

Rudy Dorscht, Susan Arlene. *Telling the Difference: Rereading 'Woman,' with Robert Kroetsch's Writing*. Thesis (PhD [English]), York University. Ann Arbor: ProQuest/UMI, 1988. (Publication No. NL45898)

### Abstract

"It appears," writes Mary Nyquist, "that one can now speak of 'third-wave feminism' as well as 'post-feminist feminism'." This dissertation is a postfeminist rereading of "woman," with Robert Kroetsch's writing.

For both first and second wave feminisms, the concept of "woman" is different from the concept of "man." Third wave feminism finds, with Barbara Johnson, that differences between seemingly stable categories are based on "a repression of differences within entities, ways in which an entity differs from itself." Kroetsch's writing undermines "the" difference between men and women – between binary oppositions of all sorts – and offers readers a "deliberate playground," to borrow Ashraf Jamal's phrase, of differences within "woman."

The three chapters in Part I argue that third wave feminism is, in Julia Kristeva's words, a "signifying space" where "the very notion of identity (of difference between) is challenged." Part II rereads the concept of "woman" in Kroetsch's texts. By considering *Badlands* and *Field Notes* together, Chapter 4 finds that the archaeological concept of "field notes" challenges the notion not only of history, but of a "her-story." Chapter 5 undermines essentialist notions of "being a woman" by rereading, with *But We Are Exiles*, the concept of the self as always already a subject of *différance*. Chapter 6 locates, in *The Studhorse Man*, an argument that postfeminist rereading – reading like, in Teresa de Lauretis's words, "a(-)woman" – is "writing in a new country" where the concepts of man and woman are traversed. Chapter 7 considers *What the Crow Said* as a deliberate telling of differences within. With *Alibi*, Chapter 8 finds that "woman's" place is an "alibi": in speaking "I" am always already an/other.

Chapter 9 appropriates Jacques Derrida's metaphor of the "post-postal" letter to de/scribe Kroetsch's most recent texts. Contrary to speaking, letter-writing is a metaphor which functions in the absence of the subject. Letter-writing allows for, indeed res(is)ts upon, differences within. Like Kroetsch's texts, postfeminism is feminism in a post-postal age, found(ed) in/on the a(-)sending of letters as a(-)woman's telling of *différance*.