

Blais, Joann M. *Nicole Brossard and Robert Kroetsch: Aesthetics & Poetic Projects*. Thesis (MA [English]), University of Alberta. Ann Arbor: ProQuest/UMI, 1985. (Publication No. ML23404)

Abstract

Nicole Brossard and Robert Kroetsch are both influential contemporary writers whose work manifests a crisis on what Rilke might have called the scaffold of consciousness. And although this crisis may be seen as merely an extravagantly formal one its epicenter is to be foundation a volatile nucleus or problems which are finally ontological and cosmologic in nature problems of naming and of relation, of order and of meaning of language and beginning world that is a once immanent absurd and full of and rhetoric.

The thesis itself falls into four parts. After situating Brossard and Kroetsch in their respective literary traditions two chapters are devoted to the examination of some of the most important elements of their prose aesthetics and what Umberto Eco in *L'Oeuvre ouverte* term *la poetique* (the poetic intention of poetic project of an individual as distinct from actual literary production) as they are revealed through essays, reviews, interviews and other critical writings. In the chapter on Brossard concept dealt with include: the act of writing, the nature and ... of fiction in relation to the construction of reality, the self female being the void and possible literary strategies to explore fissures in language and frames of reference in order to induce modifications in human perception – the use of disjunctive syntax, infra-language deconstructed narratives, and other techniques borrowed from Dada and the surrealists. Some of the issues treated in the chapter on Robert Kroetsch are: the unconcluded self the artist as trickster, “mandarin language,” the uninvention of the world and other deconstructionist projects, atopia, and, finally, the ramifications of his comic vision. The final chapter explores the common project of both these writers – the uninvention of the world – in a rather more existential sense, probing the different movement of imagination expressed in their discourse in order to underscore the crucial differences in their respective project, their very different movements.

The movement of the thesis is a rather complex one of synthesis, differential analysis, and speculation. Because it shadows the evolution of two practicing writers, this thesis is not an anatomy but a necessarily tentative study with its own peculiar and inalienable blindness one offered less as a definitive statement than as a working paper that hopes to stimulate critical reflection.