

Record: 1

Title: Decolonizing Canadian writing: Why gender? Whose English? When Canada?

Authors: Dorscht, Susan Rudy

Source: Essays on Canadian Writing; Winter94, Issue 54, p124, 29p

Document Type: Literary Criticism

Subject Terms: *POLITICS & literature
*AUTHORS, Canadian

Geographic Terms: CANADA

Reviews & Products: UNHIDING the Hidden (Book)

Abstract: Studies the decolonization of the Canadian writing. Review of the book 'Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction,' by Robert Kroetsch; Dominant version of reality in Canada; Feminist and antiracist cultural criticism in Canada; Canadian writers' feeling of alienation, desperation and uncertainty.

Full Text Word Count: 10896

ISSN: 03160300

Accession Number: 9504071124

Database: Academic Search Complete

DECOLONIZING CANADIAN WRITING: WHY GENDER? WHOSE ENGLISH? WHEN CANADA?

But underneath this layering, this concealing, is a woman who still recognizes that something doesn't fit. . . "It was the language again, I couldn't use it because it wasn't mine" [Atwood, Surfacing 115].

-- Robert Kroetsch, "Unhiding the Hidden" (44)

and english is
my mother tongue
is
my father tongue
is a foreign lan lan lang
language
l/anguish
anguish
a foreign anguish

is english --

-- Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue* (58)

To name what our own tongues will call something.

-- Erin Moure, *Furious* (39)

i: **Toward a Radical Unhiding of the Hidden**

Following from martin heidegger's own blindnesses and insights in *Poetry, Language, Thought*,^[1] Robert Kroetsch's *Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction*^[2] reveals a great deal about what was possible, in 1974, for a white, male, heterosexual, Alberta writer to see of his "predicament": "he works with a language, within a literature, that appears to be authentically his own, and not a borrowing. But just as there was in the Latin word a concealed Greek experience, so there is in the Canadian word a concealed other experience, sometimes British, sometimes American" (43).

Kroetsch, a farmer's son from Heisler, Alberta, wrote *Unhiding the Hidden* in Binghamton, New York, where he had been living since 1961 and where he had also written his early novels and the beginning of his continuing poem. All of this writing was particularly out of his place -- Western Canada -- when he was out of that place, in New York. That he was called, in the issue of the *Journal of Canadian Fiction* in which *Unhiding the Hidden* first appeared, a "Canadian novelist, critic and poet presently living in Binghamton, N.Y." (45) is useful to bear in mind as we read of the "predicament," in 1986, of poet Claire Harris, who emigrated to Canada from Trinidad in 1966: "after two hundred years in this country, blacks as a group are still seen as newcomers. In Canada, normally so open to immigrants, a blatant ethnocentricity condemns people of colour to the sidelines: eternal immigrants forever poised on the verge of not belonging" (*Poets in Limbo* 115). As Shirin Kudchedkar puts it, "Black poets tend to be labelled and discussed separately as 'Black' while poets who have immigrated from the U.S.A., Australia, Italy, Greece are 'Canadian' poets" (2). I am not trying to argue that Kroetsch is not a Canadian poet. But what does a poet do when the language -- what Kroetsch calls "the Canadian word" -- does not even appear to be her own?

Kroetsch tells a story, in *On Being an Alberta Writer*, of his disillusionment with history, which is not unlike Harris's:

I was a child -- . . . my parents took me to Spring Lake, to a picnic. . . I was playing in a large, shallow depression in the ground, a depression that somehow wasn't natural. My father came by, looking for me. I asked about the place where I was playing. He said, casually, that it was a buffalo wallow.

It's where buffalo rolled and scratched, he said. He could tell me a little more -- the lake never

went dry, he explained, the buffalo came here to drink.

What buffalo? I asked. Or wondered, if I didn't ask. I don't remember now. When? From where? . . . Even at that young age I was secure in the illusion that the land my parents and grandparents homesteaded had had no prior occupants, animal or human. Ours was the ultimate tabula rasa. We were the truly innocent. (70)

From this childhood experience, Kroetsch comes to the recognition that "History as I knew it did not account for the world I lived in" (70): "The authorized history, the given definition of history, was betraying us on those prairies," and "we too betrayed it" (71). No educated person had even heard of the buffalo wallows he played in; his father felt guilty for letting the tepee rings in the prairie grass half a mile south of their farm be removed. The history he knew was not one that made sense of his present, was not one of which he found traces. Kroetsch speaks of having to respond to "those discoveries of absence, to that invisibility, to that silence, by knowing I had to make up a story. Our story" (71). But is his story "our" story? Our Canadian story?

I admit that his recognition of absence and invisibility, and his desire to make visible what he knew to be present, are not unlike the desire of many of us who find language, history, and the construction of reality itself inadequate to our experience.[3] But I find it troubling, given Kroetsch's careful attention to place, that "Unhiding the Hidden" was republished in *Open Letter* in 1983 and in *The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New* in 1989 without any comment that the piece should be read as coming out of the "hiddenness" of its own time. Also disturbing is that in his final essay in the collection, "My Book Is Bigger Than Yours," Kroetsch claims that, by having read the essays in *A Mazing Space: Writing Canadian Women Writing*, "we" (ostensibly including himself) have left "behind the varieties of death that are embedded in patriarchal history" (202). As Kroetsch knows, one variety of death is continued invisibility. In "Delphi: Commentary," the poet-narrator goes all the way to the oracle at Delphi for answers to his questions just to hear (or rather, almost miss hearing) his father's voice say: "What are you doing here? / . . . / Did I teach you nothing?" (38).

For Kroetsch, at least, there was an escape from his colonial "predicament": there was a "radical process" by which Canadian fiction writers could demythologize "the systems that threaten to define them," "uninvent the world," unhide the hidden ("Unhiding" 43). But how radical does this demythologizing seem to us -- particularly to those of us who are not white, heterosexual, male, or from Alberta -- in the early 1990s? To whom are such systems threatening? What remains hidden?

To begin to answer these questions, I want to examine Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, the "most conspicuous example" Kroetsch could offer in 1974 of a Canadian writer's radical demythologizing of systems ("Unhiding" 43). Kroetsch reads the words of the narrator, the

only character who has no name (although we do know that she is white, middle-class, and female) -- "It was the language again. I couldn't use it because it wasn't mine" -- as an instance of a Canadian speaker being unable to find an authentically "Canadian" word. Clearly, Kroetsch has identified one aspect of the narrator's experience in her work as a commercial artist: "I can imitate anything: fake Walt Disney, Victorian etchings in sepia, Bavarian cookies, ersatz Eskimo for the home market. Though what they like best is something they hope will interest the English and American publishers too" (Atwood 57).

But the language the narrator cannot (but does) use is also one that does not refer to her specifically female experiences: her abortion, her role as mother, daughter, and wife, her struggle for selfhood. The words Kroetsch examines occur in the following context in Atwood's narrative. Joe, the narrator's present lover, asks:

"Do you love me, that's all," he said. "That's the only thing that matters."

It was the language again. I couldn't use it because it wasn't mine. He must have known what he meant but it was an imprecise word; the Eskimos had fifty-two names for snow because it was important to them, there ought to be as many for love.

"I want to," I said. "I do in a way." I hunted through my brain for any emotion that would coincide with what I'd said. I did want to, but it was like thinking God should exist and not being able to believe.

"Fucking Jesus," he said, pulling his hand away, "just yes or no, don't mess around."

"I'm trying to tell the truth," I said. The voice wasn't mine, it came from someone dressed as me, imitating me. (115)

Not only is the language not hers, but neither is Joe's apparent question. Kroetsch glosses this scene as follows: "Joe says, 'Do you love me, that's all,' and she thinks: 'It was the language again'" ("Unhiding" 44). But narrators, unlike human beings, do not think. What the narrator says, clearly, in words, to us is that "it" was the language again. What "it" refers to, and what "that" refers to in Joe's statement "Do you love me, that's all" (does saying "I love you" matter, or does his ability to make her say "I love you" matter?), remain unclear. However, in telling us that the language she speaks is not hers, the narrator does speak her experience. In Teresa de Lauretis's words, she speaks as "a subject that is not divided in, but rather at odds with, language" (9).

But even the difference between the white, Alberta, male writer's and the white, Ontario, female writer's relation to language remains hidden in Kroetsch's text. A comparison of the three published versions of "Unhiding the Hidden" reveals some of those hiddennesses. To begin with, neither the 1983 nor the 1989 version corrects the sexist bias of the repeated

masculine pronoun in the original: "he [still] longs to be destroyed"; it is still "his wrath"; "he [still] sets out"; all this is still "his only hope" (43). But the original words "he sets out to be the destroyer" (43) are replaced in 1989 with "he sets out to become the artificer of a possible destruction" (Lovely Treachery 58). This change emphasizes, perhaps, the metaphorical nature of the kind of radical de(con?)struction Kroetsch has words for by 1989.

Another revision is more telling and more hidden: a reference to Anna's "cunt" in 1974 (43) and 1983 (17) is replaced with a reference to her "vagina" in 1989 (59). At first reading, this change might seem to be in deference to feminism. By 1989, Kroetsch must have known that women would rather not be reduced to our genitalia. But the decision to replace "cunt" with "vagina" carries further significance. Kroetsch uses "cunt" in the original in the following way:

In that novel [Surfacing] the three named characters, Joe, David, and Anna, live constantly in danger of becoming American. Waiting for the barbarians, they begin to become, in terms of the essential American paradox, the awaited barbarians. But the Canadian who borrows this posture as an account of his [sic] condition is metamorphosed into the inauthentic fool that David makes of himself with his speech and his camera, that Anna makes of herself with her mirror and her compact and her cunt. (43; emphasis added, except for named)

Any careful reader of Surfacing knows that the word "cunt" is not Kroetsch's. Atwood uses it three times in the novel (49,128,162); "vagina" appears nowhere.

In fact, Anna uses the word "cunt" first. After David (her lover) says he intends to grow a beard, she says, "I don't like him kissing me when he has a beard, it reminds me of a cunt" (49).[4] Unable to find language to speak of her sexual desires, Anna pretends to silence herself:

Her hand goes over her mouth as though she is shocked. "Isn't that awful?"

"Filthy talk, woman," David says, "she's uncultured and vulgar."

"Oh I know. I've always been like that." (49; emphasis added)

Trying to find language for what she likes and wants and what she doesn't, the words she speaks are first self-censored and then called "filthy talk."

Ellen Moers, in *Literary Women: The Great Writers*, identifies the problem women writers have in imag(in)ing our sexuality. Seeking a female equivalent to the phallus, she finds it "does not . . . exist":

the term for the canal leading to and from the womb is vagina, Latin for sheath or scabbard:

thus only a single function of the canal, and biologically its less important, is evoked -- that of a tight receptacle for the male organ, visualized as a sword. (As passageway to life for the newborn infant, the canal walls miraculously stretch and expand as no scabbard or sheath can do.) (256)

That Kroetsch replaces "cunt" with "vagina" in the 1989 version of "Unhiding the Hidden" is highly significant if we recall that "cunt" is the only word women have to describe our complex sexual organs. In one of the few Canadian definitions I could "unhide," Sarah Murphy speaks of "cunt" as "labia majora and minora and clitoris and vagina" (15). By calling Anna's cunt her vagina, Kroetsch has unnamed her, reduced her to the male naming of female sexuality, tied her tongue.

Even the overt relationship the novel makes, which the narrator "didn't get," between Canada and cunt remains hidden in Kroetsch's translation to vagina:

"Hey, maybe I'll hook a beaver," he [David] said. "The national emblem. That's what they should've put on the flag instead of a maple leaf, a split beaver; I'd salute that."

"Why should it be split?" I said. It was like skinning the cat, I didn't get it.

He looked exasperated. "It's a joke," he said; and when I still didn't laugh, "Where've you been living? It's slang for cunt." (Atwood 128)

Where the narrator has been living is not where David lives; she is, as usual, in a place where she does not "get it": "on [her] home ground, foreign territory" (12). Only in its third reference is "cunt" used in a derogatory sense: David tells the narrator that Joe is "off in the bushes somewhere with that cunt [Anna] on four legs" (162).

By this point in the novel, I recognize the ways in which David is an "inauthentic fool." He does use his speech and his camera like a barbarian. And let me note one of his barbarous, misogynous acts: he forces Anna to take off her clothes so he and Joe can film her. Rightly afraid of these men, Anna warns the narrator not to destroy the film because "they'll kill you" (178). Clearly, David does make a fool of himself. But like most perpetrators of violence, he blames his behaviour on her: "She asks for it, she makes me do it" (147).

In what sense, then, does Anna make a fool of herself? Her mirror, her compact, and her cunt are not her own. She makes use of them, but only to avoid male disapproval and violence. Anna recognizes that her only power is in the way she uses her body, not for her own pleasure but to avoid male wrath: "she was desperate her body her only weapon and she was fighting for her life, he was her life, her life was the fight: she was fighting him because if she ever surrendered the balance of power would be broken and he would go elsewhere" (164). She also recognizes and tells David that his problem is that he "hate[s] women" (121).

Perhaps Anna is afraid that David might go elsewhere only because there is no "elsewhere" where she or the narrator can go. Perhaps, at the end of her story, the narrator will walk away, have her child (her self?), and go on with her life. All we are told is that Joe waits for her, and that "the trees surround" her, "asking and giving nothing" (208). I'm reminded of her disappointment in her first husband -- that "he wanted to be pleased" (44) -- and of the meaning of trees for her:

It's like the time he [her father] used to play hide and seek with us in the semi-dark after supper, it was different from playing in a house, the space to hide in was endless; even when we knew which tree he had gone behind there was the fear that what would come out when you called would be someone else. (54)

A feminist reader like me hopes that when Anna comes out -- of the woods, of this text -- she will be someone else. Playing hide-and-seek with a male critic feels something like this; the space in which he has to hide is endless, too. But the misogyny of the system within which Anna, the woman narrator, Atwood, Kroetsch, and I all work remains hidden in Kroetsch's essay. None of us can, apparently, "come out" because there is no "out" available in Kroetsch's reading of *Surfacing*.

In Canada, the dominant version of reality is that powerful persons are white, middle-class, and heterosexual, as any glance at the television, the *Globe and Mail*, or the average English department will reveal. Perhaps those who are not positioned outside of the dominant version of reality, or who deny that they are positioned outside of it, do not know -- or allow themselves to become aware -- of alternate perceptions of reality. But persons self-conscious about their marginal status vis-a-vis the dominant culture do live elsewhere, in a place with few images, little access, and much uncertainty. Sylvia Soderlind argues, for example, that "there are no paradigms outside the centre, and extraterritoriality is, strictly speaking, an impossibility. The subversion of language cannot take place outside its territory, because the outside does not exist" (232). I am not surprised that the texts she cites are not by women or people of colour. Had Kroetsch (or even Soderlind) chosen as the most radical example a text written by a lesbian, a black or brown woman, or even a poor, white woman, perhaps the difference in power and position between any woman writer and Kroetsch would not have remained so hidden.

The situation of the white, published, English-speaking Canadian writer, whether man or woman, from Alberta or Ontario, is always a powerful one because, as Soderlind notes in a phrase that is itself strangely colonizing, Canada has not only been colonized but is itself "a colonizer of [what she tellingly calls] its indigenous peoples" (3). Although different from Kroetsch's essay in time, place of publication, and theoretical context, Soderlind's text furthers Kroetsch's argument, not mine. She writes, "while economically advantaged, Canada is 'colonized' in a specifically cultural and linguistic sense: the Canadian or

Quebecois writer has no other language than that of the perceived colonizer" (3-4).

Soderlind's acknowledgement that, for many critics, the situation of a settler colony such as Canada "provides a good model for feminism, insofar as the linguistic situation in which a sense of place has to be constructed from within a language inherently alien to the territory is similar to the situation of women's writing" (233), remains impossible to interrogate because she chooses not to investigate even white women's texts in the major chapters of her study. Her readings of Canadian and Quebecois fiction are almost entirely readings of white men's fictions.[5] Moreover, she argues that "Robert Kroetsch is much more representative of postmodernism than both his contemporary female colleagues and the many minority writers that have come into prominence more recently" (233). Granting Soderlind the greatest benefit of the doubt, and assuming she uses the term "Robert Kroetsch" as a metonym for "Robert Kroetsch's work," perhaps his fiction is much more postmodern than that of many of his women colleagues. But if she hopes to find what she seeks -- a "literary subversion" that is "analogous to ideological defiance" (229) -- she would do well to consider Kroetsch's female colleagues who are poets.

ii: Extending the Visible Spectrum

Much of the feminist and antiracist cultural criticism in Canada that takes on these issues directly has been done by women who are poets engaged in formal experimentation, etymological investigation, and linguistic manipulation. In addition to *Looking for Livingstone*, two earlier collections of poetry, and her well-received recent book *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks*, Marlene Nourbese Philip's essays, published over the past six years in *Fuse*, *Now*, *This Magazine*, and the *Toronto Star*, have just been collected, along with some previously unpublished material, under the title *Frontiers: Essays and Writings on Racism and Culture*. Dionne Brand has published a number of books of poetry, including *No Language Is Neutral*,[6] and her essays have appeared in *Language in Her Eye: Views on Writing and Gender by Canadian Women Writing in English* and *Fireweed*. Claire Harris has published five books of poetry since 1984, and her essays have appeared in *A Mazing Space*, *Language in Her Eye*, and *Fireweed*.

Other publications that include work by women poets investigating the possibilities for social change available in an interrogation of language are an issue of *Fireweed* (16) called *Women of Colour* (see the dialogue between Himani Bannerji, Dionne Brand, and others), and *Telling It: Women and Language across Cultures*, the published "transformation" of the November 1988 *Telling It* conference held at Simon Fraser University, which includes pieces by Lee Maracle, Daphne Marlatt, Jeannette Armstrong, Joy Kogawa, and Betsy Warland.

All of these women argue, in quite different ways and contexts, and in both their poetry and essays, that "the Canadian word" is never just a -- or everyone's -- Canadian word.[7] Yet those who find themselves at the margins of language, society, privilege, and power remain

largely excluded from the academic discourse of marginality. Soderlind argues that postmodernism is "a metaphorization of postcolonialism," a translation from "a political into an aesthetic register" (233-34). But for her, neither postmodernism nor postcolonialism "has left the parameters of a fundamentally centrist, patriarchal ideology" (234), even though

Ethnic, racial, sexual, social minorities of all kinds are currently being talked about -- less often talking about themselves -- as "colonized," and metaphors of territorial subjection and occupation are bandied about as the focus of attention shifts from the centre (the "metropolis") to the margin (the "colony"). (3)

For anyone who cares to listen, persons marginalized by the dominant culture are talking about themselves. As Makeda Silvera and Nila Gupta say in their preface to the Fireweed issue on women of colour,

So often we hear women's publications, presses and organizations excuse all white publications and groups with the cry that they cannot "find" women of colour. We were never lost. And, as you will note in this issue, we are not invisible. On the contrary, we are alive and living in Canada. (6)

Or, as bell hooks notes in "Postmodern Blackness," those who write on postmodernism "seem not to know black women exist or even to consider the possibility that we might be somewhere writing or saying something that should be listened to, or producing art that should be seen, heard, approached with intellectual seriousness" (24).

For Afro-Canadian or women writers, Native or lesbian writers, the dominant language is that of the present colonizers, those of us who do not see, or read, or cite, or hear them. Language itself must be added to the list of what Philip says are the institutions "we," in Canada, only "appear to share -- education, religion, dress, legal institutions"; all these are "really tombstones erected on the graves of African customs, culture and languages" ("Introduction" 19). "The only peoples," she says, "who be(truly)long here -- who be long here (I use 'be' in the African American vernacular sense), are the Native peoples" (22). In the words of Maracle,

Postcolonialism presumes we have resolved the colonial condition, at least in the field of literature. Even here we are still a classical colony. Our words, our sense and use of language are not judged by the standards set by the poetry and stories we create. They are judged by the standards set by others. (13)

At Making the Links: Anti-Racism and Feminism,[8] a First Nations woman spoke of decolonizing her mind, which had been brainwashed, and filling it with solutions of her own. Following from her, I suggest we replace the adjective "postcolonial" and the noun "postcolonialism" with the verb "to decolonize" to remind ourselves that, because

colonization is experienced internally, decolonizing is always agonizingly difficult work. Decolonizing means writing into the English language experience and syntax, and thus ways of thinking, seeing, and being, that are not only foreign to it but also rendered unthinkable, invisible, unspeakable, and certainly unlivable within it. Decolonizing is a truly radical un hiding of the hidden.

Not surprisingly, feminist and antiracist calls for a radical un hiding of the hidden have only recently and erratically begun to be documented and felt in the academy. Like all large and complex institutions in Canada, the institution of Canadian-literature criticism, in all its diversity, continues to be dominated by white men[9]: Frank Davey, Robert Kroetsch, W.H. New, Robert Lecker, George Woodcock, George Bowering, Barry Cameron, Terry Goldie, W.J. Keith, Arnold E. Davidson. The few (white) women who have come to prominence in recent years --Linda Hutcheon, Shirley Neuman, and Barbara Godard among the best of them -- have been among those academics who have taken an interest in issues of material, as opposed to metaphorical, marginality and oppression. But arguments and debates about how to remedy this through action -- by changing the mechanisms by which writers of colour have access to publishing, for instance, or by acknowledging our internalized racism and misogyny -- have been overshadowed by more widely publicized debates about censorship and canonization.

Philip's essay "The Disappearing Debate" -- which appeared with varying subtitles in *This Magazine* in 1989, *Language in Her Eye* in 1990, and *Frontiers* in 1992 -- addresses what she calls the "tedious debate" in the *Writers Union* newsletters in 1988 about issues of "censorship and the writer and voice" (209).[10] These debates were, she says, "by the white middle class, for the white middle class, about the white middle class" (209), and they functioned as "a giant red herring dragged across the brutally cut path of racism" (213). More useful would have been "discussion about how to enable more Black women to get into print, or how to help those small publishing houses committed to publishing work by Black authors, or any of the many tasks that must be undertaken to make the writing and publishing world truly non-racist" (213).

Similarly, arguments concerning canonization have not been about how we might begin to consider more writers of colour as Canadian poets. Disagree as they do on certain issues, both Lecker and Davey agree, in a special section of *Critical Inquiry* on "The Canadian Canon," that Canadian literature is a construction. But neither of them addresses the relation of power to that construction. For Lecker, "Canadian literature" has been made by "Canadian academic critics" and reinforced by high-school and university curricula (661); for Davey, the institution is not monolithic: "class, gender, ethnicity, region, national politics, business practice, and discursive and institutional inheritance play much larger roles in these struggles than his [Lecker's] use of 'institutional' implies" (680-81). But even if the dominant,

conservative notion of Canadian literature is constantly being challenged by "various graduate programmes, academic conferences, writers' organizations, women's studies programmes, regional publishing houses, provincial arts councils, and grass-roots cultural groups" (681), that this notion is so unrelentingly challenged means it must, in many powerful ways, still exist.

Clearly, the questions critics ask, the texts critics and reviewers cite, the texts professors teach, and the issues editors devote their journals to affect what gets read, taught, and talked about, both within the academy and without. Because most critics, reviewers, professors, and editors are still white men (even when women set the supposed agenda, we can never forget who will be reading us, whom we are speaking to, and whom our tenure committees will value), questions of oppression and silencing have been subtly, or not so subtly, deferred from discussion.[11]

To move, for a moment, to quite another writing context, the Winnipeg poet and academic Emma LaRocque calls her preface to the anthology *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada "Here Are Our Voices -- Who Will Hear?"* Having spoken, having (been?) given voice, a writer cannot assume she has been heard or seen. In their foreword to *Writing the Circle*, (white) editors Jeanne Perreault and Sylvia Vance outline their editorial goal: "to hear the words of people who conventionally, as women and as Aboriginal people, were silenced, we wanted to hear whatever they wished to say" (xiii). But does publishing a voice imply that it has been, or will be, heard?

In a 1972 essay, Davey says that, "When an individual writer fails to achieve personal authenticity, one calls him [sic] cliched, derivative, imitative"; that is, "an image from an alien circumstance has been allowed to stand in the place of what the particular circumstances of man and place required to be written" ("Reflections" 62). But how can someone write in a language that is entirely "alien" to her without overwhelming her "own authentic subjectivity" and trying "to view [her]self through the eyes of others" (62)? As the pregnant, black, Trinidadian narrator living in Canada in Harris's *Drawing Down a Daughter* says to her unborn child, "Child all i have to give / is English which hates/fears your / black skin" (25).

In a recent issue of the Vancouver feminist journal *Room of One's Own*, Margaret Christakos points out the subtle racism of the assumptions behind the subject matter of *Language in Her Eye*. I respond to Christakos in that issue, learning from her argument the extent to which I have colluded in what Adrienne Rich calls "white solipsism" (306). Because it also privileges the concept of gender, this issue of *Essays on Canadian Writing* will be open to similar charges, and it thus offers a location to raise questions about the assumptions upon which we base even our feminist criticism in English, in Canada. When Barbara Gabriel and Lorraine York invited me to write an essay "on any topic relating to the construction of gender in Canadian Literature" for this issue on "The Poetics of Gender" and said they were eager to

have me draw on my recent research, I felt immediately the power of the assumptions around the concepts of gender and Canadian literature. So much so that, even though I had already begun to draw on it in my graduate teaching and in a few articles, I began to question the content of my current research. Clearly, the texts I have found most interesting -- books of poetry by Erin Moure, Claire Harris, Dionne Brand, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Marie Annharte Baker, Jeannette Armstrong[12] -- are not widely considered Canadian literature.

Not one of the essays in Davidson's authoritative (mla-published) *Studies on Canadian Literature: Introductory and Critical Essays* (1990) gave me a way to think about the texts I find so intriguing and important as Canadian literature and so available for discussion here. Keith, in "Third World America: Some Preliminary Considerations," speaks of Canada's marginal status in the international community and makes his point by referencing the Classroom Guide to *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, which has special sections on black poets and Canadian poets while "No other groups are segregated in this way" (16). "The editors" believed, Keith argues, "that they were being both 'liberal' and helpful. Had they imagined themselves into a black or a Canadian viewpoint, they might have had second thoughts" (16; emphasis added). Keith, too, might have had second thoughts had he imagined himself into what is, it seems, an unthinkable position for him: being black and Canadian. In his Canada, his "Third World America," there are, ironically, no black poets.

Neuman's essay, "After Modernism: English-Canadian Poetry since 1960," also in Davidson's volume, at least legitimized my interest in white women poets -- Daphne Marlatt, Phyllis Webb, and Lola Lemire Tostevin. As Neuman quite accurately describes it, the narrative of postmodernism in English-Canadian poetry since 1960 has unquestionably included work by the following writers: George Bowering, Frank Davey, Fred Wah, Robert Kroetsch, Daphne Marlatt, bpNichol, and Michael Ondaatje. The narrative has sometimes included Eli Mandel, Phyllis Webb, and Lola Lemire Tostevin. The narrative has excluded Irving Layton, Margaret Avison, Al Purdy, Wilfred Watson, P.K. Page, D.G. Jones, and Dorothy Livesay.[13]

But because Neuman circumscribes her study by the observations of two white men -- John Sutherland, who observed, in 1947, that on Canada's way to "an identity of its own" it had to pass through the "half-way house" of American examples, and Robert Kroetsch, who reflected, in 1982, "Our national discontinuities make us ripe for Postmodernism" (54) -- her very useful work does not consider texts written after 1982 (the essay was published in 1990). Would an essay published in 1995 on recent, experimental poetry in Canada still be described as "English-Canadian"? Would writers who are troubled by English as a language --for example, Philip, Black, Brand, and Baker -- be part of this imagined narrative?[14] At least one black woman poet, Harris, has been writing, editing, and publishing[15] in Canada since the late 1970s, and her essay "Poets in Limbo," which raises many of the questions I

raise here, appeared in *A Mazing Space* in 1986.

If I am interested in poetry written by members of communities who are not included under the rubric "English-Canadian," have come to prominence since 1982,[16] and are challenging the categories "English" and "Canadian" altogether, then am I participating in what Davey identifies as the crisis in Canadian poetry? His 1992 article "Poetry, Audience, Politics and Region" begins to tell me why an unproblematized "Canadian" poetry may be in crisis:

Canadian poetry may only be in crisis to the extent that the national federation is in crisis. From Toronto, or from Ontario, where most Canadian poetry in other years was written, published or at least legitimated, it may well seem that poetry is in confusion or decline, or is extremely difficult to circulate nationally. But from within women's writing, or from Edmonton, or from one of the First Nations' presses, it may seem to be flourishing. (15-16)

Whether poetry written in Canada is (or seems to be) flourishing or "in confusion or decline" has to do with one's perspective, whether one belongs to a group or place formerly more marginalized and disempowered (like women writers, First Nations' presses, or Edmonton) or a place formerly more centred and politically powerful (like Ontario).

Davey says that,

With what appears to be at least the temporary suspension of a national culture and a national literary audience, it has been extremely difficult for any Canadian poet not discursively affiliated with some regional, feminist, ethnic, racial or otherwise ideological community to find audience, recognition or identity. (14)

But is this true? After all, the "one 'new' poet" whom Davey names as having risen "to undisputed national prominence since 1970" (15) --Robert Kroetsch -- has been the writer, as I have argued, least troubled or oppressed or excluded by language, place, country, or identity, and who has had perhaps the least to unhide. As Davey says, Kroetsch has "positioned himself as a poet [and, I would argue, as a critic] in terms of both a regional 'prairie' identity and a transnational poststructuralist one" (15). But he has also been able to position himself as unmistakably Canadian.

Clearly, "Canadian" is a problematic term that continues, despite the rhetoric of multiculturalism, to signify white and middle class when, as Philip argues, Canadians are already hyphenated: "African, Asian, European and Native" ("Introduction" 25). It is ironic that even the first people of this so-called nation have been excluded from a nationality defined as Canadian. As early (or recently) as 1986, Harris wrote, in the Toronto feminist journal *Fireweed*, of the democracy that Canadians are supposed to live in and wondered whether the

West Coast Japanese would think so, or the Lubicon Indians, or battered women and children, or the striking workers at Gainers. . . . In keeping with custom, let us ignore the plight of Afro-Canadians of the Atlantic Provinces. Observe only the way in which language is used to shelter the deformed morality of power. ("Against the Poetry" 16)

It doesn't seem surprising, then, that the term "Canadian poetry" is in crisis. Davey argues: "When Dionne Brand writes 'no language is neutral'[17] she is writing of a Canada configured much differently from that envisioned thirty years earlier. . . . She is also imagining a much different audience" ("Poetry" 14). Philip speaks of audiences in her essay "Who's Listening? Artists, Audiences, and Language." But how can I listen to her work if I must think about it in the context of gender and Canadian literature?

Whether what she writes is Canadian literature or not, considering gender alone in relation to her texts makes it impossible to see many of their most intriguing aspects: the ways in which they situate the Canadian reader in a racist context, their interrogation of English as a language of imperialism and domination, their questioning of the concept of the literary altogether. Thinking about gender alone makes it impossible for me to think about these issues. Philip's texts insist that gender can be the exclusive category of analysis only for people with white skin. In "Testimony Stoops to Mother Tongue," she writes:

```

the somewhere of another mother's tongue
                tongues
                        licks
into nothing
the prison of these walled tongues
-- speaks
        this/
        fuck-mother motherfuckin-
        this/
        holy-white-father-in-heaven-
        this/
        ai! ai!
                tongue
that wraps
        squeezes
the mind round

```

and around. (She Tries Her Tongue 79)

If "talking about gender means talking about both women and men" (Showalter 2), it means talking about white women and white men. It does not mean talking about "the prison of these walled tongues" of simultaneous misogyny and racism; it does not offer "the

somewhere of another mother's tongue"; it is a way to avoid talking at all about the complex intersections of race, class, and sexuality with gender.

As Elaine Showalter argues, the category of gender is not only about difference: it is also about power (4). To speak of the construction of gender is to efface the construction workers. Vancouver poet and journeywoman carpenter Kate Braid's *Covering Rough Ground* (1991) includes a long poem called "Tool: Instrument for Getting a Grip on the World" (the title is taken from Marlatt's *Ana Historic*). Braid cites Marlatt: "the world outside my door which looks at times insane and exceedingly dangerous" was made that way, but not by women. But "the worst is that we (that we again) have made it so. no, the worst is, we had no say in how it was made" (22). Through their poetry, women (of colour, who are lesbians, feminists) are having a say in how their identities are made.[18] *Struggle: Local and Global*, a 1991 special double issue of *Capilano Review* featuring British Columbia women writers and artists, cites the late Audre Lorde in its epigraph: "If we do not define ourselves, for ourselves, we will be defined by others -- for their use and to our detriment" (qtd. in Crosby 1).

To consider the (dubious?) construction of gender in a (surely anomalous?) Canadian literature that speaks to a monolithic academic audience rather than a plurality of audiences is to ask what relations exist between the dominant patriarchal, racist, homophobic ideologies and literary texts. If literary texts both challenge and participate in a society's construction of itself, then language has an important and contested role in this construction. Language has been, as Philip notes, "a significant and essential part of the colonization process [for both women and people of colour]" ("Who's Listening?" 37).

Since 1990, when my colleague and friend Pauline Butling and I received a sshrc Standard Research Grant to write a book on the so-called postmodern[19] in contemporary Canadian poetry, I have been trying to come to terms with the relationship between experimental, political women's writing and postmodernism. But postmodernism is a term that carries a much different semantic resonance in Canada than it does in the United States, where so much of the theorizing about the concept has taken place. When hooks, for instance, speaks of the racism and sexism of postmodern American culture and of the ways in which white women and people of colour are not heard from or addressed in postmodern theory, I think she is right -- if the context is limited to the United States.

This is not to say that academic theorizing about postmodernism -- in both countries -- has not been sexist and racist -- it has been and continues to be both. But in Canada, black, women, and lesbian poets use the formal strategies of postmodernism for particular -- and achieved -- effect. If the impact of postmodernism in the United States has been that "many other groups now share with black folks a sense of deep alienation, despair, uncertainty, loss of a sense of grounding" (hooks 27), its impact in Canada has been of a different sort. As I argued at the beginning of this paper, even white, middle-class Canadian writers have long

felt alienated, despairing, uncertain, and groundless. Kroetsch wrote as recently as 1990 -- in an essay called "Reading across the Border" (a title that suggests the political anxiety of the Canadian writer) -- that "Canadian literature" "is the autobiography of a culture that locates itself against the security of all direct arrivals at self-knowledge. . . . Notions of 'other' are radically active in the Canadian psyche and the embodiment and illumination of that psyche: CanLit" (338-39). In Canada in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, persons more radically othered by Canadian culture -- particularly women of colour and lesbians -- are among the most intriguing proponents of the postmodern in terms of form.

As a feminist and academic who is also married and the mother of two young daughters, as a southern-Ontario-born woman living in Calgary, as a person who is aware of her white skin and heterosexual privilege and yet feels every day the misogyny of the culture in which she lives, as a white woman who wants to end her perpetuation of racism, I have been drawn to, and found most useful, work that interrogates and reconfigures the society within which we -- many of us uneasily -- live. This writing, more aptly described as margin/ alias, this politically charged and aesthetically subversive writing by women in Canada, challenges conventional form, voice, and content.

Consider, for example, Erin Moure's chapbook *visible spectrum*, [20] the first in Roy Miki and Irene Niechoda's *pomflit* series, and reprinted in Moure's *Sheepish Beauty, Civilian Love*. *visible spectrum* exemplifies Moure's belief that "Writing is always about writing, about what it is possible to recognize and say. . . . I'm uneasy when the words don't mean what we say" ("Poetics" 80). It also speaks of "Those things we could not speak / in the public field of light or the restaurant / standing up inside our bodies" (*Sheepish* 38), a desire for recognition of things, such as lesbian existence or an "elsewhere" for women, made invisible in patriarchal ideology:

presence

What we yearn for

What we yearn for, here also

in the midst of "these sounds,"

the visible light created by the sounds

at the stuttered edges of the body

"oh, the body"

our semaphoric splendour, this surface, skin

border of signs

we can't speak of (37)

Wanting to enter the visible spectrum, Moure necessarily participates in the ongoing question of who has the power to name.

Zebra Talk, a chapbook by Suzette Mayr, a woman of colour affiliated with the writing community in Calgary, offers an instance of gender construction in the context of complex race, class, and sexual affiliations, thus directly addressing the question of naming. Zebra Talk is a small, six-inch-by-eight-inch chapbook[21] published in 1991 in an edition of 150 copies (mine is number 129). It is unusual in form: all but two of the ten pages are unbound. The two bound pages are stitched together, back to back, with black-and-white thread, and are entitled "Love: Heterosexual" and "Love: Homosexual." The black outer covers of the book enclose white inner covers, which enclose the ten pages in a structure that continually opens out and so risks losing its contents. Both the bottom and the top flip up and down, the sides open, and the chapbook is held only figuratively shut (it doesn't really stay closed) by a black-and-white, two-inch-by-two-inch, weblike, clitoral and/or breast image by Peter Stinson. The chapbook feels like a black-and-white, mechanical Georgia O'Keefe. On the first single sheet of paper, the words "Zebra lips clamp" are written in letters spaced fairly widely apart. The words "Your eyes feel cold on this page" are written a few lines below in narrower type. The next page gives an instruction to the reader: "Repeat the following with a puppy whine: / I never said I was a woman" (n. pag.). Even knowing this much about the book, the reader knows that the speaker challenges the naming of herself as a "woman" because the language she has available to her makes it impossible for her to say "I am a woman" and have it signify everything she is: black, white, lesbian, heterosexual.

Philip's "Discourse on the Logic of Language" unhides the hidden power that language has to silence, erase, and make unreal. Like many of the poems in *She Tries Her Tongue*, "Discourse" deconstructs, as Leslie Sanders argues, the "'standard' and proper English in which the discourses of power are written" (84). For example, the first page of "Discourse" is made up of three columns. The text in the centre of the page and the right margin moves from the top of the page to the bottom; the text in the left margin is positioned sideways from the other two, in capital letters. The middle column reads as follows:

English
 is my mother tongue.
 A mother tongue is not
 not a foreign lan lan lang
 language
 l/anguish
 anguish
 -- a foreign anguish.

English is
 my father tongue.
 A father tongue is

a foreign language,
 therefore English is
 a foreign language
 not a mother tongue.

What is my mother
 tongue
 my mammy tongue
 my mummy tongue
 my momsy tongue
 my modder tongue
 my ma tongue?

I have no mother
 tongue
 no mother to tongue
 no tongue to mother
 to mother
 tongue
 me

I must therefore be tongue
 dumb
 dumb-tongued
 dub-tongued
 damn dumb
 tongue (56)

The complex relation to the English language that a black, feminist, woman poet has is here articulated and interrogated, and her logical conclusion is that she has no language, no body, with which to speak.

Set alongside this highly articulate speaking about inevitable silencing is the following, in the right-hand column:

edict i
 Every owner of slaves
 shall, wherever possible,
 ensure that his slaves
 belong to as many
 ethno-linguistic groups as

possible. If they cannot
speak to each other,
they cannot then foment
rebellion and revolution. (56)

Because this part of the poem is parallel to the middle section cited above, it complicates further the relation between language, power, and change. This edict to the slave owner -- that the slaves should not share a language -- suggests that even the disabling English language might "foment / rebellion and revolution" if those oppressed by it share it.

The third column of text, set sideways on the page, offers further complications:

When it was born, the mother held her newborn child close: she began then to lick it all over. the child whimpered a little, but as the mother's tongue moved faster and stronger over its body, it grew silent -- the mother turning it this way and that under her tongue, until she had tongued it clean of the creamy white substance covering its body.(56)

Against the logic of language, the logic of the slaveholder, and the inevitability of silence, Philip presents the sensuality of the mother's body for, the mother's tongue on, and the pleasure of silence in, the newborn child.

Like Moure, Mayr, and Philip, many other women writers challenge the so-called real, which is experienced as fictional, invisible-making, and dangerous, and offer alternative ways of seeing, thinking, and being. Women's uses of experimental and self-referential strategies to unhide the hidden are done for a purpose. Such poetry written by women[22] in Canada in the late twentieth century could be thought of as postmodern -- by which I mean formally experimental, aesthetically challenging, and linguistically acute -- but it is more accurately described as decolonizing writing. It is politically, intellectually, and socially defiant. It has intentions. It unhides hidden assumptions. This poetry is written by women who are feminists and/or women of colour; many are lesbian; many also write prose, organize conferences, and demonstrate outside the Royal Ontario Museum. Because they live in a white, male-dominated country that renders both white women and people of colour simultaneously visible and invisible,[23] their work requires a troubled and insistently troubling relationship to language.

If the English language is an "anguish" for Philip, a "shelter" for the "deformed morality of power" for Harris, then it requires a genuinely radical deconstruction at the level of syntax and meaning to get at questions of power -- to "name," in Moure's words, "what our own tongues will call something." The writing of poetry[24] is not, as Lorde argues, in a different context, a luxury; it is "the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought" (37). The radical strategy of un hiding the hidden is available in texts written by those who, to use Bannerji's metaphor, "appear silent to people who are deaf to what you say" (11). Women

poets publishing in Canada today -- in all their "hazardous and difficult" positionalities (Philip, "Introduction" 9) -- white, black, lesbian, heterosexual, Asian, African, Greek, bisexual, Native -- are speaking. Their "Canadian" identities are not only constructed out of, but also oppressed by, the multiple effects of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, and yet they manage to write. They use the English language while resisting dominant uses of it. As Philip argues, "The Canadian-born Black artist, artist of colour, or the white lesbian artist, for example, all face dilemmas over audience similar to that of the artist who has more recently -- relatively speaking -- arrived in this country" ("Who's Listening?" 28). All, she maintains, remain immigrants in a "profoundly psychic sense" (29), "eternal immigrants," to use Harris's words, "forever poised on the verge of not belonging" ("Poets in Limbo" 115).

But if Canada is made, then those oppressed or privileged by the dominant version can locate the contradictions in the uncertain and messy business of its construction: "Meanings contradict; disjunctures occur between what people experience and what they are told they should experience" (Rakow viii). Only when the madeness of reality in Canada is hidden, and so made to appear inevitable, are people subjected to reality rather than being in a position to challenge it. By locating some of the colonizing assumptions on which the construction of gender, English, and Canada have been based, and by gesturing toward alternative realities available for the un hiding of these assumptions, I hope I have contributed to the size of the audience that is listening, to the Canada that is, in Philip's words, "becoming a space of true true be/longing." [25]

Notes

I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding for books and travel, without which this essay would never have been written. Special thanks to three colleagues and friends -- Pauline Butling, Jeanne Perreault, and Susan Bennett -- for what each of them has made it possible for me to say. (This essay was written in 1991. A part of the present argument will appear, in much revised form, in *Open Letter* in 1996 under the title "Having Written Her Name in His Books," [published with the proceedings of The Robert Kroetsch Symposium, Strasbourg, France.]

[1] Heidegger speaks of the "appropriation of Greek words by Roman-Latin thought" as being anything but innocent: "Beneath the seemingly literal and thus faithful translation there is concealed, rather, a translation of Greek experience into a different way of thinking" (23). For Heidegger, to appropriate means to make one's own in the sense of placing before the eye, showing, revealing. But he sees this as a process in which nothing "selfish" occurs: an "activity or process by which . . . different members of the world are brought into belonging to and with one another and are helped to realize themselves and each other in realizing this belonging" (xx). Although this way of thinking appeals to me, I am troubled by the exclusion of women from this process (except when they slip in by way of seeming metaphor): "A man is

not a thing. It is true that we speak of a young girl who is faced with a task too difficult for her as being a young thing, still too young for it, but only because we feel that being human is in a certain way missing here . . ." (21).

[2] "Unhiding the Hidden" has appeared three times in different contexts. See the works cited for details. Unless otherwise indicated, I cite the 1974 *Journal of Canadian Fiction* version.

[3] I am not arguing that Kroetsch's particular experiences of colonization and oppression are analogous to the experiences of women and people of colour. But I do not want to think about him only in terms of his gender. Not to consider the specificities of class, not to mention the place and time of his writing, would be as limiting as it would be to think, for example, of the lesbian, feminist, Trinidadian, Torontonion, woman of colour, poet Dionne Brand as just a "woman" in any uncomplicated sense.

[4] Both Anna's internalized misogyny and antilesbianism remain hidden in Kroetsch's account.

[5] There are brief references to Atwood, Laurence, and Audrey Thomas, as well as one sentence referring to "the feminist enterprise of writers like [?] Nicole Brossard, Louky Bersianik, and France Theoret" (218). But all of the references to women writers occur in nine pages in the seventh chapter (218-27). Chapters one to six (192 pages) analyse, in brilliant detail, texts by white men: Leonard Cohen, Hubert Aquin, Dave Godfrey, Andre Langevin, and Robert Kroetsch.

[6] The title poem from this collection appears in Sharon Thesen's *The New Long Poem Anthology*, alongside poems by Kroetsch, Bowering, Marlatt, Wah, and others. Brand's inclusion in the institutionalized space of an anthology has made it possible for me to teach her work to undergraduate students.

[7] The violence and horror of recent events in Canada -- I think particularly of the antiracist demonstrations in Toronto and the murder of fourteen women at L'Universite de Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique -- have also made me face the racism and misogyny in Canadian culture. For women's accounts of the effects of the Montreal murders, see Louise Malette and Marie Chalouh's *The Montreal Massacre*.

Moreover, the concept of "the Canadian word" suggests the promise that Canada has seemed to offer to immigrants. But like Canadian museums (the Royal Ontario, for instance) or Canadian engineering classrooms, Canadian words are available only to particular individuals -- most often to those who are white and male.

[8] The 16th Annual criaw (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women) conference in Toronto, 13-15 November 1992.

[9]My earlier argument about the complexities of positionalities, for men as well as women, still holds true. But as I argued in my discussion of Kroetsch, the ways in which men are oppressed -- in terms of class or nationality -- don't make it any easier for them to see the ways in which women are oppressed.

[10]I cite from the Language in Her Eye version of this essay (209-19).

[11]The May 1991 Calgary conference Interventing the Text and the November 1992 conference English: Writing with an Accent, held at Simon Fraser University, are possible exceptions. The Calgary conference, organized by Fred Wah, Ashok Mathur, Brian Rusted, and me, encouraged forthright discussion of issues of marginality, appropriation, oppression, and silencing. But many individuals felt tokenized, oppressed, and silenced by the conference structure itself. Some sense of the conference may be achieved by reading the proceedings, recently edited by Wah, Mathur, and me, in a special issue of Open Letter (see Rudy Dorscht, Wah, and Mathur).

The Vancouver conference, organized by Roy Miki, involved "readings and talk sessions on Writing & Ethnicity & Gender & Racism & Subjectivity" and included a diverse constituency; the following all spoke during the Saturday sessions: Marie Annharte Baker, Ayanna Black, Jam. Ismail, Smaro Kamboureli, Robert Kroetsch, Ashok Mathur, Aruna Srivastava, Aritha van Herk, Fred Wah, and Betsy Warland. The conference proceedings are also available in a recent issue of West Coast Line (see "English: Writing with an Accent").

[12]I have only been able here to gesture at most of these texts. Among those that I have been unable to quote specifically are Annharte, *Being on the Moon*; Armstrong, *Breath Tracks*; Bannerji, *Doing Time: Poems*; and Harris, *Fables from the Women's Quarters*.

[13]Neuman's argument that Livesay has been ignored by the narrative of postmodernism because it privileges work that can easily be read in a poststructuralist context is well taken.

[14]Of course, the writers whom Neuman identifies are clearly troubled by language. But they do not identify the English language as particularly troublesome in the ways that writers of colour do.

[15]Harris has been a teacher in Calgary since she came to Canada from Trinidad in 1966. She has published four books of poetry since 1984, when *Fables from the Women's Quarters* (winner of the Commonwealth Prize for Poetry for Best First Time Published Poet in the Americas) appeared. In addition, she has been poetry editor of *Dandelion* and managing editor of *Blue Buffalo*.

[16]Many of the writers in whom I take so much interest were not published at the time of Neuman's "After Modernism," so I do not, of course, expect that she could have taken

account of them.

[17]More accurately, she reinscribes Derek Walcott's words. As she tells us in *No Language Is Neutral*, the words come from Walcott's poem in *Midsummer* (1984), in which they appear in the following context: "Have we changed sides / to the moustached sergeants and the horsy gentry / because we serve English, like a two-headed sentry / guarding its borders? No language is neutral; / the green oak of English is a murmurous cathedral / where some took umbrage, some peace, but every shade, all / helped widen its shadow" (506).

[18]In her preface to *Women Making Meaning: New Feminist Directions in Communication*, Lana F. Rakow addresses the "theoretical pitfalls" that accompany an investigation into how women make meaning: "The words 'women making meaning' speak to two significant developments in the field of communication. First, through the hard work of feminists, the field is awakening to what many women have known all along -- that women are active participants in naming the world and making sense of it, even if their contributions and challenges more often than not have been disdained or rendered invisible. Second, feminist scholars are themselves active meaning-makers, engaging in research, talk, and writing that uncovers and validates the experiences and meanings of other women. . . I also recognize that concepts such as 'making meaning' and 'experience' are fraught with complexities. No one is simply free to generate novel and uncontaminated meanings; experience itself is not innocent. . . All humans live in cultural worlds inherited from their predecessors. Fortunately for those born into cultural worlds with oppressive category systems, making reality is a messy and uncertain business, allowing the possibility for change" (vii-viii). I thank my colleague Susan Bennett for drawing this book to my attention.

[19]For a feminist critique of postmodernism, see Brodribb.

[20]visible spectrum] was edited and produced by Miki and Niechoda and distributed through a limited mailing list. My copy says that "a handful are available at the single copy price of \$6" by writing to 1918 East 1st Avenue, upper suite, Vancouver, British Columbia, v5n 1b4.

[21]DisOrientation Chapbooks, published and edited by Nicole Markotic and Ashok Mathur, are innovative texts, produced in a format that complements the content. For information, contact Markotic and Mathur at 312 12th Street N.W., Calgary, Alberta, t2n 1y5; phone/fax (403) 283-6802.

[22]There are a few men whose work could be usefully considered in this context -- I think especially of Fred Wah and bpNichol.

[23]Audre Lorde's comment on visible and invisible oppression in the United States is also relevant to Canada: "Within this country where racial difference creates a constant, if unspoken, distortion of vision, Black women have on one hand always been highly visible,

and so, on the other hand, have been rendered invisible through the depersonalization of racism" (42).

[24]By the "writing of poetry" I mean not only the act of writing but also the audience reception. If one has written but not been read, has one written? I think of LaRocque's preface to *Writing the Circle*, "Here Are Our Voices -- Who Will Hear?" Or Philip's citation of Raymond Williams: "no work is in any full practical sense produced until it is also received" ("The Disappearing Debate" 214).

[25]I take these words from the epigraph to *Frontiers*, which reads: "For Canada, in the effort of becoming a space of true true be/longing" ([5]).

Works Cited

Atwood, Margaret. *Surfacing*. 1972. Markham, on: Paperjacks, 1973.

Bannerji, Himani, et al. "We Appear Silent to People Who Are Deaf to What We Say." *Fireweed* 16 (1983): 8-17.

Braid, Kate. *Covering Rough Ground*. Vancouver: Polestar, 1991.

Brand, Dionne. *No Language Is Neutral*. Toronto: Coach House, 1990.

Brodribb, Somer. *Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism*. North Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Spinifex, 1992.

Christakos, Margaret. "Axioms to Grind." *Room of One's Own* 14.4 (1991): 57-81.

Crosby, Marcia, et al., eds. *Struggle: Local and Global*. Spec. issue of *Capilano Review* 2.6-7 (1991).

Davey, Frank. "Canadian Canons." *Critical Inquiry* 16 (1990): 672-81.

----. "Poetry, Audience, Politics and Region." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 30 (1992): 6-17.

----. "Reflections while Reading Canadian." *Open Letter* 2nd ser. 3 (1972): 62-65.

Davidson, Arnold E., ed. *Studies on Canadian Literature: Introductory and Critical Essays*. New York: mla, 1990.

de Lauretis, Teresa. "Feminist Studies/Critical Studies: Issues, Terms, and Contexts." *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. Ed. de Lauretis. Bloomington: Indiana up, 1986. 1-19.

Harris, Claire. "Against the Poetry of Revenge." *Fireweed* 23 (1986): 15-17.

----. *Drawing Down a Daughter*. Fredericton: Goose Lane, 1992.

----. "Poets in Limbo." Neuman and Kamboureli 115-25.

Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper, 1971.

hooks, bell. "Postmodern Blackness." *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990. 23-31.

"English: Writing with an Accent." *Conference Proceedings*. West Coast Line 27.1 (1993): 25-73.

Keith, W.J. "Third World America: Some Preliminary Considerations." Davidson 5-17.

Kroetsch, Robert. "Delphi: Commentary." *Open Letter* 5th ser. 8-9 (1984): 22-40.

----. *The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New*. Toronto: Oxford up, 1989.

----. "My Book Is Bigger Than Yours." Kroetsch, *Lovely Treachery* 195-202.

----. "On Being an Alberta Writer." *Open Letter* 5th ser. 4 (1983): 69-80.

----. "Reading across the Border." Davidson 338-43.

----. "Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction." *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 3.3 (1974): 43-45. (Rpt. in *Open Letter* 5th ser. 4 (1983): 17-21; and in Kroetsch, *Lovely Treachery* 58-63.)

Kudchedkar, Shirin. "Moving Free of Colonial Space: An Approach to the Poetry of Claire Harris." Unpublished essay, n.d.

LaRocque, Emma. "Here Are Our Voices -- Who Will Hear?" Preface. Perreault and Vance xv-xxix.

Lecker, Robert. "The Canonization of Canadian Literature: An Inquiry into Value." *Critical Inquiry* 16 (1990): 656-71.

Lorde, Audre. "Poetry Is Not a Luxury." *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, ny: Crossing, 1984.

Malette, Louise, and Marie Chalouh, eds. *The Montreal Massacre*. Trans. Marlene Wildeman. Charlottetown: Gynergy, 1991.

Maracle, Lee. "The 'Post-Colonial' Imagination." *Fuse* 16.1 (1992): 12-15.

Mayr, Suzette. *Zebra Talk*. Calgary: DisOrientation Chapbooks, 1991.

Moers, Ellen. *Literary Women: The Great Writers*. New York: Oxford up, 1976.

Moure, Erin. *Furious*. Toronto: Anansi, 1988.

----. "Poetics." *Quarry Magazine* 32.4 (1983): 80.

----. *Sheepish Beauty, Civilian Love*. Montreal: Vehicle, 1992.

----. *Visible Spectrum*. Vancouver: pomflit 1, 1992. (Rpt. in *Sheepish Beauty* 33-41.)

Murphy, Sarah. "Putting the Great Mother Together Again or How the Cunt Lost Its Tongue." *Neuman and Kamboureli* 1-16.

Neuman, Shirley. "After Modernism: English-Canadian Poetry since 1960." *Davidson* 54-73.

----, and Smaro Kamboureli, eds. *A Mazing Space: Writing Canadian Women Writing*. Edmonton: Longspoon-NeWest, 1986.

Perreault, Jeanne, and Sylvia Vance. Preface. *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada*. Ed. and comp. Perreault and Vance. Edmonton: NeWest, 1990. ix-xiv.

Philip, Marlene Nourbese. "The Disappearing Debate: Racism and Censorship." *Scheier, Sheard, and Wachtel* 209-19.

----. *Frontiers: Essays and Writings on Racism and Culture*. Stratford, on: Mercury, 1992.

----. "Introduction: Echoes in a Stranger Land." *Philip, Frontiers* 9-25.

----. *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks*. Charlottetown: Ragweed, 1989.

----. "Who's Listening? Artists, Audiences, and Language." *Philip, Frontiers* 26-46.

Rakow, Lana F. Preface. *Women Making Meaning: New Feminist Directions in Communication*. Ed. Rakow. New York: Routledge, 1992. vii-x.

Rich, Adrienne. "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, Gynephobia." *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*. New York: Norton, 1979. 275-310.

Rudy Dorscht, Susan. "Who Signifies? The Limits of a Gender-Based Notion of Feminism: A Response to Margaret Christakos." *Room of One's Own* 14.4 (1991): 107-18.

---, Fred Wah, and Ashok Mathur, eds. Interventing the Text: The Calgary Conference, May 1991]. Spec. issue of Open Letter 8th ser. 5-6 (1993).

Sanders, Leslie. "Marlene Nourbese Philip's 'Bad Words.'" Tessera 12 (1992): 81-89.

Scheier, Libby, Sarah Sheard, and Eleanor Wachtel, eds. Language in Her Eye: Views on Writing and Gender by Canadian Women Writing in English. Toronto: Coach House, 1990.

Showalter, Elaine. "Introduction: The Rise of Gender." Speaking of Gender. Ed. Showalter. New York: Routledge, 1989. 1-13.

Silvera, Makeda, and Nila Gupta. Preface. Fireweed 16 (1983): 6-8.

Soderlind, Sylvia. Margin/Alias: Language and Colonization in Canadian and Quebecois Fiction. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1991.

Walcott, Derek. Collected Poems: 1948-1984]. New York: Farrar, 1986.

~~~~~

By Susan Rudy Dorscht

---

Copyright of Essays on Canadian Writing is the property of ECW Press Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.

Source is a 3D video game engine developed by Valve Corporation. It debuted as the successor to GoldSrc with Counter-Strike: Source in June 2004, followed shortly by Half-Life 2 in November, and has been in active development since. The Unknown Architects of the Source Engine. Lumix Engine -- An Open Source C++ 3D Game Engine. The 7 Programs I Use to Make Games: Free and Open-Source. Transcription. Contents. 1 History. 1.1 Modularity and notable upgrades. 1.1.1 Source 2006. 1.1.2 Source 2007. Define source. source synonyms, source pronunciation, source translation, English dictionary definition of source. n. 1. A person or thing from which something comes into being or is derived or obtained: alternative sources of energy; the source of funding for the... Source - definition of source by The Free Dictionary. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/source>. Printer Friendly. Dictionary, Encyclopedia and Thesaurus - The Free Dictionary 12,766,258,404 visitors served. source definition: 1. the place something comes from or starts at, or the cause of something: 2. someone or something. Learn more. Meaning of source in English. source. noun [ C ]. uk. Your browser doesn't support HTML5 audio. /sɛːs/ us. Your browser doesn't support HTML5 audio. Download CS Source for free. This client does not require a Steam client, and also allows you to comfortably play on the network on all servers and with bots in a single game mode. Works on Windows 7, 8, 10. Release date: October 7, 2004 Category: MMO Action (Shooter) / 3D / 1st Person Developer / Publisher: Valve Corporation Platform: PC Language: Multilingual Language Voice: English Publication type: Non-Steam, does not require activation Version: 91, build 5394425 (from 10/09/2019) or 34 (from 05/25/2007). Source may refer to: Historical document. Historical source. Source (intelligence) or subsource, typically a confidential provider of non open-source intelligence. Source (journalism), a person, publication, publishing institute or other record or document that gives information. Source document, a document in which data collected for a clinical trial is first recorded. Source text, in research (especially in the humanities), a source of information referred to by citation.