Chapter IV

Identity, Women And The Canadian Prairies

In Badlands (1975) And Studhorse Man (1969)

Kroetsch’s fiction not only offers a variety of representations of women and the feminine but also opens up questions of how women and the feminine figure in the literary and cultural processes of representations like presence/absence. Robert Koresh’s Badlands and The Studhorseman (although an autobiography) show the contradictions in Kroetsch’s association and attitudes towards women, one of the interesting ways of narration traced in his writing is the post-modern as well as the colonial doctrine of female self-immolation, which suggests that Canadian indigenous/Indian/native is oppressed and English women are the rulers.

Hence the exploitation of the indigene is entirely different from the sexual oppression of an English woman. At the same time the tale of a English woman cannot be told in the absence of an Indian woman, since because they are the subjects and an Indian woman is apparently a white women’s subaltern shadow as Kroetsch puts it: an Indian women “did not wait for the empty dishes but politely excused herself and slipped away into the shadows” (54 Studhorseman) Interestingly Spivak’s focus on the female subaltern, has traditionally been doubly marginalized: “If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern reveals that a woman has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (“Can the Subaltern Speak?” 280). To spivak for her, indigene, were voiceless, doubly unheard under a colonial regime, and “women in formerly colonized societies were doubly colonized by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies” became an idiom of postcolonial and feminist discourses (Ashcroft, Griffiths, et al 250). Hence, the
colonial and postmodern contemporary theories of female agency move parallel and hence one can ascertain that some models are appropriate for Indian women and some are in appropriate for English women as well.

In Kroetsch’s novels male author’s representation of oppression, resistance? Of a female consciousness is more significant. Kroetsch also assumes a female narrative voice in his Badlands. According to Nivedita Majumdar there is an attempt in the novel. Badlands “to subvert the main male narrative by foregrounding the marginalized female narrative,” for her the real twist is “the female narrative in the text also becomes a voice for Canada”( Can The Women Speak?- A Reading of Ross, Kroetsch And Atwood)(p1-2009). Robert Kroetsch is exploring and exploiting both patriarchal and matriarchal language, as Goldman states, “it is a self – conscious re-incarnating woman or the feminine as a mark of her absence, an allegorical marker of male presence” (Goldman 127). From his earliest critical reception, Kroetsch has been considered, complex and somewhat a naively woman’s writer, appreciated by critics for his erotic and powerfully drawn woman characters.

Critics have differed on the questions as to how women are portrayed by Kroetsch in his works. For example, Margaret turner states that Kroetsch is a “rigorous feminist analysis”(65) speaks “ against tradition” which has “ served only to place another tradition based on post- structuralism, narratology, intertextuality and the theories of deconstruction and reader response criticism”(68) (Newman’s essay,” Figuring The Reader, Figuring The Self in Field Notes” acknowledges that Kroetsch construct’s the “daughter’s” position and only he is “able to give words to the voice”(189). Badlands is a fragmented field notes, a guide to explore female self as “unstable, undermined, subject to doublings, displacements, transformations”(192). For Hutcheon, “Kroetsch is not a feminist writer” instead “ he offers women
decentered, multiplicity, split selves, and double-voiced parody” (161-172) but “some mix of feminism.” (vii) Turns takes this opinion a step further and postulates that Kroetsch gets influenced from almost every area of Canadian criticism. Susan Rudy Dorscht opines in Women, Reading, Kroetsch that in Badlands a ‘field note’ depicts the female self and “is founded on and as an archaeological site/cite in fragments shards, leading or misleading details”(39). In Badlands Discourse of women itself gets investigated, excavated and contaminated and in the process a search for the loss of feminine language takes place.

on the other hand Studhorseman, serves as a supplement to men’s actions of lust, character and behavior. All of them seem to live in the realm of their own frustrated world, built on the idealistic conception of the surrounding boundary/blurred lines, governed by fair/unfair rules and laws. Hence, to fully understand this view and other sexist innuendos that Kroetsch provides in his novel, one has to examine the cultural framework and societal situation in which Kroetsch existed. This issue will be touched upon later in this chapter. Susan Rudy Dorset exposes Kroetsch’s idea of hidden desires in his textuality. She argues that Hazard LePAGE’s Sexism stems from the entire patriarchal European world of which both the author and the characters are the products, men are the sole occupiers of positions of power in this culture. Susan comments thus, “in Kroetsch’s texts it is always a struggle to break down these oppositions between masculinity and femininity. Indeed, the opposition between self and the other, and so to engage in a post-feminist manoeuvre itself.” (28, “How The Studhorseman Makes Love”).

As a result women are endlessly “misreadable, unfixable, plural.”(26, “The Studhorseman Makes Love”) Due to this domineering social construct, women in both Badlands and The Studhorseman are shown as weak/strong, ignorant/vigilant,
reverse/irreversible, servient/ subservient to men. Kroetsch’s attempt to project a woman’s image through the eyes of inhuman male characters and explicitly allied with Darkness described by Hazard and William Dawe. Kroetsch offers equally the wilderness of both feminine/ masculine models. As the novel Badlands opens, the narrator depicts the retriever as a masculine sphere and the either side of the landscape as the feminine sphere.

Red Deer River was crowded with men of expedition in various tasks to find the dead one as Dawe said “we are looking for the bones of the dead, we must find them.” (7 Badlands ). Hence the four men departed in a boat, “supposedly running light, was already loaded with enough food to last four men for three months, with cooking equipment and excavating equipment.” (10 Badlands). It is a place of recalling the past of men / women only in their dreams. Female figures meet Dawe only at the shores. Men appear more comfortable on the shores, a place for rest and pleasure of expeditions. Their dreams get interlocked with women and they are compared to the mother earth. Web saw her behind the grass “the prairie needles caught in her long and shapeless dress” she raised her right hand by seeing the boat, now Web could clearly see “the girl was standing on the shore.

The girl, the woman, on the shore, slender, silent, watched the three men, the boat itself. She might have been there all night long, waiting, watching, motionless, the woman standing, while the three men lay in a row.” (21 Badlands ) Dawe as a male narrator and Anna Dawe as a female narrator play with the masculine adventure and glory and feminine adventure respectively which presumably permits the presence of women as the subaltern shadow.

Women in Badlands are constant symbols of death. For instance a woman in Badlands is made to embody the dead prairie landscape or spirit of the burial
ground. Upon women, Anna’s entry into the narrative Dawe states “he saw the scattering of graves … he saved his shins from their grass. hidden corners marched in abrupt irritation … the women” also the girl, “watching, staring with luminous eyes at the tall man … she, might have been the apparitions, spirits at or even from the surrounding graves that were themselves fading back into prairie and bush” (6 Badlands).

She is explicitly mirrored and reflected in the landscape that Dawe consistently illustrates as the “the ignorant” (7 Badlands), I “vanished” “extinct”, “silent”, “burned cabins,” “mound of clay and stones that had once been fire places.” (9 Badlands). Thus she personifies death. The indigene shares in this cruel personification. When meeting with Anna yellowbird an Indigene, Anna pitifully reflects “I suppose I was tempted by her ignorance” (22 Badlands) even after fifty-six years she “would defend the man- her recollection of the man – who in her days of grief found her, and ignored her, and used her grief, and then let her vanish again” (23 Badlands). Further, Anna perceives that women have “only time to survive in, time, without either lies or mystery or suspense.” They “live and then die in time.” (25 Badlands).

Just as the unfathomable mystery of death surpasses all time, so too does the Indian/ English become the equivalent of this harsh phenomenon. The interaction between western men and native women’s sexuality makes the woman as Madeleine Dobie opines “body as a site where those in power tended to inscribe their authority” (38). Or their bodily interaction with English males/colonises social superiority. Incidentally, Durba Ghosh, in Sex And The Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire, examines the past to “reveal how men approached intimate
relationships when they had an undercurrent of racial and class anxiety” (15) highlighting the complicated cultural contacts that results in “hybridity”.

In *Badlands* and *Studhorse man*, Indigene becomes the ready domestic and sexual partners to fulfill the lust of western travelers. Thus, imperialists establish their paternal authority over Indian woman. According to Ronald Hyam, in *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience*, “Foreign lands and peoples certainly spelt the possibility of new sexual experiences, …. For most European travellers and colonialists, however, the promise of sexual pleasure rested on the assumption that the darker races or non-Europeans were immoral.”(78) That, often exploited class, age, gender, race and power. Kroetsch emphasis is on the cross relationship of white and native woman and their submission to a white is an act of possessing the land. But white man’s submission to Indian women is an act of revenge. For instance Indigene widow Anna yellowbird in *Badlands* being raped by a white is “in some way the fulfillment of a private dream, of an inner wish” (Franz 180). For instance, Hazard in the *Studhorsemans* is given a passive role and represented as an object of sexual desire. He met a forceful sexual encounter with various characters and concludes that the dark and wilderness represented by a woman is the active agent and seducer of the equation.

Kroetsch’s *Badlands* include strongly realized women protagonist Anna Dawe who narrates the “un-narrated” and she is the “most heroic and courageous of figures “(Shirle Neumen ) 186) l.v) since she creates a story out of her father’s field notes . “That’s the way we have to tell stories”(l.v 187). Koresh’s observations are relevant here: “in *Badlands* I was playing with the woman’s first person narration and with the whole notion that a story speaks in what I call the male story” (170 l.v Kroetsch):

When the silent women of colonial phrase speaks out and narrates the male quest
through the western women narrator, Who represent the women of colonial, indigene and herself as a mate model of all the time. Thus Aritha Van Herk comments that “Badlands succeeds in being a profoundly feminist work is a double irony, given Kroetsch’s phallocentric fictional world and his fascination with male quest stories. The flying/falling male has hit bedrocks. (“Robert Kroetsch Biocritical Essay” http://www.ucalgary.ca/lib-old/speccoll/kroetsch bioc. Htm (10-20). Aritha’s Her narrative gives a clue that “Dawe’s life ends in unhappiness not just because he is male but because he cannot accept or love men or women.” (“Remembering and Forgiving The Fathers Past,” Glenn Deer ). Even Anna suffered the similar trauma but she made to overcome it. Anna was free to move around as she is an independent agent, able to create friendship and new relationships, and move in all the further possibilities to fill the gaps left by his father in his field notes.

A feminist critic Anna is “like her father, “she” is inscribed as an “I” on a most unstable site- the site of her father’s citations” (38, Women, Reading, Kroetsch). As Susan Rudy Dorscht says Anna was not only exploring the I, but she also explores the “we” represent and merges both the self/ other westerner/ Indian “as if we didn’t know all the answer long before they asked their absurd questions”(23 Badlands ). Reversed narrative was Anna’s factor in her life which makes her to “seek out only those disasters that will be total.’ Commencing with a task that is guaranteed to be impossible” in double voice which deconstructs the discourse of men/ women, as Anna says “we live in time, we women.” (219 Badlands ).

In Badlands, Kroetsch portrays a dependent kind of women on man for financial support. Her inability to lead life without men and financially weak, “poor”, and a “vulgar”(7 Badlands ) an ignorant child widow “a girl” moreover an Indian widow on the prairie shores, “trying at least to get her own fevered wandering and
isolation, not only found nothing to eat but deliberately had not eaten “(8 Badlands )
Anna also was eagerly expresses her search for “husband” and willingness to go on a
trip with Dawe to “find her husband “.

Hoping her husband’s return but rejected by Dawe who states “we have no
place for women” and apologized by Web, one of the Wester quester on the board
finally Anna yellowbird GETS seduced by the bone hunters including Dawe and the
members of the team. In other words a typical colonial domination to acquire the land
in terms of Dawe’s narration he defends it and finds little to applaud, then in the
actions of either, Anna yellowbird the indigene serves merely to illustrate the kind of
financial dependence of a damned women in the early twentieth century. Her action
and performance with Dawe’s desires and action of lust, Anna Dawe states “William
Dawe, some last, infernal capacity for lust unquenched by the days and nights of
labour, driven beyond all human limitations” his animal nature nurtured and
provokes him to be “exhausted beyond pain he needed the soporific of an organism
to lull him asleep and would beg of her that pity too; “Anna, dear?” Dawe said.” (197
Badlands) where Anna yellowbird’s “sacrifice” sacrifices something for the
“advancement “ to find her husband. This in fact reflects what Lucy Irigary argues in
the bodily encounter with the mother where she emphasises “ the first body they have
any dealings with is a woman’s body, that the first love they share is mother’s love, it
is important to remember that women always stand in an archaic and primal
relationship with what is known as homosexuality. For their part, men always stand in
an archaic relationship with heterosexuality, since the first object of their love and
desire is a woman”(440).

On the other hand, Anna yellowbird entertains Web one of the members of
Dawe’s expedition. Web describes his own encounter with Anna as “we were locked
together up there like two howling dogs … the inverted universe and undescended testicles of the divine, the refucking – union with the dead “(206-7 Badlands ) This is the plight of a colonial western women in Badlands like “ Anna where she sat, ignored, dumbly waiting, like a bereaved and ever-hopeful widow. The widow widowed. Anna, the girl, waiting.” (190 Badlands ) In the bodily encounter with the mother, Luce Irigary emphasises from a feminist critic point of view. She observes:

it is… dangerous to place the body at the center of a search for female identity… the themes of otherness and of the body merge together, because the most visible difference between men and women, and the only one we know for sure to be permanent… is indeed the difference in body. This difference has been used as pretext to “justify” full power of one sex over the other” (trans. Yvonne rochette –ozzello, nff,p.218).(333).

The above discussed issue gets reflected in a more diverse when it comes to Studhorseman widows are financially independent with pig farm. “ Mrs. Lank” and her “log barn”, running a pig farm where Hazard works for money to pay fine to the policemen for tying his horse in the middle of the street. Hazard indulges in killing pigs“ Hazard relaxed and feeling almost jovial handed the empty cup to widow and picked up his knife”(78 Studhorseman ) Hazard witnessed that “ a local pig sticker had already performed his function; a carcass was hung by its hind legs from a single tree in the door way of the log barn” (76 Studhorseman). The widow Mrs. Lank “had an uncontrolable urge to have one thing of which she said she had been deprived by life: that is, the pleasure having a child. She is desperate to distract” herself from in the memory of her dear dead husband in the “usual preposterous fashion.”(81 Studhorseman) “Mrs.Lank; but surely it would not be wrong to suppose her disappearance was the consequence of hazard’s success.”(84 Studhorseman ). Hazard
recalls vaguely a very attractive widow who owned a farm on the lake. For him she made a good deal of money after the war when the boom in summer cottages began. “This widow of the Indian’s memory, however, stood well over six feet; Hazard mentioned no such bulk or size.” (84 Studhorseman).

Hazard remembers the indigene women as a reflection of the western when he says “a mirror is so placed above my sink that I have been able to sit for hours, attempting to imagine what in fact did happen (allowing for the reversal of the images) exactly where I image it. It is then time that I must reconstruct, not space. Further, I am able to see far distant; it is what is nearest that I cannot always make out from my high widow.” (85 Studhorseman). The intersecting lines in fiction is the female self-immolation at the other, female images of absolute devotedness to their family and devoted themselves for self-evolution. Thus both the Indian Anna yellowbird and the English Anna yellowbird, Anna Dawe must be viewed as “discontinuous” (Sharpe27, Derrida)

Kroetsch writing of radical sexual politics depicts his brilliant parodies of hetro/homosexuality. “Neither men nor women in Badlands can happily exist in isolation from each other; friendships are what finally brings these characters some measures of fulfillment, even if these friendships involve the imaginative but sympathetic retracing of the steps of a lost parent.” (81, Remembering And Forgiving The Father ‘s Past”). For instance, Anna Dawes investigation for her “absent father” (b2) delivers men folly, and a notion of male quester and patriarchal story. It is a daughter’s urge to fulfill the space of a lost father by recreating his fragmented Field notes. Thus, Koresh’s writing of sexuality overturns the phallogocentric assumptions through the Badlands underlines the power of the matriarch in despite playing with male story of his absence, as Susan Rudy Dorscht argues that “the maleness verges on
mere absence. The femaleness verges on mystery; it is a space that is not a space” (Kroetsch, “The Fear of Women in Prairie Fiction,” 47).

Anna’s intention of recovering the lost father, the only parent, who is a “financial acumen” to guard her as the real undertaker, was also a “legend,” and “a vision” for Anna and she hopes to be in a safe position only with the existence of her father. Without him she states “I was alone and I sat in the house inherited from my mother, who inherited it from her mother.” (3 Badlands). Thus it shows an opposite relationship of a male and a female struggle to reverse, to turn themselves from the acted upon into the agents of action. At the other end Anna yellowbird tries to recover her dead husband by imitating the members of expedition for the “bones of the dead” (7 Badlands) and she saves them as Anna Dawe expresses her knowledge of Anna yellowbird “who had, he explained to my mother, saved his life.” (2 Badlands). Kroetsh’s parody of heterosexuality in Badlands made the women, Anna Dawe, and Anna yellowbird to follow their patriarchal self-dependence and their existence. When it comes to Studhorseman it’s a diverse attitude about the search for the lost matriarchy (mother). Both emerge as characters, who deserve the readers sympathy one gets to see Koresh’s reflection of the western which in turn gives the readers much insight into the feminine / masculine world. “The relationship with mother is a mad desire, because it is the ‘dark continent’ par excellence. It remains in the shadows of our culture; it is its night and its hell. But men can no more, or rather no less, do without it than can women” (433 Luce Irigary)

In The Studhorseman Self exploration is the predominant issue in Badlands as well as Studhorseman. Anna’s learning of this aspect in Badlands is rivas parallel to the experience of Demeter, and Hazard in Studhorse man perhaps, most importantly, the jungle and word/ld teaches them the individuality to inhabit places
that are ultimately unknowable. Kroetsch explores the lives of various characters in this isolated wilderness without altering the rural settings and analyses the interrelationship between the people and the place. Kroetsch at times uses organic images of the landscape and other physical aspects of the prairie to detail the inner life of characters like Hazard and Demeter. The narrator brings together the past and the present of the Metis and engages in a process of re-evaluation. The novel repeats the argument of Kroetsch that one cannot escape the effect of the past as a haunting informant to the present and the characters are inextricably linked to their place of inhabitation.

Self-reflexivity begins from Demeter “a man” signified by a woman’s name” (Woman, Reading, Kroetsch 64) who narrates the story of an illusion (woman) told by Hazard in the form of presence/absence, named/nameless, internal/external and self/other. Kroetsch represents women as a followers/a shadow of a male narrator because “Demeter/hazard is a he/she who, in speaking, gestures towards the multiplication of meaning inherent in signification.” (Women, Reading, Kroetsch 62). Demeter/Hazard signify neither and yet both “he” and “she”, Demeter is a woman who is not one “s/he” cannot be held in place. s/he is not a woman or a man”(62, Women, Reading, Kroetsch).

Simone de Beauvoir states:

Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being [. . .] she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other” (xvi).
Jacques Derrida offers a critique of Western thought that underpines in a series of binary oppositions. They are structured as: “light/darkness, good/evil, soul/body, life/death, mind/matter, speech/writing, and so on” (qtd. in Woods 165).

Cixous asserts, “Where is she?” (“Sorties” 264). That is, which side of the binary is assumed to define the female. Interestingly for Kroetsch in both binary opposition women is present like Demeter, a mad narrator. Demeter is biographizing Hazard Lepage, he examines himself in terms of hazard. “the biographer in the *Studhorseman* slowly usurps the subject of his biography and is unwillingly deconstructing the notion of a hero. He starts to see himself as the hero as he sits in the bathtub writing the book” (Geoff Hancock “An Interview with Robert Kroetsch,” Canadian Fiction Magazine. 24-25 (1977) p-39) It is impossible to fix or ascertain one’s since the sexual identity. “sexual encounters described in the book are Demeter’s reconstruction of Hazards narrative accounts.” (28 How “The Studhorse Man” Makes Love”). The trope of inversion creates a conception of homosexual identity, which posites “a woman’s soul in a man’s body and vice versa” (Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* 87).

Demeter’s strange expression of the self “as Demetre recognizes, “in the act of naming we distinguish ourselves from the other unfortunate animals with whom we share this planet. They seem under no necessity to deny the fact that we are all, so to speak, one – that each of us is, possibly, everyone else”(119 *Studhorseman*) it is an ordeal “than an adventure”(119 *Studhorseman*)

Demonstrating ignorance of the English ladies Anna’s mother and Martha are hopelessly unaware of the unsound methods that their husband and fiancé like Hazard and Dawe enforce in Canadian north. In *Studhorse man* hazards whereabouts whereabouts for Martha was
a mystery for a few weeks. But she had long since ceased to expect him during the busy spring and early summer while he was presumably traveling his stallion from farm to farm. He never wrote (I have always rejected the argument, advanced by some, that he was very nearly illiterate), yet he had appeared each autumn for thirteen years. She was confident he would appear again”. (136 Studhorseman)

but narrator found Marie and Hazard “having tea together on the porch “at west (136 Studhorseman). Hazard was a “drowning man” reviews his own history or perhaps about England’s culture

Kroetsch aligns the entire woman character in unreality and who are unaware of where about of their males. By holding ignorant ideas, women in Badlands and Studhoresmen are hidden things by men. For instance, Anna Dawe adds that “her father was saved by an Indian girl, Anna yellowbird but “he did not explain to my mother was how that Anna– by what violent surgery of spirit– healed him back onto his feet of clay.”(2 Badlands). He canceled truth and reality from his wife and daughter instead he deposits only discontinued field notes “those cryptic notations made by men who held the words themselves in contempt but who needed them nevertheless in order to carry home,… the recollections of their male courage and their male solitude” (2 Badlands).

Men have their own mystery or suspense and are privileged to have it, while, women are not supposed to have. Thus they are made of none of the material found in the world of men and so, disaster befalls the men who dare breach the boundary between the worlds. “Kroetsch has a silent center which is feminine” (22k lv) “women are not supposed to have stories. We are supposed to sit at home, “Penelope’s to their wars and their sex. As my mother did. As I was doing.” (3
Badlands) as time progresses investigation into women’s autobiographies have disclosed false unearthing. For instance, Anna Dawes demand from Anna Yellowbird to find a trace into the wilderness called “field notes”, which would sponsor the curies “little narrative tricks of a male adventurer: the lies that enable the lovers to meet, the mystery, of who did the killing, the suspense before victory. As if we didn’t know all the answers long before they asked their absurd questions…” (23 Badlands).

Kroetsch describes in Badlands that the knowledge of the self could be studied through the voice of a woman who exclaimed “denial”. She states “hunger teaches the perfection of appetite. Separation teaches the perfection of union. Absence teaches the perfection of love.” (58 Badlands). In Badlands self is learnt by Dawe and Anna Dawe through the “lost families,” “lost homes”, “wicked nights” and their “secret longings,” (59 Badlands), Western men and women lost their self in the name of modernizations, as they were agitating against the bar. “BAN THE BAR” posing as the life savers not only for their sake but for the sake of natives who lost their self in the name of western civilization are desperately lonely souls not only in the prairies but “there together on that civilized street, as the woman in her Stony Ranch House” (55 Badlands). Exploration of the self/other is the strongest link of men in the Prairie. The lessons learnt by Hazard and Dawe are Perhaps most importantly the landscape, forest and jungle. It was an unknowable exploration and shows them that languages can neither fully represent nor comprehend neither truth nor reality.

Web tries to duplicate his self with denial, for him to retain self one has to take an oath that “he would ever and always practice denial of self” specially which women would demand a perfection of self only from “he would embrace chastity, faith, love, fatherhood, wife, family.” (60 Badlands). For Anna, Dawe is a “special breed of man, a brave man, a fool, an adventure. Who endure the boredom of files and
heat? Searching all day in vain” are self less creatures. Their absence from their family life made them to be incomplete; these lonely men are their own diggers of their self. Those lonely men need a women to look after their body. To care and embrace as Luce Irigary observes:

we are the guardians of the flesh; we do not have to abandon that guardianship, but to identify it as ours by inviting men not to make us ‘their bodies’, guarantors of their bodies. Their libido often needs some wife – mother to look after their bodies. It is in that sense that they need a woman –wife [femme] at home, even if they do have mistresses elsewhere. This question is very important, even if it seems minor.”(439)

on the other hand Anna yellowbird’s husband was dead and gone when she was 16, at that young age she transformed herself into a widow a “waiting widow” for her husband to come back from the “place of dead” where she symbolizes herself as an incomplete exploration of womanhood. In the case of Esliabeth wife of William Dawe, area of discovery includes the knowledge of the self as something unique and different and gives a knowledge of other western self-exploration as Kroetsch states in Badlands as to how a civilized western woman lost self or womanhood. Dawe remarks: “the women Elisabeth Kilbourne Dawe who had married him because it was the fashion and rage to marry a man who was going away,…” she married William Dawe because he is going away “not to the east, across the Atlantic, but westward and out onto the prairies” only “to die” (b164-165). Elisabeth needed a husband “but she did not need to have him around” (165 Badlands). Before marriage, Elisabeth had lovers “departed without proposing marriage” (165). She married a man of 35 he was a “virgin” who had never been to bed with a woman and “she was a woman of 25 and was not a virgin” (165) Thus
Dawe calls her an innocent and left behind him “his married widow” (165 Badlands). This exploration of the self of a woman in Koresh’s writing teaches one about the society and the world and the individuality, a where women inhabit it in diverse ways as indigene/western and lands them in their loneliness and ultimately knowable as “widows”, and it shows the women that language can neither fully represent nor comprehend truth or reality about them or the world.

In Badlands, Kroetsch compares a woman to the shores and William Dawe a quester gets an awareness but tries to possess the land and the jungle by attempting to identify the names of the trees and birds, when she gets deep into the forest where the human instinct is extinct and where the ultimate incomprehensibility and uncontrollability of the world which she tries to control and comprehend its reality. Web pursuing the work that escaped him he states:

Two clouds moving towards each other even while he and Anna climbed into the first small buttes then the shadow of the blotted sun giving down a yellow darkness into the canyon. The sticky heat that was Anna’s reason, excuse, for avoiding her clump of twisted cotton woods, gone; not into any wind but into a cooling of the stillness. Web, again, glancing back, and the clouds, contrary to all his notions of nature, moving towards each other, drawn into the towering vortex of the irresistible center: and still his determination that the bones must be covered, fleshed over with canvas, drove him plodding up onto the naked buttes. (172 Badlands)

Thus web calls woman “the twister” (172 Badlands) similarly despite his assertion that Anna has a “small voice small as a bird’s note under the rolling thunder “(173) like a only a hiss or a whisper, that was itself a “part of the silence” of a woman thus the great darkness of the jungle has the usual effect of taking away all the desire for
communication by making web and Anna’s words sound thin and small. That kept Web them far from the truth like what a woman is?

Anna symbolizes the vanished language of indigene. For instance, when Dawe breaks his silence when the “loud words freed from the matrix” (163 Badlands ). But the world exiled the “girl from sharing his pleasure, without a tail. Without tail,” just because the girl “ not clearly that of a woman understood the words which shows her inability to understand the western language. Language lead Dawe “wordless” (147) signaled that “he needed, wanted, a cup of water” (163 Badlands) thus the truth about indigene woman is concluded and seal up in the interior forest thus “they are digging their “own goddamned grave” (139 Badlands ). Anna is a damned “big talker” (135) of possibilities to retrieve the truth or the meaning for the words. Both says that when they heard a voice the voice lifting into song”, both were exhausted (… before he understood it was in a language that neither he nor Tune might know” (125 Badlands) Anna yellowbird, William Dawe explores the “extinct” (119) through Web where he fakes objects for subject for instance Kroetsch depicts the dialogue between Web and Tune,

Web: “so what? How about snakes? And lizards? And reptiles?”

“ Lizards are Reptiles,” Tune said

“may be that’s what you think,” Web said

“if you ask me they’re stunted dinosaurs you ever touch a lizard?” web replies

“you’re a true bull shitter”.

Thus Canadian writers like Kroetsch know how to speak around the illusion: and they are the “ nature born bullshit artist”(119) it also shows that woman and men explores of history are the “ liar, and “liar”(130 Badlands ) thus woman in Badlands are agents of disorderly existence.
Based on Kroetsch’s descriptions of the respective purposes of male and female authored fiction, one may also assume that Robert Kroetsch perhaps intended his readers to see his own novel, *Studhorseman*, as an exploration of womanhood/motherhood. Self is kept in a the place called “center” in absence in Canada “to go west to find “I” and to lose it in the finding” ends up alone and imagine their self (Robert Kroetsch, “A likely Story”, red deer, Alberta: red deer college press, 1995,155). But in *Badlands* woman live in presence they don’t have past or future, “duplicity can now extend to the notion of autobiography” (l.v k 25). Both Hazard and Dawe sense the greatness and ultimate inexplicability of the landscape, which surrounds them. Martha too wonders if her engagement to hazard, or perhaps the mere fact of her love, is only an imagination. Thus Kroetsch’s image of erotic space encircled the illusion which kroetsch describes his own experience in autobiography, he averse that

He “kept the mother figures, especially, very silent at the center of waiting, partly because my own relationship with my mother was so painful, that I’ve only recently even put it into print at all. And I think part of my move to autobiography was daring to say that my mother died when I was so young and I was very close to her: I think some of the female presence in my book is almost a parody of the absence which is really what the book is about… but I did grow up totally surrounded by loving women. After my mother died I had aunts who looked after me. I had sisters; I wasn’t doing a lot of the male work. I was living in this world of the garden quite often. And it’s funny how I kept that silent and one of the things that can see happening in the next few years as I go on writing, is a kind of enunciation”(l.v22).
Kroetsch views women as nameless, when he writes in his essay “No Name is My Name” that women seek “a willed nameless” (51) (The Lovely Treachery of Words) in Canadian literature. He describes his absent mother as the center and makes her presence through different ages. Kroetsch has textualised the masculine dominancy over the absent figure like his mother, he expresses indifferently as he still cannot find “one farm with a mare that he wanted covering” he says, “I’ve come to much more interest in the act of telling the story and that’s where you have to go back to first person quite often because you have to confront who is telling the story, and why (l.v 174)

For instance in Badlands Anna Dawe, Anna yellowbird and William Dawe are telling the story by over taking one another, where as in Studhorseman Demeter is telling the story of a misnamed man/woman, about female absence because she the female remains “Kroetsch’s double” and always plural his “other half” (32. Rosalind Jennings) neither the narrators nor men or woman both are exploring the vanished, invisible men/woman. They are active/ passive throughout the story. Involves in “not passive but active disappearance,” this action still leads to her ultimate non- existence within the framework of the text” (32. Rosalind Jennings). Luce Irigary takes the argument one step further she says:

Women have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male- centered terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked questions of history which are inappropriate to women. To rectify this, and to light up areas of historical darkness we must, for a time, focus on a woman- centered inquiry,
considering the possibility of the existence of a female culture within the general culture shared by men and women.” (339)

Kroetsch portrays woman and postures her as an agency of the past/ bones. For him, she is the only specimen who could explore the origins. Thus a woman is positioned as transformation, disappearance, and extinction. In search of the past woman is been reduced to mere imagination. For instance extinction and vanish is not exactly a death “not a hint of longing for death” instead it “had everything to do with entrance into the world” (191 k A Likely Story) called the mother hood like Hazard on ice “- ostensibly dead and ends with Demeter an insane mad narrator prompted to action” and auction that “entails Hazards actual death” further in The Studhorse Man Hazard mismanages the affairs of his Studhorse almost as “ pervasively as he mismanages his own”. It is a process of recreating woman/ men self or self/ other.

Other significant metaphor for woman is the image or imagination and bone because Anna yellow bird is the only Indian woman left in badlands who opens up multiple possibilities for a western questers like William Dawe and Anna Dawe. Dawe says that “ the girl, the child, the woman, had had help in building her strange house: from one or more or all of the men who were supposedly helping him seek these rare and precious specimens” (126 Badlands) thus the precious specimen the woman made Dawe to be speechless, and absolute loss for words to write about her. She guides all the questers for past or for bones leads them to Badlands and beyond the boundaries. They go on searching for those specimens in the west as well as in the east. Dawe says at the west he follows Anna yellowbird because she was in the valley with her “ house of bones” (148 Badlands ) made Dawe to remember his wife the other “ specimen” (148 Badlands ) staying at home with her children and raising her family at the east. He express his guilt for “ not finding more specimen but “ only one
skeleton to his credit” that is yellowbird but east is a place which also gives an ample opportunities for “the careful scientist, the new cope or march or lambe, identifying the specimens restoring, categorizing writing learned articles … perhaps he would go home to his wife and his library.” (148 Badlands). Dawe divides woman of east and west as woman in west are oral/ east are written.

At the east Dawe’s logic to hold her, catch her and synchronies her into book was a big failure as Hazard does in The Studhorseman:

He saw Martha where she stood, between him and the gate of the skating rink which in summer she used as her corral, the sun behind her setting and red. She was taller than he, standing there motionless; her hips were broad even in the blue smoke she wore over her white dress. She did not see him but rather the stallion at his side, the great cock hanging like the pipe from an eaves trough. She shook her head, the nares of her high nose gleaming tensed and white. But she would not look away, would not hear him. Proudly she stood, defying the Studhores man himself. There are virgins. She ignored him, and he could not turn from her big soft body her great full breasts as soft as a horse’s nose” (21 Studhorseman).

He reduces her into writing fails eternally. “the words he spoke passed directly from his mouth to a page in Dawe’s field book without ever touching Dawe’s mind,” (166 Badlands) he knew how to be present in two place by listening not to the words of her “body’s bones she felt, apprehended” but for their “silence” the silent woman at the east made Dawe to “lose the past” (168 Badlands) by sinking herself into bones, and those bones “sprouting and growing from the very dark itself” (22 Studhorseman). As Demeter narrates “you may remember me” the Indian said “I’m buried in that patch of spruce directly below the cliff from your mansion” (18sm).
when Hazard says that he had protected their grave against “all marauders, animal and human” the Indian replies “I appreciates your concern” (18 Studhorseman) As Dawe does at the end of Badlands, he binds the bones into bundles and loads them on a boat only to be kept in the museum without history of the original. Those bones reply: “CANNOT GET AWAY AM IN COFFIN VERY SORRY REGARDS HAZARD” (19 Studhorseman).

For Kroetsch woman is an echo, an illusion and a dream, she is echoing then, farther and farther away, miles away and Hazard was embracing the bones, “gently, blindly embracing the hard bones, dreaming the flesh, embracing already a dreamed woman, the soft large breasts of Martha” (17 Studhorseman). Hazard could speak only in his dream that too freely, and even “jokingly” those dreams are without significance “until the reader “probe them for invisible meanings” (18 Studhorseman). Even Dawe at first believed that a woman was an “illusion that compelled” him to search for herself the imagined hide of a living dinosaur” (148 Badlands). Dawe in his illusion had imagined “for three days, four days and nights that she would touch him” (164 Badlands). Or he may reach the center of the woman the earth. Each time he attempts to conquer, that darkness “he told himself, conquer: and out of that blasting Sun, into the darkness of her body he must, rising, plunge…” (168 Badlands)

At each moment of his entry into the darkness and a “wet heat of her body the outside world was lost” (168 Badlands) and both erased the past but dawe develops a new “paroxysm” “spent each night’s accumulated collection in that little time of going in; the motion that erased the ticking clock, the knowledge he gained of all his life about woman he also knows how to be “two places at once” (158 Badlands). with misplaced affection towards both the woman of west and civilized east by
pursuing the words that escaped him” (172 Badlands) writes around the irresistible
center. Thus tune warns Dawe “I don’t believe a word” (172 Badlands)

For Dawe “womanless bedclothes” during his expedition reminds his wife, he
writes for his “imagined wife in their remembered, imagined home” (130 Badlands)
which he had once was gone forever. Both woman are confined to his imagination
thus he is been trapped by the “subtle confusion, into his own pursuit of past and
future” (184 Badlands) both have disappeared once for all by leaving a question in his
own unconscious.

Kroetsch paves way for both eastern and western woman to represent their
selves in diverse processes, Anna yellowbird plays a role of a guide to Anna and
William Dawe. For Dawe Anna yellowbird was present only in his dream and
imagination whereas for Anna Dawe she presents herself with photographs when she
went on searching for her in a beer parlor she agreed to guide Anna Dawe to the place
of dead. “She was about to show those last surviving pictures of all our lost men”
(227 Badlands) she pointed, the pictures, those pictures failed to retain the authentic
truth about Anna’s father. Anna “raised up the photographs; she flung them out …
she flung them up at the bear’s balls… she flung up the pictures into the morning air;
like so many vultures they hung, descending, onto the still water of river’s source”
(229 Badlands) because those photographs misguided all including the readers. Both
have come to the “end of words” narrates the departure they “walked out of there
together” because it’s a ocean both sang together they sung a song that was the only
song both remembered and “could sing enough” that is loneliness, silence and cross
words. Anna imitates yellowbird, she opened her purse, took out the field book she
had:
Carried like a curse for ten years. For that was the craziest thing of all… when he might have been remembering, or regretting, or explaining or planning, or dreaming, or hating, or even loving I suppose, he was busy putting down each day’s tedium’s and trivia, shutting out instead of letting in concealing”(229 Badlands)

Anna threw it into the lake “where it too might drown” realized that she wasted 20 years of her precious time in reading it by cooking up stories based on the line written by Dawe in his Field Notes. Thus Kroetsch says

I told you about finding a picture of my mother when she was sixteen years old and about how my erotic relationship to this woman has shocked me—my sense of desiring the woman in that photograph which I’m going to have to write about. It denounced all my silence to me. It spoke the time.”(l.v22)

Karen Connelly defines in Touch the Dragon; A Thai Journals (1992); “without her, we become something else” both novels negotiate the relationship of the self to the place and home. Reconstruction of women is like recollecting the images, in short a kind of photo album. Judith Adler suggests that the journey of a traveler over those photographs “may owe some of its cultural prestige, as well as its importance in persons lives, to the fact that, in carrying a performer beyond the world of routine home life, it yields observations, encounters, and episodes that are free to function” (1369). The longer Anna Dawe remains in the skin of this new country and identity, the more difficult it becomes for him to imagine Canada. Her impulse is to turn to visual means of recording and understanding the place, but images fail her to visualize the reality. Each time she tries to invade she becomes an alien. The
photographer the historian, has not yet lost his way; it is the reader who sees beyond the boundaries or performative self –discovery.

Kroetsch makes discursion of old women and young girls as supernatural. Feminist critics demonstrate how often literary representations of women repeat familiar cultural stereotypes. Such stereotypes include the woman as an immoral and dangerous seductress, as eternally dissatisfied shrew, as cute but essentially helpless, as unworldly, self-sacrificing angel, and so on. In Literature, adds Rafey Habib, “as first womb then lover to the male; woman as the incarnation of nature and the door to the supernatural; woman as poetry, as the mediatrix between this world and the beyond” (689). For De Beauvoir’s woman she fulfills the role of otherness, even she fulfills man’s desire, rather than enjoying true autonomy.

The younger woman like, Anna yellowbird, according to Anna Dawe is “the girl” (6 Badlands) for McBride, she was a child”(14 Badlands) as according to Anna’s mother “a growing girl” (23 Badlands) In total women is still unwise in the ways of the world, relays the carefree attitude of men before they enter the Red Deer river but the old women like America and Fekete Leaves men to their fate and observes clearly by sitting at home that what happen to men in the wilderness. However, she sits “unconcerned” in her own, objective world and allows the men to discover if they have the inner strength to survive in the uncivilized prairie. For instance in Badlands, he creates a woman character called “America” a woman who sat up in the coffin and stepped out from it “the woman tracing with the first finger of her right hand the fate in Dawe’s right palm” (61 Badlands) and she was blonde, was a “fortune teller” (62 Badlands) told to web “you are a man who gambles everything” “and Fekete again: “and loses”. when America shook her head web saw the glitter of “jewellery in her hair, the stars, the crescent moon” (63 Badlands) Dawe warns Web
to stay “away from the woman” (64 Badlands) but America forecasts that “you’ve met a woman” and “she’s going to take you on a long trip” (65 Badlands). Thus both the sisters fooled and showed them a “fool’s luck” (65 Badlands). She flown through the “open window” vanished forever (67 Badlands).

Thus Dawe expresses his anxiety stating that “what’s the word for fucking a corpse?” (77 Badlands). Even America lost her speech to tell her story of the past. Thus Dawe’s hunting for woman ends only in his dreams that “she was still following” (91 Badlands). He speaks of the young Christian missionaries who fool the indigene in the name of religious practice. Indigene woman were replaced by Christian missionaries called “nuns”, spreading their religions sprit around the Prairie in the name of civilization became the reason for voiceless Indians or the extinction of Métis. Kroetsch symbolizes them as colonizers, attempting to conquer the land and culture or the ambassador of stealing the identity of the natives. In studhorse man “a little nun in a black shawl came forward to take his hand. She spoke so softly her voice did not echo” (45 Studhorsemman).

She attracts Hazards towards English culture at the beginning and she was also an entertainer. Offers to play cards, and asks him to play with rules. Sister Raphael represents the dictators and the government all the time as she insists “please state the point of order”, establishes old carriage and clubs at the one hand and sister Raphael interrupts and guides the order and shows indecent affection. At the other an old lady Miss Boxer speaks only of her “elaborate plan to visit the old country one more time before, as she put it, she went to meet her maker” to get instruction to rule and rule out the natives and their culture. Kroetsch hints how hazard looses 5 dollars in that gambling and left “with twenty dollars,” is logic of colonizer to steal their financial freedom. In Studhorse man, Marie was an ambassador of western culture “Marie
brought a candle” Demeter could tell at a glance” a short fat candle of the kind found
in a number of churches”. He could see through a broken pane of the window. Where
“Proudfoots are surely of a religious persuasion that placeses faith in blessed
candles;” (129 Studhorseman) now he suspects “ Marie herself rather than her
mother was the controlling force behind the presence of the poltergeist”(129
Studhorseman) she was the magic woman of the western culture.

Even Torbay cheats him by making him win every time. Indirectly Torbay is
motivating Hazard, to get addicted to the cards culture. Hazard is surprised as he
turnes on to Torbay and says : “ you don’t even try to win, Torbay. You pick up the
wrong card. You throw away cards I need. Damn’ it, man, this isn’t a game at all. I
haven’t got a chance. I haven’t got a ghost of chance. What is this?”(47-48
Studhorseman). Thus Kroetsch opines that the question of survival is in difficulty as
they are now in extinction, vanishing. Kroetsch exhibits a system of rule by the
Victorian regime, where no one is allowed to act according to their wish. An
empirical system he remarks “ Miss Boxer is going to report you to the sister superior
if you follow her up to her ward again”(49 Studhorseman ) each time Sister Raphael
adds “ order please(50 Studhorseman ) as Kroetsch witnessing the ultimate end of the
indigene culture. Even Kroetsch depicts an indifferent interpretation of the numerical
5 where indigene and the western culture are identical only through different
possibilities as Sister Raphael adds, “we have, after all five figures on each hand. Our
language is host to five vowels. We have each of us five sense” she also narrates her
visit to an Indian woman and her sense of interpretation as “who recognized five
points to the compass East, South, West, South, and Center. Five distinction.” (51
Studhorseman). Thus Kroetsch fails to break the history of Queen Victoria as an
emperor because by then she was “cremated and the ashes sent back to the moors of
Yokshire. At any rate, the cellar was sealed off and” (53 Studhorseman ) Kroetsch never opened it.

In The Studhorse man a character Old Lady Eshpter is a “witch of some sort”. (124 Studhorseman) Hazard appears in her “clutches” and she casts a rebellious sprit that finally to worries Demeter. The initial difficulty is that Hazard could “neither sit, stand nor turn over, he could lie upon her belly as well as on his own… instead of appearing to improve he seemed forever to be on the verge of a relapse. Hours became days, the days weeks. His recovery was, to say the least, tardy.”(124 Studhorseman )

Thus Demeter’s intention of writing a novel topples. Instead he writes about specimen an extinction of Indian culture on the bush of prairie he writes a “biography”

The prairie wind was “moaning” (125 Studhorseman) made Demeter to feel uneasy and made Marie an young lady as “beautiful as she was, she was also the picture of physical fitness”(124 Studhorseman ) to be blind to the past “she was so very rarely blind”(125) both Demeter she talked in the growing dusk , she was much “interested in the recent increase in the number of owls”(125) Demeter teaches her the fact that when humans become extinct another conquers the land and turns the land into a jungle and he specifies that “mice first of all increase in numbers, then owls do likewise”(125 Studhorseman ) and uses the expressions “balance of nature” and compensation( 125 Studhorseman ) by then the darkness falls both old lady and her daughter disappeared into darkness which threatens Demeter to envelope it’s a “power of perception”(126 Studhorseman ). For Kroetsch the processes of recurrence enables men to learn, improve and correct the past errors “to understand the present,
to guide the generation that are to come” it’s an imagination in the “repetitious nature of the ultimate creative art” (127 Studhorseman)

Kroetsch often uses the imagined self of a woman only as a process of mastery over “repetition” (127 Studhorseman) and the path which leads Demeter to madness is “surely the highroad to art” (128 Studhorseman) and creativity of the imagined identity as Mrs.Eshpeter was in the kitchen preparing meals, “working not from sight but from memory(128 Studhorseman) Demeter translates their “every fantasy into fact”(128 Studhorseman)