With the publication of \textit{(First Person)$^2$}, Kami Day and Michele Eodice tread protean ground. For years scholarship in composition studies has examined writing instruction based on the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed. Classroom practices such as peer-response groups, peer editing, small group invention strategies, and collective text production/publication have been introduced, critiqued, assessed, applied, and tweaked in the pages of our journals, texts, and books. Identifying a gap in collaborative writing research, Day and Eodice add to the existing body of knowledge by examining co-authoring in the academy, specifically co-authoring in the humanities.

One wonders why so many departments and administrations view co-authoring with suspicion when that practice is supported in theory, backed by grant money, and acclaimed by university presses? Eodice and Day suggest that “[l]ong-standing cultural conceptions of individual achievement and competition, and the myriad influences that counter cooperation and encourage self-serving motivations, inform mainstream impressions of collaborative work” (34). This study is based on the premise that “a feminine sensibility, or a collaborative value system is the ‘way of being in the world’ that can transform academia into a place that nurtures intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally” (184). Ultimately, Eodice and Day add their voices (and the voices of their interviewees) to the recent calls and demands for a paradigm shift within higher education. Their findings have implications for both the ways we co-author within the academy and our attitudes toward collaboration in the classroom.

In this collaborative study of collaboration, the authors adopt a phenomenological approach to examining the attitudes and practices of ten successful co-authoring teams from a variety of disciplines within higher education humanities. The teams include Blitz and Hurlbert (English); Bonnaci and Johnson (Sociology); Grant and Hui (Mathematics); Kent and Oldman (Psychology); Knight and Adams (Educational Psychology); O’Quin and Besemer (Psychology); Pike, Davis, and Ellison (History); Roen and Brown (English); Strickland and Strickland (Education/English); and Ede and Lunsford (English). Some team members elected to adopt pseudonyms for the interviews. Throughout every chapter of the book, Day and Eodice themselves become an additional team in the study as they weave their own experiences collaborating with each other. This personal reflexivity and meta-study is engaging and accounts for the rich, layered quality of the
writing. Some readers interested only in collaborative processes may find tedious the author’s extensive defense of the scope and limits of this study, the numerous references to tenure/promotion challenges of collaboratively written publications, and the narrative of their own blocked attempts to write a collaborative dissertation (see Suzanne Cherry’s review of this work). However, for those of us writing or directing dissertations, taking or teaching academic publishing courses, seeking promotion and/or tenure, or finding ourselves in positions to challenge traditional definitions of “scholarship,” this work breaks new ground.

*First Person* opens with a lengthy rationale for the study. Stemming from the authors’ thwarted desires to write a collaborative dissertation, this research examines why co-authoring teams succeed. Although acknowledged, the negatives of collaborative authoring are neither explored nor fully addressed by the interviewees. Instead the authors focus on what they term the feminine characteristics of productive collaborative teams, explaining that they “see feminist research methodology as the most ethical, most inclusive, most context driven, and most compatible with [their] belief that the research methodology itself has generative power” (7). In this work, readers will find a good overview of scholarship addressing academic collaboration (chapter 2), an interesting discussion of the various terms used most often to denote collaborative authoring, and a rationale for describing collaborative writing as feminine (chapter 3); a discussion of the framework used to analyze information from the personal interviews (chapter 4); the interviewee’s reflections on their own collaborative processes (chapter 5); an exploration of the ramifications of co-authoring in a climate that is often hostile to collaboration (chapter 6); and finally an illuminating and engaging exploration of how team members developed a “feminine stance” and the implications this study might have for pedagogical practices.

In addition to including excerpts from the interviews with the co-authors, Day and Eodice also cite the publications of influential published teams on collaborative writing practices and procedures. For example, we learn about collaborative writing processes from Yancey and Spooner; Lincoln and Guba; Roen and Mitten; Austin and Baldwin; Ballif, Davis, and Mountford; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule; Gale and Gale; and many other collaborative writing researchers from a variety of academic disciplines. Eodice and Day explain, “we juxtapose issues emerging from our interviews—such as first authorship, ownership, ethics, shared expertise, mentoring, respect, and care—with findings from the research on academic co-authoring” (18).

The authors categorize different forms of collaboration typical within the academy—the edited collection, cooperation necessary to run a department, the “collective” tasks an editor of a university press assumes, collaborative learning about writing—but they are primarily interested in co-authoring defined as sitting down with a partner “to set a goal, plan . . . and write face-to-face . . . creating text on a sentence-by-sentence, or even word-by-word, level” (30). Certainly, many collaborators vary a bit from this description. Often collaborators divide tasks,
write sections of the work and then weave the piece together, editing each other’s work, making revisions and editing until the final work is written in one voice. Day and Eodice recognize this type of collaboration as a function of co-authoring, but that common method of co-authoring was not initially a critical component of this study’s scope. However, after conducting the interviews and realizing the range of co-authoring methods, Day and Eodice expanded their notion of co-authoring and adopted the following description of authorship from the International Committee of Medical Journal Educators as an effective assessment of the teams participating in their study: “Authorship credit should be based only on substantial contributions to (1) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data; and to (2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and on (3) final approval of the version to be published. Conditions 1, 2, and 3 must all be met” (32).

Ultimately, the authors call for a suspension of rigid definitions of collaboration based on quantifying each author’s contributions, embracing instead definitions and descriptions of collaboration that allow for co-authors “to nondefensively articulate their contributions” (33). Day and Eodice’s expanded conception and exploration of co-authoring in higher education adds significantly to the body of scholarship addressing tenure and promotion issues, reconfigurations of the traditional triumvirate of service/teaching/research that emerged in light of the Boyer Commission Reports, intellectual property concerns, and ethics of care.

(First Person)² A Study of Co-Authoring in the Academy speaks to the common scenarios that define the work many of us do in the academy—co-authoring, teaching collaboration, directing dissertations and student work, serving on promotion/tenure review boards, and refereeing our colleagues’ work. In the pages of this study, Day and Eodice challenge academicians and administrators to reconceive the terms of faculty work in the humanities, and offer a feminine paradigm for doing so.

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