Rethinking Women's Collaborative Writing: 
Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of 
Toronto Press, 2002; x + 205 pages; ISBN 0-
8020-8465-6; $24.95.

Lorraine York tackles the question of how 
collaborative writing has been constituted and 
perceived head on. Her concerns reside in the 
realistic reappraisal of what she calls the "fusion 
theory of collaboration," a theory which tends to 
idealize relationships between "literary" women as 
"revolutionary, sisterly, or morally superior." York's 
knowledge of early modern scholars, both men and 
women, and her familiarity with contemporary 
women writers are astonishingly broad and also 
specific. Using both literary and theoretical texts 
from a variety of eras, York persuades the reader 
that the "co-signature" of collaborative authorship 
is "as mutable and historically situated as any other 
feature of writing" (25). Using Daphne Marlatt and 
Betsy Warland's "Reading and Writing Between the 
Lines," York illustrates how the poets confront the 
complex unspoken rules of their collaboration, what 
York sees as the fissures in the "erotic collaborative 
romance." We conclude that collaboration between 
and among women writers and scholars is not 
necessarily always smooth or joyful, and that the 
beauty of a history of such writing is that it reveals 
a combination of approaches and results that defy 
fixed "feminist" desired conclusions. Indeed, York 
ends her book with the statement that "the fault 
lines that run through women's collaborations make 
them all the more compelling." The reader may not 
feel the fullness of this claim during what seems the 
brief space of the book, but at the very least s/he 
becomes aware of the weaknesses inherent in the 
academic "collaborative bandwagon." York 
analyzes three generic bodies - collaborative theory 
and criticism, prose collaborations, collaborative 
poetry and theatrical collaboration - in order to 
illustrate the transition from what were considered 
earlier impure or contaminated bodies of work to 
more vital, sometimes riskier collaborations. In just 
one example - the partnership of Metis writer Maria 
Campbell and white actress Linda Griffiths (in the 
Canadian play The Book of Jessica: A Theatrical 
Transformation [1989]) - York argues that the play 
is a more absorbing piece of work precisely because 
the women are "differently engaged," not because 
they are mirthful and in harmonious agreement. 
Moreover, this engagement is important for a 
gendered revaluation of the politics of women's 
collaborative writing. It is in this instructive 
revaluation that York's book is of general value to 
scholars, but it is in the learned scrutiny of 
collaborative texts in a variety of genres that all 
readers will find York's (historical) argument 
fulfilled.

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Women without Men: Mennonite Refugees of 
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000; 
illustrations; viii +275 pages; ISBN 0-8020-
8268-8; $21.95 (paper).

"Who of you are still living?" Agnes, a 
Mennonite refugee in Germany, wrote to her 
American family (55). The question was poignant 
on the eve of her return to the Soviet Union with 
her five remaining children, because no answer was 
possible. In Women without Men, this query is the 
leitmotiv of the flight and resettlement of 
Mennonite women and children from the Ukraine 
via Germany to Canada and Paraguay. These 
women derived meaning and identity from their 
communities of culture and faith. They were thus 
aggrieved, and their lives constrained, by not 
knowing who had survived the secret police, the 
camps, and the war. Marlene Epp recounts the 
physical hardships, prejudice, and moral 
condemnation they endured. It is a familiar tale of 
women's courage and leadership in crisis being 
eclipsed by patriarchal privilege once order is 
restored.

Being "alive" is itself open to question in 
this work. Hard labour on the collectivized Soviet 
farms; cold, starvation and often rape en route to 
Germany; overcrowding, disease and sometimes 
assault in the camps plague the women. In Paraguay 
they homestead in virgin jungle, while in Canada 
they are oppressed by social conditions, required 
farm labour and lack of mobility. Epp explores the 
effects of unfamiliar gender roles, disruptions of the 
social hierarchy, and social mores around family
structure as these single and widowed women, often mothers, confront the receiving Mennonite communities. She weaves the archival record into an epic that is both readable and scholarly, while highlighting ambiguities and contradictions.

Epp's remarkable oeuvre, which strongly suggests that gender roles are contextually influenced, suffers in places where her focus on the refugees overwhelms contextual analysis. Her subjects sometimes seem homogeneous, whereas differences, for example between farmers and factory owners in the Ukraine, had a significant impact on their subsequent plight. Epp refers repeatedly to the nuclear family norm in Canada of the 1950s. Yet Mennonite family structures were in flux under competing pressures of extended family, urbanization, the legacy of migration, etc. The impacts of these conditions were presumably gendered. By too readily employing the shorthand of "traditional," Epp reinforces stereotypes of Mennonites as monolithic and ahistorical, even while unseating gendered and other caricatures. Some account of the relations between the first (1870s) and second (1920s) wave of Russian Mennonite immigrants, including gender roles, would have illuminated the context into which this third, feminized, wave was thrust.

Epp underscores the experiences these women share with other refugees struggling to gain acceptance and facing pressures to social conformity. The leadership of these Mennonite women modeled independence, community, social productivity, and spiritual nurture. It had lasting impacts that the author identifies, but is perhaps too cautious in celebrating. Epp does confirm that, despite all odds and propelled by their faith, many of the women are able to love and laugh and live beyond the shadow of death. For its contribution to our knowledge of history and its cogent insights into gender roles, *Women without Men* is well worth the read.

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*Making Avonlea: L.M. Montgomery and Popular Culture* is a well-edited, well-organized collection which explores the translation of literature into other media, the fascination of Japanese readers with the figure of "Anne of Green Gables," the development of heritage sites, and questions of the relation between Montgomery's life and her works. *Making Avonlea* differs from similar collections of essays in its organization. Editor Irene Gammel notes that as the volume was being prepared, the "contributors exchanged papers among themselves, engaging in critical readings that allowed them to incorporate cross-references to other chapters and to reflect on one another's arguments" (10). The resulting collection effectively weaves together the ways in which Montgomery is read, received, and reproduced and encourages the reader to think of the responses to these texts as a continuum rather than as discrete categories which privilege one type of reading or textuality over another. This collection has the coherence of a book rather than the uneven feel of a conventional collection of essays.

*Making Avonlea* is divided into three sections which represent the areas through which Montgomery and her work have been read and reproduced in popular culture. The first section, "Mapping Avonlea," focuses on the intersection of the academic and the popular. The chapters in this section include discussions of the "Anne" and "Emily" series, Montgomery's journals and photographs, and the ways in which academic readings of Montgomery often, and sometimes problematically, collide with popular conceptions and perceptions of her work. The second section, "Viewing Avonlea," looks at the space between Montgomery's personal, fictional, and photographic texts and the process through which these works are "translated" into other media such as film, television and live performance. Most of the chapters in "Viewing Avonlea" tend to argue that the performative works should be discussed as distinct texts rather than as faithful reproductions of the originals, and the difference of opinion between Eleanor Hersey and K.L. Poe around this topic makes for lively reading. "Touring Avonlea," the final section, articulates a third level of the interpretation of