

Shelley (2): Embedding, citing, quoting

REVIEW: EMBEDDING

- 3.3 Any speaker or narrator may *embed* representations of the discourse of others.
- 3.6 When an embedded text is a narrative, it is to be analyzed both in its own terms and in relation to the primary narrative. This relation depends on, among other things, the relation between the primary *fabula* and the embedded *fabula*.

MORE ON THE TEXT LAYER

- 1.5 A text (any text) may be meaningfully related to any other text in the cultural surround of writer or reader. In the case of narrative, the three layers configure this relation.
 - 1.5.1 A text may relate to its intertexts through explicit citation, intentional allusion, echo, plagiarism, unintentional borrowing, other mediating texts—or through other means. Each intertextual relation implies some kind of interpretation of the intertext, but the nature of each intertextual relation is a matter for investigation.

ARGUMENTS WITH EVIDENCE

- 2.2.1 In literary studies, discussions of fictions are obliged to recognize their fictionality.
- 2.2.2 The mode of referentiality of fiction, as well as the truth of fiction, is a matter for investigation.
- 2.2.3 As a convention for marking fictionality, story events are referred to in the present tense, not the past.
- 2.3 In literary studies, claims about texts are subject to verification at the source.
 - 2.3.1 To lay claim to verifiability, you must cite accurately and responsibly, and you must explain how the cited evidence supports your claims.

CITATION STYLE

Two citation styles are widely used in literary studies, MLA (documented in the *MLA Handbook*) and Chicago (the *Chicago Manual of Style*). You are more likely to have learned the former. I strongly prefer the latter in my own work, but you may use either. Here is how in-text and block citations look in the two styles, in an imagined introduction to a paper about gender in “A Scandal in Bohemia.”

MLA

The meaning of gender is in question from the very start of Conan Doyle’s “A Scandal in Bohemia”: “To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman” (1). But despite this emphasis on her archetypal womanhood, Irene Adler’s gender is fluid, for, as she later tells Holmes:

Male costume is nothing new to me. I often take advantage of the freedom which it gives. I sent John, the coachman, to watch you, ran upstairs, got into my walking clothes, as I call them, and came down just as you departed. (19)

It appears that the condition for becoming *the* woman is to be able to perform as a man....

Work Cited

Conan Doyle, Arthur. “A Scandal in Bohemia.” *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, Dover, 2009, pp. 1–20.

Remarks. This is the new, “simplified” style of the Eighth Edition of the *MLA Handbook*. You may also use the Seventh Edition style if you prefer. Notice that even the first in-text citation does not need any more identifier than the page number since the author’s name is given in the contextualizing sentence. There is no reason to produce a paper full of repetitions of “(Conan Doyle 4),” “(Conan Doyle 1),” and so on.

CHICAGO

The meaning of gender is in question from the very start of Conan Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia": "To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman."¹ But despite this emphasis on her archetypal womanhood, Irene Adler's gender is fluid, for, as she later tells Holmes:

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1. Arthur Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia," in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Dover, 2009), 1. Further citations will be given parenthetically in the text.

Remarks. No bibliography is required in this variant of Chicago style; an alternative approach is to cite only author and title in the footnote, and to put the full reference in a bibliography. Note that in Chicago all citations are normally in footnotes, but you may use in-text citation provided you signal the choice in an initial note on the source. (There is yet another Chicago style, used in the social sciences, which does not use footnotes.) But, again, there is no reason to produce piles of footnotes to "Ibid., 4," "Ibid., 1," and so on.

IN GENERAL

Both styles share the same rules for positioning parenthetical citations in text: in-text parenthetical citations go between the closing quotation mark and the terminal punctuation; block-quote citations go after the terminal punctuation. Footnote references should follow most punctuation except semicolons and dashes.

In my example text, I demonstrate another important feature of scholarly quotation. Both the in-text quotation and the block quotation are introduced by a concise contextualizing clause that says where each is from in the text. Quotations should almost never stand without context as a sentence of their own.

The truth about citation is that exact conformity to a given manual is less important than consistency and precision in documentation.

THE GRAMMAR OF CITATION

One marker of academic discourse on literature is the use of the present tense to describe all three layers of a narrative text. That is, it is conventional to say that Irene Adler *outwits* Sherlock Holmes, not that she *outwitted* him (*fabula* layer). It is also conventional to say that Watson *tells* the story of Holmes's defeat, not that he *told* it (text layer).

A second convention recognizes the distinction between the narrator and the author. Conan Doyle *writes* but Watson *says*. Even when the narrator is not character-bound, it is useful to maintain this distinction: Austen *writes* but the narrator *says*. As a matter of style, if you find yourself writing many sentences of the form "Austen's narrator says..." you are probably not being specific enough in the way you are contextualizing your evidence.

Finally, the present tense is usually used in describing authorial actions: Austen *chooses* a happy ending, rather than Austen *chose*. Sometimes, when scholars are writing in a more historical or narrative mode themselves, they prefer past tense.

RESOURCES

A fairly comprehensive, quite clear guide to both MLA and Chicago styles can be found on the Purdue OWL website: owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2. There are examples and guidelines for MLA style on style.mla.org, but this website has been carefully designed not to be a substitute for the *MLA Handbook*, which you have to buy or refer to in the library; a similar situation obtains with the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Automatically-generated citations. If you use bibliography software (EndNote, RefWorks, Zotero), this software can generate citations. Though I recommend Zotero (which is free) for research, the bibliographies it generates, like those from the other programs, are, with amazing consistency, never completely correct. Citations *must* be hand-corrected to be sure they conform to your chosen style. Many online databases offer you automatically-generated citations to their sources for you to copy and paste. These are usually also not quite correct.