One or Many? Tensions with Authorship and Evaluation in Community Engagement Writing

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This article illustrates the sometimes unproductive tensions between community engagement[1] goals in teaching writing and academic trends and institutional structures that influence grading practices and the language of authorship. To broaden instructors' understandings of possibilities for the relatively peaceful coexistence of individual and collaborative authorship and the always-existing pull between them, it offers an overview of authorship history. In addition, it offers directions for a productive writing and community engagement pedagogy in the form of classroom community building, assignment design, and grading practices, all of which are informed by theories of genre and discourse communities.

In social constructionism, the 'one' and the 'many' are complicated and interdependent: individuals are constructed in important ways by the social milieu in which they develop, and knowledge, concepts, even 'reality,' are all seen as distinctively social products. (Miller, 1993, p. 81)

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. (Barthes, 1977, p. 146)

The individual, Romantic author is still alive and well in the academy, in spite of all the theorizing to the contrary. Colleges and universities prosecute (persecute?) writers who "steal" others' language, even sometimes in cases when it is small-scale, unintentional, and a product of inexperience with handling sources (Howard, 1995, 1999); some teachers are skeptical when students get tutor "help" with their writing; even when students work in groups, they ultimately receive individual grades (if not for the project, then for the class). All of these practices seem to stem from the persistent cultural belief that *authentic* authors write alone, *real* authors own the individual labor of their minds. History has informed the authorship practices of the academy, entrenching privileged models of individual authorship, particularly in the last century, even though collaboration has always existed, and in fact has been understood by authorship historians as central to the rhetorical enterprise for most documented history (for example, Benedict, 2004; LeFevre, 1987; Lunsford & Ede,

1990; Masten, 1997; Woodmansee & Jaszi, 1994). The academic institution—with its individual grades, citation policies, typical assignments, concepts of cheating and competition, and even classroom structures—buries collaboration and denigrates it. Instructors and scholars, particularly those who assign community-based projects, may feel a nagging suspicion that their instruction is inconsistent or their projects constrained by these structures. An awareness of rhetorical theory and history may help instructors more consciously help their students negotiate the unavoidable tension between individual and collaborative work.

This article illustrates tensions between community engagement goals in teaching writing and parallel academic trends, language, and structures that influence teaching, learning, and grading practices. It begins with some oft-used writing methods in community engagement classes. To broaden instructors' understandings of the possibilities for the relatively peaceful coexistence of individual and collaborative authorship, it offers an overview of authorship history. Finally, it offers directions for a productive writing and community engagement pedagogy based on the concept of discourse communities and in the form of classroom community building, assignment design, and grading practices, which are so closely linked as to be virtually indivisible. While it is clear that many institutional structures will remain and evolve only slowly, teachers and students can become more aware of the limitations inherent in those structures. We do not need to accept individualistic models of authorship as natural and good, and this seeming problem can be an opportunity to develop rhetorical savvy and cooperative strategies.

Authorship Models in Community Engagement Classes

Those who are familiar with experiential pedagogies and scholarship recognize that there are widely varying uses for writing across the disciplines in experiential or community engagement classes. Nurses ask their students to write protocols of a field experience; biologists ask students to create documents that explain environmental phenomena in lay terms; communications professors ask students to create field logs of observations regarding organizational communication they witness in their community agency work. Community engagement pedagogies such as service-learning are useful to teaching a breadth of writing strategies, genres, and skills; conversely, writing helps to facilitate learning and the reinforcement of learning in such classes (the Write to Learn model). While any categorization of models is inherently limiting and limited, I would like to highlight four models of authorship suggested by typical community engagement projects: (1) individual authorship for the audience of self and teacher, (2) cross-demographic student writing groups, (3) writers collaborating with or writing for agencies, and (4) community writing groups. Though this division seems to move from clearly individual to completely collaborative projects, I hope to illustrate how even the most individual projects can be viewed as collaborative, and, conversely, how there is some individual work in most collaborative projects. The dividing line may be more arbitrary than it appears. A brief discussion of each model follows.

Writing for Self and Teacher

Many community engagement professors such as Herzberg (1994), Anson (1997), and Cooper (1998) use journals as mechanisms for critical reflection. In fact, this type of writing may be the most commonly used in service-learning courses.[2] Students may read articles or other materials related to service, communities, or social action in conjunction with often-brief service commitments. Either during or after they work in the community, students reflect on their experiences in journals. They may be given prompts, asked to tie their experiences to things read in class, or allowed to consider any issues or events that strike them as connected to their community experiences. One of the primary pedagogical goals in such classrooms is consciousness-raising or enhancement of students' abilities to read their social worlds. To deepen the experience and challenge students' thought further, teachers sometimes respond to the journals (e.g., Anson).

Of the four models I will discuss here, this one fits best within academic institutional constraints because of its focus on individual responses. These students may work in communities in more sophisticated ways in the future, may vote more intelligently as a result, or may become more critical readers of their own assumptions, though even these outcomes are not assured, as Herzberg (1994) argues in *Community Service and Critical Teaching*: "I do not believe that questions about social structures, ideology, and social justice are automatically raised by community service" (p. 309). Though journal writing on the surface seems to be a clear example of individual authorship, depending on how we define collaboration and how the task is structured, even it could be seen as collaborative. A social constructionist stance suggests that students' experiences are largely defined by the people with whom they interact in the community setting, their views influenced by their fellow students and teachers in discussion sessions and by the things they read in conjunction with the classes. The journals are a dialogue with experience, weaving intertextual threads often unconsciously. And when a teacher reads and responds dialogically to the journal, a layer of collaboration is added.

Cross-Demographic Student Writing Groups

The second model—the cross-demographic student writing group—may take varied forms but here is represented by the Writing Partners program implemented since 1997 at Texas Christian University and since adopted at multiple other institutions (Texas Wesleyan University, Christopher Newport University, Oklahoma City University, Sacramento State University, and North Dakota State University). The program pairs elementary or middle school and college students in textual exchange, involving letter writing, a writing workshop, and sometimes a publication celebration. Authorship for Writing Partners is a process of give-and-take across discourse communities—not communities unfamiliar with each other, but significantly different nonetheless. The authoring authority is thus in flux. Each student seemingly "owns" his or her work, yet influence comes from the partner-as-audience, particularly in the letter exchange (Hessler & Taggart, 2004). Writing Partners brings writer-audience collaboration to the foreground. While less deliberately reciprocal in construction, tutor and mentor programs similarly often involve the kinds of immediate dialogue and co-construction of text that collaboration theorists would deem productively collaborative and social constructionists might consider to involve the communal development of knowledge. The apparently individually-authored products bear the

imprint of both tutor and tutee.

Writer-Agency Collaborations

Professional writing projects completed in internships, cooperative education courses, and field experience arrangements are just a few models of writer-agency collaboration. Increasingly, the field of professional and technical writing is embracing service-learning as well, as scholars in this subfield argue it provides increased opportunities to consider ethics and the role of professional and technical writing in citizenship (Dubinsky, 2002; Sapp & Crabtree, 2002). This type of project involves having a student or a group of students write documents for a community agency. In service-learning, these agencies are typically nonprofit, yet the learning outcomes are often quite similar to internships and other work with for-profit corporations, involving experience with professional genres, project management, software programs commonly used to produce professional documents, and development of textual negotiation skills.

Several of the classes I have taught at Texas Christian University and North Dakota State University fit this third community engagement and writing format. For instance, two of the earliest classes of this type that I taught were paired with five agencies in the Tarrant Area[3] Food Bank network; the students worked in teams on both what are traditionally considered individually-authored and collaboratively-authored projects for each of the five nonprofit organizations. The individually-authored projects, while drafted alone, often used interviews conducted together as resources and ultimately went into a pool from which the best were chosen to be used by the agency. For example, student-written profiles were sometimes included in grant applications. Because the students constantly worked in teams—brainstorming, discussing, researching, writing, responding, communicating with the agencies, and so on—the collaborative impulse and connection was so strong in this partnership that it sometimes confused the students, some of whom continued to hand in assignments collaboratively, even when the assignment sheets explicitly stated that they must draft separate, individual documents.[4]

This response seems to expose the arbitrariness of the institutional need to reframe academic work as individual, even in community engagement classes. LeFevre's (1987) groundbreaking work, *Invention as a Social Act*, suggests that the interview work my students accomplished together—collecting, questioning, and compiling information as they worked to invent their profiles—should be conceived as a social act instead of hiding its social

nature behind the façade of individual authorship. Invention, one of the five canons of rhetoric according to classical rhetoricians (invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery), is a process of discovering resources available to the rhetor or writer. Invention typically involves research, which almost always represents multiple perspectives upon which authors draw as they enter conversations, a collaborative move not often acknowledged as such. To suggest that authoring only happens as the words are placed on a page is to deny what rhetorical scholars have known since Aristotle: invention is a central part of the composing process and is dialogic in nature. Furthermore, whenever students write for agencies, they negotiate the writing with agency representatives, as well. The agency representatives largely define the purpose and constraints of the documents. Sometimes it is even the agency representatives' names that show up on the documents in the end, as audiences expect the documents that emerge from an agency to be written by its representatives (just as political speech authors are rarely credited publicly for the speeches they have written).

Community Writing Groups

Community writing groups can take many forms: students can work with groups of elderly people in nursing homes on collaborative memoirs and newsletters; they can work in teams to solve local community problems through collective research, debate, and text production; they can write life narratives with women in women's shelters, and so on. The primary characteristics of the community writing group are that it involves members of more than one sub-community, attempts to make the collaboration dialogic and reciprocal (there is no professional-client relationship, as there often is in an internship situation), and often benefits communities or sub-communities (as opposed to the more individual benefits that emerge from cross-demographic student writing groups). Peck, Flower, and Higgins (1995) describe community groups in Pittsburgh composed of students, professional members of the community, youth, teachers, and others, all of whom come together to address complex social problems through writing and discourse. The process is largely collaborative; problems such as these cannot be effectively and thoroughly addressed on individual bases. Individuals can develop contributions on their own or in small groups, but they ultimately bring those contributions to the group. The collaborative connection is never entirely broken— the individual is communal, the communal made up of individuals, the experience both individual

and communal.

The variety represented by these four writing models makes them adaptable to a variety of pedagogical goals and teacher strengths, the flexibility to remain within institutional constraints while moving beyond the academy in terms of activity or activism, and the room to fulfill the complex learning needs of students. However, the models are not without conflict. The more overtly collaborative pedagogies must reconcile their place in the academy, where individual authorship is asserted as the norm, while the less collaborative ones fit poorly into the broader community in their impulse to adopt the "logic of cultural mission" or "charity" (Flower, 1997, pp. 97-98) and to establish distance between academic and community conversations. The more collaborative models of authorship in community engagement tend to be those most suited to the community engagement ideal of reciprocity. If writing instructors in any discipline believe even partially in the social-constructionist theories Miller (1993) invokes in the epigraph—theories that assert the individual is shaped by the social and vice versa—we must admit writing is much more collaborative than we often have acknowledged in our courses and institutional structures.

Authorship Tensions in the Community Engagement Class

In the previous section, I highlighted several community engagement writing models commonly used in higher education. I began to suggest the complexities of attributing authorship in community engagement classes and attaining proclaimed pedagogical outcomes when navigating conflicting authorship structures. In this section, I would like to further flesh out these tensions. An awareness of the institutional structures and discourse community norms coming into contact in these classrooms will help community engagement practitioners anticipate potential challenges, shape their rhetoric carefully, and help students explore their assumptions regarding authorship and ownership or sharing of knowledge in and across communities.

Writing for self and teacher can be in conflict with the community engagement principles of reciprocity, cross-cultural communication, and seeing text as social action. Students are familiar with writing for themselves and teachers, as it is the primary type of writing they have done in the past. While students may always have written in dialogue with their friends or things they have read, the perception of single authorship is strong. Grading or otherwise evaluating writing done apparently independently is the norm in higher education; thus, what Deans

terms "writing about the community" projects place little additional grading strain on the teacher than might occur in any new assignment (2000, pp. 85-109).

While grading might seem relatively straight forward because it involves assigning value to documents created by one student, familiarity with the writing conditions may lead some students to go through the motions, writing what they perceive the teachers want because teachers continue to hold greatest authority in this model, and grades remain the most obvious stakes evident in the process. Most who ask students to write journals and research papers based on community experiences hope that the students might become more sensitized to others' experiences through what they see and hear in the community combined with the reflection involved in journaling. However, a sense of the autonomous self, reified by the seemingly individual authorship presented in this type of assignment, may lead to objectification of community members, developing in Buber's terms an I/It relationship rather than an I/Thou relationship (1970, pp. 31-33). Maintaining impenetrable walls of self prevents I/Thou relationships in which individuals see each other as subjects rather than objects. Flower (1997, pp. 97-98) ties the results of this objectification to the "logic of cultural mission" and other scholars question the charity implicit in doing work at an agency without understanding the root causes of the problems that make service agencies necessary (Dubinsky, 2002). Those with whom the students ostensibly work in homeless shelters, women's shelters, literacy centers, food banks, nursing homes, and other community agencies are observed or held at a distance by the circumstances of the work and assignments. This does not mean that connections never occur, but they are not deliberately fostered in many projects; the relationships are not as carefully fostered by the pedagogy as might be ultimately desirable. If the students are not already prepared to see the community members as contributors to their learning or part of the dialogue into which their writing enters, simply putting them into a new environment and asking them to write about it may only minimally change their outlook and deepen their understanding of the world around them.

Cross-demographic student writing groups may foster reciprocity through interactivity, yet the textual authorship most often remains singular in appearance and evaluation. While cross-demographic collaboration is slightly less common and therefore less familiar to students, most students have worked in some type of project peer group. In fact, some classroom composition pedagogy overtly

labels peer response groups as collaboration. However, the collaborative practice of this pedagogy is often partial and subverted. It often does not fulfill Lunsford and Ede's call for a "pedagogy of collaboration, one that would view writing as always shared and social; writers as constantly building and negotiating meaning with and among others; and evaluation as based at least in part on a 'range of selves' and on communal efforts" (1994, p. 438). Instead, students come together to improve texts that will always bear one name (the symbol of ownership in a copyrighted world) and be assigned a grade that will only affect one member of the group. They may share ideas fairly freely and try collaborative language in the group, yet they shift back to individual language and the ethics of ownership when they leave the group, identifying subtly what savvy rhetors they really are (Spigelman, 2000). Though a student may get aid in invention, organization, and proofing (all forms of co-authoring), she will rarely be challenged by classroom procedure to see the collaboration as fully legitimate—the grade usually frames her primary viewpoint on the process.

In cross-demographic student writing groups, there is a clear common ground held by the participants even as their differences are highlighted. Even when the partnerships are cross-age or involve a mixture of socioeconomic groups or some other element of diversity, sharing the status of student helps to familiarize the participants in such projects. The possibility for identification with the community partner may help to facilitate collaboration. However, most of these projects, again, do not foreground collaboration. The texts in student-student partnerships tend to remain in the possession of one student, with the other student(s) participating in invention and/or revision. I agree with LeFevre (1987) that collaborative invention is productive and legitimate. What I am suggesting is that this collaboration is subverted when the student of record is assigned a grade as though this were an independent project. As with peer response, students sometimes resist feedback, believing that their own work will be tainted, derivative, not theirs, if they take others' advice.

Writer-agency collaborations are necessarily collaborative and cross institutional lines; therefore, the collaborators are shaped by very differing institutional circumstances, purposes, and authorship structures. They are sometimes unable to see each other as fully collaborating; even when they do proceed in good faith as collaborators, their differing priorities and text development patterns may conflict. One tension when students, either individually or in teams, write documents for community representa-

tives or agencies lies in the authority for advice regarding the documents; should the students listen to the instructor, the one who will ultimately assign the grade, or to the agency representative, the one who will use the document? Or are they supposed to be "original" and "independent" thinkers who do not slavishly obey either stakeholder's directions? To what extent do students retain some authoring power in this type of writing project?

From a purely rhetorical standpoint as regards the document, it seems that the student should respond to the primary audiences for the document, the community representative, and the audience the representative has designated. However, savvy students recognize that teachers may have priorities that extend beyond the community representatives' notions of a successful and effective document. In a recent study of two technical writing courses in which students write for community organizations, Taylor (2006) suggests that rarely do teacher, student, and community member criteria line up. Faced with filling a teacher's requirements or a community member's, many students will revert to their own institutional standards because the grade is still a powerful motivator, thereby re-privileging the academy and its representative (the teacher).

Also, a real challenge emerges when the community representatives, attempting not to overly tax or abuse the students, express delight in a document that clearly will not do the work they wanted it to do. The students have received a positive response from the representative, yet the teacher recognizes the document's flaws. In this sense, the students are usually highly aware that they are not the only ones in control of a document, that they are not fully autonomous authors. However, they may be unsure with whom they are collaborating more. Also, they will likely perceive the collaboration to be hierarchical. Their voices may seem to carry very little weight and they may fall into the difficulties of ghost writing: trying to put on someone else's persona in the writing. A pair of students composing a letter announcing a new service of the local March of Dimes initially felt the task of writing a letter would be quite simple. However, they quickly found that trying to write as the director of the organization was a greater task than expected. They were comfortable working with each other and the director, yet each word choice became a laborious process of considering whether the director would say this or that, make this choice or that. However, once they realized this dilemma and discussed it with the director, with the instructor, and between themselves, they found this an intellectually interesting and challenging task.

Conversely, when an agency representative does

not see him or herself as a fully collaborative partner in the process, the students' sense that authorship is individual is likely to be reinforced and the goals of community engagement thwarted. Graduate students involved with a local agency experienced just such disorientation in their work. They were highly competent and excited about working collaboratively to produce useful documents for the agency. The community representative, though he expressed directly to me, the instructor, that he would be available and willing to work with the students, simply sent them off on a task with little direction and was largely unresponsive to their requests for information, guidance, and feedback. In this case, the students were collaboratively-oriented while the community member was either less clear what that might look like or less available than he first expressed.

Community writing groups' clear advocacy of collaboration, reciprocity, and dialogism are undermined by the prominence of the individual author in students' lives. Through "intercultural inquiry" and "rivaling" practices,[5] participants in community writing groups at the Community Literacy Center in Pittsburgh attempt both to bring their localized expertise and perspectives and hear fully the expertise and perspectives of others on the way to negotiated meaning. In theory, this type of community engagement exemplifies principles of collaboration, reciprocity, problem-solving, and respect for differing expertise. However, little is discussed in the scholarship surrounding this project regarding evaluation of written products. What struggles do participants have in sharing knowledge and balancing the tandem demands of community problem-solving and academic learning/credential earning? Students have been trained by academic culture to see texts as individual products and know that grades are based on individual performance; it is in part out of this situation that student complaints about group work emerge. The students who are able individual authors and succeed in this system do not want to either "carry" or "be brought down by" others. A syllabus for a related community literacy course at Carnegie Mellon reveals language reinforcing the notion of individual authorship ("turn *your* ideas into action") and even a sense of hierarchy that signals greater levels of authority in the college participants ("we will mentor a group of 9th grade students") (Flower, 2004). On the same syllabus, collaborative projects are described, collaborative conversations assigned. I offer these examples not to suggest that the community literacy project in this course is not valid because it seems to display the language of individual and collaborative authorship. In fact, Flower's commu-

nity projects are considered widely to be some of the most carefully and thoughtfully conceived. What I am suggesting is that this type of project inevitably brings disparate discourse communities and disparate goals together. Teachers and students in community engagement courses should be aware of the rub between academic authoring for grades and credentials and community authoring for problem-solving.

Authorship Is Historically Neither Static Nor Monolithic[6]

To understand the authorship issues raised by these pedagogical models, it is valuable to turn an eye toward the history of authorship. Academic practices participate in this history—even justifications of method are often based on historical precedence. Space permits only a casual glossing over of these influences now; nevertheless, one can see gross shifts regarding the dominant mode of authorship: at times the individual seems to reign supreme; at others the individual author virtually vanishes; and all of the time authorship is more complex than individual, collaborative, or collective. Thus, now, when the idea of individual authorship, influenced heavily by copyright law, carries so much weight, it is somewhat hard to imagine authorship as largely or always collaborative, yet much writing is still accomplished collaboratively. I offer this history, not only to indicate from where our institutional practices have come, but also to highlight alternative explanations of authorship upon which to build. It is a truism that the reason for history is to build on positive experiences and to avoid repeating negative ones. I do not seek to demonize individual authorship, but to caution academics about the complexity of authorship in their classroom discussions and practices. This caution is particularly relevant to community engagement, since it is inherently communal—community and collaboration are at the core of the educational experience in these classrooms.

Looking as far back as rhetoric's forefather, Aristotle, we see that classical rhetors produced both oral and written documents (as this period brought with it the advent of writing as a technology)[7] largely for civic purposes. Those who were able to wield words proficiently were landed, moneyed, educated men—individuals who saw themselves as part of a larger whole, the democratic nation-state of Greece in particular (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990; Kennedy, 1994). Greek and Roman rhetoric thus could be considered a collaboration of relatively autonomous individuals in the interest of the nation-state. Furthermore, *mimesis*, a

teaching strategy based in imitation, encouraged students to begin their rhetorical training by mimicking the masters and gradually developing techniques and styles divergent from, but related to the models. While the notion of "masters" suggests an element of "originality" or singular skill, the imitation strategy suggests newly trained speakers necessarily collaborated with the masters in developing rhetorical technique. The model is both collaborative and individualized and conjures the image of language as a "tissue" in Barthes' (1977) sense. Speakers weave together what is best about previous speeches into a variation that is their own.

As Woodmansee (1994) identifies, the ensuing Middle Ages and the Renaissance found authority in derivation, in resting on the laurels of one's predecessors and, therefore, collaborating with them (p. 17). Because of the church's dominance in the Middle Ages, text production rested with religious scribes, who seemed simply to copy texts. However, that copying was often accompanied by the creation of marginalia, artwork, and even some unintended alteration, all contributing to enhance or change the meaning of the handled texts. No single author was named on the final product; therefore, ownership of the knowledge therein remained attributed to spiritual or communal sources and did not fixate on single authors. Ross offers this overview of the twelfth century perspective on authorship: "Knowledge is by definition communal, just as authority is by definition external and resistant to privatization; all experiences that derive merely from the self are diversions and deceptions" (1994, p. 236). The Renaissance commonplace book is another obvious example of collaboration, since it encouraged the open "stealing" of other's words (note how my cultural standpoint inclines me to use the language of ownership even here). The commonplace book was filled with quotations that could be used at will to indicate knowledge and culture and to speak eloquently. Renaissance drama, too, favored collaboration. Whole companies contributed to the authoring and production of a play.

The collaborative and collective impulses of the medieval and Renaissance periods began to shift, however, with the commodification of text and desire to control the producers of text. The sixteenth century ushered in the use of patents to ascribe ownership of printed texts; though authors were still not perceived as owners of the products of their labor, this ownership precedent contributed to the ultimate development of copyright law (Feather, 1994). Patents made books commodities. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the Stationers' Guild was developed to track down libel, heresy, and slander, working for the monarchy in Britain to determine responsibility for text

that was dangerous. If texts were truly collaborative or abstract ideas that could be owned by everyone, how could culture control such a powerful tool? Copyright laws, first granting ownership to authors (in word if not in fact) by the Statute of Anne of 1710, were perhaps even more influential than the Romantic notions of genius perpetuated by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other like-minded authors, though it is the Romantics that typically become emblems of individual authorship.[8] Once authors were made owners of their intellectual labor, free exchange of ideas in its purest sense was legislated out of existence and much more authority was placed in the hands of individual authors.

Later, the Romantics perpetuated individual authorship notions, making them seem mystical or spiritual rather than economically driven: Coleridge's dream of Kublai Khan (1816) is just one instance when "genius" seems mysteriously to visit the author (and just as mysteriously lead the author to forget, it seems). Writing for the Romantics was not so much a learnable skill as divine intervention with the few; only the inspired could truly write. Once sacred, it becomes difficult to rationally challenge a concept. The combination of economic muscle and high culture idealism created a firm place for individual authorship as the reigning model.

Finally, postmodern theory returns collaboration, if not to the fore of popular culture, then at least to intellectual primacy. For instance, Foucault (1969) tells us that authors function in name to represent their thought and even whole fields of knowledge: Karl Marx's name is invoked as "Marxism," a term that represents theories that may stem from Marx's work but have clearly moved beyond anything he wrote or said in his lifetime (pp. 896-897). Marx is thus a "founder of discursivity" or a "transdiscursive author." Postmodern theory also tells us that the author may, in fact, be less influential in the creative act than the reader, who becomes the "author" through interpretation (Barthes, 1977). The text only has heuristic meaning. Even in the wake of such radical theory, however, copyright and Romantic notions of authorship drive pedagogical practice, partially because of culture's slowness to change in response to theory, and partially because of the real economic concerns for authors and publishers that would accompany the banishment of copyright law.

Most recent authorship theorists agree that single and collaborative authorship are viable concepts of writing, simply representing differing theories of language (e.g., Woodmansee & Jaszi, 1994; Ede & Lunsford, 1990). The critique is that concepts of collaborative or collective authorship have been

overshadowed, particularly in the academy, by the language of genius, springing spontaneously from the minds of individual authors and commercial concepts of ownership. In terms of purely sensory experience, physically, we often seem to author alone. Perhaps this contributes to keeping individual authorship the dominant concept of authorship, leading us to teach individual "authors." However, after much research, Lunsford and Ede (1994)

> feel confident in saying that the traditional model of solitary authorship is more myth than reality, that much or most of the writing produced in professional settings in America is done collaboratively, and that, in fact, much of what we call 'creative' writing is collaborative as well, though it almost always flies under the banner of single authorship. (p. 418)

How to Reconcile These Tensions?

As much as I would love to offer it, there is no easy fix regarding the dilemmas of being pulled by divergent cultural forces. To make collaborative writing more prominent in our educational tapestry, we would have to rip from the fibers of society threads that lead to our bias toward individual authorship (one of the first threads to go would probably have to be our present system of grading), and interweave more generously threads that lead to collaboration. However, I am not convinced that is necessary since, as history suggests, authorship has always to some extent been both individual and collaborative. Several years after initially encountering the student confusion and my own tension in a community-based writing course that stimulated my thought about these issues, my pedagogy has changed fairly radically. As a result, the tensions are far fewer and what tensions we do encounter as a class often become productive for learning about writing and raising questions to improve the community-based projects. Thus, there are areas I would like to suggest where instructors can make improvements in the classroom to more accurately represent the complexities of authorship and help students see the roles individual and collaborative authorship play in various discourse communities.

My primary suggestion is at the core of this entire article and has the most cross-disciplinary promise; it is the one that has made the most difference in my own community-based classes: imbue the writing environment throughout the semester with the sense of knowledge as simultaneously individual and communal by explicitly discussing the nature of written knowledge in discourse communities. One way to encourage this is to talk with students about the contingent nature of discourse communities and the communal way language changes and is defined (Rorty, 1979). The discourse community conceptual frame helps to situate apparently individual efforts within communal and collaborative settings, and may foster a more sophisticated notion of authorship as a process of rhetorical negotiation.

For instance, as early as week one, teachers might introduce the concept of a discourse community by talking about how the class is a community with its own typical texts, conventions, topics, and shared assumptions. In the present class in which I assign regular community-based writing projects, I use Deans' (2003) *Writing and Community Action*, which offers a section, including readings, focused on discourse community differences. While having these readings is helpful for enhancing student understanding, I suspect a teacher in another discipline who didn't want to add on a writing textbook could work productively from Deans' definition of discourse community: "A *discourse community* is a group of people who are unified by similar patterns of language use, shared assumptions, common knowledge, and parallel habits of interpretation" (p. 136). Students come with quite a bit of knowledge about what it means (a) to be students in general and (b) to be students in their chosen disciplines. They can help to lay out the assumptions they bring with them about how a class is a community and this can provide a basis for discussing the particulars of the community being built in the class. During this discussion the class can even focus on what it means to be a writer in a classroom environment, the kinds of constraints put on writers in this context, and how students deal with those constraints all the time (they are not free to be genius authors away in their private garrets, totally in control of their writing decisions, even though they might desire this idyllic "freedom"). Even in a discipline in which the writing is not the central content of the course, talking about the class as a discourse community offers instructors an opportunity to talk about disciplinary expectations such as citation practices, kinds of knowledge the discipline values, and even vocabulary the instructors hope the class shares as a baseline for doing the class work. Instead of these constraints being presented as apparent rules subjectively imposed by the instructor, students are encouraged in this model to understand language as situated within communities and affected by multiple forces reasonable to supporting human communication. The syllabus, too, might become a primary object of the discussion, as the syllabus is a manifestation of the class as a discourse community. The syllabus is not just controlled by the teacher, but is informed by institutional require-

ments and the ways past students as an audience have responded to the syllabus. It, too, is a negotiated text not fully in the control of a single author. All of this early analysis is a way to talk about writing as negotiated.

When beginning the community-based project, I use a similar approach: the students and I discuss how the discourse community has now broadened and try to anticipate which patterns of communication, shared vocabulary, shared assumptions, and so on the community members might and might not share with us, developing questions to ask and thinking about texts it might be useful to see to understand writing in this environment. Before project contracts are developed and while students are coming to understand the general nature of the assignment, they reflect both in class (small and large group discussions) and in daily writing assignments on how to bridge those differences. Instructors can ask students to think about the extent to which they will control the writing and to what extent they will need to listen to and integrate other stakeholders' visions, goals, and perspectives. This also allows the class as a whole to develop strategies for dealing with collaborative conflict.

Throughout the project preparation stages, I encourage the students to think of planning and prewriting as a negotiating time to determine how to balance agency needs and concerns, audience needs and concerns, their own and the class's learning goals. In *Writing a Professional Life*, Savage and Sullivan (2001) offer portraits of professional or technical writers working in varied professional settings, similarly struggling to balance the concerns and requirements of various constituencies. While I have not yet assigned readings from this text in undergraduate classes, graduate students participating in field experiences and in masters' level classes on community engagement have read the text and found it useful for highlighting the authoring challenges of these kinds of projects (the text is written in narrative form and is nicely suited to undergraduate study). From this collection, I particularly recommend Hile's (2001) "I've been working on the railroad: Re-vision at BNP Railway," as it attends centrally to authorship issues. Hile had to learn to give up some control over the text to ensure that those who would use it had enough input. While students probably will not take on the authoritative consultant role Hile does, they might be able to discuss how they can work to hear the concerns and requirements of the agency for or with which they write. Having students interview people at the agencies about the nature of writing in the agency representatives' work lives might also reveal the vastly differing conditions for authorship that exist from one discourse community to another.

There are several other times in the project cycle when negotiation returns to the fore. When agency representatives come to class to talk about writing projects or when students first talk with their community partners about their roles, the group might come to that discussion with a list of what they anticipate to be most important about the project, in terms of gauging its success. Instructors can take direction from Taylor's (2006) work tracking teacher, student, and representative perceptions and try to list these more explicitly than may be common in such partnerships. Asking everyone involved to list two or three things they believe will make a project such as this one a success will continue to make evident authoring assumptions that might otherwise cause consternation when grading occurs. As a teacher, I might list effective project management on the students' parts, student reflection that indicates a growing understanding of the nature of professional writing, and a product that fulfills most, if not all, of the representatives' expressed needs. Students often struggle in these early stages to identify clear goals, but many will suggest that they want to write a document the agency can use; some talk about having a team that works well together. Agency representatives have goals they bring to these discussions, and this allows them to enter into a discussion with the students and teacher rather than simply presenting and leaving, which suggests that they have total control over the shape of the project, or at least forestalls discussion.

Another common method of formalizing relationships and clarifying goals for community-based writing projects is the project contract, which is also sometimes termed a project plan/proposal, or "letter of understanding" (Bowdon & Scott, 2003, pp. 103-119; Deans, 2003, pp. 352-54; Watters & Ford, 1995, pp. 41-44). Contracts typically include outlining the nature of writing, research or other tasks; planning the methods for collaboration; and proposing standards of excellence, from the agency's, students', and teacher's perspectives. Contracts are not foolproof in terms of eliminating ambiguity and supporting effective collaboration, however. Sometimes the professed goals and criteria that emerge in the planning stages are not the criteria applied in the end (again, Taylor's (2006) study shows how these criteria are in flux throughout a project cycle). However, at least it is generally clear in the process what roles the agency representatives will play in shaping the projects, the roles students plan to assume, and possibly (though this is not a common feature of contracts I have encountered) how the teacher will participate in "authoring" or controlling the text.

When grading occurs, it is easy for the academy to reassert itself as dominant player, and there is potential to revert to re-privileging single authors. Instructors need processes for evaluating collaborative work that acknowledge collaboration without micromanaging text and without allowing individuals to slide through without contributing. Some instructors remain reluctant to assign a single grade to all students of a collaborative team, so they ask students to identify which sections of a text are theirs and which contributions by others with whom they have worked. This is both time consuming and undermines genuinely collaborative work in which people work so closely that they cannot recall who said what and when. Dewey might call this a "mis-educative" experience (1938, p. 25). Some teachers are now turning to project management software to help students accomplish challenging collaborative tasks. The motivation for using the software sometimes seems to be as much about accomplishing complex tasks and keeping them organized as it is about seeing which students do which work. However, the individualizing act of tracking who does what and when may reduce the possibility for what Lunsford and Ede call "dialogic" collaboration, the kind of collaboration that involves all participants in dialogue about virtually all or all decisions made as a collaborative project is undertaken (1990, p. 134). An instructor who asks students to use tracking software might combine this management tool with a project log that asks students to reflect on the collaborative process by reviewing the tracked changes and talking about negotiations, productive moments, things that stalled the project, and teamwork to overcome conflicts or blocks.[9]

More productively than reverting to the instinct to track individual contributions, I suggest pulling together several techniques commonly used for collaborative projects that seem synchronized (when combined) with a less individual-centered authorship theory: student self-evaluation, agency representative supervisor reports, and teacher product evaluation. In this model, students reflect on the project product, their contributions to the project and effective functioning of the team, overall effectiveness of the team, and things they would do differently in a future project. Agency representatives report on students' professionalism, project management, and the overall product. Teachers, then, balance the information from the various individuals with their own evaluation of the product. And they do so with the eyes of someone informed at various points in the process about student and agency goals and sense of the project success.

As we continue to consider the dynamics of authorship, community engagement, and assessment in our classrooms, we should also heed the warnings of colleagues such as Flower (1997), Cushman (1996), and Hessler (2000a & b), among others, who analyze the language of community engagement. In the language of this educational innovation lie the assumptions of its practitioners. Are students positioned as autonomous "service providers" or as collaborative "partners"? How do we introduce the idea of community work to the students in our classes? If we change our evaluation practices without understanding our assumptions about the community authoring in our classes, we accomplish little. Beyond helping students to have a more complex understanding of authorship and the possibilities for cooperation, they may come to see the academy, as Day and Eodice (2001) did, as a more "emotionally supportive atmosphere" for learning, removing some of the emphasis on one-upping, one against the world, each person for him or herself (p. 2). At the core of my argument is that no single tool will transform a classroom into a place where students do not also feel this pull. Opening our eyes to the ways in which institutional structures come into conflict, and structuring and inviting discourse about these issues between and among stakeholders and across institutional lines, is the basis of my tentative "solution" to this problem. Offering a view of authorship history in relationship to community-based learning and highlighting the issues that now surround us as we teach community-based projects will help us to be more aware as we structure assignments; it will provide us with language that reflects authorship's complexities instead of suggesting through our presentation and organization of projects that the tasks are entirely individual *or* entirely collaborative.

Notes

[1] Like Brooke Hessler (2000b), I prefer the term *community-engagement pedagogy* to *service-learning* because it is more expansive and inclusive of a wide variety of campus-community interactions that involve learning. Also, *community engagement* is preferable to *service* because it avoids the cultural associations with the hierarchy of the server and the served and the history of *noblesse oblige*. The language of the pedagogy is truly powerful: when I used the language of service in my writing classes, I received resistance from students and a sense that they were forced volunteers; when I changed the language to community engagement and pre-professional writing, I more regularly discovered enthusiasm and motivation for the community work.

[2] A research visit to Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, KS, supports this statement, as

well. In the interviews I conducted, I was consistently told that the writing used most often in community service courses at that college was the reflection journal.

³ Tarrant County, which includes Fort Worth, Texas, is only a small part of what is designated as Tarrant Area. The Food Bank serves 13 counties and has approximately 260 affiliated agencies.

⁴ The reason I insisted on individually-authored profiles stemmed from the grading and evaluation issues I discuss in this essay. It seemed at the time simpler to grade each profile individually, and the students ultimately saw it as *their* work, alleviating unease at "helping" others get a good grade or "being hurt" by others' perceived lesser abilities. There were two required collaborative assignments (i.e., the process is almost entirely collaborative) already built into the course. This assignment and the following one were meant to counterbalance the collaborative work, revealing my own unease with revealing all work to be collaborative in some way in a traditional general education writing course—what would people think?

⁵ According to Linda Flower (1999), "intercultural inquiry is a search for understanding in the face of complex, open questions with no 'right' answer. It poses problems, seeks rival hypotheses, and constructs warranted, but revisable conclusions." Rivaling is a method of allowing for a variety of viewpoints about a problem, often apparently in conflict, to emerge in a community dialogue like the ones held at the Community Literacy Center. See also Flower's 2003 article on intercultural rhetoric as a method of addressing difference and negotiating meaning in response to difficult cultural questions.

⁶ Though I have chosen a period analysis here, it is not only time or *kairos* that defines the nature of authorship. For instance, virtually throughout history, clergy have had a much more collaborative or open notion of knowledge; individuals do not need to own their language to survive in this profession.

⁷ See Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982) for more on writing as a technology that changes the nature of language use from oral to literate, leaving secondary orality and vestiges of orality he calls oral residue (p. 115).

⁸ See Peter Jaszi (1994) for a more extensive treatment of copyright's influence on modern and postmodern notions of authorship.

⁹ In the spirit of this article, I feel it is important to note that even my text is collaborative. This suggestion to analyze a tracked document was offered by a reviewer, whose feedback was critical to jump-starting my thought process.

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