

WHAT THE CROW SAID: A TOPOS OF EXCESS

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One comes back to those damn binaries all the time.¹

Binaries. Feminine: masculine. Light: dark. Hot: cold. House: horse. Robert Kroetsch does come back to them again and again. But where and what is the place/space from which we return? What are we doing while we are there? And what is the nature of the binaries to which we return? Kroetsch's novel *What the Crow Said*² is such a place/space, a position, from which to engage with binaries. And in it binary oppositions are questioned, used, abused, deconstructed and re-created. Kroetsch undermines binaries, collapsing them in parodic extremeness. He also undermines his undermining. So the question is not whether Kroetsch destroys or perpetuates binaries. He does both; he does neither. Kroetsch offers text, a place where the dynamics of binary relations are enacted. Through the textual relationships of writer:reader and desire:language, either/or divisions, as structure, are replaced with necessary forces, as process. *Crow* is a topos of excess, a position where binaries are forces of "becoming" rather than rigid structures which unambiguously shape our lives.

Underlying the outrageous events in *Crow* are banal occurrences of prairie, but not only prairie, life. Bees swarm. Women get pregnant without being married. The weather is unpredictable. Oil rigs come up dry. Crops fail. Women make rhubarb pies. People go to church, are born, get married, die and have funerals. Ice melts. Our relationships to these events, however, are anything but simple. We elaborate grand fictions to account for things. Some of our fictions are master narratives that not only account for things, but create the very occurrences of which they tell. "The fiction makes us real,"³ but it makes us unreal as well.

Kroetsch, in his essay "The Fear of Women in Prairie Fiction," writes that the "basic grammatical pair in the story-line (the energy-line) of prairie fiction is house:horse . . . Masculine: feminine."⁴ But this master narrative of essential "dual, hierarchized oppositions"⁵ drives much more than prairie fiction; it drives patriarchal society, especially through sexual and social relationships. Hélène Cixous predicts what will occur when this fiction is recognized as a fiction: "all the stories would have to be told differently, the future would be incalculable, the historical forces would, will change hands, bodies: another thinking as yet not thinkable will transform the functioning of all society."⁶ *Crow*, most definitely, is a story "told differently." It foregrounds essential and hierarchical binaries as fiction, but also refuses to resolve their dynamic relationship into a final answer. The future, in the novel, is finally incalculable, because it is forming through the relationships of forces in the present.

Crow derives much of its energy from the hierarchical opposition between masculine and feminine. And the foregrounded and fantastic fiction of this pair demonstrates the unreality of it as absolute essential structure. Both sides of the equation are parodied to the point where they become absurd and begin to collapse. Ann Mandel, writing of the poet John Newlove, outlines the masculine position: ". . . men striv[e] against themselves for impossible perfection, suffering their bodies, not knowing how to find release from a self-created sickness."⁷ The self-created disease for the men in *Crow* is the fiction of the essential nature of binary divisions and all which that entails. When the men fight the women, the sky, death, time, the dark, the hot and the fecund, they fight the products of their own patriarchal fiction. In fighting the products of their own fiction, the men are, thus, fighting themselves. In Lacanian terms, the men battle the Symbolic (the Law, Language, Name of the Father) and the order it imposes on the real. So, in a sense, they fight the Father in futile and bizarre Oedipal quests. However, because the parody is so extreme, the structuralist theoretical position is also undermined.

It seems fair to say that the men in *Crow* derive more of their energy from binary oppositions than do the women. They fight harder towards the self-imposed goal of perfection and they have more to lose. Cixous's comments are appropriate: "And the movement by which each opposition is set up to produce mean-

ing is the movement by which the couple is destroyed. A universal battlefield. Each time a war breaks out. Death is always at work."⁸ On the battlefield Cixous describes, the female half of the pair loses and becomes the ground on which "male privilege . . . sustains itself."⁹ However, this does not happen in *Crow*. Generally the men destroy themselves with a ferocity which makes them appear either grotesque or pitiful or both. In all of their activities the men struggle against death, domesticity, closure. And they fight using machines, boundaries, structures, language, and an attempt to extend linear time forever. Paradoxically, the goals and the tools of the fight are implicit in each other. Time tries to ward off death, walls counter walls, structure fights closure.

Many of the men die because their machines are ineffectual in the given circumstances. Not only are the men finally impotent in their struggles, the mechanical extensions, of both their way of thinking and their power, are as well. Skandl dies when his plane falls from the sky: "ice forming on the wings of the Piper Cub had caused the crash" (135). O'Holleran "fell, landing headfirst in an open bag of drilling mud" (144), in a rage because the derrick had discovered only "a dry hole" (143). Droniuk "fell into his threshing machine while raging at the sky because the huge field of wheat proved to be all straw without grain" (140). Even horses aren't spared. When Joe Lightning screamed his laughing cry, a "horse [male, most likely] ran head-on into an abandoned threshing machine and broke its neck" (158). The treatment of machines in *Crow* is different from that at the end of *Badlands*. There the two Annas watch a grizzly suspended from a helicopter. Ann Mandel comments on the grizzly's "comic double imprisonment by machine and sexuality."¹⁰ In *Crow* the machine does not remain as a symbol of imprisonment, nor of transcendent male power. In *Crow* both men and machines fall down on the job, not failing in tandem in pursuit of a common goal, but ineffectually and by chance.

The schmier game is another of the men's futile attempts to escape the entrapment of their own making. They play schmier to extend time and avoid death. Unlike the machines, however, time is not merely an ineffectual tool. Time is death's own tool. This paradox makes itself felt in the very nature of the game. The crow, sensing "the desperate nature of the playing" (85), asks the most important question: "Win? Win? Somebody's going to

win?" (87). In a situation like this even 151 days is not long enough, unless, of course, death wins. Death almost wins.

At first death is only an extra player, odd man out, hanging around on the sidelines. But its presence is felt. Liebhaber "recognized the seriousness of their game" (93) only after Old Lady Lang told him, " 'You're going to die in this house'" (93). After the move to Heck's, "the stench of death spread" (98). Death at this point moves more directly into the game. The men have "diarrhea" (97) and are "losing weight" (98). However, they have yet to identify death as the player most likely to win: "the consequences of not winning were too terrible to contemplate" (98). Instead the men see death in the guise of the women. With the move to the basement of the church, death enters the game as a human player in the form of Marvin Straw. And then the paradox reverses itself. To save Jerry Lapanne the men "had to lose" (108). They also "had to win . . . sometimes, to recover money, in order to go on losing" (109). At least the men can win this game. They only have to play for three days.

The ghost of Martin Lang appears, perhaps to remind the players that they have really won nothing. He is the visible consequence of not winning. The men continue their game in Skandl's granary, believing that he will come home and renew them. But he does not and finally the "players were more corpses than men" (125-6). Marvin Straw begs to end the game seemingly just before death wins it. And ironically Vera's beauty and Tiddy's cooking end the game—sex and domesticity. The men, after 151 days, are back where they started, courting exactly what they were trying to flee—woman/womb/tomb.

The men also court what they are trying to flee with boundaries, structure and language. Skandl builds his lighthouse against Liebhaber, his sexual competitor, against death, the dark, the hot and the absence of meaning. He has the full and eager support of most of the men who argue that the lighthouse "must be built taller, still taller" (49). As Kroetsch discusses in *Labyrinths of Voice*, the lighthouse is "the temptation of the single."¹¹ It is against plurality and multiplicity. Paradoxically, the lighthouse stands for the very thing it so fights—death resulting from singular systematic closure. It is not surprising that the "wives and mothers . . . saw the tower as a kind of tomb or monument" (47). They, unlike the men, see the lighthouse as the symbolic embodi-

ment of their position within patriarchal society. It is also not surprising that the women who object are denoted by their formal names/positions within that system—wives and mothers, the ground on which the fathers, husbands, sons sustain their privilege. The lighthouse rises towards heaven and the singularity of one all-encompassing *langue*, a language which both creates binary oppositions and rests upon them.

To protect "their secret place" (20), the men use many tools, especially language. First they create the physical enclosure of the beer parlor, as a place to counter the enclosure of the house and domesticity. To support the sanctity of the place, they enlist the legal powers of language: "It was against the laws of the municipality for a woman to enter the beer parlor" (18). When these strategies fail and Tiddy enters, the men resort to the special code of bullshit: "'The world is a double hernia' . . . 'A cracked pot. A boiled lemon. A scab and a carbuncle'" (20). The men's individual speech acts are not important; they have a linguistic structure to bolster and protect them. Martin Lang, as Peter Thomas notes, "is secure within his own *langue*,"¹² and safe within the walls of the beer parlor. However, his belief in the security of systematic language is misplaced. It kills him. Lang was "able to believe that June was June" (18). He dies because he dresses for the language rather than for the weather.

Martin Lang's death creates a literal silence which results from his belief in language rather than in the real. The crow's speech parodies such rigid systematic *langue* and makes of it another kind of silence. As Robert Lecker writes, the crow really says "very little."¹³ And in the emptiness lies the parody. Roman Jakobson, in "Linguistics and Poetics," outlines the "factors inalienably involved in verbal communication": addresser, addressee, context, code, contact and message.¹⁴ In the crow's speech, the contact function is predominant. Jakobson's remarks about this function put the crow in the proper perspective: "The endeavor to start and sustain communication is typical of talking birds; thus the phatic function of language is the only one they share with human beings."¹⁵ So the presence of a talking crow, in itself, is not entirely absurd. However, the parody results from the men's relationship to the crow and its speech. While both men and women talk with and listen to the crow, only the "men asked each other, what did the crow say about the flight of birds in a

high wind . . . about salamanders . . . women . . . guns" (152). Indeed "the black crow was . . . quoted as an authority" (152). Investing the crow's speech with meaning, the men place their faith in the more or less mechanical means of checking the channel. They invest mere contact with the greatest of authority. Thus *langue* becomes only a noisy silence.

The men's relationship with the crow parallels their relationship with the women. During the schmier game, they resist the crow's utterances, in much the same way that they resist and try to escape the women. And although the men cannot "agree on the sex of the crow" (97), the impression created is that the bird is female. As they do in the schmier game, the men begin by fleeing domestication, closure and women, and end up courting authority and closure in the form of the (possibly) female crow. Again the men cannot find a way out of their self-created disease.

The crow's noise, the silence in ultimate meaning, is the parodic (paradoxically female) end of the line for the traditional masculine quest based on the foundation of binary divisions. JG's "terrible silence" (156) is the extreme (paradoxically male) opposite. His pre-linguistic silence parodies the feminine side of the binary structure—the Mother, the body, chaos and absence. JG lives surrounded by women, seemingly indistinct from his mother—The Mother. He has no father present to facilitate his entry into language and hence meaning. With his suspect and possibly dual paternity, John Gustav has an overabundance of names of the fathers, but no Name of the Father. He remains in a condition of bodily chaos, filling his pants rather frequently. JG never becomes a subject differentiated from the objects around him, especially from "his only friend, the black crow"(148). So, "not guilty of thought" (147), he cuts his figure eight around the house and garden, climbs the tree and steps "directly into the sky" (148).

JG's ascent and fall, his motion based on "simple knowing" (147), is also opposed to the quests of the other men, so driven by reason, action and meaning. Thus, on the one hand, we have pre-linguistic silence and unthinking motion; on the other, we have noisy codified silence and purposeful questing. A binary structure. Feminine:male. The irony, of course, is that both positions produce exactly the same results: silence and death.

With JG, contrasting as he does with both the crow and the men, Kroetsch almost doesn't need the women for effective parody. But *Crow* is excessive and the women contribute their fair share.

It is of course with the women, the triad—woman/womb/tomb, that the men struggle and seek with such ferocity to protect themselves against. And the fiction of binaries defines the women precisely as the other, the chaotic, the irrational, the dark, fecund and hot. That same fiction, of course, makes of women the mother, the virgin, the domestic caregiver. In the parody of binaries in the novel, Kroetsch plays with all of these definitions of woman. And, as do the men, the women assume the most extreme positions, parodic positions. The Lang women are excessive. Four generations of them live, at one time or another, on Tiddy's farm and a fifth (female, most likely) is on the way. The four generations, as close as it is possible to figure, are made up of 14 women. And one black mare. So the women are healthy, long-lived and fertile.

The Lang women are also unabashedly sexual. From the oldest to the youngest, they either fondly remember or actively indulge their sexual desire. Old Lady Lang remembers "the nameless Cree buffalo hunter" (195). Theresa "slides a hand into the pocket of [Darryl Dish's] cut-offs" (217). Gladys "raises her long, flowered skirt off her legs . . . moves aside the crotch of her bloomers . . . rubs the warm egg between her legs" (217). After a long time as "the most proper creature in the municipality" (63), Tiddy, in her imagination, takes "every man who had ever loved her . . . And those she wanted" (215). Theresa and Vera make the most extreme statements about female sexuality. Floating in Skandl's granary, Vera asserts her sexuality publicly: "Obscenely, [she] gestured . . . raised up her full breasts . . . to the startled on-lookers" (198). Theresa seemingly breaks the taboo against incest. She has a liaison with "a ghost" (187) which closely resembles that of her grandfather: "His legs went this way and that when he walked" (188). With their sexual activities, the women display the very behaviour that essentialist binary thinking defines and tries so hard to control.

The women's other activities are also extreme, and non-rational, non-linear, rhythmical, and undirected towards goals or meaning. Rita writes "her erotic letters" (88). The old lady repeatedly clutches her "ball of sorrow" (10). Rose buries her

dishes and Anna Marie combs her hair. Not surprisingly, the next generation of Lang women take up their mothers' habits. The motivations for these activities are so varied that explanation becomes meaningless: "When Gladys was upset, or happy, or depressed, or merely bored, or something else, or nothing, she took her ball and went outside and began to throw it and catch it" (73). The women's activities are not only unexplainable, meaningless and cyclic, they are also directed entirely towards the self and away from society. Like the women's sexual practices, their habits do not focus on men and their satisfaction. Indeed, the Lang women do not seem to need men at all. Even their auto-eroticism suggests that, for the women, men are an unnecessary, if sometimes pleasurable, excess.

Of course, the women's chaotic, sexual and non-rational behaviours do not receive the only extreme and parodic treatment in *Crow*. As Robert Lecker points out, "the line of women who protect hearth and home . . . has been destroyed, the stereotype is dead."¹⁶ The line dies by parody. Tiddy, the nurturer, does not succumb to grief when Martin dies and sits reminding her of the fact right outside her bedroom window. Instead she nurses Liebhaber. At "a time of year when farmers should take a few hours off" (84), Tiddy becomes a domestic whirlwind, organizing her daughters, preparing vegetables, making up "a kettle of sauerkraut and backbone . . . pull[ing] enough rhubarb to make three pies" (85). Tiddy and her girls manage to do all the farm chores as well. Eventually Tiddy realizes "that the women were running the world better than had the men" (85). The need for men seems to fade even more in the face of the women's practical abilities. The women do not need the men to entertain them, nor to fulfill their sexual desires, nor to attend to the practical matters of life. However, as it is with the men and the absurd extremeness of their position, the result, for the women and the position of the Great Matriarchy, is death. And, thus, silence.

The women, with their chaotic sexuality, their repetitive, non-rational and bizarre activities, their longevity, their desire and their excess, are outrageous. Likewise, the men, with their machines, their wars, their bullshit, and their card playing, exceed the bounds of everything but imagination. The men and the women in *Crow* represent the extreme positions to which the essentialist definitions of binary oppositions can take us. In that

extremeness, lies the parody of binaries. As a rigidly deterministic structure, the opposition of masculine and feminine collapses under the weight of its unreality. However, the play of male and female forces is dynamic. To retain this energy, Kroetsch foregoes any final implosion of the binary by allowing traces of ambiguity to undermine the absolute positions of his characters.

The energy of ambiguity, in *Crow*, is even greater than that which derives from the head to head combat between essentialist binary divisions. The force of ambiguities depends, largely, on point of view. And the narrator in the novel is particularly elusive when it comes to point of view. The tallest of tales and the most banal of details are related from a distance, without intrusion, without evaluation. The narrator's position regarding resolution of the parody she, or he, recounts seems to be that "to desire an end [resolution] / is to desire."¹⁷ The play of female and male forces, without narrative judgement, creates a text where readers enact, in the present, the very tensions which the text foregrounds. Kroetsch does indeed make his readers struggle. Ambiguities exist which frustrate resolution. Asking questions is one way to highlight the points of tension among the many ambiguities in *Crow*. So we will ask some questions.

What is normal? To whom? Cathy Lang Lightning waits, at the end of *Crow*, "hoping that Joe Lightning will fall into her arms" (218). The novel ends with one of its most ambiguous characters waiting for the impossible. Is this normal? Is Cathy really "the normal one" (82)? Everyone seems to say that she is—"her relatives, her friends, her mother, her sisters" (82). Amongst the friends and relatives, no distinction is made between male and female. But who really thinks Cathy is normal? The schmier players do not think so at all. Cathy wants to marry for love, while "no person in the municipality, ever, they explained, had married for love" (100). Tiddy may think Cathy normal, but why, then, is she angry at her for not showing "some interest in the younger [schmier] players", especially when she "knew it was serious love" (91) with Joe Lightning? Is it normal, in the parody of essentialist binary definitions, for a woman to pursue fulfillment through love, marriage, baking, and the fixing up of the domestic abode, be it a little house with a picket fence or an old car body? It is debatable whether Cathy is so very different from her sisters. She seems to bake something as a response to almost

anything, not unlike Gladys who throws and catches her ball for many reasons and no reason: Cathy "liked to bake, on a rainy day" (192). But baking has an end, it feeds people; and Cathy's baking is not for her own consumption: "everyone reached to the tray of overnight cookies that Cathy took from the oven"(186). What is normal?

Is John Skandl an impressive, if failed, phallic hero, or a wimp who lets his wife support him while he goes on juvenile and self-aggrandizing jaunts? Theresa is impregnated in an act of ghostly incest—sexual and subversive. Why is she attracted to a man who "wanted there to be a perfect woman waiting, a woman with child"(209) Or is Darryl Dish just a pretty pair of cut-offs?

Tiddy. Is she a self-sufficient paragon who could do very well without men? Or is she the proper matron who nourishes her menfolk and sends money to her husband so he can continue with his important business away from home? Tiddy is the one who always seeks to legitimate pregnancy: "Someone must take a wife" (18), yet she never castigates any of her daughters for becoming pregnant, for expressing their sexuality outside of marriage. Thus we can ask whether her views of sexuality and marriage are subversive to or supporting of patriarchal society. Does Tiddy really run the farm by herself, or does she succeed because Liebhaber makes her rich "by developing a new breed of cattle" (69)?

What about Liebhaber? Does he fight domestication, of himself, of the "free, beautiful letters" (69), or does he court it? At one point Liebhaber becomes one half of "the laziest pair of creatures in the district" (62), almost unable to function in any other capacity than as JG's baby-sitter. So is he a newspaper man, a prophet, cattle breeder, politician, civilizing man, or an incompetent? Or all, or none? At times, Liebhaber seems to court the domestication he tries to flee. He is the founding schmier player, tying himself into a death knot because of "the inadequacy of truth" (76). He wants to marry Tiddy, most desperately, in spite of the fact that he is convinced that she "had persuaded the alphabet itself to become as inflexible as her original wish and command: Someone must take a wife" (69). Liebhaber wants to take a wife. However, it is Tiddy finally who says, "Sermon be damned" (212), denying the one condition which would facilitate an immediate wedding ceremony.

Liebhaber's fear of and desire for domestication parallel, or are part of, his fear of and desire for language. Both are paradoxical unless viewed as the play of necessary forces rather than as pre-existing and unalterable structures. Liebhaber recognizes the hegemony of language as an abstract organizing system, one not unlike that of essentialist binary divisions. He tried "the simplest changing of the alphabet—and heard himself making sounds for which he had no signs at all" (69). He tried to twist and rearrange letters of words, separating them spatially, but "he knew the word OUT was still OUT" (54), regardless of what he did with its components. The same urge which drives Liebhaber to try and escape the power of OUT, is the same one which drives him in the schmier game. And, as in the schmier game, he cannot help but court what he tries to flee. With Tiddy, with the schmier game, with language, Liebhaber fights against a master narrative written in the past, with the power to remember and structure both the present and the future. However, as long as he seeks to counter the absence of "meaning anywhere in the world" (94) with a pre-written and inflexible story, he is caught: "Martin Lang [langue?] was on his back" (210).

Liebhaber can't live with language and can't live without it. He remembers "for the third time in his life, the future . . . 'we're going to be afflicted with a flood. That's the one certainty we have in our miserable lives'" (145). Based on the existing story of Noah's ark, Liebhaber writes himself into it as the saviour of the town. When his ark overturns and traps him, Liebhaber begins to write his own story, independently of the past: "*I perish . . . but only in a dream . . . Enough would be enough*" (163). However, he tries for the master narrative, even if he must write his own: "He could account for events, announce the presence of design, under the apparent chaos" (163). Liebhaber begins here to realize how the present forms both the future and what will be the past, but he still does not see the relationship between desire and language as one of process rather than one of fixity. Later, when he leaves his ark "to visit all those who were staying on shore . . . want[ing] those few scraps of wood, those fragments of old trees, carved and cut into the shapes of the alphabet" (197), Liebhaber acknowledges the need for the continuity and collectivity of both his fellow humans and language. The scene is set for the moment

when desire and language, male and female, house/horse, hot/cold, light and dark are poised as equal and active forces in becoming.

When Vera and Marvin Straw disappear through the gap in the CN bridge, when Vera's boy and Jerry Lapanne crash simultaneously into the rigid phallic symbol in the centre of the gap, the world of *Crow* exists suspended in a moment when transformation is possible. Kroetsch writes, elsewhere, of a similar moment: "the lost and everlasting moment when chaos and order were synonymous . . . that timeless spilt-second in time when the one, in the process of becoming the other, was itself the other."¹⁸ In *Crow*, the possibilities are mutually dependent and interactive. The symbolic, the structural, "the center piling . . . stiff and tall like a lighthouse, [exists] in the middle of the swollen river" (202). Desire, the body, the hot, fecund and dark surround and support the structural and symbolic. Yet, the gap in the bridge, cannot, would not, exist without the bridge, the bridging structure. Reciprocity, process, interaction—the elements of a parodied binary structure, master narrative, are freed to write past and future in the present.

With the simultaneous crash and disappearance, Tiddy "decide[s] to live for the moment" (203). And into this moment, the forces of the novel are drawn. Tiddy's daughters, with their sexuality, their repetitions, their fertility, converge on the Lang farm. The bees and the light and the night, the earth and the sky, all are insistent in their presence. Female and male, transgressive sexuality and the organizing symbolic of language interact. Tiddy names Liebhaber: "Child. Husband. Son. Brother. Old man. Friend. Helper. Enemy. Lover" (216), yet her naming both creates and negates symbolic relationships, all in a sexual moment. Liebhaber realizes that "Gutenberg, too, was only a scribe" (216). But Liebhaber also becomes "the inventor of the world's words" (215): "Helm . . . Help . . . Hell . . . Ho" (215). While he relinquishes the organizing power of master narratives, Liebhaber needs language with which to write the moment. New relationships are forming in this moment. Kroetsch writes in "The Fear of Women in Prairie Fiction," the long standing model of marriage "has been replaced by models of another kind. What that kind is, I've only begun . . . to guess."¹⁹ In *Crow*, the relationship between Tiddy and Liebhaber, among all of the forces, is in formation. The

dynamics of the binaries play in a "naked circle" (215), mandala-like in both image and effect.

The topos that is *Crow* is one in which binaries are altered and alter each other. As opposing halves of an abstract objective system, they are parodied until they collapse under the weight of their own absurdity. However, the pairs are not denied; they remain as dynamic relationships. Even structure and master narratives are not abolished; they also function as forces in an interactive field. Kroetsch's position, in this novel, vis-a-vis structure and process is complex. He counters the structuralist project, which Michel Foucault sees as "the most systematic effort to evacuate the concept of the event,"²⁰ with multiple and particular happenings. However, also like Foucault, Kroetsch is not "trying to do for the event what was previously done with the concept of structure."²¹ He is, rather, writing both in a text/place where the one and the other act together, on each other, and on the reader. Tiddy and Liebhaber, "together, in the naked circle of everything" (215), exist in a relationship of desire and language, process and structure, male and female, in which remembering, dreaming and knowing create the past and future in the present moment.

Remember the future:

Imagine the past: you can only do so in
this present we share.²²

NOTES

¹ Shirley Neuman and Robert Wilson, *Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch*, Western Canadian Literary Documents, no.3 (Edmonton: NeWest, 1982) 26.

² Robert Kroetsch, *What the Crow Said* (Toronto: General, 1978). All subsequent references to the text are contained in the body of the essay.

³ Robert Kroetsch, ed., *Creation* (Toronto: New Press, 1970) 63.

⁴ Robert Kroetsch, "The Fear of Women in Prairie Fiction: An Erotics of Space," *Open Letter* ns 5.4 (1983): 49.

⁵ Hélène Cixous, "Sorties," *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988) 287.

⁶ Cixous 289.

⁷ Ann Mandel, "Uninventing Structures: Cultural Criticism and the Novels of Robert Kroetsch," *Open Letter* ns 3.8 (1978): 63.

⁸ Cixous 288.

⁹ Cixous 288.

¹⁰ Mandel 64.

¹¹ Neuman and Wilson 117.

¹² Peter Thomas, *Robert Kroetsch*, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, no.13 (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980) 105.

¹³ Robert Lecker, *Robert Kroetsch* (Boston: Twayne, 1986) 105.

¹⁴ Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988) 35.

¹⁵ Jakobson 37.

¹⁶ Lecker 104.

¹⁷ Robert Kroetsch, *Advice to My Friends* (Don Mills: Stoddart, 1985) 65.

¹⁸ Robert Kroetsch, "Beyond Nationalism: A Prologue," *Open Letter* ns 5.4 (1983): 86.

¹⁹ Kroetsch, "The Fear of Women" 54.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984) 56.

²¹ Foucault 56.

²² Carlos Fuentes, "Remember the Future," *Salmagundi* 68-69 (1985-6): 338-39.