the last thirty years many scholars have studied the nature of discourse within disciplinary communities. As a result, there exists a body of literature that documents the rhetorical dimensions of a wide variety of stylistic conventions—language, report structure, and presentation of statistical data, to name a few. While some within academic circles may be inclined to deny any valid connection between rhetoric and scientific research, several studies contradict this view. In 1976 Joseph Gusfield published an influential article which argues that scientific discourse is essentially rhetorical. He concluded that, while a scientific report's style is sometimes minimalist (for example, effacing the author from the reader's view), this is nothing less than intentional. The traditional view of scientific research-writing is that it is founded in positivistic epistemology. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that scientific writing employs devices typically associated with rhetoric, and thus that it fulfills its function through language as well as logic.

Two decades later John Hagge studied twelve disciplinary style manuals, which he defined as publication guides that are drafted and endorsed by specific scientific communities. According to Hagge, these manuals explicate the norms that are required and/or suggested for participation in an academic or professional community. Such norms embody the standards that have emerged, at least in some cases, from decades of publication activity within the discipline. Furthermore, disciplinary discourse norms are largely rational: They enhance the scholarly communication process, whether by creating actual advantages for the dissemination of information, or simply by creating predictable structures for communication.

The rhetorical character of scholarly writing also extends to the social sciences. According to William A. Firestone, both quantitative and qualitative methods have achieved acceptance in educational research. However, there is debate about whether they are fundamentally incompatible or complementary techniques. Quantitative methods are typically (though not always) associated with positivistic assumptions, while qualitative methods usually assume a phenomenological epistemology. Significantly, both method types exhibit features of rhetoric. In quantitative research, says Firestone, "absence of style turns out to actually be a rhetorical device in its own right" (17).

Shifting to a different field, Charles Bazerman identifies APA style as a rhetoric that developed as

behaviorism came to dominate experimental psychology. He traces the history of APA style from its precursors in the early literature of experimental psychology (late nineteenth century), to its rigidly prescriptive manifestation in the third edition of the *PM*, published in 1983. Bazerman makes the case that the APA's rhetoric strongly favors the epistemology of behaviorism and, by implication, disfavors alternative approaches to the study of psychology. The following quote aptly summarizes his findings:

> For those social scientists who believe that the behaviorist, positivist program creates an accurate picture of the human world and provides the surest (if not only) path to knowledge, the prescriptive rhetoric of the *Publication Manual* is precisely the right one. It offers a programmatically correct way to discuss the phenomena under study; moreover, it stabilizes the roles, relationships, goals, and activity of individuals within the research community in ways consistent with the community's beliefs about: human behavior. The invention of a way to communicate consonant with beliefs constitutes a major accomplishment. Nonetheless, the realization that behaviorism has not escaped rhetoric, but has merely chosen one rhetoric and excluded alternatives, may temper adherents' certainty about their mode of communication. (275)

In 1995 Robert Madigan, Susan Johnson, and Patricia Linton published a landmark article entitled "The Language of Psychology: APA Style as Epistemology." Confirming many of Bazerman's findings, this piece documents and defends APA style as a rhetoric that has emerged from a discourse community that is committed to an empiricist epistemology. Features of APA style that receive attention include the arrangement of the report, language of disagreement, the drawing of hedged conclusions, citation patterns, and the notion of transparent language. The authors affirm that students of psychology are granted admission to the disciplinary community as they appropriate the philosophy that underlies APA style.

American Psychologist subsequently published at least two formal responses to this article. Ruthellen Josselson and Amia Lieblich agree with their colleagues that APA style enforces a positivistic paradigm, but disagree that it should continue to be taught as the sole standard for psychological research. They argue instead that psychologists' initiation into their discipline should also acquaint them with epistemologies that value

narrative.[8] Jay Brand, the author of the second response, tends toward empiricism rather than social constructivism, and thus affirms the value of APA style. Nevertheless, he is sympathetic toward (and even offers) strong conclusions that are based on research with significant warrant.

MLA style can also be viewed as a rhetoric that reflects the views and values of a community of scholars. In fact, in his foreword to the *MSM*, Herbert Lindenberger acknowledges the disciplinary character of the book, including its epistemological dimensions, by referring to "a distinct disciplinary community sharing certain assumptions about [. . .] the value of contributing new knowledge about a culture's texts and the need to present this knowledge to other members of the community by means of solid evidence and rational argument" (xv). Furthermore, he appears to admit the rhetorical nature of the *MSM*, stating that it "can be viewed as articulating the present highly diversified institutional style of literary and language study" (xv).

It is appropriate to conclude, then, that publication styles are not arbitrary, but both shape and are shaped by the discourse communities that they serve. This concept fits well with the views of prominent twentieth-century rhetorical theorists. In "Language Is Sermonic," Richard M. Weaver states, "There are degrees of objectivity, and there are various disciplines which have their own rules for expressing their laws or their content in the most effective manner for their purpose. But even this expression can be seen as enclosed in a rhetorical intention. Put in another way, an utterance is capable of rhetorical function and aspect. If one looks widely enough, one can discover its rhetorical dimension, to put it in still another way" (222).

Furthermore, according to Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, a culture's values can be induced from its communication patterns:

> Every social circle or milieu is distinguishable in terms of its dominant opinions and unquestioned beliefs, of the premises that it takes for granted without hesitation: these views form an integral part of its culture, and an orator wishing to persuade a particular audience must of necessity adapt himself to it. Thus the particular culture of a given audience shows so strongly through the speeches addressed to it that we feel we can rely on them to a considerable extent for our knowledge of the character of past civilizations. (20-21)

On this theoretical basis, it is logical to assume that one can examine patterns of communication within a scholarly community and discern the values to which it holds. Therefore, I now turn my attention to the comparison of documentation practices within MLA and APA styles.

What Are the Purposes of Documentation?

One of the reasons that it may be tempting to view divergent documentation styles as interchangeable is that they overlap where basic functions are concerned. Most styles prescribe protocols for citing common sources (e.g., books and journals) and thus provide a mechanism for avoiding the misappropriation of ideas or verbiage from other researchers (i.e., plagiarism). But the fact that they can be applied to common tasks does not mean that they are essentially the same kind of tool. Rather, each style is designed to perform a range of functions, some of which may be particularly consonant with the values of the sponsoring community. Thus it is fitting to survey the functions—stated and implied—of the documentation styles under consideration here.

Scholars in the humanities, including those who use MLA style, are committed to engage in protracted discourse about the creative works of humankind. Thus Lindenberger's comments in the foreword to the *MSM*: "However much we may disagree about the value or meaning of particular artifacts, the attention to which we subject these artifacts gives them life over long stretches of time" (xxvi).

This self-perception influences the documentation protocols articulated by the *MSM*. For example, discussion of in-text citations and works-cited formatting stretches over 102 pages (*MSM* 153-254). In fact, management of sources, including the mechanics for direct quotation, is arguably the heart of MLA style, as reflected in the following quote from the *MSM*: "Chapters 6 [conventions for lists of works cited] and 7 [protocols for in-text citations] offer an authoritative and comprehensive presentation of MLA style" (152-53; see also Leverenz 191). This leads naturally to a second major purpose of MLA documentation style: the prevention of plagiarism. "Scholarly authors generously acknowledge their debts to predecessors by carefully giving credit to each source. [. . .] Using another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source constitutes plagiarism" (*MSM* 151).

A third, perhaps less important purpose of MLA documentation style grows out of the *MSM*'s stated goal of providing a level playing field for competition within academe. Lindenberger refers to this purpose as an "attempt to keep the profession solidly democratic" (xxiv). Stated in another way, MLA style aims to mitigate inequities in academic life by informing all members of the community of the protocols for scholarly productivity.

By contrast, the purposes of APA documentation style seem less monumental. The *PM* states that "a reference list cites works that specifically support a particular article" (215); that is, it does not seek to be comprehensive, nor does it list background reading, but corresponds only to what is mentioned in the text. APA's reference list is equivalent in this regard to MLA's list of works cited. However, compared to the *MSM*, the *PM*'s discussion of plagiarism is less prominent (it appears in an appendix), more concise, and less intimidating (349-50; see also Leverenz 192; Mueller 7).

Furthermore, the *PM* portrays documentation in terms of meticulous scholarly procedure, not as the essence of APA style: "Accurately prepared references help establish your credibility as a careful researcher" (216). The *PM* aligns with MLA style when it asserts that "one purpose of listing references is to enable readers to retrieve and use the sources [. . .]. Each entry usually contains [. . .] all the information necessary for unique identification and library search" (216; see also Leverenz 192). This statement leaves one wondering what other purposes listing references might serve. A clue is found in the *PM*'s first chapter: "Just as data in the paper support interpretations and conclusions, so reference citations document statements made about the literature" (28). Though the *PM* does not say so overtly, this implies that citations are to be used rhetorically—not merely economically, as the language of "giving credit" implies.[9] If citing sources can help scholars build credibility and position their research within a community, it is fitting to ask what sources bear authority within the two styles under analysis. To this subject I now turn.

What Sources Are Valued?

In MLA style, many kinds of sources are considered legitimate. Book-length works in a variety of manifestations (monographs, reference works, anthologies, etc.) are given first consideration.

Provisions are made for broadcast and recorded media as well as artistic works and performances, while legal sources and technical reports receive little attention. The *MSM* selects and organizes its referencing instructions as follows: books and other nonperiodical publications; articles and other publications in periodicals; miscellaneous print and nonprint sources; and electronic publications (155-229).

By contrast, in APA style, journal articles are considered the primary vehicle of scholarly communication, and thus receive first consideration in the *PM* (239-47); in addition, there is little provision for documentation of reference sources and audio-visual media (254, 266-68). The *PM* selects and arranges referencing guidelines as follows: periodicals; books, brochures, and book chapters; technical and research reports, including government documents; proceedings of meetings and symposia; dissertations and theses; unpublished works; reviews; audiovisual media; and electronic media (239-81).

MLA style exhibits little concern for the age of a source. Literary scholarship is an ancient discipline; thus, in Lindenberger's words, "a conversation among practitioners widely separated in time and place has evolved by means of publication" (xvi; see also Dowdey 334-35). However, this is by no means true in a discipline, such as modern psychology, that is dominated by empiricism. It comes as little surprise, then, that APA documentation exhibits a preference for current publications by providing means of referencing in-press sources and manuscripts in progress or not yet accepted for publication (*PM* 241, 253, 263-64).

The two styles also differ in the value that they attach to personal communications. In APA style, private correspondence, unpublished interviews, and non-archived electronic communications do not qualify for inclusion in the reference list and thus are cited only in the text (214). The *MSM*, on the other hand, prescribes reference formats for a variety of unpublished sources, leaving the author and reader to appraise the value of any given source. The *PM*'s approach to personal communications is consistent with its stated preference for empirical sources (28). By contrast, the *MSM* emphasizes works of significance to research in the humanities: literary texts and other creative works, critical works, editions, sources of historical information, and periodical literature, among others.

Both styles prescribe formats for referencing electronic sources in a separate section—in fact, the final section of each manual's chapter (*PM* 268-81; *MH* 207-

35; *MSM* 209-29). Carrie Leverenz's "Citing Cybersources" provides abundant evidence that teachers of writing of a decade ago felt quite nervous about the emergence of the Internet as a medium of scholarly communication, especially since the style manuals had, until that time, failed to provide assertive direction concerning the documentation of network-based sources. Since her article appeared, the MLA and APA communities have made significant progress in their understanding of, and appreciation for, electronic media. Nevertheless, the fact that the manuals under consideration concentrate their coverage of electronic sources in a less-than-prominent location probably reflects a lingering anxiety about the unfamiliar. By contrast, the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* has achieved a more integrated approach, discussing protocols for referencing electronic journals, for example, immediately following its coverage of print journals (688-98).

Not surprisingly, there is evidence to suggest that the manuals' sections on electronic sources reflect disciplinary values. Whether by arrangement or extent of coverage, the *PM* privileges on-line journal literature (271-73, 279) and documents posted by an organization—academic or otherwise—that is presumed to disseminate authoritative information (274-75). Predictably, the *MH* focuses on prescribing bibliographic formats for "refereed, authoritative sources" and "historical texts" (208), and also favors sources sponsored by an institution or other organization (210). Ironically, both the *PM* and the *MH* give less than prominent treatment to aggregated databases (i.e., those that libraries subscribe to on behalf of their patrons), though these presumably account for a large proportion of articles cited by academic researchers (*PM* 278-80; *MH* 229-30).

In summary, it is evident that the two discourse communities under consideration legitimately value different kinds of sources and are struggling somewhat to apply their stylistic traditions to the dynamic world of electronic media. The following section will make clear that the two documentation systems also prescribe variant approaches to citing sources in the text.

How Are Sources Treated in the Text?

MLA and APA documentation styles bear some similarities in regards to their treatment of sources within the text. Both have adopted parenthetical referencing as a substitute for more traditional note systems. Parenthetical references are arguably simpler for authors to compose and definitely cheaper for publishers to typeset. However, the elimination of reference notes has come, to some extent, at the cost of readable prose. James Hartley puts it succinctly: "Long lists of references in the text make for cumbersome reading" (923). But Connors goes further, arguing that parenthetical references pose a threat to the traditional values of text-based disciplines:

> The movement toward parenthetical citation forms suggests powerful epistemological shifts in the ways that readers are expected to perceive and use the literature. Citation systems comprised of notes, whatever their form and wherever they were placed, all share the central idea that the citations and annotations should *interrupt* the text as little as possible. Whether marked by symbols or by a letter or number system, notes were an *elective* reading experience; readers could choose or not choose to follow up the back trails or side tracks they represented. Note systems, even those that surrounded a block of text with glosses and annotations, assumed the reading experience of the reader with the main text to be sacrosanct. Parenthetical citation systems called this assumption into serious question. (238)

That MLA adopted parenthetical references in 1984 rather than retaining the more versatile footnote system may seem counterintuitive given the humanities' need to interact repetitively with the words of previously published sources. Connors accounts for this conversion on several grounds: Footnotes were difficult and expensive to produce; teachers of writing found it challenging to teach growing numbers of college students the mechanics of footnoting; and other style guides had already migrated to parenthetical references (223-24, 233-35). Commenting on Connors's article, Hauptman lays great emphasis on this latter motive, characterizing it as "the need to emulate the scientific methods misappropriated by psychology and other social sciences" (179). Interestingly, Connors reports, the new MLA style was not adopted universally by literary journals, nor did it gain much of a foothold in other disciplines with roots in the humanities (linguistics, history, political science, etc.) (236-37).

As explicated above, MLA and APA styles use the same basic approach to in-text citation. They are also similar in that each suggests reasonable locator[10] formats for non-paginated sources (e.g., electronic files and audio-visual media). Furthermore, in both systems the

primary connection between parenthetical citation and bibliographic reference is the author's last name. Connors suggests that "authors lose agency here, as their surnames become nametags for works" (239). But the two parenthetical systems diverge in one significant respect: APA style calls for each parenthetical reference to include the work's date of publication, while MLA style does not. On the surface this may seem to be a trivial difference, but it reflects a critical epistemological divide between the humanities and the social sciences.

In his characterization of APA style as a behaviorist rhetoric, Bazerman states that "the *Publication Manual* adopted the new reference style, wherein the author and date of an article appear as facts or landmarks in the course of the article, visibly demonstrating the incrementalism of the literature" (274; see also Leverenz 189). Connors corroborates this interpretation, noting that footnote systems did a poor job of displaying the chronological order in which scientific research took place (223). Therefore, "As parenthetical systems evolved during the twentieth century, dates of publication within the text citation became more important, as is only natural when investigation is ongoing in rapidly moving fields and 'getting there first' with research results is of prime importance" (239).

Dowdey suggests another factor that may rationalize APA's in-text citation system: "The use of parenthetical documentation by author and date usually means that the entire text is being cited, rather than a specific passage" (339). This observation points toward another key difference between MLA and APA styles: their provision for direct quotations from sources. "Privileging the text—accentuating the importance of exact words—is exemplified by both the citation conventions and the major documentation systems used in humanities research" (333). Not surprisingly, the *MSM* contains detailed instructions concerning such matters as quotation of different kinds of text (prose, poetry, drama, etc.), correction of errors in the original source, ellipsis, indirect quotation, and translation. Its coverage of quotation amounts to thirteen pages (102-15).

By contrast, in APA style, quotations are generally deemphasized, so the *PM*'s description of the mechanics of quoting sources occupies only five pages of text (117-22). According to Madigan, Johnson, and Linton, "writers in psychology frequently cite other published work but rarely quote directly from them. Citing previous work by paraphrase rather than by direct quotation is a convention that affects both the flow and feel of the resulting text" (428). In the social sciences,

says Dowdey, "It is not exact language that is privileged but ideas only" (337).

Disciplinary discourse patterns also impact the distribution of citations within studies published in the two documentation styles being considered here. Strictly speaking, such conventions are not enforced by the style manuals, but by common practice within the discipline. According to Dowdey, "Humanities scholarship uses citations throughout the text both as authority and demonstration. It usually relies heavily on primary texts to provide demonstration and on authority to exemplify the approved assumptions in the community" (332). Madigan, Johnson, and Linton describe a divergent pattern in psychological research: "Citations in APA style writing typically occur in the introduction and discussion sections, as authors attempt to place their work in the ongoing stream of empirical studies. These references in the text not only function to provide necessary background for the study but can also play a role in establishing the author's credibility as an expert on the subject" (432-33).

The discussion above shows clearly that MLA and APA styles share some similarities in their basic treatment of sources within the text, yet differ widely on certain points of rhetorical significance. The following section will show that the two systems diverge even more in regards to the formatting of bibliographic references, often with rhetorical implications.

How Are Bibliographic References Formatted?

An MLA-style list of works cited bears few resemblances to a reference list formatted in APA style. To be sure, references to basic sources—typical books and journals—display essentially the same elements (though with different arrangements, punctuation, and typographical settings). Also, entries are sorted alphabetically, resulting in the aggregation of signed sources by author name. Beyond these similarities, the two documentation styles have little in common.

One of the most important differences between the two styles has to do with the formatting of author names. The *MSM* instructs researchers to transcribe the author's name in full from the original source—in the case of a book, from the title page. Furthermore, researchers are permitted to clarify the author's identity by spelling out an abbreviated name or supplementing a pseudonym with a real name (156). In short, MLA style seeks to ensure that readers have no doubt about who has

authored any given work. By contrast, the *PM* prescribes transcribing the author's surname in full but only the initials of the author's given name(s). On the surface this difference may seem to bear little consequence, but such is not the case. "By using the complete name of the author, or the author's preferred form of address," says Dowdey, "the MLA style stresses the significance of the unique individual" (333). Furthermore, Hartley notes, by establishing identity clearly, "The use of first names prevents errors occurring with references to different people with the same initials [. . .]" (923).

According to Dowdey, APA's use of author initials "decreases the sense of the individuality of the author" (339). Mueller attributes rhetorical significance to this practice, concluding that APA style "emphasizes the research rather than the researcher/writer" (8). Leverenz goes even further:

> This convention erases or at least downplays the particularity, the humanness of the researcher, implying, for example, that the gender of the "investigator" doesn't matter. The fact that many research studies in the social sciences are conducted by groups of researchers, some of whom may not have written a word of the final report but [are] considered authors, nonetheless, is another example of the limited value placed on the traditional (literary) concept of the author as both the creator and communicator of ideas. (191)

Nevertheless, while APA's use of abbreviated author names may fit well with the presuppositions of the psychology community, the masking of identity and gender can complicate bibliographic searching[11] and constrain bibliometric research unnecessarily.[12]

A second major difference between the two approaches to referencing is the way they treat dates of publication. APA reference lists privilege dates of publication in two ways. First, the date appears in a prominent position within each bibliographic reference, placed immediately after the author's name. Second, references are sorted alphabetically by author name, then in ascending date order, then in alphabetical order by title (*PM* 219-21). Dowdey attributes this date-sensitivity to the social sciences' emphasis on the progressive accumulation of knowledge and the concomitant favoring of recently published sources (339). By contrast, in MLA style, "The date of the book comes last, the place of least significance. The insignificance of the date is underscored by a study of citations in humanities journals showing that the vast

majority of citations were to works published more than 10 years ago [. . .]" (333-34; see also Connors 222).

MLA and APA styles also differ in their treatment of the titles of sources. In MLA style, most words in titles are capitalized. Furthermore, book and journal titles are underlined,[13] while article and essay titles are enclosed in quotes (*MSM* 97-102). However, in APA style, very few title words are capitalized, except in the case of journals (*PM* 226-27). And while book and journal titles are italicized,[14] article and essay titles have no identifying format or mark. Connors (238) and Dowdey (339) conclude that these conventions draw attention away from the original author's language.

Another distinction between the two referencing styles is MLA's authorization of numerous abbreviations. In fact, the *MSM* devotes an entire chapter to the subject of abbreviations (255-87), whereas the *PM*'s comparable coverage fits on less than three pages (216-18). Lacking the potential obfuscation of unintelligible abbreviations, APA style provides for clear source identification but can lead to lengthy bibliographic references. MLA style, on the other hand, seeks to shorten elements, sometimes at the expense of simplicity.[15]

Also reflecting APA style's emphasis on accuracy and thoroughness is its treatment of works by numerous co-authors (a fairly common occurrence in scientific literature). Up to six co-author names may be listed in a reference list, and as many as five may appear in a parenthetical reference (208, 240-41). By contrast, MLA style requires references to works with three or fewer co-authors to include all contributors' names, giving researchers alternatives in the referencing of works with four or more co-authors (*MSM* 160-61).[16]

A further point of comparison between the two approaches to referencing is their relation to libraries. Humanities scholars tend to be highly dependent on libraries and archives devoted to the long-term preservation of books, journals, manuscripts, and other textual sources. Accordingly, one might expect that if either of the style manuals under review might be more attentive to libraries, it would be the *MSM*. MLA style tends to identify periodical issues by their natural identifiers (journals: year, volume number, and—if necessary—issue number; magazines: cover date) (183-90). As Hartley notes, this correlates well with shelving arrangements in library collections (923). Surprisingly, though, APA style includes more library-oriented features.

APA-style references generally direct readers to sources in ways that are library-friendly; in fact, the *PM* mentions libraries at least twice in the context of document retrieval (216, 232). In APA style, journal issues are identified by year and volume (240); documents retrieved from a library's full-text database are acknowledged as such rather than with a URL (231); and dissertations are listed by University Microfilms International document number (260-61). However, this apparent orientation towards libraries is probably somewhat misleading. In my experience, scholars in the humanities are typically more enthusiastic about libraries than are most scientists. In my opinion, APA's display of support for libraries stems from its perception that libraries mediate access to published works that are considered more authoritative than personal communications, freely accessible Web pages, archival documents, and other such sources. Thus APA's relation to library collections and databases is a rhetorical feature.

This leads to a final criterion for comparison between MLA and APA referencing: their treatment of electronic sources. Despite betraying some signs of uneasiness vis-à-vis electronic sources, the style manuals under analysis exhibit more mature approaches to referencing than were prevalent just a decade ago. The *PM*, for example, admits that documenting Internet-based sources is difficult (269); emphasizing retrieval, it makes provision for referencing sources whose content is spread across multiple pages (273) or that must be retrieved by search rather than with a URL (279). Furthermore, the *PM* acknowledges the distinctiveness of Web-based sources and does not assume, for example, that on-line periodical articles will have the features associated with their print counterparts, such as volume and issue numbers or pagination (272-73). For its part, the *MH* acknowledges that electronic sources, by comparison with print sources, are relatively unstable (207-08); that information needed for a complete bibliographic reference is often lacking (208); that some URLs are too long to be included in a reference (212); and that some documents cannot be retrieved with a URL, so a path or search keyword must be provided instead (212-13, 215).

Both styles emphasize that a bibliographic reference should include enough information to allow the reader to retrieve the source entered as evidence. In APA style, minimum elements of a reference to an Internet-based source are "a document title or description, a date (either the date of publication or update or the date of retrieval), and an address" (*PM* 269).[17] Not surprisingly, the *PM* advises against referencing a Web document that is no longer accessible at the site from which it was originally retrieved (275). APA's rigid insistence on the retrievability of sources, says Mueller, stems from a basic rule of scientific inquiry: data—including the sources cited in a paper—must be open for independent validation (7-8).

MLA style emphasizes positive identification and retrieval (*MH* 207), which in some cases yields bibliographic references that are quite lengthy and complex (215). For example, the *MH* directs researchers to list multiple dates in a reference: print publication, electronic publication, and access (211). Furthermore, MLA style complicates the citation of electronic sources by calling for elements that are more related to attribution than identification or retrieval (e.g., editor of an on-line project, sponsoring institution, and name of library subscribing to an information service).

Conclusions

This article has adduced substantial evidence to support the claim that MLA and APA documentation conventions generally reflect the epistemological assumptions of their respective communities, thus reinforcing certain modes of expression rather than others. Of course, the two style guides do not always follow predictable patterns; in fact, from time to time, they prescribe documentation protocols that seem inconsistent with their communities' values. Sometimes the manuals face a choice between conflicting values, while in other cases they struggle to apply their values to the unfamiliar context of Internet-based media. Notwithstanding these qualifiers, it is appropriate to conclude with Mueller that "each documentation style arises out of a set of values and concerns that is pivotal to the discipline in question. These are valid concerns and valid characteristics; they aren't arbitrary or idiosyncratic" (9).

As guides to disciplinary discourse, the *MSM/MH* and the *PM* are rhetorics that explain how to communicate persuasively to audiences with highly specialized knowledge, beliefs, and preferences. The two manuals are not full-orbed in the sense that they do not supply principles subordinate to each of the five traditional canons of rhetoric. In particular, they do not address the canons of memory (*memoria*) and delivery (*pronuntiatio*)—not surprisingly, as they are not geared toward public speaking.

One might be tempted to view the style manuals as being concerned almost exclusively with style (*elocutio*), but this is not the case. Invention (*inventio*) comes into play wherever the manuals determine which elements will make up an in-text citation or a bibliographic reference. Arrangement (*dispositio*) is particularly significant, as elements considered to be most important are given positions of prominence. And, of course, there are numerous stylistic considerations, many of which are rhetorically charged.[18]

Overall, the two manuals analyzed in this article convey a common two-sided message to would-be authors: First, follow the manual's prescriptions and your research, if original and timely, has a good chance of gaining the desired audience. Second, ignore the conventions of the community expressed in the manual and you can be assured that your research, if it is published at all, will fail to persuade readers, no matter how good its content may be. The following quotes drawn from the early pages of the two manuals come close to conveying this message in explicit terms:

- "[O]bserving the codes that have been agreed on within our disciplinary community signals your membership in the community" (Lindenberger xvi).
- "In a large field such as ours, adherence to these codes allows your writing to be taken seriously, whether by referees [. . .] or by readers [. . .]" (xvi).
- "Writers who conscientiously use the *Publication Manual* will express their ideas in a form and a style both accepted by and familiar to a broad, established readership in psychology" (*PM* xxiii).

What sort of implications can be drawn from this research? First, emerging scholars need to be acculturated purposively to the discourse standards of their respective communities. This will likely involve college writing instructors, disciplinary faculty, and other educational professionals (academic librarians, writing center personnel, etc.). The rhetorical character of the publication manuals, including their provisions for documentation, should not be kept a secret.

Second, authors should typically follow the stylistic conventions observed by their discourse communities. In some disciplines, authors may be able to choose between legitimate publication venues that prescribe variant approaches to documentation; in such cases, they should select a venue whose style is highly congruent with their methodology. However, in other cases, they may find it

necessary to negotiate with an editor for permission to use a style that diverges from the norm (Hartley 931). Their understanding of the rhetorical dimensions of documentation will undoubtedly assist them in this task.

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[1] Some of these texts focus on language, document formatting, and other aspects of writing for publication, to the exclusion of prescribing bibliographic citation formats. Nevertheless, Howell acknowledges that he would have needed to cover many more styles had the scope of his research included technical manuals, style guides issued by institutions of higher education, or publications in languages other than English (vii-viii).

[2] The fact that there is a whole industry of software- and Web-based reference management tools makes it clear that a unified approach to bibliographic style is far from a reality. James Hartley's call for a reduction to two major styles (923, 925) is

unlikely to be taken seriously, especially in an environment where, thanks to technology, it is easy to reformat references in a different style.

[3] To these co-authors' credit, they probably had in mind variant approaches to footnoting in the discipline of history, not foreseeing that parenthetical citation would soon become the norm for much of academic and scholarly writing.

[4] Unlike the *MSM*, which targets graduate students and scholars, the *MH* propounds MLA style to college and high school students.

[5] Leppänen chose to focus her analysis on two editions of the *MH* and two editions of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

[6] Important studies of citation behavior, most of which favor the rhetorical view of citation, include those by Stéphane Baldi, Susan Cozzens, G. Nigel Gilbert, Danette Paul, Shirley Rose, and Henry G. Small.

[7] Examples include *bibliographic style*, *bibliography*, *citation(s)*, *citation system*, *documentation*, *footnotes*, *reference list*, *references/referencing* (often with modifiers such as *bibliographic* or *parenthetical*), *style guides/manuals*, and *works cited*.

[8] Given the nature of APA style, undertaking non-empirical research would presumably require psychologists to use a publication manual more suited to their rhetorical ends.

[9] Appealing to Kenneth Burke's rhetoric of identification, Rose argues that citations serve to create bonds or divisions between an author and the authors whom he or she summons as witnesses. When effectively presented, citations can strengthen an author's identification with a disciplinary community; however, the converse is true as well. This leads her to state the following maxim regarding quotation: "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 [. . .]" (44).

[10] The locator in a parenthetical reference is typically a page number, as the vast majority of citations point to textual materials. Documentation systems face challenges, though, when prescribing means of pointing to specific portions of non-paginated sources. Examples of other kinds of locators include paragraph, line, and screen numbers.

[11] Initials lead to ambiguous author identification, especially when they are combined with common surnames. Citation indexes cannot efficiently infer full author names from initials, and thus pass along the ambiguous references to researchers (Garfield 323-24).

[12] For example, when attempting to measure the contributions of female authors to the literature of library and information science, Håkanson had to limit her focus to journals whose references spelled out the full names of their authors (315).

[13] MLA style's continued call to substitute underlining for italicization is puzzling given the nearly universal availability of software capable of generating italicized type. Notwithstanding the rationale provided in MLA's publications (*MSM* 80; *MH* 94), it is difficult to account for this convention on grounds other than attachment to the past (Frankovich 182).

[14] Hartley notes regarding APA style: "It seems odd to have the titles of unpublished articles, or dissertations, etc. in italic, when this is usually reserved for the titles of published books and journals" (923).

[15] The *MSM* delineates a number of rules that tend to shorten elements of a reference: Only volume and year are required to identify an issue of a journal with continuous pagination. Digits may be elided when sequential page numbering is referenced (e.g., *344-346* is shortened to *344-46*). A plus sign is used to denote non-consecutive pagination of a periodical article (e.g., *34, 36* is shortened to *34+*). While presumably devised with good intentions, these rules can complicate the drafting of references, making it more of an art than it should be. Furthermore, not all character-saving protocols may be easily understood by readers.

[16] Some might suggest that by requiring researchers to list up to six co-authors, APA acknowledges the significance of authorship even more than MLA. If true, this could refute my finding that MLA style shows greater concern for the text and its author(s) while APA focuses more on research findings. However, there is another explanation that I consider more plausible. By requiring the acknowledgment of as many as six co-authors, APA affirms the scientific literature that it prizes, which is often the product of collaboration between numerous individuals. Furthermore, given that the incidence of publications with four or more co-authors in the humanities is fairly rare, MLA concedes little of its respect for authors and texts by granting researchers the choice to abbreviate references in this case.

[17] The date of retrieval is required except in the case of a document that is presumed to be the exact equivalent of a print publication.

[18] It is unlikely that all of the formatting conventions prescribed in the MLA and APA manuals are rhetorical. For example, it is difficult to attach significance to the use of specific forms of punctuation between the various elements of a reference. The same can be said of minor differences in the order of the elements.