

## *Chapter V*

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### **Navigating through Manawaka: Rachel's Fragmented Self and Flaneuring in *A Jest of God***

Margaret Laurence wrote the book *A Jest of God* in the year 1966. It is about Rachel Cameron, a thrifty four-year-old schoolteacher who lives with her mother. She is ensnared by the lies and pettiness of her small town, which includes her own wrongdoings as well as those of others. Rachel wants to meet someone who is as rebellious as she is, and when she has a summer affair and has to deal with love and death, she finally gets the freedom she wants and needs. *A Jest of God* is the story of Rachel's second coming of age, even though she is in her thirties. In it, she must truly mature in order to care for her aging mother. The novel was made into the 1968 film *Rachel, Rachel* starring Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, and also won the Governor General's Award for 1966.

Laurence tries to give Canadian women an identity and focuses on the problems faced by women. Her novels, which come from a Scots-Irish background of strict values, hard work, and Puritanism, focus a lot on the topic of survival. During the 1930s' drought, depression, and war, the topic of survival came up. Laurence's most important quality is her commitment to social reforms. The main themes in *A Jest of God* are survival and freedom. Laurence shows how awful it was for women in Canada in the middle of the twentieth century to survive. Similar to Laurence's other Manawaka novels; the theme of survival continues to be central in *A Jest of God*, which aims to show the character's determination to maintain some dignity until the end of her life.

Rachel Cameron, a thirty-four-year-old spinster schoolteacher, experiences a midlife awakening in Margaret Laurence's 1966 novel *A Jest of God*. This awakening has profound effects on Rachel Cameron's circumstances, her heart, 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.

When Rachel looks out the window of her classroom at the beginning of the book, she realizes that she has spent the majority of her life either as a student or as a teacher at this school. She sings a song that she used to sing as a child while the children are at recess. Rachel stops herself from reminiscing and reminds herself that she must not become eccentric, as is typical of the widows, spinsters, and schoolteachers in her town. She has only ever moved away from her hometown for any length of time, and that was to go to college. She, however, decided to move back in to help care for her demanding mother after graduating and her father's death. They live together at Rachel's father's former funeral home. Stacey, Rachel's sister, the only member of the family who made it out was married, moved to the city, and had four children; Rachel is left with the often-unappealing task of dealing with the manipulative Mrs. Cameron because she rarely returns home.

Rachel feels like her life is stuck, which is not surprising. Her only happiness comes from giving each year all of her love and attention to one of her seven-year-old students. This year, that understudy is James, yet Rachel doesn't let on that he's her number one. In a way, she places all of her hopes and dreams on her chosen student,

imagining for them a future that is much bigger and brighter than she could ever imagine for herself. Calla, a friend of Rachel's, is truly her only supporter in life. Nonetheless, Rachel is somewhat reserved even when she is with Calla. Calla falls squarely into the weird category that Rachel studiously avoids. Calla goes to a Pentecostal church and dresses strangely. Rachel promises to go with her one day.

Rachel meets Nick Kazlik, a former classmate and the son of the town's milkman after school ends for the summer. He is also a teacher; however, he works and lives in the city and only visits during the summer. Nick confronts unresolved issues regarding the death of his identical twin brother many years ago upon returning to his hometown.

Nick and Rachel start sleeping together. This is unusual for Rachel, who has no prior experience with sexual relationships. She finds herself blossoming in their relationship because Nick is gentle with her. Rachel is a lot more serious about Nick than he is about her because of how strongly she feels about the affair. Despite his hot-and-cold treatment of her, she dreams of a future together; He stops calling her for several days at one point. Despite this, she cannot deny the heat, passion, and happiness that Nick brings to her core. The fact that the affair is kept a secret from her mother and the town's prying eyes only heightens the excitement.

Rachel fulfills her promise to go to church with Calla one day. Her inner sensual fervour is as liberating as the religious fervour of the service. As the evangelist works the gathering into a craze, Rachel's internal interests slam into the external world, and she starts talking in tongues at the help. She flees from the church. Terrified by her outburst, Calla follows her and gives Rachel a mouth kiss. Rachel runs home, unsure of Calla's

intentions-whether they are the result of Calla's unspoken feelings or the heightened emotions of the service.

Rachel keeps seeing Nick, but when she does not get her period, she worries of being pregnant. She is aware that if she has a child outside of wedlock, her community and mother will reject her. She contemplates suicide and even empties a pill bottle from her hand, but in the end, she throws the pills out the window. Rachel consults Dr. Raven to determine whether she is actually pregnant or not. He tells her that she is not. Instead, it is the benign tumour she misunderstands as pregnancy. He reveals to Nick that he is actually married to a woman in the city when she tells him. Afterward, she goes to his folks and figures out that Scratch is lying, and that he has never been hitched. Sorrowful by this disloyalty, she quits seeing him. Rachel decides to leave town with the sense of freedom she has gained since Nick left her life. She finally escapes from her mother and also from the wreckage of a failed love affair. The emptiness of an unfulfilling life comes to an end when she moves to British Columbia to live with her sister at the end of the novel.

Looking beyond the narrow context, it becomes clear that psychogeography is retrospectively supported by earlier traditions and precursors that have been neglected. It is a theory that remains firmly rooted in a particular time and place. Urban wandering, the imaginative reworking of the city, the otherworldly sense of place, and unexpected insights are the characteristics of being part of psychogeography. It juxtaposes aimless drifting by experiencing new ways of knowing the environment.

Michael De Certeau in his book titled *The Practice of Everyday Life* has mentioned about the everyday practices of a modern man from cooking to wandering and also displays a curious logic that reveals through a semiotic and poetic analysis of these

practices, common to each of them. Certeau examines the practices of the common man and the ways in which he lives his everyday life. On the basis of a semiotic analysis of these everyday practices, De Certeau's highly abstract take on them, which include speaking, reading, walking, and cooking, reveals patterns and strategies that are common to all of them. This logic is curious in his take on these everyday practices. By doing so, he tries to show how relationships between people in a city are governed by a hidden structure of modern urban life.

According to De Certeau, the city of New York is the apex of the modern world. It is because of the stark difference between pedestrians on the streets and voyeurs on top of skyscrapers. The ordinary citizens of the city live below the threshold, where the vision begins, and the daily practitioners of the city live accordingly. In this city experience, they take an important step by continuous walking. However, followers have a divine scenic view of the city from above. It is seen as a vast whole removed from any individual perspective that elevated the pinnacle of social groups.

The concept of global exchange should be liberated from the city. At the moment when one goes there, he gives up the drifting mass and ignites the individuality of the creator. His ascent turned him into a curious man. Paths covered throughout a space no longer bind the body. The distinction between pedestrians and spectators highlights the democratic significance of the street-level perspective gained by traversing the city and reconnecting with personal lives. It keeps him away from the boundaries of time. It is the impulse of the geographer that facilitated the revisiting of streets.

Because of this distinction, it is clear how the simple act of walking can be subversive, by eliminating the voyeuristic perspective that comes from looking down at

the city from above. The goal of psychogeography is to end this dual view and restore the street to its place atop the structure of the modern city. The spectator sees the city as a cohesive whole. It is also an anonymous urban space where no separate identity is created.

In the opening section of the novel, the central character Rachel Cameron is analysed from the point of view of a voyeur. When the novel begins Rachel is singing a song on the attractiveness of blowing wind. As per her view, the wind blows high and the snow keeps on falling from the sky. She is willing to die, as she is in need of the golden city. She then defines the wind as the queen of the golden city (Laurence, *AJOG* 1). Rachel gazes at the wind from the classroom window and a kind of thought comes to her mind. She then says the wind is not chanting her name. Instead, it is she who hears it that way.

Here Rachel takes the stance of the spectator who is able to transform the text which was possessed into the one that lies before our naked eyes. She is able to disentangle from the daily practices and is able to connect with the extra-terrestrial things that she gazes around. She is haunted by the scopic drive, that prompts her in thinking the following manner:

Twenty-seven years ago, which seems impossible, and myself seven, but the same brown brick building, only a new wing added and the place smartened up.

It would certainly have surprised me then to know I'd end up here, in this room, no longer the one who was scared of not pleasing, but the thin giant" (Laurence, *AJOG* 1).

Here, Rachel is clear about the modification that has occurred within the twenty-seven years. She indicates the concept of transition by linking the idea of a brick building. An urban space cannot be narrated only through the visualisation of its spatial features,

instead, an integration of the environment and socio-cultural, which is observed by the narrator helps the text in converting to its scopic form. Time as a sociocultural factor plays a huge role in bringing out architectural development. When Rachel mentions the new addition of a wing to the existing building, the entire outlook of the space is being changed. Time is getting linked to the space and the text is therefore converted to its scopic form. Rachel is considered here as a voyeur who outlines the visible spaces of her daily life.

Walking is considered the basis of a city's experience. A man walking on the street uses invisible spaces, and his knowledge is as hazy as lovers holding each other. The daily process of walking has a strangeness that is drawn against the invisible because it escapes the imaginary wholes created by human eyes. The practice of a geospatial always prioritizes performance over spatiality to characterize its liveliness

When Rachel is walking through the streets of Manawaka, she is able to transcend her everyday actions into an operational form. Here close observation of the sounds, climate, and landmarks all helps in creating the idea into its operational form. It can be understood in the following manner:

The halls are quiet, and from upstairs I can hear the swishing and clash of the janitor's broom and dustpan. The daylight stays longer these days, and the streets are not quite dusk yet. The maple branches are black and intricate against the white unwarmed sky. The leaves will not be out for another month. The cement sidewalks are nearly dry, the last of the melted snow having seeped away. I turn at River Street and walk past the quiet dark brick houses, too big for their remaining



occupants, built by somebody's grandfathers who did well long ago out of a brickworks or the first butcher shop. (Laurence, *AJOG 14*)

The double projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that can be dealt with is what perspective vision and prospective vision are. They mark the beginning of the transformation of urban reality into the idea of space. Long before a particular historical figure emerges from the concept itself. It assumes that this fact can be addressed as an urbanistic ratio-based unity. The space and the idea are never the same when they are linked, but rather their progressive symbiosis is played out. Designing a city requires considering the plurality of the real and making way human thoughts into action. It is the ability to articulate it and perform it.

The possibility of the three activities defining the concept of the city is based on urban and utopian discourse. At first, the processes of creating one's own space were a logical association, so each physical, mental, and political pollution must be prevented. Secondly, the use of an indefinite system in place of a rigid tradition of resistance. Finally, the creation of the city as a universal and anonymous subject is based on its functions and predicates.

The three-way operation of considering the city can be analysed from the perspective of Manawaka. From the light of the novel, the creation of Manawaka or Manitoba as a space is formed using the physical, mental, and social associations of the people when they try to explore the things around them. Secondly, the usage of a synchronic system occurs when people who live in the Manawaka spaces follow as well as oppose the culture and its customs. On, the other level when the living beings (Rachel) start to identify the invisible aspects of the culture. Finally, when all the above-mentioned

factors work together, a community or a group of which leads to the socio-political subjects making the space of Manawaka an autonomous or a universal one.

The operational activities of space can work only with the help of a flaneur. In the novel *A Jest of God*, Rachel Cameron, the protagonist can be considered as the common man as addressed by De Certeau whose everyday practices and their existence makes up the space. The story of Rachel as a flaneur begins with the footsteps. She is working as a teacher in a school for the past twenty-seven years. Her routine remains the same every day. She is therefore able to experience the past as well as the present life and is able to easily transcribe her path. It is well explained as follows:

Long ago meaning half a century. Nothing is old here, but it looks old. The timber houses age fast, and even the brick looks worn down after fifty years of blizzard winters and blistering summers. They're put to shame by the new bungalows like a bakery's pastel cakes, identical, fresh, tasteless. This is known as a good part of town. Not like the other side of the tracks, where the shacks are and where the weeds are let grow knee-high and not dutifully mown, and where a few bootleggers drive new Chevrolets on the strength of homemade red biddy. No - that's as it used to be when I was a kid, and I would go with Stacey sometimes, because she was never afraid. I don't know what it's like now. Half my children live at that end of town. I never go there and know it only from hearsay, distorted local legend, or the occasional glimpse of a word. (Laurence, *AJOG* 13-14)

Rachel as a pedestrian is having a qualitative character a style of tactile apprehension and kinaesthetic appropriation. Her everyday activities over all these years are myriad in nature. Since the daily activities span over a period of more than twenty

years it can be considered as an innumerable collection of curiosities. The integrated paths that she walks thereby give shape to the Manawaka spaces. She is thereby able to weave places together. In this respect, the movements of geographers form one of the real systems whose reality constitutes the megacity. They are not localized in their style, instead, they are spacers. They are not encased in a vase but rather characters that the speaker sketches in his hand with the tip of his finger.

It is true that walking activities can be tracked on maps of megacities to record their tracks and their circles. However, like words, these thick or thin angles refer only to the absence of what happened. Route checking usually ignores the pass itself. The aimless walking is the effort of the audience, which is translated into points that make up an overall and reversible line on the map. They only allowed us to keep a relic placed in an overhang. Visibility on its own has the effect of obscuring the property that geo-systems have of being able to turn action into legibility, but in doing so it makes one forget how to be in the world.

If we see Rachel as a person who lives in space consistently, then we have on the contrary her sister Stacey MacAindra, who has not visited Manawaka for the past seven years. Here, Stacey is considered to be a version of an inhabitant who is detached from the space where she was brought up. Rachel says:

I haven't seen her since the last two were born. I haven't seen my sister for seven years. She never comes back here. Why should she? She's lived away for years. She has her own home, and wouldn't be bothered to visit here, not even so Mother might see the children. She's very decisive, is Stacey. She knew right

from the start what she wanted most, which was to get as far away from Manawaka as possible. She didn't lose a moment in doing it. (Laurence, *AJOG* 14)

Our identity and who we are is strongly influenced by our location and space. Places have a way of claiming people, or that a place grows on you, according to some. This indicates that we are not only becoming accustomed to a location but also that we are forming a strong bond with it and that it is becoming a part of who we are and our identity. So, what we can infer from the above quote is that Rachel's sister Stacey is not accustomed to the Manawaka spaces, whereas Rachel is part of the location for many years and it has played a great role in shaping her identity.

Rachel has gone to the city for her graduation. But, she couldn't finish her education due to the death of her father. So, she had to return to Manawaka again. Even after living in the same space for a long time, Rachel still does not like the place. She verbally expresses her dislike in the following manner: "Where I went wrong was in coming back here, once I'd got away. A person has to be ruthless. One has to say I'm going, and not be prevailed upon to return" (Laurence, *AJOG*14-15).

The pedestrian gesture has three characteristics that distinguish it at the start of the space device. First of all, it is true that a spatial order organizes a set of levels related to one's abilities. It is based on the area people are going to move by prohibiting and partitioning the wall. A pedestrian makes use of the existing condition besides a city's appearance. But together he supersedes them and invents other things. It is either because of the crossing, the distance, or the improvisation of the privilege of walking across or giving up parts of space.

In the novel, Rachel as a pedestrian is able to organize a number of possibilities. She by living in the Manawaka space for a continuous time period is thus able to bring up the spatial system as well as abandon it when needed. It is the regularity that gives the position of a walker in the city.

Japonica Street. Around our place the spruce trees still stand, as I remember them forever. No other trees are so darkly sheltering, shutting out prying eyes or the sun in summer, the spearheads of them taller than houses, the low branches heavy, reaching down to the ground like the green-black feathered strong-boned wings of giant and extinct birds. The house is not large-it often surprises me to realize this. In the same way it will surprise my children to return when they're grown and look around the classroom and see how small the desks are. The house used to seem enormous, and I think of it that way yet. Rust brick, nothing to set it off or mark it as different from the other brick houses nearby. Nothing except the sign, and the fact that the ground floor doesn't belong to us. (Laurence, *AJOG16*)

Seen from this angle, a pedestrian will multiply his cane's chances: he will intersperse elements with something similar and will go to the other side of the border the determinant of the targeted attack he uses. In a similar way, the pedestrian transforms each abstract word form into something else. And if on the one hand, it only realizes a lot of the opportunities created by the order, on the other hand, it increases the number of potential and prohibited elements.

Rachel can find substitutes that she never noticed in her daily life. Being a user of a city, she selects declaration fragments to update them. It is therefore capable of creating separation, whether or not, by making decisions between the symbols of the language,

abstraction, or by replacing them by using them. She condemns certain places as inertial or vanishing and composes abstractions with others and transforms this space into a rare or accidental space. This, however, led to marching rhetoric.

Through the rhetoric of walking, Rachel is able to witness a new space, which was accidental. The space that he witnessed was the Tabernacle. When Rachel went out on a rainy evening Japonica Street was deserted. She was then afraid that, if any person who knows saw her, then they would share the news with her mother. During her walk through the street, in between the empty stores and she sees herself dimly reflected while looking through the glass windows. She even felt that her white coat was a little different and she looked even taller than usual. As she walks for a long time, the observer in her pops up and started gazing upon the Manawaka streets. Here, she is able to transcend herself to the next level of Psychogeography.

Drifting is a method of speed walking through varied ambiances. Derive involves playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and area unit. It is totally different from the classic notions of stroll. In a derive one or a lot of people throughout a precise amount drop their relations, their work, and leisure activities from their different usual motives for movement and action. They allow themselves to be drawn by the attractions of the piece of ground and also the encounters that they notice there. From the point of view of a derive, the purpose of reading cities has psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fastened points, and vortexes that powerfully discourage entry into or exit from bound zones.

In the novel, Rachel as part of her daily psychogeographical actions is able to derive a state of actions that is not part of her usual movements. She is able to walk

through varied ambiances and encounters what she sees there. Her vision of the sights she sees is expressed in the form of dialogues. So here, the semiotic and visual elements work together in order to frame a cognitive mapping of the environment. As a representative of the common man, here we are going to analyse Rachel from two perspectives.

One is based on the spaces that are part of her daily actions. In the novel, she says: “I’ve been teaching in Manawaka for fourteen years” (Laurence, *AJOG15*). The phrase fourteen years is indicating her connection with space for a longer period of time. Therefore, time is symptomatic of a person’s state of action. She then says: “I have my hair done every week at Riché Beauty Salon. It used to be Lou’s Beauty Parlour when I got my hair done first, at sixteen. They’d find that amusing, probably” (Laurence, *AJOG16*).

The concept of derive also includes the process of letting go and its necessary contradiction. Here, the domination of psychogeographical variations by the data and calculation of their prospects is being taken into consideration. During this latter phase, ecological science - despite the slim social area to which it limits itself helps in providing psychogeography with exuberant knowledge. So, the best example of deriving works is when Rachel tries to show a taste for exploring uncanny locations. Here, the unfamiliar space is the Tabernacle she visits with her friend Calla.

The room is larger than I remember it, almost as large as though the place had been a proper church, The chairs are in semi-circular rows, the same straight, thickly varnished chairs one used to find in every school auditorium, but replaced there now with lighter ones which can be stacked up and the old ones probably sold to establishments such as this The painted walls are heavy with their greenish

blue, not the clear blue of open places but dense and murky, the way the sea must be, fathoms under. Two large pictures are hanging, both Jesus, bearded and bleeding, his heart exposed and bristling with thorns like a scarlet pincushion.

(Laurence, *AJOG*37)

So, by coming across an unfamiliar space Rachel is able to observe the interior as well the architecture of the building. She notices everything in detail. Architecture plays a great role in highlighting the aura of space in its psychogeographical form. It is the flaneur who detours the environment and is able to disentangle the possible images of space.

Nothing is experienced in isolation; everything is experienced in relation to its surroundings, the events that led up to it, and the recollection of experiences that have come before it. A city is a combination of several images. Since each of these components is a part of the tangible, changing urban environment and hence contains readable and recordable data, they all play a vital part in how the public perceives the city. The flaneur through the deriving helps in creating geography as an apparatus of detailed recording this is made possible through architecture. One is able to rediscover the most naive, sensual, and visceral relationship with our constructed world through the lens of psychogeography. Rachel when visiting the Tabernacle is able to rediscover the inner elements of its interior. It is explained in the following manner:

There is no altar, but at the front a kind of pulpit stands, bulky and new, pale wood blossoming in bunches of grapes and small sharp birds with beaks uplifted. The top of the pulpit is draped with white velvet, like a scarf, tasselled with limp silver threads, and on the velvet rests a book. The Book, of course, not jacketed severely in black but covered with some faintly glittering cloth or substance



impersonating gold, and probably if the room were dark it would glow- or give off sparks. Let's sit near the back. (Laurence, *AJOG*38-39)

The spirit of the illustrative drawings is to focus on the study of specific aspects of the revealed environment. Like film frames, sketches serve as snapshots of the area of interest and can therefore be used as data generation tools. They can focus on the matter, texture, colour, edges, routes, boundaries, building types, and various objects encountered during the process of drifting. Therefore, it is possible to conduct a full description of the study area, analyse it or compare it with other areas.

At the foot of River Street, past the shopping part and down the slow curve of the hill, the old olive-green house stands, high and angular, encrusted with glassed-in porches, pillars with no purpose, wrought-iron balconies never likely to have been used except in the height of summer, a small turret or two for good measure, and the blue and red glass circle of a rose-window at the very top. It was built by some waistcoated gent who made good, and the made tangible his concept of paradise in the house. Whatever family once owned it, they've moved now, shrugged it thankfully off their shoulders, I expect. The sign extends the full width of the house and is well-lighted. The crimson words are plain to see. Tabernacle of the Risen and Reborn. (Laurence, *AJOG* 37)

The influence and use of names give a clear indication of the relationship between spatial practices and their non-appearance. The links between the meaning of a walk and the meanings of words that combine the two movements seem contradictory. First, one can see the image of an extrovert when the walk ends with going outside. Then an introvert has a movement that takes place under the stability of the signer. Semantic bias

is considered to be the determining factor of our move. On the other hand, the city is, for many people, transformed into a desert, in which nonsense, even scary, ceases to be in the form of darkness but becomes an unwavering light that helps in creating text.

The metropolis without ambiguity is created by a technocratic power everywhere, and this puts the inhabitants of the city under control. Proper names create hidden, familiar meanings in spaces clearly lit by alien reason. They are reasonable in their form. In other words, they are the driving force of movements like vocations and callings that give the journey a sense of direction hitherto unknown. In some places, these names create a void. They overcame it.

In the novel, there is an instance where the use of the name is being channelized to create a sense of identity within a space. Rachel's father owned a funeral home. It was located just below their apartment. During her childhood, Rachel never got a chance to visit the place. After her father's death, it was sold. Due to their convenience, Rachel and her family never shifted from the place. Years later, she recalls the name of her father's funeral home and says:

When I was a child the sign was painted on board, pale-grey background, and black lettering, and it said Cameron's Funeral Parlour. Later, my father, laughing in some way incomprehensible to me then and being chided for it by Mother, announced other times other manners. The new sign was the ebony background and gilt lettering, Cameron Funeral Home. (Laurence, *AJOG* 17)

What we can infer from this instance is that the name 'Cameron Funeral Home' form a sentence where the past actions of Rachel assemble and she is not realizing it. This place has been part of the city for many years. Therefore, a resident of the city can

easily identify it and also attribute it as part of history. The name of a place thus arranges the attractive field of directions similarly as they can torment dreams. In the same way that summonses and classifications transmit her orders or identities and have an effect on her walking. These names are arranged in constellations that operate chronologically and provide historical justifications as well as a hierarchical and semantic order to the city's surface.

The names break away from the places they are supposed to represent and act as fictitious gathering spots on schedules that, as an example, they choose for reasons that are unrelated to their own value but may or may not be noticed by pedestrians. A strange, unrelated topography that flies high above the city and directs the physical tours below, like a hazy geography of meanings suspended in time. In the novel, as a stroller, Rachel always mentions the names of a few pots in the city frequently. And they are respectively Japonica Street, which happens to be the centre of Manawaka town, then the Tabernacle, where she goes with her friend Calla and also River Street, Regal café. Then the most important place that she mentions is the landscape of the Manawaka i.e. Wachawaka Valley.

These words act in the name of emptying and redirecting their main function, that of linking actions and approaches, to unfolding meaning and giving guidance. They are turned into empty and occupied spaces. They serve to articulate a second poetic geography above the literal, forbidden, or permitted by a semantic rarity driven by a substantive decision. They offer a variety of avenues to approach the need for functional and verifiable development. People are motivated by the inverted remnants of grand ambitions, the remnants of meaning, and sometimes the by-products of them.

Things that are not important or very small act as a source of representation and direction of pedestrian walking. The names created no longer correspond exactly to the

definition of being right. In these symbolic nubs, three separate but interconnected functions of relationships between spatial practices and symbols are displayed and can be established. They are unassuming, memorable, and consistent. Three distinct functions play a very important role in shaping a flaneur's identity. At first, is the pretentious. During this stage, the flaneur seems to take the space he lives in very seriously. Everything that links the space from the interior to the decorum will be the subject of much attention. For example: In the novel, there is an instance where Rachel after entering her house back from her work describes the living room. She says:

The living room is tidied enough to suit her. It might be the midsummer gathering of a coven the amount of fuss we go to, lace tablecloth, the Spode china the silver tray for sandwiches, the little dishes of salted nuts to nibble at. Well, it's only at our place once a month. (Laurence, *AJOG* 20)

Next, let us analyse the second function, which is memorable. Here, a flaneur tries to connect things from the past and tries to connect it with things that associate with her daily life. For example:

Brushing away the curtains with my hand and leaning a moment out my window, I can feel the fineness of the day. Even the spruces look light, the needled boughs having lost their darkness in the sun and now looking evergreen as they are meant to, and not ever black as they seem when the sky is overcast. The sky today is the colour of the turquoise in the bracelet my father gave me as a child. (Laurence, *AJOG* 25)

Here, Rachel is trying to associate the colour of the sky with that of a bracelet her father has given her. So, the metaphor of memory is her father, who was part of her

existence. But, after his death, she is driven by his memories and it triggers in her a sense of associating the things that she sees with her father. The third function is being believable, here a flaneur tries to explore the hidden aspects of a space and bring it to the light.

Then, these hidden element takes the form of a believable item.

A Flaneur specifies what makes spatial encounters possible or conceivable, what is considered there from a quiet and distant memory, and what is held there and continues to be confirmed by a childish beginning. The basis of a discourse on the city myth, memory, and dream is organized by these three symbolic mechanisms in a way that also challenges urban systematics. They have escaped their role in proper names by stripping them of their ability to classify. They have the ability to enable something else by making the place liveable. Thus, it helps to recall ghosts that have disappeared but are still present in the form of moving bodies and gestures.

They create a vanity that someone else's law deepens in the very place by name, that is, by imposing a command to start from another part of the story and by changing the functionalist approach and discussing identity by detaching from it. Reliable and durable things are those elements that can live in nature. By a paradox of appearances, the discourse that makes people believe is also the discourse that never keeps its promises or takes away from it what it makes people believe. It does not convey a void or represent a need. It creates space for a space. Thus, it opens up clearings.

In a system of well-defined locations, it allows for a specific spirit. It permits the creation of a space where identities are analysed and classified. It transforms uninhabited areas. Therefore, as a walker and during a city walk, Rachel can create a different space and also participate in the creation of a free play space where the landmarks are classified

calculation. It is explained as follows: “Japonica Funeral Chapel. It winks and beckons, and as I walk up the petunia-edged path, I see all at once how laughable it is, to live here, how funny lots of people must think it, how amusing, how hilarious” (Laurence, *AJOG* 72).

It’s a hole in the system that fills in meaningful places and only reduces them to that meaning, leaving it breathless. Because they ensure system unity, the characteristic tendency of functionalist totalitarianism is to seek out and eliminate these local governments. Thus, a city being turned into a figurative order is suspended after they are destroyed, which is similar to the destruction of forests, trees, and hiding places where such legends exist. As a result, the habitable city is destroyed.

Local legends are made possible by their ability to build cellars and lofts everywhere, or rather, the ability they provide to store rich silences and wordless stories. What is readable allows for exits, entrances, and exits, and thus creates a habitable space. Undoubtedly, walking and tourism replace the outings, which were originally made possible by a set of myths that no longer exist in these places. Physical movement serves a roving purpose like the old system of beliefs. The myths that roam the city serve to open up space for other things to be replaced by tourism, such as walking. Rachel, while walking through the streets of Manawaka, is able to open detailed versions of animated locations through her vivid descriptions. She then says:

Already July smells of dust and dryness, and I hope we aren’t going to have one of those yellowing summers, with no rain, and the green seeping away from the grass and leaves. River Street is almost empty this morning, only a few bicycles buzzing slowly like bluebottle flies, and the occasional kingfisher flash of a car driven by some impatient housewife bored with shopping. Outside the Parthenon

Café, Miklos is sponging his windows dawdlingly, spinning the job out to last the morning while his wife waits stoically on the customers inside. (Laurence, *AJOG* 77)

Rachel always prefers to walk in the daytime. While walking she observes the weather, then the people who pass by, the shops, and many others that she is surrounded with. By doing so, she is able to distinguish between the spaces that are habitable. Exploring different places while walking is actually a kind of connecting a person's identity and memory. Sometimes, flashbacks and memories pop up ultimately brings in uprooting a person's origin. Rachel went for a drive with her friend Nick. He took Rachel to his house. They were having a deep conversation and it was then he mentioned his father's origin. He then says:

He really was attached to it, though. He had come here and settled in as soon as he got home from the First War. He must have been very young then. He never talked about that time in France, and when the Armistice Day parades were held, he never would go. Mother used to say, "Everyone goes, I Niall-it looks so peculiar, for you not to." He would agree to nearly anything, for quiet, but not to that. He would stay downstairs that day, with the silent company if there happened to be anyone in residence waiting for burial, or else alone. (Laurence, *AJOG* 72)

As a corollary, we measure the extent of these space-inventing practices, such as storytelling. Their contents are still revealing from this point of view, and the organizing principle is even more so. Stories of places were invented. They are made from the world's waste. The material is provided by the rest of the nominations, classifications,

hero or comic predicates, etc., even if the literary form and action scheme of the superstition correspond to the structured models that have often been analysed in the past.

Complementary and similar things, or details that are out of tune and outrageous, become part of an accepted framework, an imposed order. As a result, there is a fundamental connection between the constructed order and spatial reality. Sieve of order, the surface of this order is perforated and torn by holes of meaning, ellipses, and drifts everywhere. A verbal relic of a story, linked with forgotten stories and mysterious actions, is placed side by side in a collage whose relationship is ignored, forming a whole iconic. Thus, they create counter-text effects, concealment and escape, and opportunities to move into other landscapes such as caves and bushes in the structured space of the text. Stories differ from rumours in that the latter is always the command, the initiator and result of the levelling of space, the creator of the usual gestures that reinforce order by adding a trusting activity. This is due to the diffusion process by which stories unfold.

Rumours multiply and diversify. If there is still a certain oscillation between them, today there seems to be stratification: while the rumours spread by the media cover everything and are united in the shadow of the city, and replace any proper name to remove or eliminate superstitious sinful opposition, stories become private and sink into the alley, family or individual. The dispersion of memorable moments is implied by the dispersion of stories. Furthermore, memory is a kind of anti-museum: its location cannot be determined.

The legends contain traces of it. Objects and words also have spaces for an elderly person to doze off, as in the usual demonstrations of walking, eating, and drinking. Go to sleep, the time of the ancient revolutions. The memory is nothing but a prince charming



who appears just long enough to awaken the sleeping beauties of our silent tales. In the text, memory is a key factor in building Rachel's identity as a stalker. She then remembers one instance from the past, in order to highlight the view.

The in-visible identities of the visible are shown by demonstrations: In point of fact, the fact that a location is made up of a series of displacements and effects among the fragmented strata that make it up and that it plays on these moving layers is the very definition of a place. Our memories bind us to this place. It is personal and would not interest anyone else. People can only live in haunted places, which goes against the Panopticon model. These individuals break themselves to pieces in much the same way as the Gothic sculptures of kings and queens that once adorned.

Places are considered as stories that are allowed to be read by others, the accumulation of time can unfold, but like the stories that are kept secret, in a state of mystery, symbols associated with pain or joy of the body rays. Contrary to this opinion, Rachel makes a statement that she hates living in Manawaka. She never realized that her true identity or herself belonged there. Instead, she always tries to express her opinion on how much she hates the place. According to Aristotle's *Poetics* (14576), "remembrance is what one can dream of a place". A metaphor is an act of giving something a name that belongs to something. Subjectivity has been linked to the absence of structure into existence and turns it into this tiniest sheepskin. However, as we have seen, this entity acts only in spatial operations, that is, in transitions to something else.

Ultimately, it must be seen as the repetition, through various metaphors, of a fundamental and important experience, the separation of the child's body from the mother's. The spatial and localization capabilities of the audience are demonstrated

through this experience. In the novel, when we consider Rachel as the subject and Manawaka as its space, what we can infer is that as a city explorer, she tries to best describe the environment. Her longing for freedom is what keeps her from identifying Manawaka as her original home and the reason she leaves this place after all the setbacks she has experienced in her life.

Rachel is an unmarried single teacher who focuses on her mother at the end of the story. The story actually allows Rachel to blow like a fictional person by enlisting the logical contradictions between their outer lives and her inner life. At the same time, she navigates on the woman's plight: entering the acquired code, how can a woman communicate her deepest desires and fears. She is held captive in the social dignity of peace and both feel deeply humiliated when at events they violate these principles.

Such stories are sure to be dubious, with the use of pre-arranged surfaces in these women's daily routines, interrupted by their silent conversation about opposites through dreams, wanderings in wonderland, and - bad dreams. The dream stories in Rachel's inner monologues are arranged as immediate creative responses to social circumstances, because, for Laurence, the latent results of disruption and modification exist within existing people and designs. It involves scenes of self-portrait fiction that glorify subjectivity to make space for one's personality fantasies and dreams, and these breathing spaces in turn reveal limitations. Of pragmatic fiction is the development of private or social reality.

The difficulty of analysing might be dissected on this section. Since death disengages and clove is an endeavour to pass the limits of detachment this concept of death which determine fantastically with inside the novel is in comparison with affection

and is on this way displayed as an acknowledgment of separation. The following factor is that disengagement consists of detachment from different people alongside separation from God. Rachel felt herself removed from each human in addition to from God. Curiously Manawakans, with their humble network mindset dodged each, death in addition to 'God'. Towards the end of the section, Laurence's difficulty of predecessors, the acknowledgment of our underlying foundations and our preceding come into the front. The features that had been integrated into Manawaka via way of means of its trailblazers and the horrible hindering pressure of the cities barriers are at combat withinside the man or woman of Rachel Cameron. She is aware that during spite of the manner that Manawaka became the motive for her difficulty, simultaneously, without them she has no individual via way of means of any means. In the end she leaves for Vancouver, and is aware that Manawaka have to and could go together with her usually.

*A Jest of God* is not only an intellectual record but a portrayal of sociohistorical powers interior Canada and of the nation's connection to Extraordinary England. The overbearing Mrs Cameron is the place of origin in its process as perfect power. Rachel is symbolic of a Canada looking to unencumber itself from a dictator frontier beyond and to make its very own future. The issues of woman and the antique individual question 'Who am I?' disturbs Rachel. In the final part, Rachel's midway triumph is due to her beginning to benefit scalability with the guidelines of endurance. Rachel's inquiries spotlight the focal troubles of the book. Her yearning for, authentic closeness and constant correspondence suggests that for Laurence the concept of voice infers the whole unpredictable, unbearable task of man or woman and academic correspondence.

*A Jest of God* is surprisingly acclaimed as a haunting novel, portrayed by a woman on the verge of hysteria; Rachel's life is often led under the slogan of legitimate appearances. Is really limited. She is cut off from most human contact by her duty to her mother. Rachel is younger, has not left Manawaka, and has never challenged her relatives. The novel is the story of an old teacher who lives with her deceased mother. Rachel Cameron's portrait is almost a case investigation of a butler haunted by her sense of premonition and restraint.

Rachel Cameron, the granddaughter of Niall Cameron, a funeral director in Manawaka, lives in uneasy despair with her deceased mother. Rachel and Mrs. Cameron live in a comfortable, well-lit home to her mother's taste. Rachel feels both contempt and envy for her older sister Stacey - married, mother of four - who lives in Vancouver. A long time ago, she returned to Manawaka to teach and help her mother. At this current pressing moment in her life, she cannot find any respect, either in what she has done or what she is doing. The Principal Willard Siddley considers her a contortionist. At the same time, she is nauseous because she is aware of her real presence; she resented Jimmy Doherty's mother with ease and struggled with guilt over her disappointment in her motherhood. The way she teaches, the way she finds a way to constantly get over it, the way she finds ways to help, pamper, and feel lavish with her mother, makes no difference to her. Rachel's fear of being seen as fickle, eccentric, a fool locked in her own sense of fear and obstacles, her solidarity, constantly drained by her self-degrading coward body. Rachel is driven by the need to make a real connection to life outside of her own life, but she is constrained by the pessimistic goal that makes up her own near-home life:

intimacy. Obligation to the mother, and the disappointment of the surrogate mother. Love for young James

The Doherty she educates is responsible for her fanatical sexual dreams. She is accused of being afraid of everything inside her circle of suffocating pain and everything outside. She lives in a female world and is characterized by resistance to men. Her father is dead. She is overwhelmed by a possessive and manipulative mother. Rachel is shy, disengaged, self-destructive, and reserved. She is never fully matured and the story follows her growth. The romance is limited to a single summer, but there are memories that stretch into the past. An emergency forces him to act. She has a despicable romantic relationship with a former co-worker, Scratch Kazlik, and confronts the possibility of her becoming pregnant. A strange joke, *A Jest of God*, is played with him. Paradoxically, such a shy and virtuous woman fell into this predicament.

With this strange personality, her family, and the city she resides in turn into a tragedy. She was not actually pregnant but was diagnosed with benign cancer. The novel's plot concisely describes a problem Rachel encounters during a mid-year event with Nick Kazlik, an instructor from Winnipeg who lives on her father's estate near Manawaka. Rachel's want for affection is so strong that she overcomes all feelings of fear and self-doubt and enters into a real energetic connection with Nick, hoping that she will become pregnant. She then says: "If I had a child, I would like it to be yours." This seems so unforced that I feel he must see it the way I do. And so restrained, as well, when I might have torn at him - Give me my children" (Laurence, *AJOG* 181).

The struggle she endures has a powerfully liberating effect. As she comes out of the anesthetic after the operation, she says, "I am the mother now". Rachel's real

salvation and significance is that she is not a tragic figure, but just an ordinary human being. In her despair at her possible pregnancy, when the time comes to make the final grand gesture to take the whiskey and the sleeping pills and throw it all away she does not defy and reject life. She adapts to its blows and its demands. She then says: “At that moment when I stopped, my mind wasn’t empty or paralyzed. I had one clear and simple thought. They will all go on in somehow, all of them but I will be dead as a stone and it will be too late then to change my mind” (Laurence, *AJOG* 170).

Rachel does learn to accept living with her limitations and lives. “I am the mother now” (170). These words are her key to freedom and an acceptance of herself as he is. As Nick could not be God for her, so she must not be God for her mother. Her choices are limited and she makes one of them - the decision to move out of Manawaka. The finding of decision and spirit, the affirming of the future, is in Rachel’s context a great victory.

Laurence described Rachel as “a potential hysteric” (Laurence, *AJOG* 13) who does not for quite a while realise this about herself. If hysteria has to do with ‘the mind’s internal divisions, self-alienation, self-estrangement and splitting of consciousness, then Rachel displays many of these characteristics. Her consciousness is dominated by gaps in comprehension and by the untranslatability of language. In her mind words spark themselves from meaning or at best exist in unstable relationships, so that language becomes the agent not of human communication and self-expression but of alienation

Her images of ‘the blue-painted dogmen snarling outside the walls, stealthily learning “the words of the children’s skipping rhymes “(Laurence, *AJOG* 2) or of Dr. Moreau’s beast men prowling and waiting, “able to speak but without

comprehension” (32) suggest her apprehension of the sinister threat within words.

This perception is linked with St. Paul’s text, “Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian unto me” (Laurence, *AJOG*135).

Death is a subject forbidden by her father and excluded from the house by her mother. Rachel’s mother had an interesting fear of a touch of both death and life, a double fear that her daughter has picked up. George Bowering makes the connection between sex and death which Rachel’s narrative makes without comment and its transition from erotic fantasy to the death dream quoted above. In Manawaka “death is rude, unmannerly, not to be spoken to in the street” (Laurence, *AJOG* 13). ‘Unmannerly’ and ‘forbidden’ are words applied both to sex and to death, and Rachel’s narrative enacts her exorcism of the one through the other. Nick Kazlik with his memories of his dead twin brother offers a shadowy parallel to Rachel’s obsession, though they are both too enclosed in their private places even as lovers to give any kind of mutual rescue. Thus we see that Rachel is the old maid humanized and dignified. “This is a person, certainly flimsy and perhaps gutless, no heroics, no Promethean pride here, but a, living human being capable of growth and demanding respect”(Laurence,*AJOG*12) .

Rachel is not brave. She is plummeted and buffeted by every fear she conjures up and yet even her range of fear is narrow. Her cruel self-portraits constitute an attempt to deal with the limbo she inhabits. She sees herself as a skinny sapling servicing a dog, a scampering giraffe, a gaunt crane, a lean grey-hound on a beach, a cross of bones, and inhibited ostrich walking carefully through a formal garden. This fearful suspension between other states perceived as real is depicted in grotesque and macabre images as Rachel tries unsuccessfully to sleep. The night is a giant carnival wheel turning in

blackness; glued to the wheel, Rachel is powerless to stop its pointless circling; “I see scratch of gold against the black and they form into jagged lines, teeth, a knife edge, the sharpened hackles of dinosaurs” (Laurence, *AJOG* 18)

Rachel, “tries to break the handcuffs of her own past” (Laurence, *AJOG* 13), but she is self-perceptive enough to recognize that for her, no freedom from the shackles of her ancestors can be total. Her emergence from the tomb-like atmosphere of her extended childhood is a partial victory. She is no longer so much afraid of herself as she was. She is beginning to learn the rules of survival. Her colleague Calla offers friendship but Rachel is embarrassed by Calla’s differentness, by her uninhibited sloppiness, and by the fundamentalism of her Pentecostal religion:

If only Calla wouldn’t insist on talking about the Tabernacle in Mother’s hearing. Mother thinks the whole thing is weird in the extreme and as for anyone speaking in a clarion voice about their beliefs - it seems indecent to her, almost in the same class as what she calls foul language. Then I get embarrassed for Calla, ashamed of being embarrassed, and would give anything to shut her up or else to stop minding. (Laurence, *AJOG* 18).

Rachel turns back to her friend in times of trouble. Calla’s, non-judgmental acceptance, the unqualified offer of help, and shared strength help her to discover her own strength. We could draw the conclusion that, like other protagonists in the Manawaka cycle, Rachel, perceives three worlds with herself caught in the middle, “a weak area between millstones (Laurence, *AJOG*94). The remark has psychological and social analogues. Psychologically, the first world (Rachel’s world) belongs to her pupils and the apparently self-confident teenagers they so rapidly become. The third world



belongs to her mother and the more in *A Jest of God* it takes the form of children's chants, folksongs, and hymns. The chant that introduces the novel evokes time passing, change, and yearning: a yearning for admiration, respect, power, and sexual fulfillment, all things denied to Rachel in her view. The cryptic advice to Spanish dancers to get out of town is prophetic with regard to Rachel's decision to leave Manawaka. It hints at her need to transcend the psychic prison of local attitudes. The golden city, Zion or New Jerusalem in Biblical typology, suggests a fulfillment that is both physical and spiritual. This is picked up in the Anglican's solo, "Jerusalem the Golden" and in the Pentecostal rendering of Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel/shall come to thee, O Israel" (Laurence, *AJOG* 20). Rachel's fears are excluding her from this joyful state.

The metaphors in the opening scene are largely demonic. Time is imagined as a process leading to confined boxes (the school, her classroom) which suggest prisons and coffins. Power is arbitrary and is ultimately illusory. Growing up is a grotesque distortion of the child's body, leading to the final distortion of the undertaker's act. Conversely, the images at the end are full of hope and affirmation. Heading west, the bus flies smoothly and confidently like a great owl. The possibilities imagined by Rachel are comic, whimsical, but largely pleasurable. Time in Laurence's comic fiction is seen to play a redeeming role.

Orientals, in Manawaka, fare worse than Ukrainians. The Regal Cafe is owned and run by Lee Toy, a dried shell of a man who seems ageless. Laurence's implicit comment on Toy's heroism and on two contrasting cultures, Oriental and Western, is caught in the two pictures which hang on the walls of the Regal Cafe. One is a Coca-Cola poster, and the other, is a Chinese scroll with a mountain and a solitary tiger. Laurence

discovers “the extraordinary within the pedestrian” (Laurence, *AJOG* 14). Nick’s inner demons, and Toy’s lonely pain, reflects Rachel’s fears and grounds them in a specific soil of Manawaka. Both worlds exclude Rachel and isolation generates fear.

The entire narrative of *A Jest of God* centres round the character of Rachel Cameron. Laurence uses first person narrative written in present tense to show the predicament of Rachel. The transition from the present tense back to past tense is an important structure of the novel. Rachel as a narrator explains the other characters in the novel, especially her mother, who raised her based on the puritan values of her society. The major themes discussed are the problems of survival, mother-daughter relationship and the question of freedom. The novel is a culmination of visual and voice imageries beautifully crafted by Laurence. Rachel’s use of eye imagery is emblematic of her consciousness. Laurence’s vivid use of imagery, dreams and fantasies through the protagonist is very illuminating. The tone of the work is poetical and it becomes evident through the usage of rhymes to portray Rachel’s inner landscape of mind.

*A Jest of God* is the story of Rachel’s ordeal and of her limited victory. As a narrator, Rachel sees the divisions in Manawaka and is able to see the division between her body and desire. Through her memory and hope, Rachel creates a community for herself and her mother beyond the confines of space and time. The chapter thus highlights the importance of walking as a form of flaneuring in the everyday life of Rachel Cameron. It also mentions the importance of psychogeography in framing the identity of a person. The cognitive effect a geographical space can have upon a man is immense.