

DATA MODEL: Distant Reading Mennonite Writing, Literary Texts

Rationale (Framework)

This dataset is an attempt to compile an exhaustive, searchable dataset of literary texts by or about Mennonites, written in English and published up to and including the year 2020. Due to the project's focus on English-language texts, the vast majority of the entries in this dataset were published in North America.

This project follows the [Mennonite/s Writing bibliographies](#) established by Ervin Beck and maintained by Daniel Shank Cruz in defining “Mennonite authors” as:

writers who are ethnic or theological Mennonites (or both), whether they claim the identity “Mennonite” for themselves or not, and whether or not their work contains explicitly Mennonite characters or themes.

As the parameters for this project incorporate creative writing both *by* and *about* Mennonites, not all of the texts in this dataset were written by Mennonite authors.

The dataset does not include literature by or about related Anabaptist communities, such as the Hutterites or Brethren. However, it does include some literary texts from or about those communities with histories that blur such distinctions, including the Amish and Amish Mennonites. A notable exception here is the hugely popular genre of Amish Romance novels, which is recognized as a separate phenomenon and is not included here.¹

This dataset is focused on “literary texts,” defining the “literary” in broad terms, including (but not limited to) poetry; fiction; drama; life writing; self-published books listed; children’s and young adult writing; Christian fiction; and written records of oral narratives (such as Mennonite fables and folk stories).

The following works have been excluded:

- Non-fiction (other than life-writing)
- Non-literary or multi-media works, including television, film, music, songs (such as hymnals)
- Explicitly didactic texts, such as writings for Sunday School or School Curriculum²
- Self-help or life guidance books where the primary function is clearly not literary

¹ For a discussion of Amish Romance, including their relationship to Mennonite literature, see Valerie Weaver-Zercher, *Thrill of the Chaste: The Allure of Amish Romance Novels*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2013. The larger question of the position of Amish literature and folklore in relation to Mennonite literary criticism requires additional critical investigation.

² Please note that Children’s Literature texts that were imaginative or creative retellings of biblical stories are included in this dataset.

- Life-writing where the primary purpose is genealogical
- Individual works (short fiction, poetry, etc.) published in:
 - edited collections, although the collections themselves *are* listed under their editor's name
 - literary magazines dedicated to Mennonite writing, including: *Festival Quarterly*, *Rhubarb*, *Mennonite Mirror*, and the *Journal of Mennonite Writing*
 - literary magazines associated with Mennonite postsecondary institutions publishing student writing in annual volumes, including: Bluffton College's *Shalith*; Canadian Mennonite University's *Soul in Paraphrase*; Eastern Mennonite University's *The Phoenix*; Goshen College's *Red Cent*; and Hesston College's *Journal of Writing and Art*. Note that sole-authored works from Goshen College's curated *Pinchpenny Press* are included

Sources

This dataset draws part of its sample from the existing [Mennonite/s Writing bibliographies](#), as well as from related bibliographical work, most notably in *Mennonite Life* and *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

Additional entries were added through the team's substantial research efforts, including extensive library database searches, in consultation with librarians, at the following Mennonite institutions across North America:

- Conrad Grebel University College (Milton Good Library)
- Goshen College (Harold and Wilma Good Library)
- Canadian Mennonite University Library
- Fresno Pacific University (Hiebert Library)
- Eastern Mennonite University (Sadie Hartzler Library)
- Bethel College Library

The cluster of terms used as a dragnet for the digital search included: Mennonite; Anabaptist; Amish; Pennsylvania Dutch; Pennsylvania German," along with Novel; Fiction; Poem/poetry; Drama; Theater/theatre; Memoir; Autobiography; Juvenile literature; Juvenile fiction

Project Note

The DRMW Project team includes Dr. Robert Zacharias (Principal Investigator, York University), with PhD students Kyle Gerbrant (University of Waterloo) and Marion Tempest Grant (York University).

The DRMW Project datasets are a work in progress. DRMW 1.0, the first published draft of the dataset, was completed in December 2023. We anticipate periodic updates that incorporate the feedback of others in the field, as we move the project toward a comprehensive and exhaustive dataset. As such, we invite feedback to the project from its users, including omissions or corrections. Please send feedback to rzach@yorku.ca, using the subject heading "DRMW Dataset."

Data Model

Use MLA as a reference for formatting data.

Data

Restricted: Typically will be a drop down menu, needs consistent formatting of entries to help with data visualizations and queries.

Unrestricted: Will typically be more unique entries. Titles should always be unique entries. However, there will be repetition of some entries in the cases of *A_Citizenship*, *P_Venue*, *P_Publisher*, *P_Location 1*, *P_Location 2*, *P_Location 3*, *P_Type*.

FIELD	DATA / OPTIONS	DESCRIPTION
Title	Unrestricted	Title of the Text Format: Written in full, words beginning with a capital letter
Author / Contributor	Unrestricted	Author(s) of the text; Editor(s) of the Text Use the name they published with as opposed to only birth names. In cases where authors have published under multiple names - both with and without middle initials, for example - these names have been standardized to their most common usage to ensure that all entries appear in search results Default contribution type is author. If the person's contribution is not an author, list their contribution type using the following formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Translator = (trans.) ● Editor = (ed.) ● Artist/ Illustrator [if they receive authorial credit] = (illus.) ● Photographer [if they receive authorial credit] = (photo.) ● Chairman = (chairman) Format: Written in full, names beginning with a capital letter. If the authors are married, related, or share a last name, the complete

		<p>names of both authors must be included</p> <p>Format: (Solo Entry): <i>Lastname, Firstname</i></p> <p>Format: (Multiple Entry): <i>Lastname, Firstname and Firstname Lastname</i></p> <p>Format (Solo Entry with Role): <i>Lastname, Firstname (role)</i></p> <p>Format (Multiple Entry with Roles): <i>Lastname, Firstname (role) and Firstname Lastname (role)</i></p>																		
<p>A_Gender</p>	<p>Restricted</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>W</td> <td><i>Woman</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>M</td> <td><i>Man</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>GN</td> <td><i>Gender Neutral</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MU_W</td> <td><i>Multiple Author, Women</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MU_M</td> <td><i>Multiple Author, Men</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MU_MI X</td> <td><i>Multiple Author, Multiple Genders</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MU_U</td> <td><i>Multiple Author, with Unknown Nationalities</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>U</td> <td><i>Unknown</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>I</td> <td><i>Institution</i></td> </tr> </table>	W	<i>Woman</i>	M	<i>Man</i>	GN	<i>Gender Neutral</i>	MU_W	<i>Multiple Author, Women</i>	MU_M	<i>Multiple Author, Men</i>	MU_MI X	<i>Multiple Author, Multiple Genders</i>	MU_U	<i>Multiple Author, with Unknown Nationalities</i>	U	<i>Unknown</i>	I	<i>Institution</i>	<p>Gender (not biological sex) of author(s) / editor(s)</p> <p>Format: All capital letters</p>
W	<i>Woman</i>																			
M	<i>Man</i>																			
GN	<i>Gender Neutral</i>																			
MU_W	<i>Multiple Author, Women</i>																			
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U	<i>Unknown</i>																			
I	<i>Institution</i>																			
<p>A_Citizenship</p>	<p>Restricted</p> <p>solo entry of one citizenship unless there are multiple authors</p>	<p>Determined by the author's last (before death) citizenship (not residency). In some cases, this will not be the citizenship with which they were born</p> <p>Only one entry per node</p>																		

		<p>If gender is “I” (Institution) nationality is determined by the country in which the institution is established</p> <p>“Unknown” if the author’s nationality is unknown</p> <p>If multiple authors, list in alphabetical order</p> <p>Format: Written in full, words beginning with a capital letter</p>
P_Date	Unrestricted	The year that the text was published
P_Decade	Restricted	<p>The year that the text was published rounded down to the lowest decade</p> <p>Example: 2017 = 2010</p>
Publisher	Unrestricted	<p>Name of the Original Publisher</p> <p>In some cases, the texts will be self-published. If an author has paid for or arranged for a publisher to produce their book, it is still considered “Self-Published”</p> <p>Format: Written in full, capitalizations as it was published</p>
P_Location 1	Unrestricted	<p>City of Publisher</p> <p>Format: Written in full, words beginning with a capital letter</p>
P_Location 2	Unrestricted	<p>Province/ State/ Region of Publisher</p> <p>Format: Written in full, words beginning with a capital letter</p>
P_Location 3	Unrestricted	<p>Country of Publisher</p> <p>Format: Written in full, words beginning with a capital letter</p>
Genre	<p>Restricted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fiction ● Life Writing 	<p>Select the genre that best fits the text. If the text (like an anthology) reflects multiple genres used, use “Multi-Genre” and list the Genres in the notes</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drama ● Poetry ● Multi-Genre ● Unknown 	<p>Qualifying the genres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fiction: Literature in the form of prose, especially short stories and novels, that describes imaginary events and people ● Life Writing: recognizable as non-fiction writing about a life; focus is primarily literary, rather than historical, genealogical, or institutional ● Drama: scripts for theatrical productions ● Poetry: creative writing in verse ● Multi-Genre: text that is comprised of multiple genre types ● Unknown: the genre of the item is unknown or unclear <p>Format: Written in full, words beginning with a capital letter. "Multi-Genre" with a hyphen.</p>
<p>G_Subgenre</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Restricted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anthology ● Biblical ● Comedy ● Children's ● Folklore ● Historical Play ● History ● Morality ● Quest Play ● Religious ● Science Fiction ● Short Fiction ● Western ● Young Adult <p style="text-align: center;">(More may be added as required)</p>	<p>Not fully populated; added only where clear and relevant</p> <p>Genre= Multi Genre Sub Genre = Children's Literature</p> <p>If there are multiple genre types, use multi genre and include the types in the notes section</p> <p>Format: Written in full, words beginning with a capital letter</p>
<p>Notes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Unrestricted</p>	<p>Important notes that don't cleanly fit onto the dataset can be included as needed</p>