

*Abstract*

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Canadian Literature is a reflection on the multicultural, geographical and living experience of the Canadians. The literature had its beginnings in the early seventeenth century with Jacobean writings in Newfoundland. It always reflected the country's dual origin and the division of literature into French and Canadian. Multiculturalism has always focused on the socio-cultural aspects, racial differences and gender bias by becoming a branch of study that holds the mirror to the society. The major themes addressed in this literature are search for identity, immigrant psyche, cultural politics, humor and satire.

Margaret Laurence is one of the most prolific writers of Canadian Literature. Her writing style was based on the conventions of realism and regionalism by portraying women characters who strive for identity. Her most celebrated works, set in the fictional town of Manawaka, helped to establish the Canadian prairie as a literary setting. Her literary gauge covers six novels, two short stories and four children's books along with few memoirs and essays. Laurence's novels has won Governor's General Award and was also one of the selected books in the 2002 edition of Canada Reads, championed by Leon Rooke. She was also named as a National Historic Person in the year 2016.

The thesis focuses on the four novels of Margaret Laurence. The selected novels for study include *Stone Angel* (1964), *A Jest of God* (1966), *The Fire Dwellers* (1969) and *The Diviners* (1974). The aim of the thesis is to trace the Psychogeographical and cultural perspectives in select novels of Laurence and also the ambivalence of time and memory as forms of deriving the geographical identity of the characters. As the title of the thesis suggests the dissertation tries to explore the Psychogeography and culture by

traversing through Manawaka spaces. The thesis is concerned with the theory of Psychogeography invented by Guy Debord. It highlights the concept of Psychogeography by focusing on Michael de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980) Merlin Coverly's *Psychogeography* (2006) and Collin Ellard's *Places of the Heart: The Psychogeography of Everyday Life* (2015).

Psychogeography is a blend of psychology and geography. It focuses on the behavioural effect of an individual upon a geographical setting. The theory was developed by Guy Debord, the French philosopher after the Second World War. The theory of Psychogeography in the words of Guy Debord, is "the investigation of the exact regulations and explicit impacts of the topographical climate, deliberately coordinated or not, on the feelings and conduct of people" (*Psychogeography* 18).

It is the geographical elements that muddle the city and its background. People drift towards different landscapes that constantly draw towards the collection of memory. This enables the people to create niche for them in the place where they abide by creating an identity. The perspectives and the shifting angles of a flaneur by strolling through a space remains fragmented. But, the experiences person of the city observes and derives help in unveiling the hidden aspects of an environment. The Manawaka novels of Margaret Laurence focuses on the concepts of flaneur, derive, détournement and association of time and retention.

Canadian Psychogeography is showcased high at its best in the texts of Margaret Laurence. The four women characters residing in Manawaka as a geographical space reflect their social surroundings through a functioning and social composition of self-set

up. The narrative deals with cultural problems relating to the area that exists along with them by focusing on the transnational and diasporic associations and streams.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter charts out the origin and growth of novels as a specific genre. It offers a brief insight into the history of Canadian Literature and also the manner in which the concept of Psychogeography has been dealt in the literary works. It delineates the notion of Psychogeography and attempts to give a brief insight into the chosen novels by considering the ambivalence of time and memory as a benchmark of identity.

Chapter II, entitled 'Hagar's Memory and the Continuum of Psychogeography in *Stone Angel*', focuses on the ambivalence of time and memory in shaping the identity of a person. It also discusses the impacts of having attachment towards a space where the protagonist has been living for long. The long association in Manawaka gives the protagonist a sense of bonding and belongingness towards the house and its ambience. The character is reluctant to shift into a new space. The psychogeographical gestures of daily life that unites time and memory as the key factors and the transition that follows is highlighted in this chapter. Ellin Collard's and Merlin Coverly's psychogeographical aspects are taken for theoretical study.

Chapter III, entitled 'Morag Gunn's Snapshot of Cultural Memory and Formation of Geographical Hybridity in *The Diviners*' published in 1974 is a semi-autobiographical narrative by Margaret Laurence. It delineates on the life and memories of the protagonist who grew up in Manawaka and the struggle in understanding and exploring the identity. The chapter highlights the concept of memory as a prime element in bringing out the

psychogeographical aspects of the characters. Cultural displacement and the character's acceptance of the geographical ambience of Manawaka are also analysed.

Chapter IV, entitled 'The Confined Duties and Forgotten Spaces in *The Fire Dwellers*' focuses on Stacey's aimless wandering and her hectic day life which helps her in the exploration of the forgotten spaces of Manawaka. The novel is set in the backdrop of turbulence that prevailed within the society. For Stacey the world always seemed to be chaotic. She had always tried to shield her children by being protective. Her maternal instincts always pushed her to be apprehensive regarding their safety. She struggles to find herself in spite of the roles of a daughter, wife and mother. She is juggled between her early life and the present. Stacey is numb against the busy household chores that take most of her valuable time. The concepts of flaneuring and derive are analysed through the life of the protagonist.

Chapter V, entitled 'Navigating through Manawaka: Rachel's Fragmented Self and Flaneuring in *A Jest of God*' detects the protagonist Rachel as a representative of the 'common man' by outlining Michael de Certeau's concept of walking for the theoretical background. The protagonist has been living in Manawaka for twenty-four years and reveals her helplessness in connecting with the geographical space of Manawaka. The awakening has profound effects on Rachel Cameron's circumstances, her mind and her future. Caught by the bounds of unassuming community life and her obligations really focusing on her oppressive mother, Rachel leaves on an undertaking that makes a way for freedom - a recently discovered opportunity that she should figure out how to acknowledge according to her own preferences.

Chapter VI, entitled 'Summation' reasserts the influence of Psychogeography in select novels taken for study. It also states the relation between time and memory in shaping the identity of a person. The research brings out that Psychogeography as a domain explores how characters of a text are psychologically and sociologically affected by their surroundings. It gives us the conclusion that space becomes the metaphor of a person's survival. Man's activities of his everyday life are chiseled, shaped and positioned by the geographical space, time and memory through his life experiences.