

***Rethinking Women's Collaborative Writing: Power, Difference, Property.*** Lorraine York. 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 the Second World War.*** Marlene Epp. 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