

Université de Montréal

The Dimensions of Space: Metaphorical Poetics

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The Dimensions of Space: Metaphorical Poetics

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Résumé

La langue n'est pas qu'un outil de communication, mais aussi un moyen pour explorer, un raccourci efficace dans l'expansion des connaissances humaines et l'exploration de la société humaine. En analysant la poétique métaphorique des deux poètes déconstructionnistes canadiens, Robert Kroetsch et Erin Moure, cette thèse vise à examiner comment la métaphore, la métonymie et la catachrèse travaillent ensemble pour engendrer des constructions métaphoriques, qui peuvent produire de nouvelles connaissances et une éthique féministe.

La métaphore, la métonymie et la catachrèse sont généralement étudiées comme des dispositifs littéraires qui augmentent l'attrait artistique des œuvres littéraires. Cependant, dans la poésie métaphorique, ils sont considérés comme des outils cognitifs pour déconstruire une compréhension rigide de l'histoire humaine et de la société. Dans *The Stone Hammer Poems*, la métaphore et la métonymie servent à dévoiler l'existence du savoir perdu, délimitant un espace imaginaire, composé de créatures et de civilisations anéanties. De même, dans *O Ciudadán*, les deux dispositifs constituent une structure métaphorique qui accentue le respect du statut naturel des êtres humains. Pendant ce temps, au lieu de former une rhétorique satirique, la catachrèse dans les deux œuvres devient de véritables connaissances du temps et des personnes perdus. Par conséquent, en utilisant une approche cognitive pour effectuer une étude littéraire sur *The Stone Hammer Poems* et *O Ciudadán*, cette thèse vise à étudier comment la métaphoricité fonctionne comme une ressource de compréhensions post-structuralistes de l'historicité et comme porteuse de l'éthique féministe.

Mots-clés

Poétique métaphorique, métaphore, métonymie, catachrèse, étude cognitive

Abstract

Language is more than a communicative tool. It is a practical means of inquiry, a functional device to expand human knowledge and to explore human society. By analyzing the metaphorical poetics of two Canadian deconstructionist poets Robert Kroetsch and Erin Moure, this thesis aims to examine how metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis work together to engender metaphorical constructions that can produce new knowledge and feminist ethics.

Metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis are usually studied as literary devices that increase the artistic appeal of literary works. However, in metaphorical poetry, they function as cognitive tools to deconstruct rigid understanding regarding human history and society. In *The Stone Hammer Poems*, metaphor and metonymy serve to unveil the existence of the lost knowledge, delineating an imaginative space consisting of annihilated creatures and civilizations. Similarly, in *O Ciudadán*, the two devices construct metaphorical constructions that accentuate the respect of the natural status of human-beings. Meanwhile, instead of forming satirical rhetoric, catachresis in both works become the real knowledge regarding the lost time and people. Therefore, employing a cognitive approach to perform a literary study on *The Stone Hammer Poems* and *O Ciudadán*, this thesis studies how metaphoricity operates as the resource of post-structuralist understandings on historicity and as the carrier of feminist ethics.

Keywords

Metaphorical poetics, metaphor, metonymy, catachresis, cognitive study

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To Pao & Kiki

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Introduction: The Dimensions of Space

Poetry has been widely employed to tell a space, some particular region being explored by humans who are constantly looking into the inside and the outside world. The trinity of space, language, and human-beings, together with the interconnectedness, the intrusions, and the terra incognita among the three are realized, narrated, and remembered from generation to generation relying on poetics. Language becomes an indispensable part of human existence, and poetry becomes more than mere words, but real existing experience and experiences constituting reality as we know it. Metaphor, metonymy and catachresis are parts of that reality, shedding light on the right path to the discovery of the real truth about the world and about humans. When scientists endeavor to unravel the cosmic law upon which the physical world is operated, poets resort to establish the connection between the knowledge apriori and posteriori. Thus, in poetic eyes, poetry is an inquiry, which has no boundaries.

Robert Kroetsch believes that meaninglessness exists in the reality conceived by humans. He attempts to disclose the absurdity by exposing the hypocrisy and vanity in history and utilitarianism. Erin Moure is aware of the ridiculousness in creating and tolerating meaningless morals which lead to violation and violence in human society. Thus, she passionately lauds individual authenticity and autonomy. Both poets attempt to break physical or mental boundaries that compromise the natural status of the nature and that of humans, trying to explore and describe the ideal form of the world.

Poetry directs anthropic behaviors. According to Aristotle¹, poetry is constructed on the substratum of mimesis, which directly produces its metaphoricity. Humans enjoy reading poetry because in seeing and contemplating the likeness, they “find themselves learning or inferring” (Aristotle 6). In other words, by comprehending the metaphorical simulacrum produced by poetry,

¹ The definition given by Aristotle can be over-simplistic for many literary critics. However, it is cited because it directly points to the core feature enabling the various connections studied in my thesis.

human desires aroused by epistemological inquiries are fulfilled. In this sense, poetry as the shared intellectual treasure of humanity, constitutes both human cognition and their behaviors in a world full of changes, ambiguities, meaninglessness and nothingness.

With metaphoricity, poetics creates and models human existence. Directly relevant literary devices like metaphor, metonymy and catachresis scaffold an existentialist perception on humans and the world, constantly debasing concepts like temporality, belonging, ownership, and normality. To unveil this poetic mechanism, the thesis tries to analyze how literary devices engender the poetry that reflects post-modernist and deconstructive thinking.

Human cognition delineates a vivid picture of materiality centered on anthropological stance. Thinking and feeling are no longer excluded from the content of reality. Literature is regarded as a science. When devices such as metaphor, metonymy and catachresis are traditionally studied as mere vehicles passively conveying thoughts and emotions, they are inevitably reduced to lifeless symbols, passively driven by authorial purposes. However, this thesis will challenge such an angle and will disclose a considerable level of autonomy exhibited by such “devices”. More importantly, it will reveal the fact which could be long ignored— poetics is not like a temple or a machine, which are mere manifestations of human existence. Instead, poetics is a thriving form of human existence. Accordingly, metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis are constructions which actively direct the sequential anthropic actions of discovering, learning and acting. In other words, they are the pillars holding the metaphorical poetics, or, bio-poetics, as their organism-like features suggest. These biological constructions are the forms of human experiences which are recognized and celebrated by poets discussed in the thesis.

In accordance with the theme, there are two chapters included: firstly, metaphorical constructions (metaphors, metonymy, catachresis) modeling human knowledge (the discovering and the learning); and secondly, metaphorical constructions forging human ethics (the acting).

1. Metaphorical poetics modeling knowledge, the “absurdity”/ nothingness of the reality

Kroetsch states that “Nowadays is a postmodern word. It tells us to live tentatively—tenderly—in the caress of a now that is wary of larger knowings” (163). Numerous scholars like him and Linda Hutcheon argue the “nothingness” of the knowingness, which is actually the nature of in-betweenness as truly exhibited by the reality. This notion is phrased as “absurdity” in existentialism. According to Albert Camus, it originates from the “incompatibility” between the world and the people. “Absurdity” denotes the impracticality in juxtaposing human understanding with the reality, as they are in nature, vastly different entities operating on their own distinctive rules. Therefore, poets like Robert Kroetsch and Erin Moure are more interested in collecting and studying particular experience(s) capable of expressing a moment or an aspect of reality. Consequently, metaphoricity which can be generated by metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis is a vital resource of the production of existential experience and experiences as well as the knowledge attained from them.

Their poetry blurs the boundary alienating the physical and the metaphysical by imbuing a fair abundance of human experiences into the delineation of physicality through the bridge of metaphoricity. Therefore, the world they depict prioritizes real human experience. Shaped by the dynamism of various experiences, reality features a high degree of heterogeneity. So does the knowledge produced from it. Closely examining the poems of Robert Kroetsch and Erin Moure, it is clear that their constructions of reality pivot around the existential conflict between self-actualization and social-alienation. In other words, the two poets vehemently reject the act of excluding human experiences in the definition of reality, avidly arguing the value of admitting the limitation of humanity in knowledge production and in human cognition. For example, Kroetsch deconstructs the concept of history by questioning colonialism, establishing the understanding of the fluidity of time and the meaninglessness of imposing rigid boundaries in viewing time and

nature. Meanwhile, Moure discloses the absurdity and violence in social taboos which are against human nature, actively producing knowledge about the severe consequences of denying human desire and human experience. Her metaphorical poetics presents vivid pictures of violence fettering the natural state of human existence.

Resorting to metaphoricity, Kroetsch utters his doubts regarding the validity of historical knowledge by unveiling its vanity and irrationality. Intensely inquiring into the dichotomy of reliance and domination that features the colonialist attachment to the land, he integrates a broad sense of loss and alienation into the nostalgic narration of a myriad of events/ moments lost to contemporary eyes. Based on such a depiction, he claims that the irretrievability of the “real” historical truth could jeopardize any fantasy it creates. As both a post-modernist and humanist, he deploys the device of metaphor, especially the metonymic feature of metaphor, to impress the readers with the fragmentation and incompleteness of historical knowledge constructed on limited anthropological stance. To enhance the profoundness and permeation of his historical nihilism, he employs metonymy to expand such a nihilistic sensation. The poet skillfully channels several temporal and spatial domains to multidimensionally perform the displacement and deprivation caused by colonialism and anthropologism. Therefore, his doubts on historical accuracy intermingles post-modernist thinking with deconstructive sentiments. His metaphorical poetics scaffolded by metaphor and metonymy renders his philosophical thinking on the nature of historical knowledge highly discernible and surprisingly permeable.

If Kroetsch is committed to convey metaphorically post-modernist thinking on humanity and the physicality of the world, Erin Moure manages to produce a true knowledge accusing the absurdity of certain social taboos through the same metaphorical vehicle. For her, social knowledge, no matter a priori or posteriori can sometimes exhibit a distorted picture of nature and reality. By presenting graphically and metaphorically the natural connections and unerasable associations

among different entities, the poet aims to invoke a truthful vision on the real human nature residing on interdependence and constant integration. Thus, issues like social identity, gender roles, masculinity, femininity and patriarchy are widely discussed and intensely questioned by the poet who rejects separation and who extols amalgamation. To produce the details of her existentialist philosophy, Moure unfolds the dynamics of permeation and integration among various entities through orientational metaphor. Moreover, to present the “real” status of human mentality, which is a collage consisting of numerous evolving status and forever changes, Moure utilizes metonymy to detail the association channeling different mental domains. Moreover, catachresis is also employed to describe the violated and unnatural status of human existence caused by unreasonable social taboos due to the misinterpretation of reality. Like Kroetsch, by metaphorically debasing and reconstructing human linguistics, the poet produces and cultivates her philosophy on the existential and epistemological value of humanity. Relying on the expressiveness of metaphoricity and the provocative nature of metaphorical constructions, Moure compels her readers to develop a proper definition of “truth” and “reality”.

Interestingly, when questioning the validity of human knowledge, both Kroetsch and Moure are concerned with whether human minds are capable of capturing the entire reality in which people live. The two poets emphasize the absurdity of humans misunderstanding and misinterpreting natural and social reality. Like Jacques Lacan, who differentiates the concept “reality” (the world constructed by human perception) from “the real” (the materiality beyond language), they address the gap between the real world and the simulacrum conceived by humans. Considering the fact that the world currently described is neither complete nor “true”, the poets argue the significance of including detailed, tangible human experiences in knowledge and ethics production. However, as such experiences are difficult to accurately describe, not to mention to concisely summarize, metaphoricity becomes the perfect source to generate particularly diversified

and personalized ideologies on both the physical and the metaphysical aspects of reality. Just as discoveries of micro-history substantially complete the grand assumptions made by macro-historical perspective, so also does their metaphorical poetry allow people to acquire concrete knowledge both apriori and posteriori. The productivity of metaphoricity intensified by post-modernism and existentialism is immense. This is why although metaphors depicting physicality have been studied for ages since the ancient Greek, what is beyond the human perceived reality stays an intriguing dimension for literary production and metaphoric studies.

2. Metaphorical poetics forging ethics

Aside from creating historical knowledge, metaphorical constructions guide the forging of particular cognitive structure, directly shaping human ethics. The existence of metaphorical poetics itself buttresses this idea. Metaphoricity can introduce the integration of physicality and mentality. Existentialist morality as a code of behaviors emerges from such integration. Due to the permeability and productivity of metaphorical construction, ecogism and feminism are concretely substantiated and intelligently expanded by Erin Moure. Unlike Kroetsch whose contemplation mainly remains on the philosophical and epistemological level, Moure produces the ethics centering on the freedom and autonomy to perform one's social role, as well as on the gender performance. This not only perfectly matches the concepts of "authenticity" and "facticity" in existentialism, but also considerably supplements the content of the two concepts.

In Moure's poems, agency and subjectivity are avidly celebrated. Tolerance, respect for emotions, desires, freedom and equality in gender cognition, a myriad of ethics are visually presented and passionately lauded by the poet. In *O Ciudadán*, a constellation of metaphorical constructions— signs, signals, and notations, are coined as "apertures", catering for semantic recreation and moral reorientation (Maguire, "Parasite Poetry"). Their diversity, irregularity, and sensuality are imbued with discreteness and violations, each signifier decentering from the fixation

of meaning to mock the rigidity and conventionality of language and society by highlighting the absurdity and “nothingness” of linguistic conventions.

Explicitly speaking, in Moure’s poems, metaphoricity vividly etches the fluent, dynamic status of the mental world, voicing out the repressed desires, the longing for recognition and acceptance, as well as the denunciation of phallogocentrism. The argument of crossing the “borders”, to explore and reiterate the significance of “personhood” in the “between-ness” as well as the “self-ness” (McCance et al, 4), the respect and tolerance for natural human desires are all clear indicators of feminist thinking. Besides, with the “tensilities” of the metaphorical compounds, metonymy and catachresis, “penetration across senses” is realized (“Seebe” 84). By expanding the reading experience of readers, the poet awakes their recognition and appreciation regarding the inter-dependence of the world as well as among individuals. Due to the permeable feature of metaphoricity, the celebration of “personhood”, the middle state, and the autonomy to act based on free will perfectly exemplifies and complements the concept of subjectivity. Like the denotation and connotation of subjectivity is in constant development with growing human cognition, the metaphorical spaces in her poem become “a field of conceptual inquiry into the epistemological limits of discourses and practices” (Moyes 113).

Questioning the “nothingness” in the patriarchal tradition, Moure inspires her readers to ponder “the issue of privilege of who stands where in the social order, and how this order enacts us as we enact it ” (“Seebe”81). Kroetsch once asked about what else lies beyond dreams, and perhaps Moure has given him her answer: “there is no apparent sense” (“Poets Amid the Management Gurus” 147). Deriding social alienation, crowd violence, and the vanity of class and gender stipulations, the poet encourages the pursuit of identity. Such an ideal evidently echo the feminist value on subjectivity, which is featured by its vehement rejection to the violence of interference and violation imposed by the society.

3. Metaphor, metonymy and catachresis are real living experience(s)

The attitude one should adopt toward his/her existence and how he/she should act to experience the existence remains an aporia. Metaphoricity carried by metaphor, metonymy and catachresis can produce the knowledge, ethics and behaviors to address this enigma. It nurtures ideas with rich contents that are uneasy or even impossible to clearly or utterly define.

For Robert Kroetsch, the unpredictable disastrous potential of humanity (in a colonial and postmodern context), the incompleteness and uncertainty in history (in a deconstructive context), and the risk of losing personal identity are all vividly depicted and sensibly explained by his metaphorical constructions. These threats which collectively contribute to the absurdity and meaninglessness of the reality are rejected by the poet who pursues a flexible, balanced and diverse form of existence. For Erin Moure, metaphorical construction is her ultimate weapon to challenge phallogocentrism, and to build up the morality that extols “facticity” (to create one’s own identity) and “authenticity” (to act on one’s free will) in human society. Relying on metaphor, she manages to render what is falsely rejected by mainstream ideology visible and valuable.

In a nutshell, metaphors help the poets to find the compatible form of human existence where human mentality is well connected and integrated with materiality. Metonymy aids to reveal the association between individual and the others (the “other” and the “Other”). It makes clear that an interdependent form of humans’ living where no member is reduced and alienated should be chosen. Catachresis discloses the heterogeneity of reality as well as the diversity in the forms of human existence. Together, they construct metaphorical constructions becoming the knowledge unfairly suppressed or made to disappear. They also become the ethics and choices that should be firmly made and performed.

Chapter 1: A Space of “Nothingness”— Metaphorical Constructions

Constituting Knowledge

The problem for the writer of the contemporary long poem,
is to honor our disbelief in belief.
— Robert Kroetsch, *For Play and Entrance*

As a literature with a colonial descent, it has always been inscribed by the anxiety and insecurity typifying
the ambivalent desire of settler cultures”
— Smaro Kamboureli

1.1 – On the “Nothingness”

Linda Hutcheon states that “Kroetsch is a Canadian writer because Canadian writers write from the margins; they do not avow a ‘center’ of the colonial power that once commanded so much power” (1983). The “Stone Hammer Poem” produces and vividly manifests knowledge on the epistemological understanding regarding history and personal identity, the white diaspora, as well as the dichotomous relationship between land and people featured by dependence and violence. For the poet, imposing an overly generic historical fantasy on the depiction of reality and a static narration on the relation between humans and the world is meaningless. More importantly, the meaninglessness in such an attempt leads to a world of “nothingness”. Thus, with metaphorical constructions featured by permeability, flexibility and real living experiences, the poet urges his readers to reflect on the rigidity and narrowness of the knowledge produced by a static mind.

In the poem, the stone, the hammer and the poem can be regarded as constant reminders of the diasporic sentiments of the poet. Taking the stance of a descendant of colonizers, the poet presents a narration which pivots around frequent emotional surges concerning disease, rootlessness and loss. More importantly, based on these emotions, Kroetsch attempts to explore the relationship between land and people, conjuring up a post-modern interpretation of reality. These endeavors reflect evident ideological preference which derides the absurdity of alienation, violence,

and historical certainty.

Indeed, the definition of “nothingness” is plural. The content of this catachrestic expression is rich and multifaceted. Firstly, it is about the displacement of people, which involves both the indigenous people and himself as a representative of immigrants. Secondly, the “nothingness” points to the absence of the true owner of a piece of land. To Kroetsch, there are no real permanent residents. Various people of diverse races only occupy the space for a period of time, but cannot really stay permanently. Therefore, the temporality of this “ownership” compels the poet to contemplate the relation between people and land. For him, dwellers appear more like mere visitors. For the land, humans’ presence is temporal yet their absence is absolute. No living creatures can maintain a permanent possession of the land, for they are all doomed to die whereas the land remains forever. From this perspective, the so-called owners of a land actually stand for a moment. The relationship between people and land is not about the former owning the latter. Instead, it is about how people make sense of their existences. Based on this angle in interpreting “nothingness”, Kroetsch raises a genuine inquiry: “I want to know (not know)? WHAT HAPPENED?” (line 74-76).

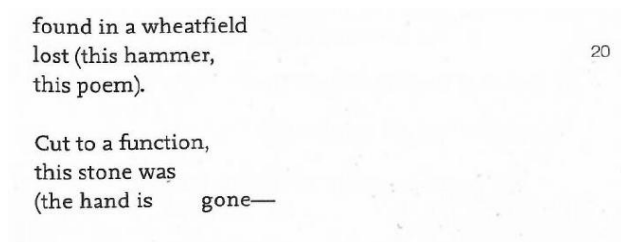
Thirdly, “nothingness” is highly catachrestic. The word means empty and blank, yet, the poet employs it to strongly insinuate the prior existence of actual living experiences on the land, because it indicates the lost people and the lost time. Fully aware of the haunting of the past, the poet recognizes a land as an admixture of what physically exists (the positive space) and what mentally exists (the negative space). He sees the land both in the past and at present, lamenting for the creatures (landscape, people and animals) disappeared. He also recognizes the status of incompleteness of physical reality in human eyes. Consequently, the poet argues that human-recorded history is under the constant influence of hauntology. It is written by people living at present yet attempting to reify ghosts. People can only capture a partial truth, a simulacrum. Thus,

for Kroetsch, what cannot be recorded— the death of identity, the absence of lost creatures and people constantly being affected by the land, are also valuable parts of real history.

1.1.1 – Deprivation, Incompleteness and Alienation

Generally speaking, the contemplation of the world’s “nothingness” is carried by metaphorical constructions in the poem, which include metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis. Metaphoricity permeating the three devices aids to channel various cognitive spaces to create a multidimensional mental journey for readers. Interestingly, in such constructions, metaphorical aspects and metonymic aspects cooperate with each other to mirror what has been lost with what has been established, and to capture what is incomplete with what currently exists. This combination clearly reflects the dialectical philosophy of the poet.

To start off, the metaphorical expressions in Kroetsch’s poem frequently center on incompleteness. The losses unfold on several levels, from the material existences including the stone, the hammer, the living species, and the natural environment to the spiritual realm of family history and knowledge. Typical examples can be found from:



The incompleteness of the hammer and its absence from the land are physical manifestations of displacement, incongruity and misplacement. What appear in the eyes of the speaker (for example, the wheatfield and the hammer whose handle (and hand) are gone) continuously remind the readers of what is erased (such as preys or victims of colonialism, the indigenous culture). The reminiscent vibe as reflected from the lines is constructed based on the metaphors which equate hammer with stone, the poem, the people and the land. Thus, the missing piece of the hammer as well as what is

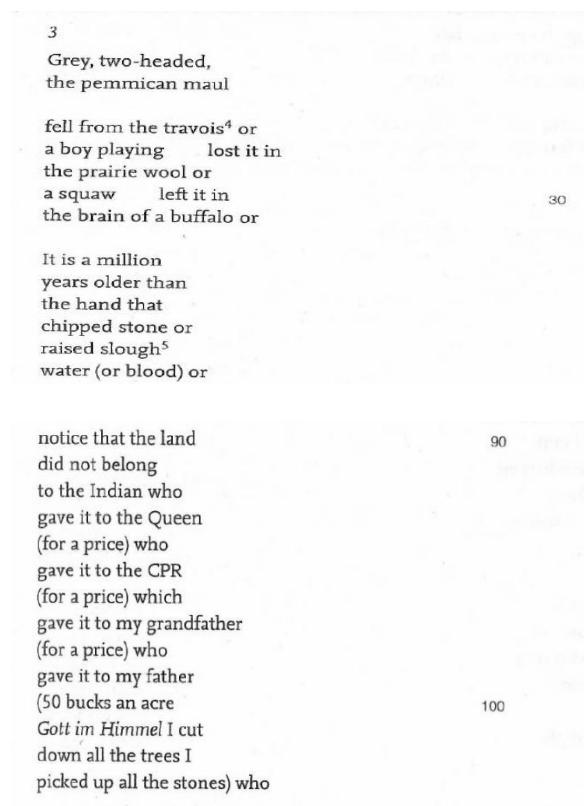
left (the stone) not only symbolize the losses of a historical chapter on this land. More importantly, they reiterate the incompleteness of personal or national history leading to the disorientation of the speaker. There, the positive space as depicted and the negative space as constantly being implied are inseparable constituents. Together, they put forward a legitimate inquiry regarding the consequences brought by colonization both on the colonizers and the colonized. The devastating impacts on these subjects, the alienation, together with the deprivation of inheritance, of culture and history, compel the readers to contemplate the meaning and the sacrifice of colonizing a land. In other words, the lines above aim to arouse concerns on the status of displaced people and displaced history, vehemently criticizing colonial thinking epitomized by antagonism, conquest, and domination.

1.1.2 – Hauntology, the Ghosts are Never Gone

Employing the devices of metaphor and metonymy to reify the negative space, the poet conjures up in vivid colors and details the lost space and time. Shifting from the scenes at present to those of the past, it can be assumed that Kroetsch is skillful in unveiling the multifaceted nature of the concept of a land. Based on this, the poet argues for the atemporal nature and the permanence of the past, which echoes the very ideal of hauntology. “Does then the 'historical' person who is identified with the ghost properly belong to the present? Surely not, as the idea of a return from death fractures all traditional conceptions of temporality” (Derrida 11). From this perspective, it seems fair to assume that the poet resorts to a deconstructive perspective in viewing a place as an admixture of its past and its present, refusing to adopt a static and limited view overtly focused on the present status. That is to say, for Kroetsch, the reading of a land should not fixate on its present. The identity of a land is, like that of a person, multi-dimensional and highly flexible. “Inter; intra. The Great Plains as middle. How do you speak a middle? Whatever happened to the good-old beginning and good-old end” (Kroetsch 169). Therefore, for the poet, the

space is never separated from time, and its association with the past should not be cut off. More importantly, due to this objective status of a land, any attempt to interpret a physical space from a purely human perception is naively subjective and overtly simplified.

For example, from line 26 to Line 103, the poet constantly projects the past into the present, repetitively questioning the concept of “owning a land”. In the “Stone Hammer Poem”, there are lines like “...the land did not belong to the Indian who gave it to the Queen [...] who gave it to my father” (line 90 to line 97).



Evidently, the metaphoric meaning of the land goes far beyond its literal meaning, but rather implies its history, its complicated status, and the entire unity of time and space. In other words, in the eyes of Kroetsch, the heterogeneity of a space renders it beyond the linear and static cognition of humans. This means the identity of its dwellers should exhibit a similar feature, begetting a postmodern reading of physical reality and humanity.

Considering such uncertainty, the application of metaphors here in the lines above allows for

the detailed capture of the heterogeneity of land, nation, and people. Thus, the ambiguity and vagueness as naturally inherited by such a trope are skillfully maneuvered to match the unattainable feature of a land. Since the “land” is too grand to belong to its settlers, its inhumanity keeps it independent from human scope and human expectations. Explicitly speaking, the pemmican maul, together with the lost stories associated with it are just facets constituting the space. To the land, all the dwellers are temporal existences, rendering any claim to own the land in vain. The human events are chapters instead of the essence or the core identity of the land.

To sum up, the diasporic sentiments gain their transcendence, from the personal level of seeking root or origin up to a dialectical philosophical reading of reality, a recognition of the triviality of human cognition and of the infinity of the land. They constitute the knowledge about the absurdity of the violence imposed on the oppressed, and of the distortion and misguided understanding that derives from a one-sided interpretation of reality, which collectively build up the cognition on the “nothingness” in the world and in human existence.

1.2 – Overcome the predicament: Knowledge of Permeation and Duality

When citing Ernest Buckler on the supreme predicament faced by human activity, Robert Kroetsch claims that “we might exist in a cosmology that is so detailed and complete, it enables us to read each object and act an expression not simply as metaphor but as symbol” (“Beyond Nationalism” 10). Similarly, in his study on prairie poetry, Laurie Ricou argues that “space is not only the distance between objects, but the cosmic infinitude ” (114). While it is a common practice to understand metaphor as a rhetorical device employed to depict objects in the physical reality, these statements seem to suggest a possibility of metaphor extending to the domain of the metaphysical. Therefore, this part aims to excavate how the metaphors employed in the “Stone Hammer Poem” facilitate the permeation, or passing-through, from the physical world to the realm

of the imagination. At the same time, it will explore the duality of the metaphorical space in destructing and reconstructing existentialist knowledge lauding duality, diversity, and connectivity. Explicitly, it aims to argue that metaphors are not only the vehicles depicting the space a priori, but rather a constituent of the knowledge beyond the empirical understandings of human-beings.

When exploring the difficulty in defining national identity, Kroetsch claims that “we might live in a world that means nothing” (“Beyond Nationalism” 10), and “hearing the silence of the world, the failure of the world to announce meaning, we tell stories” (“Beyond Nationalism” 5). Given the “nothing” and the “nothingness”, he applies spatial metaphor to capture the unknown from a stand “in the middle”: “That’s what a region is”; “A text that unravels around the edges”; “The Great Plains as middle”; and “ventures into the middle, and ventures a middle”(“Regionalism, Postmodernism, and Robert Kroetsch” 164). In other words, the metaphors employed to depict a space of “nothingness” should be, in essence, vehicles capturing its imperceptible, unattainable and unknown qualities. To detail and vivify the depiction of such a void space beyond human observation, Kroetsch firstly resorts to the permeation between the tenor and the vehicle to project properties from the physical reality to the world of nothingness, efficiently and effectively etching out its broad outline. Secondly, he furthers the function of metaphors to erode and destroy stereotypical understandings on the unknown space, shedding lights on what was misunderstood, unnoticeable or disregarded. That is to say, while employing the metaphorical space as a triple prism to reveal the light spectrum imperceivable in an ordinary environment, the parameters of the “nothingness” are skillfully seized and rendered observable. Consequently, certain orthodox understandings pertaining to time, space, history and human knowledge are subject to effacement and reconstruction.

To start off, highly permeable metaphorical constructions can be identified from various dimensions. Here, permeation refers to the ability to pervade, to spread through various temporal

and mental spaces. This also means permeable metaphorical constructions can be heterogeneous. That is to say, the permeation of the metaphoric space is both an inducer and a carrier of the nothingness, whose connectedness facilitates the leap between the real and the imaginative. For example, this is reflected in the core image/vehicle: the stone hammer, which exhibits an identifiable duality in its signification, marks both a present moment and the one beyond. The signifier of the stone hammer is highly productive and provocative due to the fecundity of the metaphorical space it evokes. It generates a multidimensional space bordering on the present and the past, and on the perceivable and the obscure. Meanwhile, it is an icon symbolizing the avid, long-lasting desire of the poet to procure a glimpse of the world beyond his sight. In this sense, the stone hammer becomes a tentacle extending from the physical to the metaphysical, a sensor of the poet to read and understand the “nothingness”. To sum up, the poetic metaphors reveal themselves in the poem by rendering substances within the space of nothingness, and in how their metaphoricity mirrors what is beyond the empirical knowledge of humans.

The concept of metaphorical permeation is constructed mainly based on the arguments from Roman Jakobson concerning metaphor being engendered out of similarity (129). Commensurate to this doctrine, Kroetsch employs space metaphors to synthesize the properties in the physical world with those that are metaphysical, vividly capturing, enriching and materializing the “nothingness” of the lost times, spaces, and beings. Similar to what is posited by Laurie Ricou, “the images of lines provide the vehicle linking ‘place facts’ to a disappearing place” (114). As mentioned above, the unique nature of permeable metaphors as being an inducer and a carrier of nothingness at the same time leads to the discussion on metaphorical duality.

Regarding the duality of metaphoric poetics in the “Stone Hammer Poem”, a heterogeneous metaphorical space integrating bodily experiences from physical reality and the assumptions about the imaginative world comes into reification through contextually constructed similarity and

contiguity. In other words, in the poem, various entities and dimensions within the metaphorical space etch out what might exist in the space of “nothingness”. In this way, the assumptions regarding “nothingness”, the simulacrum procured from grafting daily living experience onto a space beyond physicality are manifested. More importantly, Kroetsch manages to unveil not only the similitude but also the inconsistency between a space in the physical world and that in his mind. In essence, he shares a priori knowledge by the technique of cognitive mapping, not merely employing a sign to refer to another sign, but a symbol to define another symbol. Interestingly, due to the fundamental nature of a priori knowledge, which renders it impossible to be utterly verified, Kroetsch himself is fully aware of the deficiency in the mapping. Thus, he utters the statement cited at the beginning of the essay, “the disbelief in belief”. This argument represents both the theme and the major notion that Kroetsch intends to bring up in the “Stone Hammer Poem”. He doubts the practice of engendering knowledge based on insufficient empirical evidence and limited human cognition, and is concerned with the impossibility of retrieving knowledge. Such sentiments are buttressed by the strong emotions of sorrow and regret throughout the poem. By highlighting the conditionality and ephemerality of knowledge with his metaphorical poetics, Kroetsch constantly destroys and reconstructs the understanding pertaining to the “nothings”. Whimsical, unstable, and ephemeral, these are the qualities of knowledge revealed by him. In his eyes, there is always something unnoticeable and unattainable. Hence, there are no perfect cognitive models for humans to understand and interpret the world, only the quest of endless doubts and inquiries, the deconstructions and reconstructions.

In this sense, permeability and duality are the two pillars upholding the metaphorical poetics of Kroetsch. With the former filling in the blanks of “nothingness” and the latter constantly effacing erroneous assumptions, the metaphorical space constructed in the poem grows to be a self-closing mechanism. The beliefs and disbeliefs of the poet are consequently actualized and shared

with the readers.

1.3 – Eliminating the Absurdity of Flawed Knowledge: Connecting and Expanding by Orientational Metaphors

“Knowledge becomes, for us, knowledge of someone else” (“The Lovely Treachery of Words” 4). In the “Stone Hammer Poem”, Kroetsch attempts to explore the nature of historical knowledge, the meaning of humans seeking such a kind of knowledge, and the loss forever of some knowledge. In other words, he purports to depict and elaborate on the content and the texture of the “nothingness” by taking a stance in the current moment. He manages to capture parts of the a priori— a fragment, a trace, a trajectory, a facet, a tendency— but never the whole.

The “Stone Hammer Poem” epitomizes Canadian historiographical poetry with an admixture of retrospection and introspection associated with a historical relic of the stone hammer, unfolding a grand volume in which ephemeral sentiments, meaningful depictions of historical moments, and epistemological reflections coalesce with each other. As a philosophically sophisticated work exploring the disbelief in belief, “Stone Hammer Poem” offers detailed portraits of physical subjects, which are juxtaposed with meaningful reflections. Therefore, effective rhetorical devices like metaphor, metonymy, simile, parallelism, and synaesthesia together with a unique poetic style collectively produce a strong sense of elusiveness. “We feel a profound ambiguity about the past— about both its contained stories and its modes of perception” (“The Lovely Treachery of Words” 5). In this poem, Kroetsch creates a recurring sense of unattainableness, stressing the obscurity of historical knowledge and claims that the full dynamics of the lost is always beyond human cognition, as too much has been eroded and effaced with time. Like what is revealed by the name of the poem, ideologically and historically related associations are affiliated to the description of simple objects like a stone and a stone hammer. Accordingly, as “Figurative language is the common denominator and mediator through which the opposite trajectories of science and poetry

are interconnected and interact” (Keller 118), the device of metaphor is skillfully employed by the poet to bridge the physical matters with profound epistemological insights, creating a refined and permeable texture of vagueness, intangibility, ephemerality, and whimsicality.

First, to study the permeability, which exists as the interconnection and interaction between knowledge of the physical and that of the metaphysical, this section aims to explore how the intangibility of history is substantiated by metaphorical space. At the same time, it elucidates the complementarity between the tenor and the vehicle, which channels the share of properties between the two. That is to say, such a kind of complementarity constructs fundamentally the ability of metaphors to fill the blanks of the space “in the middle” (Kroetsch 164), functions like a dynamo to the permeability.

Interestingly, heterogeneous metaphorical constructions never merely transfer properties, but also create knowledge and conceptualize terms. They effectively engender meaningful associations filled with vividness and expressiveness, materializing the vagueness of history and considerably enhancing readability. Based on this notion, the overall interconnection or interaction between the tenor and the vehicle is termed as metaphorical permeability, including the complementary feature. Two distinctive qualities exhibited, namely transferability and directionality, are discussed to reveal the contents and dynamics of such an interrelation. Meanwhile, aesthetic evaluation is integrated to unveil how metaphor and metaphoricity narrate the obscurity of historical knowledge from multiple angles. In each part of the discussion, a series of sub-features such as iconicity and dynamicity are studied to thoroughly analyze how the permeability functions as an impetus fostering a link between reality and imagination, between the known and the unknown.

1.3.1 – Transferability featured by Generativeness

Fontanier identifies the very nature of metaphor as “the irruptive expansion of a sign signifying an idea to a sense without a signifier” (207), pointing out a transfer of properties and

perceptions from a sign to a conceptual domain that has yet to be clearly defined. This is essentially a metaphorical link between the tenor and the vehicle. Hence, the transferability of metaphorical construction seems to be theoretically corroborated. In the “Stone Hammer Poem”, the conceptual domain should be the space of a priori knowledge, the “nothingness”. To address the transferability which determines the content of complementarity, properties transferred as well as how they facilitate connections should be investigated. Generally speaking, in the “Stone Hammer Poem”, transferability is the major source to create a sense of tangibility in the face of the unattainability of history. In other words, resorting to this device, Kroetsch manages to interpret abstract concepts with simple concrete objects, inspiring his readers to see beyond the letters, and to experience what is unseen. By visualizing a great many details from lost times based on the characters of the stone or the maul, readers can witness and experience what was happening, what has been changed and what has been lost. Consider the following metaphorical expressions:

smelling a little of cut
grass or maybe even of
ripening wheat or of
buffalo blood hot
in the dying sun. (Kroetsch 325)

Evidently, metaphoricity resides within a concept domain constructed by the lines narrating the iconic traits of a lost time in history. And all the meaningful associations about that time are radiated from the stone hammer. In presenting the hammer as a vehicle expressing the imaginative world, Kroetsch stresses a series of prominent characters of the lost time, which are the wildness and harshness of nature, and the sole desire of survival. In *The Lovely Treachery of Words*, the poet explains such a maneuver as “recording the harshness, the realistic mode of fiction” (5). With this fictional style of depiction, the primitiveness of the lost time and land is actualized through the

smell of grass and buffalo blood. The hostility of nature is portrayed by the sun which is dying, and the strong willingness to survive is highlighted by the ripening wheat which stands for the need to feed. All these qualities are transferred from the smells of a relic to the imaginative world belonging to a lost age. Through this flow of properties channeling the source (the hammer) and the target (the world in imagination), the vague concept of a lost time and space evolves into something tangible and sensible, arousing overwhelming nostalgic sentiments. This mechanism echoes the arguments from William R. Brown, that “a prime function of poetry is to exhibit new, hitherto-unseen relations among things or events” (34), and “metaphor is admirably suited to the function” (34). By actualizing the effaced beings and materializing a lost space through a metaphorical narration, readers are firstly impressed by unique visual and olfactory sensations. Then, with the awareness that such moments only exist in a lost realm, they are captured within an immense feeling of loss. To sum up, metaphorical transferability exemplified by iconic qualities extracted and delivered to the tenor not only enriches the contents of the poem but also enhances the overall aesthetic repository of poetic images, compelling readers to live the past and to contemplate the very nature of their historical knowledge. Interestingly, the metaphorical transfer accomplished in this stanza is not based on similarity in appearance, but on previously established associations between the hammer and history. This operation confirms the statement from Richards regarding metaphorical application in “symbol” situations, which requires “the same kind of contexts as abstract thought” (214). In other words, metaphoricity can be achieved with contextually established associations as the basis, and it is possible for a metaphorical construction to produce ramifications not from physical resemblance, but from semantic connections. This mechanism is further explained by metaphorical generativeness, which is the ability of metaphors in generating new, context-based meanings among signs and symbols, relying on conceptualization. Unlike transferability which provides the basic content of permeability, this kind of generativeness

functions to enrich or expand the touch of metaphorical permeability. If complementarity is manifested as transferability, and provides the void space of “nothingness” with basic elements and facts that roughly define its nature or essence, generativeness imbues these facts with new denotations or connotations, and consequently decides the tendency of transfers, capturing the very dynamics of permeability.

Generally speaking, as the “inherent trope in lyric poetry” (Jakobson 297), metaphor is widely employed in poems to serve the purpose of creating an exhilarating exuberance of language performance. “Metaphor as the process most vital to the growth of language, being specifically the means by which language users extend old names to new phenomena, thus providing for one kind of generality of vocabulary” (Brown 32). Meanwhile, Bartsch argues that metaphor and metonymy are two distinct types of generating new meanings for existing expression (73). Therefore, generativeness as one of the generic features of metaphor and metaphoricity seems to be widely acknowledged. In the “Stone Hammer Poem”, such generativeness exhibits a binary nature: language performance enriched on the surface level, and the facilitation of meaningful associations which materialize abstract concept(s) underlying in the deep. The metaphoric use of the stone hammer is the first example to reveal such nature. The stone and the hammer are sometimes addressed separately, each representing some particular emotional tendencies of a certain period in history. At other times, the two objects are treated as a totality to produce joint emblematic meanings. With the production of connotations accompanying the transfer of iconic properties from physical objects to the times they represent, the duality of generativeness is revealed.

To exemplify, the third section of the poem unveils the metaphorical meaning of the stone hammer by unfolding several scenarios, like “the pemmican maul / fell from the travois”, or “a boy playing lost it / in the prairie wool”, or “a squaw² left it in the brain of a buffalo” (324), implying

² The word “squaw” is problematic and I want to mark this word for its gendered colonial violence.

that the hammer was used in a hunter-gatherer society. That is to say, a contextually generated equivalence is produced based on the stone hammer, relying on its association with the iconic living scenes of the lost time. Then, the gap between an historical relic and the time it represents is filled with vivid details. By giving connotations to the hammer to facilitate meaningful associations, the content of the stanza is amplified with vibrating colors and meaningful implications. More importantly, a cognitive domain of readers regarding a lost time is constructed on a basic level. However, there is something more fundamental, as the maneuver above only elaborates on the working mechanism of metaphor generating contexts to establish superficial associations. It fails to clarify the productive tendencies produced by the metaphorical constructions. This is to be detailed later.

Similar to the metaphorical object of hammer, characteristics of the time represented by the stone is manifested with the same strategy of creating equivalence and meaningful associations from iconic scenes, as what is revealed by the lines that:

it is a stone
old as the last
Ice Age, the
retreating/the retreating ice,
the retreating buffalo, the
retreating Indians. (Kroetsch 324)

By detailing various events that happened in the lost space, the poet successfully creates the visions and the meanings of these historical moments for readers to savor and digest. Instead of directly transferring properties as exemplified in the previous part of the discussion, what propels the comprehension and materialization of such an imaginary space is the denotative and connotative

meanings of certain metaphorical events. This strategy greatly mirrors the scope of historical intangibility.

Additionally, aside from the metaphoricity of the whole stanza which is between the stone and its time, the actual literary metaphors constructed are also worth exploring. First of all, complete metaphorical expressions without any reduction should be: the Ice Age is retreating. The ice is retreating. The buffalo is retreating, and the Indians are retreating. Evidently, the sense of withdrawal or constringency as revealed by the repetition of “retreating” is firstly inscribed to the hypernym: the Ice Age, and then, flows within the semantic field down to the hyponyms of ice, buffalo and Indians. In other words, the shared practice of “retreating” spreading vertically from the upper echelon to the lower constructs a strong sense of fluidity, adding vividness and dynamics to the narration. Hence, the first function of metaphor in enriching language performance is achieved. Meanwhile, the fluidity effectively reflects the pervasiveness of the retreats, implying the severity of the troubling consequence. Thus, the second function of generating profound connotation is realized. Moreover, the creation of cross-space expressions like “retreating ice”, and “retreating buffalo” are also examples of the generative capacity of metaphors. They integrate properties from two different mental spaces: the space of human behaviors, and the space of non-human beings, to unfold new events depicting the prominent feature of the lost time. The merits of such a technique of personification is not only in the mere enrichment of narration, but in creating new knowledge, and expanding the cognition of the readers. That is to say, the synthesizing of two spaces firstly unveils the significance of metaphor as a productive cognitive device which facilitates recognition. Secondly and more importantly, it reminds readers of a simple fact: effacement of an age starts from the losses of various vital elements. Therefore, if the whole stanza is considered as a metaphorical construction, then all the physical beings— the stone, the retreating

ice, buffalo and indigenous peoples— can all be regarded as the manifestations of the “nothingness”.

Yet, beyond the operating mechanism of metaphoricity in producing meaningful events and new knowledge, there is still something more. Despite the fact that the same action of “retreating” is performed by various agents, the tensions between colonizers and colonized, and between predators and preys are purposely exposed. That is to say, colonizers begetting the deterioration of the natural environment and the extinctions of other peoples and species are boldly unfolded by the metaphorical constructions in front of the audience. To start off, the depiction of “retreating” exhibits a multiplicity of implications. Conventionally, such an action is conducted with unwillingness or reluctance, a bitter choice made when encountering an enormous threat, exploitation or aggression. The event of buffaloes retreating insinuates the reckless predation committed by colonizers. The indigenous people retreating reflects the cruelty of colonial violence and deprivation, an atrocity leading to the near-collapse of the indigenous society. The retreating ice exhibits the tension between the natural environment and the colonizers, mirroring the detrimental effects and destructive power of colonization and colonialism. To sum up, the metaphorical constructions featured by “retreating” resort to somatic experiences (mostly visual) to unleash the criticism and disparagement of the poet on colonialism. In this case, the permeability of metaphoricity appears in the accusations against the relentless slaughters and genocides performed by the colonizers on the colonized land and people.

By constructing various retreating scenes with the device of metaphoricity, Kroetsch skillfully creates a series of experiential knowledge, constantly reminding his readers of various sorts of tensions and losses. From a particular species of animal, to other human species, to a landscape, and finally to an entire age, the irretrievable vanishing pieces in time and space surely leave all sorts of blanks. Based on the voids, the poet repetitively urges his readers to ponder on the

fundamental reason(s) causing such a nihilism. In the following part of section 5, the poet emphasizes the color white and the winter season, deliberately aiming to arouse an association linking these images to the stone hammer (the bone color of the hammer), as well as to the existence of “nothingness”. By this means, a chain of signifiers is established, connecting the retreats, the whiteness, the emptiness with the stone and the hammer. This demonstrates how independent figures interacting with each other construct a multidimensional metaphorical space which features permeability and generativeness in particular. Hence, metaphorical generativeness as illustrated above becomes the very engine producing new denotations and connotations, which include meaningful images, profound associations, and arousing emotive tendencies on the space of nothingness. More importantly, by proclaiming the authorial inclination on denouncing colonial violence, the stone as a witness older than history and humans turns out to be a piece of solid evidence recording the contributors inducing the losses and blanks.

To sum up, metaphorical transferability is accompanied by its generativeness. Thus, it exhibits the capacity to construct and create all sorts of associations, a typical process of conceptualization. Therefore, simple signs such as the stone or the stone hammer can be construed as anchors of signification. Cognitive domains which are actually understandings regarding specific targets (the tenors) are forged by metaphorical space. Both the transfer and the generation can contribute to the materialization of the lost times, and consequently, substantiate the obscurity of history. Metaphorical constructions not only offer details of the lost realm. More importantly, they provocatively emphasize the blanks within human cognition related to that time and space, exposing the existence of nothingness. Thus, the so-called historical knowledge is questioned and deconstructed fundamentally. Worth noting, here, is the iconicity of the images selected to represent the characteristics of the past times, without which, expressiveness and appeal would be considerably compromised.

To detail, iconicity, in the sense of producing highly impressive and representative images, turns the untouchable into something of sensations. In other words, aesthetically speaking, the metaphorical space in the poem constructs a typical sort of expressionistic poetics. It not only narrates, but also actively impresses and intensifies. As mentioned earlier, this feature of metaphorical generativeness directly expands the scope of influence of the permeability, extending its function from the basic materialistic recognition to profound psychological resonance. Therefore, such permeation not only triggers the promotion of epistemological understanding, but also forges emotional bonds. In a nutshell, the emotive function, the inferential function, the poetic function, and the conative function of language are simultaneously accomplished by such a kind of highly functional metaphorical poetics.

1.3.2 – Directionality and Dynamicity

The directionality of metaphors are frequently analyzed to study the causes and consequences of metaphorical expressions. According to Shen and Porat, “verbal metaphors are fundamentally directional” (62). Most studies pertaining to this feature are conducted under the influence of Conceptual Metaphor Theory from Lakoff and Johnson, and thus, attribute such directionality to conceptual mapping. The practice of conceptual mapping is essentially a projection from the source domain, comprised of the attributes from the vehicle, to the target domain, comprised of qualities of the tenor. This theory provides a theoretical basis for the analysis of metaphorical directionality which follows.

Based on the discussion on metaphorical transferability and its generativeness, it has been established that the interrelations enabled by the transfer of properties between a tenor and a vehicle involves cognitive operations like crossing of mental spaces and conceptualization. For example, the degrading status of the hammer as indicated by the third stanza in section one insinuates the remoteness and decay of the time to which it belongs.

The rawhide loops
are gone, the
hand is gone, the
buffalo's skull
is gone. (Kroetsch 323)

In this stanza, the metaphorical structure “*X* is gone” is repetitively employed to reiterate the oldness of the hammer. With the metaphorical use of the hammer, this characteristic is transferred to the old age it represents, strengthening the sense of missing and vacantness. Therefore, based on similitude, a metaphorical construction: the old age is the hammer, is well established. More importantly, anchored by the projection of properties from the hammer to the lost time and space, Kroetsch again reiterates the desolating power of colonization, the devastating violence incurring extinction and annihilation. The tensions between human species, the scene of one civilization devouring the others, are captured and vivified within the metaphorical spaces. This constantly compels readers to question their historical knowledge, recognizing the hypocritical side of colonial expansion and its achievements. At the same time, it highlights the duality of advancement and progress, where construction and destruction, grace and cruelty, and productivity and deprivation coexist.

In the metaphor equating the old age to the hammer, the mental space on the qualities of a hammer is bridged with the space of understandings regarding a past time. The shared traits which is the status of being lost is selected from the first space and mapped into the second space, directly reflecting a unilateral process. The directionality of this metaphorical construction is simply unidirectional, which serves to maximally fill the lost space with a sea of symbolic marks inducing ethical reflections and philosophical inquiries. In other words, the space of nothingness as materialized (rendered visible) and actualized (rendered sensible) in the poem relies on such uni-

directionality to arouse concerns on the complication and heterogeneity of colonization and colonialism. Meanwhile, such a kind of metaphor, with the fecundity within its permeability, directly and boldly enforces a somatic experience in readers. Consequently, the mercilessness, the violence, the extinciveness of colonialism and modernity are manifested. The duality of colonization/extinction, and the development/destruction are not only brought into awareness, but also rendered visually and mentally sensible. However, in another metaphoric expression as cited below, the interactions between the tenor and the vehicle seems to be bilateral.

The poem

is the stone

chipped and hammered

Until it is shaped

Like the stone

Hammer, the maul. (Kroetsch 325)

Firstly, the definition of “poem” is highly conceptualized by the context in the poem, as evidently, its generic meaning from the dictionary is not sufficient to explain its meaning in this stanza. Given section 11, which clearly states that “sometimes I write my poem for that stone hammer” (Kroetsch 327), it seems reasonable to assume that the lines cited above equal the emptiness of knowledge to the losses of history. What is worth noting, the juxtaposition of poem, stone, and stone hammer, clearly reflects intentionally constructed relation of equivalency among the three. This means that in the poem, the three items are essentially a unity. As suggested by Wang, “Stone, Hammer, Poem. Like the Trinity, the three are distinct yet one” (“Stone, Hammer, Poem”). Therefore, in the metaphor that the poem is the stone which is also the hammer, the directionality exhibited among the three entities seems to be bilateral, with properties of each item shared by the other two. That is to say, each conceptual space is both a source domain and a target domain. As readers can easily

interpret the connotations within the trinity of the objects replying on their previous reading of the poem, they can instantly acquire the understanding that the stone, the hammer and the poem are actually different symbols for one, which is the blanks, the ambiguity and the incompleteness of history and historical knowledge. With the poem being the stone that is “chipped and hammered” (Kroetsch 325) to be a hammer, what seems to be suggested by the author is that the knowledge about history as we know it is only a small portion, and what is lost can never be retrieved. More importantly, the metaphorical space constructed on such a trinity forms a loop where colonialism, destruction of beings, and loss of knowledge interact with each other to generate the spaces of nothingness. Therefore, the structuring of the semantic unit, the cyclical and self-closing metaphorical construction of a trinity, and its bidirectional quality particularly, unfold the operational mechanism of producing “nothingness” physically, epistemologically, and emotionally. Secondly, the complexity and heterogeneity of humanity are revealed, urging the readers to reflect and ruminate. The conceptualization constructed by the trinity directly indicates the meaning of knowing obscurity, incompleteness and limitation of knowledge. To produce this notion, connotations extrapolated from the three items flow back and forth to form a supporting circle, each complementing the others and being complemented by the others. Hence, the bi-directionality serves to launch the channeling of images, unifying their significations and actuating the permeation of meaning.

With the analysis above, it seems fair to assume that metaphorical directionality in this poem also exhibits a binary nature. When the vehicle is a concrete physical object, and its qualities are ascribed to the tenor, the direction of transfer is probably unilateral. This is reflected by the metaphorical constructions involving sensory or physical qualities, such as the smells or the looks. However, when a metaphor is constructed between two abstract concepts, the relation of equivalence is probably established on contextually constructed associations, rather than similarity

on the surface level. This is corroborated by the metaphorical constructions in which connotations extracted becomes a shared property between the tenor and the vehicle. For example, in the first section of the poem, there is a metaphor “Bone is the color of the stone maul” (323). The choice of the lexicon “bone” is worthy of noting. Due to its unfortunate implication of death and decay, a strong sense of negativity seemingly permeates the whole stanza. To comprehend such metaphor, the connotations of the vehicle and the tenor are firstly extrapolated and then combined to forge a joint meaning. Since bone represents death, and maul represents a past time, it is reasonable to assume that this metaphor aims to conceptualize the hammer as the lost time in history. Besides, bone is the proof of what was once alive, the relic from the lost time and space, the color of blanks, and the witness of deprivation and violence.

In this sense, the bone is the nothingness.

Evidently, both the bone and the hammer can be regarded as the materials arousing feelings and emanating reflections, when they are employed metaphorically. Therefore, when sensation becomes the only channel, it naturally leads to a mutually complementary and hence, bilateral process of exchange and unification, as neither the tenor nor the vehicle alone can furnish a reasonable understanding of the whole metaphor. The bilateral nature of this kind of metaphor could also be explained by the theory of Bartsch regarding concept formation as the beginning of meaning generating in metaphor (73). Again, in a metaphor where connotations originating in sensation(s) are the impetus to arouse empathetic understanding of a metaphysical concept such as the intangibility of history, a conceptual stratum anchoring relevant associations is vital. Consequently, the tenor and the vehicle cooperating with each other to facilitate the interpretation of the metaphorical constructions. Moreover, compared with the former case in which properties are simply selected and transferred to the tenor, the bilateral metaphorical construction involves an extra procedure of synthesizing. Thus, the final product of metaphoricity in this case, is a newly

created, joint meaning, which buttresses the generative capacity of metaphors as discussed in the first part of the essay. To sum up, the dynamicity of metaphor and metaphoricity as epitomized by unidirectionality and bidirectionality reflects the pragmatic purpose of metaphorical complementarity.

1.4 – Developments: Metonymic Aspects and Catachresis

The metonymic aspects of metaphor prevail in the poem of Kroetsch. This is the major reason that his metaphoric poetics is powerful in arousing all sorts of meaningful associations. There is a large amount of discussion regarding how metaphor and metaphoricity generate surrealistic connections, linking the physical reality with the imaginary realm. By this means, metaphor can effectively expand the cognitive horizons of readers. Explicitly speaking, the most evident example could be the trinity of the stone, the hammer and the poem. When presenting the three parallel imageries, the poet intends to highlight both the continuity and the discontinuity of history. The stone stands for a pre-human age. The hammer represents pre-industrial time. The poem is obviously the modern thinking of history. As the operation of metonymy relies on association rather than similarity, it is more ideal in generating connections among various images. Leaping from the stone to the hammer to the poem, history and humanity as discussed by Kroetsch are interpreted from the three nodes. The temporality of human beings and the incompleteness of factitious reading of the physical world are well argued.

As for the catechresis, it obviously serves to convey the epistemological understandings of the poets regarding how to define and interpret reality. In the “Stone Hammer Poem”, the poet claims “bone is the color of stone maul” (line 6-7), instead of bone-white is the color of stone maul. The evidence of catechresis is highly metaphorical, as it indicates that what hides behind the color is actually the connotation of death carried by the maul. Similarly, in line 61, there is an expression

“pemmican winter”. Abandoning the conventional expression indigenous winter, or the winter for the indigenous people, Kroetsch chose the word “pemmican” to detail and vivify the disappearance of a race and a culture. Unlike the first example, this catechresis is both metaphoric and metonymic. The indigenous people and their cultures are condensed and represented by a simple image of pemmican. Such a kind of unconventional wording highlights the semantic misuse leading to a discomfort when reading. It is an intentional practice of the poet to arouse negative feelings associated with the people who are erased. Hence, fierce and complex emotional responses are forged. More importantly, the philosophical depth of the poem is enhanced.

1.5 – The Construction of Knowledge Facilitated by a Metaphorical Space

Kroetsch claims that “we might live in a world that means nothing” (“Beyond Nationalism”¹⁰), and “hearing the silence of the world, the failure of the world to announce meaning, we tell stories” (“Beyond Nationalism” 5). Thus, the “Stone Hammer Poem” should be one among the numerous versions of such stories capturing and unfolding the essence of such a “nothingness”. Instead of adhering to the Hegelian materialistic determinism which claims that human knowledge is merely a passive reflection of physical reality, the poet emphasizes the limitation of human knowledge acquired by only studying empirical evidence. By destructing the ideals based on the homogeneity of the source of knowledge, Kroetsch strives to establish the acknowledgment on the infinity of knowledge going beyond mere physical materials and empirical experience. Therefore, the theme of knowing the agnostic becomes the core of his argumentation in the poem.

The poet remains positive to the quest of humans pursuing knowledge. “Kroetsch never determines if intrinsic purpose of a stone exists, only that it is outside of humanity. In understanding this, the struggle for meaning, the extrinsic purpose, is enough” (Wang, “Stone,

Hummer, Poem”). The stone, the hammer, and the poem are different entities depicting various historical moments, yet they are the same in essence, that is, the knowledge of history. In other words, the meaning of human seeking meaning in “nothing” is to procure a glimpse of what others saw and to taste what others experienced. Thus, knowledge is no longer “the knowledge of some else” (“Beyond Nationalism” 4); the space “in the middle” is no longer empty; the cognition of the nothingness is less void. For the impossible mission of seeking meanings from a realm beyond current time and space, metaphors and metaphoricity construct a bridge connecting the present and the past as well as the concrete and the abstract. In other words, the mental bridge is based on what we believe has happened and what has really happened, which means there is always room for supplements and corrections. Despite the fact that the piers of the bridge are essentially speculative, as they merely reflect partial or relative truth, the journey of seeking, exploring and introspecting itself is a real enlightenment for human-beings in the eyes of Kroetsch.

Chapter 2: Metaphorical Construction of Issues Regarding Gender and Identity

The issue of privilege of who stands where in the social order, and how this order enacts us as we enact it.
— Erin Moure, *The Anti-Anaesthetic*

2.1 – Create and Celebrate Individual Identity

How the diversified existence of people is regarded as noise or even parasite? The violence and brutality in the action itself is fiercely derided by Erin Moure, a feminist poet who believes in authenticity (the right to take one's choice freely) and facticity (the right to create one's own identity). By exposing differences that truly exist, and by vehemently condemning the attempts made to ignore such differences, the poet lauds feminist ethics of subjectivity. This is manifested first in her recognition and celebration of difference, or "différance" ; then, in the ironies in her metaphorically constructed "noises" and "parasites" (unorthodox words and expression such as catachresis and ungrammatical utterances); and finally in her condemnation of essentialism and phallogocentrism. In *O Ciudadán*, poetic language, particularly metaphor, becomes a vessel to hold the feminist ideals of Erin Moure, vividly visualizing the violence and violation imposed on social minorities. Interestingly, the same vessel also manifests her accusation and rebellion against the exterior interference of one's subjectivity and individual identity. The devices of metaphor, metonymy and catachresis work together to picture a poetic space filled with linguistic differences that directly refer to different identities in human society. The poet celebrates her unique existence by bravely embracing her *différance*, honestly narrating her true desires and emotions, and creatively forging her own ethics and identity. The richness of her poetic language, the twists of grammatical rules, the willfully created errors and the diversity in semantic creations are all examples of the *différance* that naturally exists in human identity. The ambiguity inhabited by

metaphoricity, together with the imaginative possibilities aroused by it, become the vitality of her poetics, constructing a rich texture of writing which constantly contributes to her celebration of individual identity.

2.2 – Facticity: Celebration of "Différance" in Thinking and Behaving

The celebration of "différance" (difference and deferral) is the source of metaphorical creations which construct and develop Moure's feminist ideology. The authoritative practice of Erin Moure clearly manifests her intention to question the rationality of the phallogocentric tradition of human society. She also taunts the conventional stipulation of gender and social norms with her invention of novel semantic units including lexical compounds and graphs. The fundamental strategy of Erin Moure is to resort to metaphoricity, which includes rhetorical devices of metaphor, metonymy and catachresis to perform a deconstruction of gender and identity. On the surface, her employment of metaphoricity is realized by the coalition of metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis to challenge linguistic norms. However, what underlies the rhetoric is her feministic philosophy extolling gender and social equality, as well as the respect for the natural state of humanity.

Firstly, what indicates her respect for facticity and difference resides most evidently in Moure's manipulation of metaphoricity to erode a fixed definition of a word or a concept. Her poetry exhibits a tendency toward uncertainty, a refusal of fixation, rigidity and prohibition. Something that might be called semantic fickleness. This fickleness designates effacement of meaning, which results from the temporality of oral utterance. Yet, this degree of temporality, the erosion of meaning, is demonstrated and fully employed by Erin Moure to engender numerous semantic creations. More importantly, what is unfolded in her poetics is not only the effacement, but the exact opposite— creation, evolution and differentiation. Resorting to the absence created by

the effacement, that is, the blank left by the imperceptibility of difference, metaphoricity finds its place.

Through the metaphoricity originating from the absence of difference and the temporality of meaning, the poet successfully demonstrates her philosophy: meanings carried by linguistic or social symbols are in constant change, thus there is no need to overtly fixate on a rigid stipulation. Semantic boundaries are meant to be breached, not to be upheld. This is the first level of her authorial intention, as detailed by metaphorical and metonymic expressions in the poems.

Secondly, the term “différance” discloses the gulf between the body and the mind. Certain social conventions or morals which are constructed by the mind and carried by language, could be drastically detached from the true reality. That is to say, instead of being a truthful depiction of physicality, they are merely distorted, even deformed, simulacrum. The respect for the real needs of the body should be prioritized over the necessity of rigidly maintaining linguistic and social conventions, this is the second aspect of Moure’s philosophy, which is again skillfully manifested by metaphoricity, particularly by the vehicle of catachresis. This is to be detailed in the fourth section of the chapter.

Thirdly, the word “différance” also refers to a biased systemic operation of human cognition, which is exemplified by numerous cognitive models based on antagonism and hierarchy. On this level, the term directly questions the validity of the atemporality of “identity”. Theoretically, any attempt to permanently define a concept is not possible. “Identity is conventionally opposed to the concept of difference” (Phillips, “Différance”). Therefore, challenges to fixed stipulations of gender identity or social identity frequently appear in the poems. Based on the first two layers of her philosophy, Erin Moure vehemently refutes the phallogocentric tradition of gender stipulation, extolling a natural, democratic, and tolerant perspective in viewing gender roles and gender performances. Considering her personal background, this intention is a truthful reflection of her

own living status. However, her feminist inclination aims to address larger concerns. Aside from calling for gender equality and tolerance for sexual desire, her manifestation evidently involves the issue of social equality. This is buttressed by her ambition to overwrite both the linguistic rules and certain specific models of human cognition. To pursue this objective, metaphoricity substantiated by amalgamation of metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis renders her rhetoric direct but philosophical, even in some cases, delirious. The highly bizarre aesthetic ambience permeating her poems is a clear indication of her appeal to respect the natural status of humanity.

Based on the general illustrations above, it is reasonable to assume that the term “différance” is celebrated by the poet not only to capture but also to further analyze the heterogeneity of the truth of humanity, and the significance of existentialist belief in choosing one’s own experiences, such as one’s gender roles. Mocking the fixation on the “invisibility” and “ideality” of the concept “being the same”, Moure avidly urges her readers to respect the truth of her texts and the ethics that should be valued by humanity. That is, the eternal trend of breaking boundaries, the ongoing desire for change and amalgamation. In this regard, the core denotation of the term “différance” renders it as an ideal base to analyze the metaphorical poetics of Erin Moure.

2.3 – Embracing Authenticity: Metaphorical Configuration, Noise or Markers?

The conversion from rhetorical devices/semantic units in literary work to cognitive models of humans is the central concern of the cognitive approach in interpreting and analyzing metaphoricity in poetics. Therefore, in this chapter, tropes like metaphor, and metonymy are selected and discussed as metaphorical constructions. The reason for such an equation is to highlight the constructive ideology behind these meaningful semantic constructions. Meanwhile, more semantic units carrying ideological metaphoricity are included in the study, as the core value of metaphoricity is to name and perform, which far transcends an over-simplistic dual structure

consisting of the tenor and the vehicle. In other words the operation of metaphoricity, which is enabled by a two-stage process: selection and replacement, can be applied to various expressions other than “A is B”. As the language of Moure is succinct, even fragmented, it is not possible to limit the discussion of metaphoricity to the conventional metaphorical structure. Therefore, to extend the scope of study material to constructions such as symbols, graphs, pictures or notations is a reasonable choice in accordance with the major authorial intention of *O Ciudadán*, which is identity configuration.

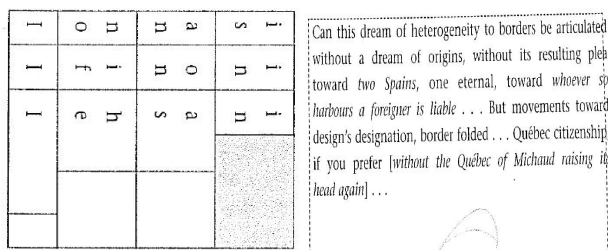
2.3.1 – The Reconstruction of Concept: Metaphor and Its Performativity

Language as we know it can be regarded as “a house of Being”, and the creator and guardians of its manifestation are people who use it, think in it, and live by it (Heidegger 313). In other words, language transcends the scope of a communicative tool to be a part of the stipulation of the world we live in, and the life we choose to live. In many aspects, *O Ciudadán* is an intruder to the house. Inventing novel semantic symbols, passionately narrating her queer love, and intentionally violating linguistic rules, Erin Moure claims her own identity in the house. Audaciously, the poet challenges the conventions and regularities required by the “owners”, questioning their “hospitality”(Of Hospitality 3) through deconstructing the normal and constructing the abnormal, that is, what can be called the noise.

Noise is a “nuisance” and “a signal that does not belong there” (Kosko 3). According to Cary Wolfe, “noise” in literature induces three unsuspected meanings: 1. biological parasite; 2. social parasite; 3. static or interference (11-27). In *O Ciudadán*, parasites with these denotations, “especially the second and the third”, constitute a “contiguous shaping mechanism based on interference of the dominant signal” (Maguire, “The Parasite Poetics”). Lexical inventions like “structure/stricture”, “en(in)dure”, insertions like “alors”, “fêlure”, “anon”, “la felle”, and all the forms and graphs embedded are clear manifestation of her novelty. With the intentionally created

lexical, syntactic, and poetic violations which are considered as noises, Moure miraculously constructs a metaphorical space of innovation, unleashing a sea of unorthodox semantic icons to foster a reorientation of meaning. More importantly, by drastically rupturing from the morphological and syntactic normality that is accredited and conventionalized by any form of so-called decent writing, she challenges the accessibility and aesthetics of conventional poetics.

Evidently, the poetic language of Moure exhibits unique linguistic features, from its surface structure to its signification of meaning. “Erin Moure’s poetry is fragmented, meta-critical and explicitly deconstructive” (Jacques, “The Indignity of Speaking”). With deconstructionism and multilingual construction, such noises become the berceau of new linguistic phenomena, the threshold of meaning generating, and the means to undo phallogocentric ways of thinking and organizing human society. As apertures are where the light comes in, noises are where new meanings and ideology filter in. Employed by Moure, the noise of the strangeness, the informality and irregularity, as well as the disturbance, are systematically maneuvered to activate cross-space connections, leading to new inscriptions of meanings. To take the table and graph inserted in *O Ciudadán* for example:



(Page. 35) (Page.135)

Clearly, they appear like an abrupt intrusion into the text, a misplacement, and a noise disturbing the original harmony constructed by pure letters. To acquire their meanings, the mind constantly attempts to make sense of such strange semantic units until at a certain moment, it breaches the boundaries that define but also confine the contents signified by each unit. After this deconstructive

process, originally independent semantic spaces are channeled and an interpretation is achieved. Take the table listed above for instance: the whole structure gains a new meaning as a unity, which could be an accentuation of the dissonance of the female, or an insinuation encouraging women to strive for a clear sense of their identity, or a subtle indication of the necessity to shed a light on the gray area(s) regarding the exact definition of a “she”. In the process of acquiring these meanings, the table is treated as a semantically meaningful totality with the fixed meanings assigned to the words or phrases within being breached, effaced, and lastly subsumed to the meaning(s) newly constructed. Therefore, “an object that is first a noise, then a resonance of words that alters noise over and over in the head, breaking the pallor of the image and the self” (Skibsrud 17). Based on the analysis above, it seems fair to assume that the poems of Moure which are initiated by and progressed by the way of noise as the impetus have successfully breached boundaries on various levels to create a self-consistent domain that renews conventional concepts, even creates some.

2.3.2 – The Renewal of Concept: Metonymy and Its Performativity

According to Merriam-Webster, metonymy is a figure of speech. It aims to name a concept by using another name/marker that is actually its attribute or is closely associated with it. Therefore, it could include synecdoche. Sometimes, the two are studied as one rhetorical device. As the core of metonymic operation is to name a concept based on associations, it is reasonable to assume that the trope essentially discloses the relation(s) between a concept and its marker. This mechanism is employed by Moure to expose the previous unnoticed, or deliberately ignored factors, the *différance*, within a concept familiar to the public. Thus, it is different from the performativity of metaphors as it adds no new element to conventional concepts. It only unveils what is hidden.

The expression “O Ciudadán” is a concrete exemplum. Instead of using “a ciudadá” , a noun phrase that “has a feminine supplement”(Ciudadán n.pag.), Moure turns to a novel phrase suggesting a collective concept including both the male and the female. By such adjustment, a connection

channeling two very basic cognitive domains about gender difference is realized. In other words, Moure marks the original phrase “a cidadá” as gender specific, expands its boundary to amalgamate the other gender, and emphasizes “O Cidadán” as a generic term .

Besides, lexical creations like “structure/stricture”, “en(in)dure”, and insertions like “alors”, “fêlure”, “anon”, “la felle” are also indications of her constant efforts to erase the linguistic border between English and French. Therefore, associations between the two are revealed or created. Additionally, to counter “the inevitability of non-signifying space in every oppositional discourse” (Butler “Bodies That Matter”), Moure explores the possibility of generating structures that are not isolated by semantic boundaries, but instead, permeate them. In other words, she creates a series of operating signals whose productivity is their tension or extensibility. Therefore, there are compounds like:

work	hungers	endure
.....
function	angers	adore

According to Moure, such compounds visualize the borders between two lexical spaces, yet with their “tensilities”, they instigate the “penetration” across “senses”(112). That is to say, lexicons in these structures do not stand in semantic isolation. Their meanings are not only connected but also expanded to overlap or merge with each other. Therefore, the meaning of the whole compound is an admixture of those from the two parts. This successful integration corroborates the solubility, and the transferability of the two units attracted by the dotted line. Interestingly, multiple purposes can be extracted from such original morphological creations. Aside from meaning generating, they also promote the aesthetic ambience of the poem. The concretion of borders breaks the rigidity of the original poetic layout, adding vividness and visual varieties. Meanwhile, as suggested by the last two sorts of examples above, the shared phonemes constitute end rhymes which are

particularly euphonious in vocalization. “*O Ciudadán* is heterogeneous in structure, [...]; as well as other ‘aleatory’ poems--including a diversity of forms such as banners, calculations, film scripts, and photos [...], implying that they operate on a different frequency from the other poems” (Maguire, “Parasite Poetics”). Therefore, it seems fair to conclude that the heterogeneity exemplified by these binary semantic units featuring dotted lines unveils the change in and connection among theme words .

Aside from employing innovative lexical and semantic creations to initiate cross-spacing meaning, her direct borrowing of notations like arrows, blanks and slashes also suggests an infiltration of visual arts into literary texts. Again the two theme words emerge.

2.3.3 – The Refusal of Essentialism

Yet, albeit disintegrating, rearranging and reorganizing linguistic signs to channel and merge language spaces or generating new semantic symbols, the ambition of Moure seems to be more profound. Multiple pieces of evidence suggest that she may aim to alter the current language system by rectifying its gender-orientated cognitive scaffolds and erasing certain imposed semantic boundaries, an evident rejection of phallogocentrism.

Bart Kosko defines noise as a “nuisance” and “a signal that does not belong there” (3). According to Maguire, Moure “substitutes the threshold of noise as a decentralizing principle of hospitality”(Parasite Poetics). To be more detailed, in *O Ciudadán*, Moure not only invites the “host of a language” to welcome linguistic strangeness and disturbance, but also demands an expansion of hospitality and tolerance to the “annoying, unwanted, and normally disregarded or actively suppressed” (Maguire, “Parasite Poetics”) in reality, including queer subjects. Such achievement of the poem is corroborated by the statements of Maguire that “Moure cast the lesbian subject as a being-in-question, that is, as a basis for hospitality” and “To do so, she uses noise [...] as both a poetic medium and a crucible of hospitality”(Parasite Poetics).

Starting from the preface of the poem, Moure highlights the philosophy of creating noises to counter the male-oriented scaffold of language: “To intersect a word: citizen [...] it has a feminine supplement’, and ‘How can she speak from the generic at all [...] transcendent value’”(Cidadán. n.pag.). Evidently reflected by her adoption of the novel expression “O Ciudadán” as the generic term to describe citizens, anti-phallogentrism seems to function not only as an anchor but also as a pragmatic solution to the question raised by Moure herself regarding the inappropriateness of speaking from the generic as a way of erasing the feminine identity at the very basic morphological level.

Moreover, the queer sentiments pervading her poem indicate her intention to denounce phallogentrism. Here, the noise is no longer a linguistic irregularity, but a metaphorical symbolization of the desire associated with “failure, impossibility and loss” (Love 24). Although in a different context, her discussion of “contiguity” as “the space of amorousness; the spaces of care and their opposite, the risk of harm are simultaneous here” seems to be an accusation against a patriarchal society on its suppression of same sex romantic relationship (Cidadán 34). Meanwhile, to express a longing for autonomy and equality which are long overdue for women, she wrote in *O Ciudadán*:

(As she waits for the entry to settle

Before again moving inward

Clenching the hand to compel

Arise in ecstatic urgency)

(we wait) (34)

Furthermore, the praise and passion towards female beauties from Moure are frequently uttered in the whole poem. To cite just a few, there are lines like: “To laud your stillness to my command”, “my longing to the word ‘exalt’ Georgette”, “your full and tender rich anatomy”, “your stillness a

gift I would endow protect” and “whose kindness would protect avail” (Cidadán 95), which collectively indicate her loving sentiments. To summarize, from the basic morphology of semantic units to her philosophical sophistication, anti-phallogentrism prevails in her poetry.

Her ambition to rebel also extends to logocentrism, as revealed by the numerous attempts to rebut the typical phenomenon of logocentrism that texts, theories, modes of representation and signifying systems tend to generate “a desire for a direct, unmediated, given hold on meaning, being and knowledge” (Grosz 27). In *Georgette*, there are a number of instances exemplifying morphological abnormality and cross language amalgamation, which directly challenge the convention of logocentrism, such as the word “toposemia”, the binary structures with dotted lines, the double headed arrows, and the contents in the brackets. To exemplify:


Georgette

Labrador to confuse
 Physis to see with two eyes which are the body
 faint's perception
 Tristes améliorations
 Almost as such to went endure

 adore

Our article
 (fecund) part ancestor to foliate

Her hearing this, I press my ear
 sudden in investigation
 your being, L, I will not let derelict
 adore to harbour
 haste's rhetor falls (a ruse)



These irregularities are regarded as “porosities” and “penetrations” (Cidadán, 112). Under the context of space of contact, Skibsrud argues that by adopting such a strategy, Moure constructs a “contact zone” (15) where spaces of language clash with each other. In addition to erosion or effacement, a new meaning bordering on the intersections is engendered. Meanwhile, the border

itself becomes a part of the meaning. In other words, the cognitive process of merging is actualized and accentuated by these poetic marvels.

The anti-logocentrism attempts also extend to syntactic construction. That is to say, the form itself conveys meanings. The layout and the overall structure of the poems are the most evident indicators. Secondly, the spontaneousness and the arbitrariness revealed by the number of words and lines in each stanza are also evident violations of poetic norms. Thirdly, the integration of forms, graphs, scratches, and the notes in the brackets suggesting mentality and status jointly construct a richness of symbols and signals mingling, disturbing, and reorganizing the original system of encoding and decoding, a declaration of independence both literally and ideologically. To summarize, the rejection of poetic regularity is a direct refusal of the hegemonic dominance exerted by literary conventions which highlight stability, separation and rigidity. Interestingly, to refute the logocentric tradition, what has been achieved by Moure is not an entirely new language, but rather a new orientation, a reconstruction and reorganization of the utterances already existed in the house of languages.

2.4 – Disparity between the Body and the Mind: Catachresis

According to Merriam- Webster, catachresis refers to the application of the wrong word for the context, or the use of a forced and especially paradoxical figure of speech. As metaphorical constructions aiming to reveal the disparity between the body and the mind, catachreses in the poems can be classified into two types. The first kind functions to arouse emotional resonance. The second kind aims to stir up examinations of socially imposed curbs, the social taboos. To be more detailed, in “Georgette”, there are lines like “Your feet pressed by such deleterious moment shoes/my longing to the world ‘exalt’ Georgette” (“Georgette” 95). Evidently, the catachresis here resorts to synaesthesia, linking physical pain from the feet being pressed by uncomfortable shoes

with mental suffering. The adjective phrase “deleterious moment” is deliberately misused to describe shoes, but not exactly the shoes. This blatant error serves more to merely impress readers. It intelligently arouses the empathy of readers by connecting mental suffering to bodily pain, rendering it more sensible, long-lasting and unbearable. Considering the main feminist theme of the poem, such an admixture of physical pain and mental pain directly mirrors the suffering caused by brutally dissevering the connection between the body and its natural desires. Therefore, it is fair to assume the catachresis as a metaphorical construction, because it functions to equate physical pain with mental suffering. Apparently, this case exemplifies the first sort of catachresis which directly demonstrates the pain caused by a brutal separation of the body and the mind. Meanwhile, also in the poem “Georgette”, there are lines like:

a thousand without words
arms waiting
parts unknown or new to citizen’s admission

time

(Moure, line 13-15, page113)

The expression “a thousand without words” is the catachresis of the second type, the one accusing the rigidity and violence of social conventions. The silence of enduring social taboos which suffocate natural desire(s), the desperation and the silent accusation from the suppressed are voiced out by the mistaken use of a numeral here. The correct expression should be a thousand words, instead of “without words”. Therefore, the misuse of “a thousand” serves to intensify the hopelessness and the longing of sufferers. Evidently, the two kinds of strong emotions violently clash with each other. The intensity of such a clash is reflected by the numeral, compelling the readers to empathize with the victims who are silenced and bullied on. The stigmatized social

status of people pursuing forbidden romantic desires also resonates with the conflicting mental status of their minds. Ostensibly, compared to the first kind of catachresis, the second kind exposes the gender perspective and the ideological stance of the poet who is passionately calling for social awareness, support and tolerance. Similarly, the metonymy here “arms waiting” also serves to depict the intensity of the desire. Therefore, the whole stanza should be considered as a metaphorical construction, within which, rhetorical devices dynamically cooperate with each other to vividly construct an ideal social cognition from multiple dimensions. Through the discomfort and the sense of abnormality produced by catechresis, the poet mocks the barbarity of narrow-minded people interfering with human nature, disclosing the meaninglessness caused by phallogocentric domination of human society.

2.5 – On “différance”

On the substratum established by the term “différance”, Moure resorts to the operation of metaphoricity to name and perform her deconstructionist and feminist project, calling for openness, tolerance and connection. Through the devices of metaphor, metonymy and catachresis, she constructs a philosophy depicting the true reality of humanity and extolling the tolerance and respect of the natural human needs. Her poetics generates “a field of conceptual inquiry into the epistemological limits of discourses and practices” (Moyes 113). From morphemes, lexicons, syntactic structures, semantic units and the whole poem as a totality, she presents readers with a meticulously designed piece of art rife with “intralingual as well as interlingual infections”(Maguire, “Parasite Poetics”), and inspires them to ponder “the issue of privilege of who stands where in the social order, and how this order enacts us as we enact it ” (Moure, “The Anti-Anaesthetic”).

Conclusion: Metaphorical Poetics, a Means of Inquiry

“The language of poetry is a language of inquiry, not the language of a genre.”
— Lyn Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry*

Poets like Robert Kroetsch and Erin Moure tend to deconstruct old knowledge and conventional phallogocentric ethics which limit the cognitive and intellectual development of humans. Like Lyn Hejinian, they employ poetic language as a means of inquiry. In their exploration to expand human cognition, poetry becomes more than a functional resort. In the discussion of knowledge and ethics that are hidden or deliberately neglected, metaphorical language first operates as a tool of deconstructionists. In addition, metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis become a part of the new understandings.

The regional metaphor from Robert Kroetsch vividly unfolds a collage of the current world and what it was in the past. It deeply cultivates readers' imagination, compelling them to see the coexistence of the world today and that lost in time. In a sharp contrast to the common employment of this literary device which merely serves to describe the similarity between two entities, Kroetsch's metaphor creates something out of nothing. The poet, who manages to revive a lost time and space with his poetics, anchors his findings to metaphoricity. Thus, literary devices not only direct the search for the lost knowledge, but also actively constitute the major content of it. Kroetsch fully realizes that human knowledge is inevitably subject to limitation, and thus, looks into the middle space between what is already known and described and what is not perceived by human eyes. Interestingly, instead of producing a vague description to depict the space in-between, Kroetsch's poetic language is direct and clear. With metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis, the portrait of the in-betweenness is unfolded in front of readers. It is the mixed status experienced by a descendant of immigrants who is constantly trying to figure out his identity on a foreign land. It is the complex existence of the land—— under the earth that is cultivated by colonizers who believe

they own the land, lies the world that has never been touched by human hands. It can also be a stone hammer. The stone, the hammer, and the people observing the object all come from different times and spaces. Thus, the stone hammer is more than a hammer. It turns out to be an admixture of various existences, an object of heterogeneity which cannot be understood or defined easily. In this way, it is never merely a working tool, but the evidence that proves the limitation of human language and human cognition. By metaphorizing the stone hammer, the poet claims that people are bound to their own space and time, and can only perceive a superficial and temporary reality.

Indeed, neither the world nor the humans living in it, are homogeneous. Some people believe that there is nothing else except the truth and reality already acknowledged and described by humans. Others are able to find a crevice through which they produce new knowledge and ethics. Erin Moure manages to see the people neglected, those who are deprived of their own voices. Her metaphorical poetics is a novel creation that delineates the natural status of human existence. Imbued with vitality and vividness, metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis in her poetry manifest the diversity of vigorous human lives. In her eyes, people cannot be rigidly stipulated or disciplined by violence, and humanity should never be caged by phallogocentrism. The respect for natural human desires is vital to facilitate a faithful reflection of human society, which paves the way for an accurate reading of people and the world. Her literary devices mostly work to establish connections among entities and concepts. By this means, the poet manages to underscore the human instinct of reaching out and communicating with others. Her special poetic language becomes her experiment to inquire about an ideal status of society, which not only accepts but even appreciates the differences that are naturally possessed by its members.

To conclude, both poets resort to literary devices of metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis as a means of inquiry. Functioning as a part of the new knowledge and new ethics, the poetic language constantly accentuates the necessity to renew and revisit people's self-understanding as

well as their reading of the surrounding environment. More importantly, the metaphorical poetics constructs possibilities to discover and define the aspects of reality once lost or ignored.

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