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STORY AND DISCOURSE IN *THE DIVINERS*: A STRUCTURALIST ANALYSIS

by

LINDA GRACE GERRARD VEITCH

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.....

Supervisor

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Date July 31 1984

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents, William and Grace Gerrard and Frederick and Eva Uggles, whose existence for me can only be on a level of fictional reality. I wish I had known them.

ABSTRACT

Margaret Laurence's writing, especially her Manawaka fiction, has been the focus of much critical attention. The analyses of Laurence's work have been predominantly thematic so that the content of the fiction is well documented. However, little attention has been paid to the form of Laurence's work. The purpose of this study is, in part, to redress this critical imbalance by examining the form of Laurence's latest fictional creation, *The Diviners*, in the context of the previous Manawaka fiction. This study will avoid committing what Robert Scholes calls the "formalistic fallacy;" it will not focus on form to the exclusion of content. The work of the thematic critics will be acknowledged and used. Adopting the approach to narrative set forth in Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, this study will examine the narrative discourse of *The Diviners*.

In Chapter One I present the conceptual basis of this structuralist study and examine the main critical concepts used. The terms "story" and "discourse" are defined and their manifestation in *The Diviners* is explained. Chatman's conception of the "whole communication situation" is presented in its diagramatic form and each feature of this process is examined. This chapter serves as a conceptual point of reference for the discussion of the form in *The Diviners* in the ensuing chapters. The remaining three chapters focus on specific features of narrative structure. Chapter Two examines the narrative discourse in terms of narrative voice and point of view in *The Diviners* . In this chapter, the speech-acts, "voice" and "perspective" of the narrative are studied and the question of narrator reliability is addressed. The relationship between story-time and discourse-time in *The Diviners* is analysed in Chapter Three. I use Genette's work, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, as my main critical text in this discussion of time and analyse the temporal relations of the narrative discourse in terms of order, duration and frequency. Chapter Four focuses on the two modernist features of innovative form and self-consciousness in *The Diviners*. In the discussion of the novel's innovative form, I deal primarily with the obtrusive devices labelled "snapshots," "innerfilms"

and "memorybank movies." These features are also pertinent to the discussion of the narcissistic nature of the narrative in which I examine language, the act of story-telling, and the narrative concern with fictional creation producing levels of fictional reality within the narrative discourse.

I shall show that *The Diviners* employs form in fiction to define and ultimately become fictional content, and also, to compress the "whole narrative communication situation" in the text. The discourse is structured so that the transmission of the narrative from the implied author to the implied reader is condensed; the distance between the agents of communication is minimal. The form of the novel provides an immediacy of narrative presentation that serves to consolidate the communication processes of the discourse.

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I thank my parents, John and Doreen Gerrard, for making this work possible through their constant moral support throughout my academic career.

Colin, my husband and best friend, "lived" this work with me. I thank him for suffering so silently. His belief in me was inspiring.

Lastly, I wish to sincerely thank my advisor, Dr. Paul Hjartarson, for his professional guidance and encouragement throughout the course of this study.

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INTRODUCTION

> ...the evolution of form is never totally new and is usually much less experimental or original than we might like to imagine, but it is an attempt at something new to us, an effort to discover a means--a vehicle, if you like--which is capable of getting across some of the things we feel compelled to try to communicate.[1]

Margaret Laurence's Manawaka fiction spans an entire decade of Canadian literature from the publication of *The Stone Angel* in 1964 to *The Diviners* in 1974. This decade was a time of great fictional experimentation with the formally innovative work of such writers as Robert Kroetsch, George Bowering and Audrey Thomas, to name but a few. The writing of the sixties and seventies is especially interesting "for unlike much earlier Canadian work, the recent writing [had] been engaged for the most part at the level of form and language rather than theme."[2] However, the literary criticism of the period did not keep abreast of the innovations in the literature itself. Literary criticism was (and to a large extent, still is) predominantly "thematic criticism," with "a critical scope too restricted to capture the complex vision and achievement of our literature."[3] This "restricted" approach to literature is exemplified by Margaret Atwood's guide to Canadian literature which appeared two years prior to Laurence's *The Diviners*.

Margaret Atwood's book, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, is, as the subtitle suggests, entirely thematic in its approach, following the tradition of D. G. Jones' *Butterfly on Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature* (1970) and Northrop Frye's *The Bush Garden* (1971) and foreshadowing the arrival of such critical works as John Moss' *Patterns of Isolation in English-Canadian Fiction* (1974). Atwood's work is enlightening while being, at the same time, extremely narrow and claustrophobic, suffocating Canadian literature by placing its creative possibilities into unyielding, reductive categories. This book is

not a "book of patterns" as Atwood would have us believe; rather, it is a book of labels. For, *Survival* not only advocates a static, uncompromising approach to literature, but it also negates critical concern for the formal aspects of literature. In aiming to answer the question "What do writers write about?"[4] Atwood fails to consider the "how" of the narrative process and the relationship between the two:

> All [Jones, Atwood and Moss] treat works of Canadian literature as if they were primarily repositories of indigenous themes and images documenting localized historical, psycho-social, mythological, and political concerns. None treats the works as autonomous verbal structures with a literary integrity of their own; in short, each violates the harmony of form and content. Yet form and content are complementary and symbiotic; *how* a writer has done something is the primary determinant of *what* he has done.[5]

In *Survival*, in answering the "what" of Canadian fiction, Atwood defines the central symbol of this literature as survival--"grim" and "bare"--and sees all Canadian literature as representative of the country as a "collective victim." By dividing Canadian literature into these two categories, Atwood believes that she has identified the touchstones which will enable readers "to distinguish this species from all others, Canadian literature from the other literatures with which it is often compared or confused."[6] In reality, Atwood does not crystallize the identity of this country's literature, she merely identifies two themes common to much, not all, Canadian literature. By so doing, she fails to consider elements of this literature beyond thematics. Atwood herself acknowledges that *Survival* "is not an exhaustive, extensive or all-inclusive treatise on Canadian literature,"[7] but this does not negate the existence of a critical imbalance in her approach: Atwood discusses content to the exclusion of form.

Frank Davey not only cites *Survival* as an example of unscholarly research which misrepresents Canadian literature through generalisations and lack of historical perspective,[8] he also feels that its methodology blinds the author to informative aspects of the literature being studied:

> She [Atwood] claims intermittently to be concerned with the quality and form of literature as well as with its ideas, but her emphasizing of Pratt over Smith and Scott, of Lee over Layton and Purdy, and of Gibson over Laurence and Godfrey, suggests that she believes that in Canada the explicit message of the work is more significant in determining "tradition" than are the implications of its form....Where she might have found unique literary expressions of the Canadian character--in the *form* of its writing--she fails to look. The forms available to a writer are of the same number as the forms of the universe, while as Pound tells us, the ideas of men can be written on the back of a postage stamp.[9]

Thus, Atwood and her fellow exponents of "thematic criticism," by placing the study of literature into a purely thematic context, have denied part of the literature's being by disregarding the form of literature. Atwood's guide, despite the accessibility to the idea of contemporary structuralist criticism at the time of publication, offers "the narrowest definition of a Canadian tradition yet attempted."[10]

In a more extensive article, "Surviving the Paraphrase," Davey extends his distaste for Atwood's reductive approach to critics of similar inclinations--Frye, Moss and, in particular, Jones--and calls for critical studies of Canadian literature that focus on the form of a work. Davey feels that writers whose work involves experimentation with style, prosody and structure cannot be studied if their work is subjected to thematic criticism only. He believes that the work of "thematic" critics has dominated literary criticism to the detriment of Canadian literary criticism:

> It is a testimony to the limitations of Canadian literary criticism that thematic criticism should have become the dominant approach to English-Canadian literature. In its brief lifetime, Canadian criticism has acquired a history of being reluctant to focus on the literary work--to deal with matters of form, language, style, structure, as these arise from the work as a unique construct.[11]

One of Davey's main objections to the theory of "thematic criticism" is that it is unrelated to the process of writing itself and therefore, he claims, it ignores a crucial aspect of the fiction which should be studied: form. Davey believes that because thematic critics study what the novel says and not how it says it, "the focus of such criticism invariably rests outside the

writing."[12] Thus, Davey emphasizes the need for new critical methods which go far beyond the borders of thematic criticism. He is joined in this struggle to enlarge the scope of Canadian criticism by such scholars as Russell Brown, Barry Cameron and Michael Dixon. These critics believe that books of a complex structural nature, such as *The Diviners*, demand "a more objective criticism" which adheres "to the classic New Critical aims of treating a single work as autonomous, self-referential, and self-defining."[13] By focusing critical attention on the text itself, not on its social milieu, Brown believes that "theme" would be revealed in a manner "very different from the way we are used to dealing with the concept. Rather than removing us to a semantic level which runs contrary to the 'artfulness' of a literary work, theme would be recognized as a structural feature, part of the grammar that enables the author to give form to a work, discoverable as one of the formal features of that work."[14] In the work of Davey, Brown, Cameron and Dixon, the critical approach advocated to redress the problem of "thematic criticism" in Canada is a structuralist approach. Brown claims that structuralism "[s]eems just now to offer us a great deal of potential for resolving the critical problems we have encountered and for offering us directions to be investigated."[15] Cameron and Dixon cite "comparative formal criticism" as the means by which the critic will counter "the inhibiting preoccupation with indigenous content at the expense of form."[16] And Davey goes a step further to produce a guide to Canadian literature which adopts a structuralist approach.

Davey's guide, *From There to Here: A Guide to English Canadian Literature Since 1960*, was written as a positive attempt to redress the lack of formal criticism in Canadian critical circles. In this guide, Davey illustrates the need for a closer, analytical study of Canadian literature which moves away from the insular thematic approach. In the Preface to this work, Davey makes clear his critical stance and the rationale behind it:

> I have given considerable space in this volume to analysis and explanation of technique and form. I have done this in part because the period in Canadian writing being considered [1960-1974] is one of continual search for new and profound forms. In no way can much of this writing be opened even for thematic discussion without careful attention to the meaning of its techniques.

> I have also attempted by attention to form to redress the tendency in recent Canadian criticism toward exclusively thematic interpretation. One must remember that it is by being encoded in the language and structure of literature that these "themes" are transmitted from writer to reader.[17]

This book marked a significant advance in Canadian criticism by adopting a structuralist approach to Canadian literature and thus, by focusing on form, placing "works of Canadian literature in their most immediate and proper context, the autonomous world of literature."[18] However, a number of major Canadian authors were denied such critical attention because of their inclusion in the "thematic" guide, published prior to Davey's book, in the same series--"Our Nature-Our Voices." Many of these artists still await a critical appraisal of a nature other than the thematic appraisal along the lines of Atwood, Frye, Jones and Moss.

Margaret Laurence is one of the authors included in the first volume of the series; and, indeed, thus far her work has received only a purely thematic criticism. This situation has yet to be rectified by an extensive analysis of technique and form in Laurence's work. Such a concentration on the form of Laurence's fiction would be justified not only by the great structural variety of her work, but also by the importance of form to Laurence herself as a means of presenting content. Laurence acknowledges that her main concern in fiction is the creation of protagonists who seem to possess a will and vitality independent of their creator; she also affirms that she has "a very strong sense of their existence as human individuals in their own right."[19] What is more, these protagonists seem to follow the "pattern" identified by Atwood in *Survival*; they struggle for their survival in a hostile environment which threatens them both physically and spiritually. Nevertheless, Laurence's own hierarchy of creative commitment and her apparent adherence to Atwood's "pattern" do not mean that the "thematic criticism" of Atwood *et al* is most appropriate mode of critical analysis to be applied to Laurence's fiction. Rather, a structuralist stance as proposed by Davey and other "anti-thematic" critics would be more illuminating; by looking at the content defined by the structure of Laurence's work and by considering the "meaning" of the work in terms of its structural content, a much greater understanding of Laurence's work could be achieved. By

focusing on the "how" of the fiction, the "what" would be understood in much greater detail. The close relationship between the "how" and the "what" in literature--that is, between the form and the content--is recognized by Laurence and is one of her prime concerns in the creation of her fiction: "I am concerned mainly, I think, with finding a form which will enable a novel to reveal itself, through which the characters can breathe."[20]

Laurence's interest in form really only began to emerge as she developed as an artist; it was not a conscious interest at the beginning of her career: "When I wrote my first novel, *This Side Jordan*, I had very little consciousness of form."[21] But Laurence's interest in form grew as her art matured; she began to realize that form was not an abstract consideration but an integral part of the creative processes. By 1974, having consciously worked with form in the five works of her Manawaka series,[22] Laurence had reached a new level of awareness regarding form. In November of that year she discussed form and literature and the act of communication via the printed word:

> Well, the fact of trying to put down life or one's consciousness or a character's consciousness in terms of words on the printed page is in itself a kind of form. Art does exist and it is a *form* and the fact is that art is *never* life. Art is never as chaotic or as complex or as alive as life....Part of the essence of art is that it is concerned with form. That is, when you write a novel you are being selective.[23]

With each new work, Laurence's experimentation with form appears to increase, and her struggle to synthesise form and content appears to become more difficult. She constantly strives to find the exact form, regardless of tradition and existing norms, which will most successfully communicate her ideas to the reader; and thus, she develops a greater reliance on structural innovation in her work. The climax of this struggle is reached in Laurence's novel *The Diviners*, about which she admitted, while still in the process of writing: "...I've got the first draft done and it needs a great deal more work. I've found the form of it extremely difficult, to discover what its own true form is, and I'm not sure I've got it worked out properly."[24] This novel provides the ultimate expression of Laurence's structural

experimentation to date.

Considering Laurence's interest in form, it is surprising to notice the lack of structural analysis present in reviews of the novel. In most instances, the form of the novel was either disregarded or treated with a disarming superficiality. Those reviewers who did comment on the form of the novel in greater detail than their colleagues were really no more help in understanding the actual implications of the novel's structure. These reviews stated the immediate effect of the structural techniques on them as readers without attempting to analyse ese techniques. Most reviewers condemned without explanation. Robert Fulford remarked latly: "In terms of style and structure, this is the least impressive of all the Manawaka books."[25] Granted that, given the space and time allocated, there is a limit to the extent to which reviewers are committed to detailed analysis;[26] however, even the reviews which considered the novel's form more extensively and positively were unable to be more specific than, for example, Allan Bevan, who remarked: "Margaret Laurence is a fine writer, perhaps the best Canadian novelist yet to appear, and *The Diviners, a complex and skilfully constructed novel* with a beautifully conceived central character is at least as good as any of the earlier novels."[27] And then, of course, there were those reviewers who contented themselves with concessionary remarks such as Phyllis Grosskurth's "perceptive" comment: "The structure takes a little getting used to"![28] Commenting on the reviews, Marian Engel remarked: "Since *The Diviners* is long, is a sort of epic and contained flashbacks called Memorybank Movies, poems, and long present-tense passages, it probably hit all their hackles [the reviewers'] at once."[29] Only a few reviewers were able to see beyond their emotional reactions and analyse the function and role of the novel's form. L. Biesenthal was one such reviewer; her comments seem to indicate a closer, more critical reading than those of her colleagues:

> In *The Diviners* Laurence has devised an intricate pattern of interweaving past and present, fact and fiction in sequences of snapshots, memorybank movies, and reminiscences....the style serves to amplify the themes. This cohesion of form and content is seldom achieved with as much success.[30]

This review was one of the very few to analyse the "why" of the techniques and to acknowledge the necessity of looking at form in relation to content.

Admittedly, reviews are not designed to provide the reader with a detailed examination of the work being considered, but this dearth of structural analysis is not confined to the novel's reviews. In the ten years since the publication of *The Diviners*, the book has occasioned a great deal of critical examination; however, the number of articles devoted to an analysis of the novel's form is surprisingly few. The work of Leona Gom, Theo Quayle Dombrowski, Sherrill E. Grace, Barbara Hehner and Ildikó de Papp Carrington are the only notable examples of structuralist criticism dealing with *The Diviners*.[31] Other critics who comment on the structural aspect of the novel tend to offer explications without indicating how, through an analysis of structure, they have reached their conclusions.[32] However, it appears that less experienced critics are more consciously aware of the structural aspects of Laurence's work, as numerous theses have been written on *The Diviners* which deal extensively with at least one aspect of the novel's structure.[33] In most works of this nature, the treatment of form is limited simply to the two aspects of time and narrative voice, both crucial concerns, but nevertheless only part of the area of structure which needs to be studied. But, despite the narrow scope of this structural analysis, these works do attempt to supply an area which has been neglected by literary scholars--to understand the "why" behind the complex narrative structure of Laurence's latest novel.

This thesis will facilitate an understanding of the "why" in Laurence's narrative fiction by conducting a close analysis of narrative techniques in *The Diviners*. This novel has been chosen for two main reasons: firstly, it is the concluding book of her Manawaka fiction:

> Well my feelings about it [writing another piece of work set in the fictional prairie town of Manawaka] with *The Diviners* was that it was a cycle which had been completed and I think it's very doubtful that I'll write another book out of that background....it just seemed to me that those five books of Canadian fiction came out of that fictional prairie town, that the wheel had come full cycle, that things had been completed."[34]

Secondly, as already mentioned, it represents the latest, and perhaps final, expression of Laurence's increasing interest in form throughout her literary career. To compliment the critical interpretation of this novel, examples will be drawn from the first four works in this cycle, *The Stone Angel*, *A Jest of God*, *The Fire-Dwellers* and *A Bird in the House*, because Laurence was consciously working on form in these narratives and they will help us to understand aspects of form in her latest novel. The form of *The Diviners*, it will be shown, is worth more than a superficial consideration and is not "at best superfluous, and at worst, artificial and distracting."[35] On the contrary, it represents a conscious attempt to utilize form in fiction to define fictional content. By focusing attention on the structure of *The Diviners*, this study will illuminate the "what" of Laurence's fiction from a thorough understanding of the "how." For, as Davey states, "[U]ltimately, only the form of a writer's work speaks to us."[36]

The problem which now remains is to find a critical framework within which to conduct our analysis. A structuralist approach is the obvious critical stance to adopt when analyzing form, but which structuralist approach? From the time of the Russian Formalists on, structuralist criticism has advocated many different approaches, major areas of concern, strategies, and so on. Today controversy exists among many leading structuralist critics regarding the method and aim of a structuralist analysis of fiction; primarily because, as David Lodge points out, "'Structuralism' is a very elastic label, stretched over a wide range of intellectual activities:..."[37] There is one literary critic in particular, whose focus and approach seems most suitable to Laurence's work: Seymour C...

Laurence herself leads us to this conclusion ... comments concerning form in fiction. She claims that experimentation with form in ...vel is necessary to ensure the survival of this literary genre but, form must always ... as a means of presenting content, not as an abstract concept about which to theorize:

> As a novelist, I sometimes feel I am engaged in a dang... and fragile profession. Someone is always predicting the death of the nove.....Howev... I go on writing novels and I notice that large numbers of much younger writers

> are doing the same. I believe that what is happening, in fact, is not that the novel is dying but that it is undergoing profound inner changes--changes of perception and therefore of form. In serious novels, these changes are not gimmicks and are not done to be trendy--they are done out of real necessity, because the older forms will no longer carry so many altered situations and altered ways of seeing.[38]

Chatman also regards the experimentation with form as necessary for the longevity of the genre of the novel and, like Laurence, he is interested in the relationship between the media of both literature and film.[39] Chatman supports Laurence's view that "form and content are totally bound up together," and in his critical text, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978), his primary aim is "to work out...the ramifications of the story - discourse dichotomy and to explain those insights...which it has prompted."[40] Chatman's approach to structuralist criticism affirms Laurence's belief that "[t]heorizing, by itself, is meaningless in connection with fiction, just as any concept of form is meaningless in isolation from the flesh and blood of content..."[41] and presupposes the symbiotic relationship between form and content.

Therefore, Seymour Chatman's work, *Story and Discourse*, will be the main critical text in this structural analysis of Margaret Laurence's novel, *The Diviners*. In drawing upon the insights of literary theorists since Aristotle, *Story and Discourse* provides the modern critic with an accessible, contemporary theory of structuralist criticism which moves away from the abstract analysis of narrative kernels to the study of narrative form as it relates to narrative content. As Chatman explains: "In particular I am concerned with form, rather than content, or with content when it is expressible as a form" (SD, 10).

In the following pages, then, I will use a critical approach based upon Seymour Chatman's critical text, *Story and Discourse*, to show that the form of *The Diviners* defines its content. Following Seymour Chatman's example, I will focus on specific structural concerns in each chapter to illuminate the nature of the communication processes between the implied author and the implied reader in this text.

NOTES

[1] Margaret Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing: Form and Voice in the Novel," *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, No. 27 (1980), p. 54. Originally given as a lecture at the University of Toronto, Fall 1969.

[2] Frank Davey, "Surviving the Paraphrase," *Canadian Literature*, No. 70 (1976), p. 5.

[3] Barry Cameron & Michael Dixon, "Introduction. Mandatory Subversive Manifesto: Canadian Criticism versus Literary Criticism," *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 2 (1977), 137.

[4] Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), p. 14.

[5] Cameron & Dixon, "Introduction," p. 140.

[6] Atwood, *Survival*, p. 13.

[7] Atwood, *Survival*, p. 11.

[8] Frank Davey, "Atwood Walking Backwards," *Open Letter*, Series 2, No. 5 (1973), 81.

[9] Davey, "Atwood Walking Backwards," p. 83.

[10] Davey, "Atwood Walking Backwards," p. 81.

[11] Davey, "Surviving the Paraphrase," p. 5.

[12] Davey, "Surviving the Paraphrase," p. 16.

[13] Russell M. Brown, "Critic, Culture, Text: Beyond Thematics," *Essays on Canadian Writing*, No. 11 (1978), 155, 156.

[14] Brown, "Critic, Culture, Text: Beyond Thematics," p. 18.

[15] Brown, "Critic, Culture, Text: Beyond Thematics," p. 179.

[16] Cameron & Dixon, "Introduction," p. 142.

[17] Frank Davey, *From There to Here: A Guide to English Canadian Literature since 1960*. Our Nature-Our Voices, Vol. 2 (Erin, Ontario: Press Porcepic, 1974), p. 10. It should be noted that this work is not without its critics, and even critics who adhere to structuralist criticism have indicated problems of critical stance which Davey encounters; for example: Jean Mallinson, "Ideology and Poetry: An Examination of some Recent Trends in Canadian literature," *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 3 (1978), 96-102; and Cameron & Dixon, "Introduction," pp. 137-145.

[18] Cameron & Dixon, "Introduction," p. 142.

[19] Margaret Laurence in an interview with Harriet Law, "Our Myths: Our Selves," *Indirections*, 2, No. 2 (1977), 41.

[20] Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," p. 55.

[21] Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," p. 55.

[22] These works include four novels and a collection of short stories. The latter, *A Bird in the House*, is often referred to as a novel. This is because, structurally, this work is more characteristic of the genre of the novel than the genre of the short story. In "Time and the Narrative Voice," Laurence herself states that these stories were all "published separately before they were collected in a single volume, but conceived from the beginning as a related group. Each story is self-contained in the sense that it is definitely a short story and not a

chapter from a novel, but the net effect is not unlike that of a novel," in *The Narrative Voice: Short Stories and Reflections by Canadian Authors*, ed., John Metcalf (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1972), p. 127. However, each story does exist as an autonomous piece of fiction and this compartmentalized narrative structure has a dramatic impact on the content of this work. Therefore, *A Bird in the House* will be referred to in this study as a collection of short stories, not a novel.

[23] Margaret Laurence in an interview with Bernice Lever, "Margaret Laurence," *Waves*, 3 No. 2 (1974), 7-8.

[24] Margaret Laurence in an interview with Graeme Gibson ed., *Eleven Canadian Novelists* (Toronto: Anansi, 1973), p. 207.

[25] Robert Fulford, "It's Fascinating despite the Flaws," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *Toronto Daily Star*, 18 May 1974, Sec. H, p. 10.

[26] I do not wish to be as damning in my appraisal of reviews and reviewers as Henry James, who states: "The fact that in England and in the United States every specimen that sees the light may look for a "review" testifies merely to the point to which, in these countries, literary criticism has sunk. The review is in nine cases out of ten an effort of intelligence as undeveloped as the ineptitude over which it fumbles, and the critical spirit, which knows where it is concerned and where not, is not touched, is still less compromised by the incident." See, "The Future of the Novel," in *The Future of the Novel*, ed., Leon Edel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1956), p. 35.

[27] Allan Bevan, "The Diviners," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *Dalhousie Review*, 54 (1974), 363. Emphasis mine.

[28] Phyllis Grosskurth, "A looser, more complex, more sexually uninhibited Laurence: and never an Atwood victim," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *The Globe and Mail*, 4 May 1974, p. 35.

[29] Marian Engel, "It's the Grit: Laurence is unforgettable because she is us," *The Globe and Mail* 19 Apr. 1975, p. 37.

[30] L. Biesenthal, "Alternate Selection," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *Canadian Reader*, 15, No. 5 (1974), 6.

[31] See, Theo Quayle Dombrowski, "*Who is This You?* Margaret Laurence and Identity," *The University of Windsor Review*, 13, No. 1 (1977), 21-38;
Theo Quayle Dombrowski, "Word and Fact: Laurence and the Problem of Language," *Canadian Literature*, No. 80 (1979), pp. 50-62;
Leona M. Gom, "Margaret Laurence and the First Person," *Dalhousie Review*, 55 (1975), 236-251;
Leona M. Gom, "Laurence and the Use of Memory," *Canadian Literature*, No. 71 (1976), pp. 48-58;
Sherrill E. Grace, "Crossing Jordan: Time and Memory in the Fiction of Margaret Laurence," *World Literature Written in English*, 16 (1977), 328-339;
Barbara Hehner, "River of Now and Then: Margaret Laurence's Narratives," *Canadian Literature* , No. 74 (1977), pp. 40-57;
Ildikó de Papp Carrington, "'Tales in the Telling': *The Diviners* as Fiction about Fiction," *Essays on Canadian Writing*, No. 9 (1977/78), pp. 154-169.

[32] Examples of such critics will surface throughout the study.

[33] Most notable amongst these are a selection of theses which appeared in 1977:
Deborah Lynne Humble, "Analysis of Margaret Laurence's Fiction Centering on such Formal Patterns as Themes, Narrative Techniques and Irony," M.A. Thesis Regina 1977;
Joy R. Kuropatwa, "Time in Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*," M.A. Thesis Manitoba 1977;
Paul Matthew St. Pierre, "Divers Multiform Divinations: A Study of Mythogenesis in Rudolph Stowe's *Tourmaline* and Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*," M.A. Thesis Queen's 1977;
Lynn Marie Sinclair, "Time and Narrative Technique in Margaret Laurence's Manawaka novels and *A Bird in the House*, M.A. Thesis McMaster 1977;
Giles Therrien, "Form and Content in *The Diviners* by Margaret Laurence and in *Kamouraska* by Anne Herbert," M.A. Thesis Montreal 1977.

[34] Laurence in an interview with Bernice Lever, "Margaret Laurence," p. 6.

[35] Brita Mickleburgh, "The Diviners," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *The Fiddlehead*, No. 104 (1974), p. 112.

[36] Davey, *From There to Here*, p. 10.

[37] David Lodge, *Working with Structuralism: Essays and Reviews on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. ix.

[38] Margaret Laurence, in "The Diviners," by Brita Mickleburgh, p. 113. Quoted from an address given by Margaret Laurence at the University of Toronto 1973.

[39] In a reading and discussion period at the University of Alberta on October 25, 1973, Margaret Laurence stated: "I think that contemporary novels have been influenced by film to this extent: that I feel personally very strongly that novels no longer, or short stories, should...try to do too much of what film can do because fiction can ... things that films can't. That is, each one can do its own thing." Seymour Chatman discusses the relationship between these two media in Chapters 3 and 4 of *Story and Discourse*.

[40] Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 10. All subsequent references to this work, hereafter referred to as SD, will appear in parentheses in this text.

[41] Bernice Lever, "Literature and Canadian Culture: An Interview with Margaret Laurence," *Alive Magazine: Literature and Ideology*, No. 41 (1975), pp. 18-19.

Chapter II

THE TRANSMISSION OF A TEXT

> Meaning does not exist before being articulated and perceived...; there do not exist two utterances of identical meaning if their articulation has followed a different course.[1]

The primary objective of modern structuralist analysis of narrative fiction is to examine "form" and to discover how this form may define "content." When studying the form of a narrative, what we are in fact studying is the transmission of a text; that is, the means by which the author communicates her story to the reader. Thus, we are dealing with the difference between two symbiotic aspects of the narrative text: the difference between story and its representation in discourse. In Chatman's terms, "[s]tory is the content of the narrative expression, while discourse is the form of that expression" (SD, 23).

Story can be defined as the main events, in chronological sequence, which constitute the narrative, the "raw material of the narrative";[2] it should be noted that this is already one step removed from the creative vision of the author which must be acknowledged but which can never be made known to us. If the critic ignores the existence of a creative vision held by the author before the imposition of language to articulate this vision, then literary criticism runs the risk of becoming depersonalized and relinquishing its status as a field of enquiry within the humanities. This reservation is in Henry James' mind when he states: "'The story,' if it represents anything, represents the subject, the idea, the *donnée* of the novel."[3] In Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's words: "'Story' designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events."[4] Although this definition is valid, it fails to take into consideration the larger implications of abstracting story events from their verbal expression. Chatman views the abstract concept of story from a broader perspective, claiming that

> *story* in one sense is the continuum of events presupposing the total set of all conceivable details, that is, those that can be projected by the normal laws of the physical universe. In practice, of course, it is only that continuum and that set actually inferred by a reader, and there is room for difference in interpretation". (SD, 28)

Discourse can be defined as the representation of story in a form accessible to another person. It is the sum of the formal means used to present the abstract idea of story to the reader. Henry James does not agree with the basic concept of the term "story" as separate from an intangible aspect of narrative--discourse: "I cannot see what is meant by talking as if there were part of a novel which is the story and part of it which for mystical reasons is not--unless indeed the distinction be made in a sense in which it is difficult to suppose that anyone should attempt to convey anything."[5] However, such a distinction is necessary if we are to examine the methods used by a novelist to communicate the subject of his narrative to his reader. Using the Russian Formalists' terminology of story (*fabula*) and plot (*sjužet*) to discuss the two aspects of story and discourse, Robert Scholes states that

> [discourse] is the narrative as actually shaped. We can think of story as analogous to the facts of history itself, always running on at the same speed, in the same direction. In a *plot*, the speed may be changed, the direction reversed, at will. Actually, a *story* already represents items selected according to some elementary law of narrative logic which eliminates irrelevancies. And a *plot* is then a further refinement which organises these items for maximal emotional effect and thematic interest....The art of fiction is, then, most apparent in the artificial rearrangement of chronology which makes a story into a plot.[6]

The study of narrative discourse is the study of structural devices used by an author to communicate story events to a reader. In Margaret Laurence's novel, *The Diviners*, story would be the sequence of events starting with Louisa Gunn's pregnancy ("Snapshot: Morag Gunn is in this picture, concealed behind the ugliness of Louisa's cheap housedress, concealed in her mother's flesh, invisible"),[7] and continuing in strict chronological order to Morag's setting down the title of her "private and fictional words" after the completion of her journey

of self-discovery (D, 370). Discourse is the text of *The Diviners* itself, incorporating the varied structural techniques chosen by Laurence to communicate the story events of her fictional creation to the reader. The symbiotic relationship between story and discourse in a fictional narrative is succinctly expressed by Chatman: "What is communicated is *story*, the formal content element of narrative; and it is communicated by *discourse*, the formal expression element" (SD, 31).

The distinction between story and discourse and the analysis of fiction primarily in terms of its "expression plane" (SD, 146) is not unique to the view of literature held by modern structuralist theorists; on the contrary, it has its roots in the literary distinctions posited by Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, Book III. Here Socrates distinguishes between *diegesis* and *mimesis*: the former was considered the purest form of narrative, the direct words of the poet, whilst the latter was regarded as markedly inferior, the imitation of characters' speech by the poet. The incorporation of Socrates' definition in a structuralist theory was first attempted at the beginning of the century by the Russian Formalists, who used the terms '*fabula*' and '*sjužet*,' in place of '*diegesis*' and '*mimesis*,' to discuss the theory of language and its relationship to story elements.[8] The concept of form and content as symbiotically related aspects of narrative was the focus of study for the Prague School of Linguistics and Poetics in the 1930's,[9] the French scholars of the "*Nouvelle Critique*" in the 1960's,[10] and a growing number of English-speaking exponents of structuralism today. Since Socrates' day, the terms themselves have undergone a series of changes. These terminological variations have been tabulated by David Lodge as follows:

Table I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURALIST TERMS

Russian Formalists	*Fabula*	*Sjuzet*	
Todorov	*Histoire*	*Discours*	
Barthes	*Récit*	*Narration*	
Genette	*Histoire*	*Récit*	*Narration*
Chatman	Story	Discourse	

Source: David Lodge, "Form in Fiction: A Guide to Analytical Methods and Terminology," Unpublished, 1980, p. 2. (Handout circulated to students of David Lodge at the University of Birmingham, England, 1980).

Lodge explains that

> The meanings of the terms arranged vertically are roughly, though not precisely, the same. It will be observed that Genette's formulation is threefold, not binary. In effect, he has split the narrative Discourse into the text itself (*récit*), and the act of narrating which produces the text (*narration*). This helps him to define more delicate sub-categories of narrative technique, but does not really affect the more fundamental opposition between Story and Discourse.[11]

In creating this table of the development of structuralist terms, Lodge acknowledges the use of Shlomith Rimmon's article, "A Comprehensive Theory of Narrative,"[12] and yet he seems to diminish the importance of Genette's threefold presentation of a traditionally binary system of narrative which is of great importance to Rimmon. In her later work, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, Rimmon uses Genette's distinctions as the basis of her critical study and

suggests that the use of Genette's threefold formulation has far greater significance than simply helping "to define more delicate sub-categories of narrative techniques." Substituting the terms "story," "text" and "narration" for the French terms "*histoire*," "*récit*" and "*narration*," Rimmon-Kenan makes the following distinctions:

> Whereas 'story' is a succession of events, 'text' is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling. Put more simply, the text is what we read....Since the text is a spoken or written discourse, it implies someone who speaks or writes it. The act or process of production is the third aspect--'narration'.[13]

However, despite the evident usefulness of Genette's distinctions, this study will adhere to the binary system of story and discourse as advocated by Chatman.

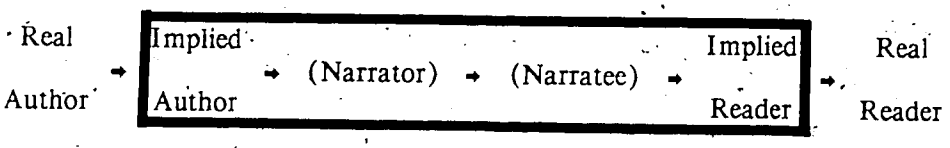
Chatman's system incorporates categories of "*récit*" and "*narration*" into the one category of discourse so that the account of the story and the manner in which it is presented are both considered under the encompassing heading of discourse. Although Chatman's distinction between story and discourse is, as may be argued, less sophisticated than other distinctions proposed by structuralist theorists, his interpretation of this distinction between the events of a fictional narrative and the expression of these events is most useful when analysing Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*. To further understand the communication processes in narrative fiction, Chatman extends this twofold distinction into subcategories, creating a more intricate fourfold system of analysis. Starting with a simple explanation of the transmission of a text and then progressing to subtler distinctions necessitating the development of further subcategories, Chatman provides a critical framework within which it is possible to examine every structural feature of a fictional narrative, ranging from the use of a narrator to the author's choice of medium.

The structuralist critic's major area of concern when analysing the transmission of a text is the role and nature of the narrator, because the narrator is the primary agent of communication in the novel. Chatman summarizes "the whole narrative communication

situation" diagrammatically:

Table II

NARRATIVE TEXT



Source: Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p. 151.

The real author (Laurence) communicates the story elements to the real reader (you and I) via the use of a narrator (Morag Gunn). As Booth explains:

> In any reading experience there is an implied dialogue among author, narrator, the other characters and the reader. Each of the four can range, in relation to each of the others, from identification to complete opposition, on any axis of value, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and even physical.[14]

The implied author in the diagram is the conception of the author the reader develops from reading the novel; it is the artistic mind implied by the text. This term was first coined by Wayne Booth and is synonymous with the less frequently used terms "official scribe" and the author's "second self." The reader attributes values, morals and beliefs, as expressed by the novel as a whole, to the implied author; these attributes may not, and quite often are not, held by the person who actually created the novel. Booth outlines the essence of the implied author's existence:

> Our sense of the implied author includes not only the extractable meanings but also the moral and emotional content of each bit of action and suffering of all the characters. It includes, in short, the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole; the chief value to which *this* implied author is committed, regardless of what party his creator belongs to in real life, is that which is expressed by the total form.[15]

In the seventeen years subsequent to Booth's introduction of the term "implied author," the term's meaning has undergone subtle re-definitions and the status of the implied author in the narrative text is now regarded as less authoritative. As Chatman explains, the implied author is now considered less integrally involved in the communication processes than Booth believed:

> ...the implied author can *tell* us nothing. He, or better, *it* has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn. (SD, 148)

Thus, although the implied author is an implicit component in the communication processes, it can only be understood after the examination of more tangible elements of the novel's form: the narrator, point of view, and so on.[16]

The implied reader is the "ideal" reader the author envisages for her novel. Such a reader attempts to experience the novel in its purest form and, therefore, "in order to reduce the distortions produced by prejudice, considers himself as 'man in general, and forgets, if possible, his individual being and his peculiar circumstances'."[17] Like the implied author, the implied reader is implicit in the narrative processes *but* his existence is an abstract consideration. Percy Lubbock, writing much earlier than Chatman or Booth, refers to the implied reader as the "critical reader." Lubbock sees the role of this reader as being far more active than that of the passive reader defined by Chatman and Booth. Lubbock sees the reader as both participating in the creative processes of the novel and contributing to the success of the novel:

> The reader of a novel--by which I mean the critical reader [the implied reader/ideal reader]--is himself a novelist; he is the maker of a book which may or may not please his taste when it is finished but of a book for which he must take his own share of the responsibility. The author does his part, but he cannot transfer his book like a bubble into the brain of the critic; he cannot make sure that the critic will possess his work. The reader must therefore become, for his part, a novelist, never permitting himself to suppose that the creation of the book is solely the affair of the author.[18]

However, the creative role of the implied reader is limited as he is not involved in the tasks of selection or imposition of form: "there can be no picking and choosing now; that was the business of the novelist, and it has been accomplished according to his light; the critic creates out of life that is already subject to art."[19] So, the implied reader, as represented in Chatman's diagram, is the ideal reader who strives for objectivity while participating in some aspects of the creative processes of the narrative.

The implied reader is closely related to the narratee in the communication processes. The narratee is the reader or listener who is invoked, by the author, in the novel. Like the implied reader, the narratee is the receiver of information relayed by the narrator; however, unlike the implied reader, the narratee is purely a creation of the author. Gerald Prince distinguishes "five major categories of narratees, going from ones who are so little involved in the events they are supposed to read or listen to that they are not even mentioned to the ones who narrate the very events they listen to or read."[20] Prince categorizes narratees according not only "to their degree of involvement in the events recounted in the narrative," but also according to their functions in the narrative, claiming that these two areas are crucial when considering the "overall narrative effectiveness."[21] Chatman accepts the validity of Prince's observations but he feels that the "optional" status of the narratee is a reality and requires greater emphasis. Therefore, Chatman places the narratee in parentheses in his diagram to illustrate that this figure is not always integral to the communication processes.

The narrator, a fictional device familiar to all literary scholars, is cited parenthetically in the same manner as the narratee. Such a parenthetical citation indicates that Chatman considers that the narrator is dispensable in narrative fiction. Booth refers to "non-narrated"

texts as narratives with an "undramatized narrator" and he claims that in such instances there is no distinction between the implied author and the absent narrator; the implied author *is* the narrator.[22] However, the fusion of implied author and narrator in non-narrated texts is not widely accepted. A number of modern structuralist critics have denied the narrator an optional status, claiming that a narrator is always present, overtly or covertly, in a narrative text. Rimmon-Kenan states:

> In my view there is always a teller in the tale, at least in the sense that any utterance or record of an utterance presupposes someone who has uttered it. Even when a narrative text presents passages of pure dialogue, manuscripts found in a bottle, or forgotten letters and diaries, there is in addition to the speakers or writers of this discourse a 'higher' narratorial authority responsible for 'quoting' the dialogue or 'transcribing' the written records.[23]

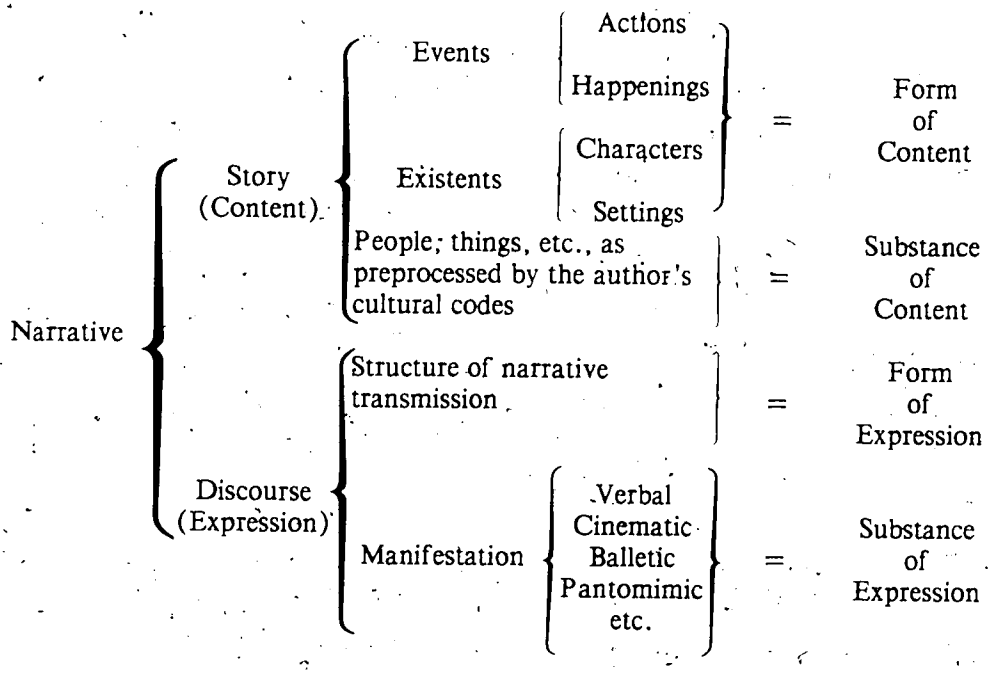
The last element of this diagram requiring explanation is the exclusion of the real author and the real reader from the confines of the narrative text. Chatman deliberately isolates these two elements because he believes they are not relevant to a structural analysis of the text although they are "indispensable to it in an ultimate practical sense" (SD, 151). This brings us back to the problem raised earlier concerning the reality but intangibility of an artist's creative vision. It is self-evident that a narrative text cannot exactly reproduce the original creative idea of the artist because the artist's original vision is necessarily redefined once it is confined by language. The vision of an artist must always remain on a spiritual plane beyond the reach of those who are language dependent for the experience of this vision. According to Laurence, "the novel that exists in the head is always a much better novel than the one that gets down on the written page."[24] In this thesis, the real author (Laurence), is relevant to a structural analysis of the text and will be discussed, in Chapter Four, in relation to the communication processes of *The Diviners*.

Chatman's diagram of the transmission of a text is useful but flawed. The communication of an idea from an author to a reader can be explained by using the constructs

of implied author, narrator, narratee and implied reader as indicated but, the narrator is not optional to the communication processes. In *The Diviners* the narrator is the main component of the communication process: it is predominantly through the character of Morag Gunn that Laurence is able to communicate her creative thoughts, her conceptual idea of her novel, to the reader. Morag's language expresses the story events and creates the tone of the novel; Morag's method of selection determines the order of story events and thus creates suspense and narrative interest; Morag's evaluations and interpretations of events force us to participate actively in the creative processes of the novel; and Morag's status as an artist-narrator defines the self-conscious status of the narrative. However, inherent within this communication process other structural devices exist which help the narrator in her transmission of the story. These other structural devices are not evident in Chatman's diagram of "the whole narrative communication situation;" rather, they require a more complex diagram that looks at the transmission of a text in greater detail than a simple analysis of the role of the narrator allows. To account for all elements of the narrative discourse, Chatman progresses from his diagram of a single channel of linear movement to one that employs quadruple channels of linear movement to depict his intricate fourfold categorization of story and discourse:

Table III

FOURFOLD CLASSIFICATION OF THE TRANSMISSION OF A TEXT



Source: Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p. 26.

Moving beyond the scope of the narrator as the sole means of textual transmission, the two categories of a narrative text, story and discourse, are sub-divided in terms of "substance" and "form." Within this fourfold classification of a narrative text the structuralist critic is primarily concerned with the three areas which deal with either expression, form, or both. More specifically, she is concerned essentially with "form of expression" and "substance of expression." These two categories are defined by Chatman as: "Narrative discourse (the structure of narrative transmission) consisting of elements shared by narratives in any medium whatsoever," and "Media in so far as they can communicate stories" respectively (SD, 24). We are concerned with the "form of content"--the "Narrative story components: events, existents, and their connections"--to a lesser extent (SD, 24). The final category, "substance

of content," is of interest only in so far as it is defined by the preceeding three areas of concern. A novel's "substance of content" has very little relevance to a structuralist analysis of a narrative text because it consists of "Representations of objects and actions in real and imagined worlds that can be imitated in a narrative medium, as filtered through the codes of the author's society" (SD, 24).

This study will focus primarily on "form of expression" in *The Diviners*. Narrative features which will be discussed as part of the novel's "form of expression" are narrative voice, point of view, time, subordinate narrative devices, and self-consciousness. The novel's "substance of expression" will be subjected to analysis in the final chapter. The two sub-categories of content, "form of content" and "substance of content," will be discussed as their relevance emerges in the analysis of the other two categories. From my examination of these aspects of form in *The Diviners* I shall show that a close analysis of the novel's discourse is justified because it adds both to the reader's understanding of the central issues presented in the novel, and to an understanding of the author's creative intentions.

NOTES

[1] Tzvetan Todorov, *Littérature et Signification* (Paris: Larousse, 1968), p. 20. Quoted in Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, New Accents, gen. ed., Terence Hawkes (London: Methuen, 1983), p. 8.

[2] Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 80.

[3] Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in *The Future of the Novel*, p. 21.

[4] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, p. 3.

[5] Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," p. 21.

[6] Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, p. 80. Scholes notes that the Russian Formalists saw story and plot simply as abstractions, whereas in modern structuralist theory story is an abstraction and discourse is real (p. 165).

[7] Margaret Laurence, *The Diviners* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1974), p. 6. All subsequent references to this work, hereafter referred to as D, appear in parentheses in the text. Story is sometimes believed to start with the earliest event actually referred to in the text, in *The Diviners* this would be the Highland Clearances. However, such a definition of story would relegate the term to an unmanageable status and, as a critical concept, its usefulness would be greatly diminished.

[8] The work of Vladímir Propp heralded the beginning of Russian Formalist criticism in the early decades of this century; his first major work, *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), and later, his influential study, *Generic Structures in Russian Folklore* (1964), incorporated a transfer "from an atomistic to an holistic conception of folklore forms." Propp believed that an analysis of form, and an analysis of content, would be possible only if an index were compiled, so he attempted to establish order out of the mass of material already written about form and structure. Propp's studies stimulated the work of such critics as Victor Schlovsky, L.P. Jakubinskiji, Victor Zirmunskij and Roman Jakobson. These critical theorists concentrated on the critical examination of style, individual style, text style, and period style, claiming that each verbal message contained style, thus producing a taxonomy of styles

explain the transmission of a text. Starting with an analysis of formal stylistic devices, Russian Formalists progressed to an idea of formal stylistic structures..
A useful article to read for an understanding of Propp's work and the influence it exerted is Isidor Levin, "Vladímir Propp: An evaluation of his Seventieth Birthday," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 6 (1967), 32-49. For a detailed account of Russian formalist thought see Lubómir Doležel, "Russian and Prague School Functional Stylistics," *Style*, 2 (1968), 143-158.

[9] See, René Wellek, *The Literary Theory and Aesthetics of the Prague School* (Ann Arbor, [Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literature: University of Michigan], 1969).

[10] The leading French scholars in this field are Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov. A concise resumé of the nucleus of work produced by the French stylisticians and their contemporaries is provided by Helmut Hatzfield in his article, "The Leading French Stylisticians of the Twentieth Century," *Style*, 8 (1974), 3-17.
Other articles of interest are:
Gérald Antoine, "La Nouvelle Critique: How far has it got?" *Style*, 7 (1974), 18-33; and Philippe Hamon, "Narrative Semiotics in France," *Style*, 8 (1974), 34-45.

[11] David Lodge, "Form in Fiction," p. 2.

[12] Shlomith Rimmon, "A Comprehensive Theory of Narrative," *Poetics and Theory of Literature*, 1 (1976), 33-62. It should be noted that Rimmon changes her name to Rimmon-Kenan prior to the publication of *Narrative Fiction* (1983).

[13] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, p. 3.

[14] Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 155.

[15] Booth, *Rhetoric*, p. 73.

[16] Rimmon-Kenan is one of the few critics who objects to Chatman's view of the implied author as integral to the communication processes in a narrative text. She feels that the lack of a "voice" on the part of the implied author negates the possibility of being regarded as an active component in the transmission of a text: "My claim is that if it is to be consistently distinguished from the real author and the narrator, the notion of the implied author must be de-personified, and is best considered as a set of implicit norms rather than as a speaker or voice (i.e. a subject). It follows, therefore, that the implied author cannot literally

be a participant in the narrative communication situation," (*Narrative Fiction*, p. 88). However, such de-personification is undesirable because of its de-humanising effect on literary criticism. The implied author's significance in the communication processes of a narrative fiction need not necessarily be precluded simply because he does not have a voice. This aspect of *The Diviners* will be studied in Chapter Five of the thesis.

[17] Booth, *Rhetoric*, p. 170. Booth is quoting extensively from Hume's "The Standard of Taste."

[18] Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (1921; rpt. London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), p. 17.

[19] Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, p. 19.

[20] Gerald Prince, "Notes Towards a Categorization of Fictional 'Narratees'," *Genre*, 4 (1971), 103.

[21] Prince, "Notes towards a Categorization of Fictional 'Narratees'," pp. 100, 104.

[22] Booth, *Rhetoric*, p. 151.

[23] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, p. 88.

[24] Margaret Laurence, in *Margaret Laurence: First Lady of Manawaka*, National Film Board of Canada, n.d.

Chapter III

NARRATIVE VOICE AND POINT OF VIEW

> Each of [Laurence's] heroines...is memorable in her own way, and this is a direct result of the author's choice of point of view, with emphasis always on the perceptions of the narrator, as she seeks to define her present self through her Manawaka past.[1]

Percy Lubbock claims that "[t]he best form is that which makes the most of its subject--there is no other definition of the meaning of form in fiction. The well-made book is the book in which the subject and the form coincide and are indistinguishable--the book in which the matter is all used up in the form, in which the form expresses all the matter."[2] Such an affirmation of the symbiotic relationship between form and content in a narrative indicates the *relative* worth of thematic criticism. As far as it goes, thematic criticism does provide a significant contribution to the understanding of Laurence's art. However, an analysis of a novel's content is severely restricted if it does not incorporate an analysis of the structural means by which this content is defined. Structuralist criticism can, in its initial stages, utilize thematic criticism, but ultimately, structuralist criticism will transcend the boundaries of thematic criticism.

In *The Diviners*, the narrative content which the form functions to define is, as with the previous Manawaka fiction, the complex character of the protagonist; each novel's "form of content" focuses on the psyche of an individual.[3] Although each narrative contains a number of intriguing situations and interesting themes, it is the creation of individual characters that gives each work its substance. Laurence herself states: "the thing that concerns me most in writing is character and everything else, the themes and everything arise out of these characters."[4] In *The Diviners* the form of the narrative exists first and foremost to define the character of Morag as the main narrative interest is focused on Morag and her reaction to, and

handling of, various situations that affect her spiritual freedom. The focus of the novel's content is the protagonist's struggle, in the time present of the novel, to achieve a state of self-awareness. Such a journey of self-discovery is intensely personal and introverted; it requires access to Morag's inner-consciousness for the reader to understand Morag's experience in the time present of the novel. Morag's emotional quest is to assess the worth of her life in terms of relationships and personal achievements by journeying in her mind, back to the events of her life past, with the aim of re-examining and re-evaluating her existence.

In *The Diviners*, as in the previous four Manawaka works, the protagonist is cast in the role of narrator and controls the selection and arrangement of story events. But, unlike her fictional predecessors, Morag's control is extremely ordered and rational because of her creative status as author within the frame story of the narrative.[5] Morag functions as the intermediary between the implied author and the implied reader. As such, she is the narrator of the entire novel, and not simply of the internalised autobiography. This is evident because of the idiomatic language used throughout the narrative discourse; the self-deprecating tone which pervades; and the creative preoccupations of the narrator at all stages, such as a fascination with language and expression via the written word.[6] Thus, both the narrative voice--the voice which articulates the discourse, and the point of view--the perceptual orientation of the discourse, belong exclusively to Morag in this novel. Both these structural components are used to control the reader's perception of the fictional events, monitor the flow of time, render language, and dictate the extent of reader involvement in the creative processes of the novel.

I

Narrative voice in *The Diviners* is a mixture of first and third person. The third person narrative voice is, as will be shown, the dominant voice. The third person narrative voice achieves a distancing between the reader and the narrator. At the same time, the use of "free" speech acts and the allocation of only limited omniscience in the narrative, creates the illusion that the entire text is written in the first person. Laurence is able to create a text which paradoxically produces a sense of both distance and immediacy.

Three of Laurence's earlier works in the Manawaka series, *The Stone Angel*, *A Jest of God* and *A Bird in the House*, were written solely in the first person. Hagar, Rachel and, to a lesser extent, Vanessa, present introspective narratives without any third person or authorial narrative intrusions. The result of this method is an extremely intense submersion for the reader in the main character; which precludes the possibility of any extensive objectivity by the reader. In these works, Laurence creates a narrative which allows the reader to experience events in fiction in the same manner as he would perceive them in society. That is, like the main character in the fiction, the reader can see through one pair of eyes only. In an interview with Earle Toppings, Laurence remarks:

> ...I think this [writing in the first person] is because I feel very strongly that this is the way we view life; we can only view it through one pair of eyes, that's all we've got. So that, what I think I'm trying to do when I write in the first person and through the eyes of the chief character, what I'm trying to do is to see life through their eyes, not necessarily my own....it just doesn't seem possible any more to see the God's-Eye-View and I don't say this is the only way of writing...but some of us don't find this [writing in third person] any longer very possible because in fact, one is perceiving life only through one pair of eyes....[1]

By negating the possibility of an omniscient consciousness in her novels, Laurence ensures that the focalisation[2] of each narrative is restricted to the main character, and both the reader and

Laurence can see no more than the protagonist-narrator. In "Author's Commentary," Laurence explains how both she and her reader cannot know all the answers:

> Why do they [the characters in *A Bird in the House*] all find it so necessary to keep on saying "Sorry" to one another? Possibly because they know they are not fulfilling Grandmother Macleod's concept of the granite-like character which their culture holds up as an ideal. But is Grandmother Macleod like that, either? How does she feel, in the privacy of her heart, about her two dead sons, and about her own attitudes to them when they were alive? Vanessa can only guess, because Grandmother Macleod will never be able to say.[9]

This form is justified in all the novels by the manner in which it reflects and reinforces the content of each individual piece of work. For example, when discussing *A Jest of God*, Rosengarten asserts that the "theme of individual aspiration conquered by social convention and personal guilt is all the more forcibly conveyed by this intense concentration on the single sensibility."[10]

However, when Laurence wrote *The Fire-Dwellers*, she changed the form of the novel so that it incorporated both first person and third person narration. Adhering to her expressed beliefs concerning perceptual verisimilitude, Laurence wrote the novel predominantly in the first person; however, passages of third person narrative broke the introspective flow and injected a degree of objectivity into the novel which did not detract from the impression of a single consciousness controlling the communication processes. As Leona Gom notes, "all Stacey's thoughts are presented in separate, first person passages, and all action and flashbacks are presented in the third person, yet from the limited omniscient viewpoint of Stacey."[11] This shift of narrative stance in the later novel was due to Laurence's desire to provide the reader with a degree of distance from the protagonist-narrator. Laurence states, "there was a certain amount of first person narration [in *The Fire-Dwellers*] because I wanted to get some slight sense of distance with Stacey."[12] A similar desire prompted Laurence to integrate two juxtaposed narrative stances in her last novel, *The Diviners*, and present, as she did in *The Fire-Dwellers*, "a third person narrative which is so intimately connected to the plot, that, on

first reading, one is left with the impression that the story has been told in the first person."[13] By so doing, Laurence is able to redress the criticism concerning the intense introspection of her narrative forms, while still retaining the quintessential impression of a single, unifying consciousness mediating the narrative.

Technically, *The Diviners* is predominantly a third person narrative. The protagonist-narrator does not usually refer to herself in the first person but relates events from a third person narrative stance by referring to herself using third person pronouns, as though Morag as narrator is a very different person from Morag as character:

> *Morag* shot down the stairs, tripping on the piece of loose carpet which *she* always forgot to tack down, losing *her* balance, grabbing simultaneously for *her* glasses and the stair railing. *She* had instinctively clapped on *her* glasses, *she* realised, not so much because *she* needed them to find *her* way downstairs as because *she* felt totally inept without them. Probably *she* thought *she* needed them in order to hear. (D, 19. Emphasis mine)

However, complications arise because we know that Morag is narrating her own story even though the majority of the novel is in the third person. Although this section is written in the third person, the tone is the same as that which exists in the sections written in the first person.[14] Therefore, the narrative voice is the same despite the differences in pronoun referencing. The overall effect of the third person narrative form is a distancing between Morag the novelist/narrator, and Morag the character. The reader is impressed with the seeming objectivity of a narrative which presents a protagonist-narrator who has achieved a distanced stance from which she is able to rationalize and order her experiences. As this narrative structure does not adhere to the general "laws" of narrative stance--a protagonist-narrator usually communicates the text in the form of a first person narrative--there is a possibility that the technique may appear imposed and unnatural, not only at odds with the rest of the form of the novel but also with the personalized content of the novel existing in the protagonist's mind. But Laurence side-steps such problems in two ways.

Firstly, she presents her protagonist-narrator as a novelist; therefore, the creation of a split narrative stance is not unrealistic because as an artist-figure Morag is distancing herself from her experiences by transposing them onto the written page. In this manner, her creative mind can examine her emotional self as if the two facets of her character, creative and emotional, were lodged in two difference people. By placing her experiences in an autobiographical novel, Morag is distancing her creative self from her emotional self both spatially and temporally. Secondly, the novel incorporates a number of complex speech acts which create the illusion of a predominantly first person narrative whereas, in reality, only a very small portion of the novel is written in the first person. Clara Thomas remarks: "there is an immediacy about the third person narrative, which is designed to cancel out any feeling of the author describing herself."[15] This illusion of a first person narrative is achieved by a careful manipulation of voice patterns which focus on the verbalisation of thoughts and speeches in a "free" style.

In *The Diviners*, the dominant speech patterns of the narrative are "free indirect speech" and "free indirect thought." Here, the speech and thought of a character are reported by the narrator as a summation, not as a direct quotation of a character's words or perceptions, and narrated without the use of authorial tags such as "she said," or "she thought," to identify the speech act:

> She is walking along a street of flimsy board houses, boarding houses, *Rooms Weekly or Nightly*, no curtains on windows, a greyness over all. The day also is grey, autumnal grey or seems so until she comes out of herself to some degree and notices that in fact the air is crisp blue. Clear yellow leaves are being blown from the already sparse branches of the few thin trees that fringe the street, and the sun has the warmth of Indian Summer. *One day she will be dead and not able to see all this any more, and now she is wasting whatever there is. How can she write if she goes blind inside?* (D, 215. Second emphasis mine)

The second italicised section of the above passage is an example of free indirect thought as the third person narrator is summarizing the thoughts of the character without indicating their possession, that is, without the tag "she thought that." This form of reporting is third person

but it creates the illusion of first person because the directness of presentation gives an impression of immediacy equated with first person narratives. Also, the lack of speech indicators has the effect of effacing the narrator from the narrative; the reader may not be aware that the passage is being mediated by an outside party. By effacing the narrator, Laurence diminishes the distance between character and implied reader, and brings the reader one step closer to experiencing rather than simply reading the novel. Laurence's choice of form also enhances the realism of the novel for she promotes the method of "showing" rather than of "telling"[16]: George Bowering claims that

> Margaret Laurence is an unusual bird amongst Canadian novelists, in that she works on the premise that form (not "structure") matters pre-eminently in the endeavour to simulate reality. What happens happens *in* the writing, not in front of it. One sees through the eye, not with it. Mrs. Laurence is not talking *about* life; she is trying to re-enact the responses to it.[17]

This effect is also achieved by the use of a dramatized form of free direct speech; that is, the exact recording of a character's words without using speech tags. In *The Diviners*, Laurence does not go to the extremes of "free" style as she did in her previous novel, *The Fire-Dwellers*, to present speech in this manner. In *The Fire-Dwellers*, entire sections of dialogue are reported with voicing of names and typographical chronological presentation of speeches serving as the only indication of the identity of the speaker:

> Chatter buzz wail
> Okay, Jen, I'll be up in a sec. Are you finished? Don't try to get off by yourself--I'm coming.
> You going to get your hair done, Stacey?
> Yes, of course, whaddya think?
> I only asked, for heaven's sake. No need to
> I'm sorry, Mac. Yes, I'm getting it done this morning. Want an egg?
> Please.
> Mum, it's not *here*, and Mr. Gaines will be mad as fury. I got to find
> Okay, Ian, one minute and I'll look. Where have you looked?
> Everywhere.
> . . . . . .

I got to take fifty cents, Mum.
Duncan! What for?
Cripples or something
What?
It tells about it right here, in this piece of paper they gave us
Why didn't you show me this last night?
I forgot
So long, Stacey. So long, kids.
'Bye, Dad.
Oh good-bye, honey. Wait--you didn't have your egg. It's just done now
Can't. Said I'd be in by eight thirty. You eat it.
I hate eggs.
Miss Walsh said earn it if we can but I dunno how to earn fifty cents. (FD, 80-81)

Laurence's use of free direct speech in this instance has the effect of enhancing the feeling of chaos and disorder in Stacey's household and of impressing upon the reader the constant demands made on Stacey. In this manner, the form reflects the content and the reader's "experience" of Stacey's mode of existence is heightened. Such an extreme structure is not required in *The Diviners* because Morag is not caught up in the same family turmoil as Stacey. Instead, Morag is on her own (for the most part) and is consciously questioning herself about her existence in a logical, controlled manner. Therefore, the free direct speech in *The Diviners* is more structured and grammatically ordered to create the illusion of rational questioning rather than bedlam, and each speaker is identified in the manner of a dramatic script. Morag's conversations with CPT are often presented in this format:

How could you stop yourself from worrying? The kid was eighteen. Only. What had Catharine said, somewhere, about emergencies?
Morag loped over to the bookshelves which lined two walls of the seldom-used livingroom. Found the pertinent text.

In cases of emergency, it is folly to fold one's hands and sit down to bewail in abject terror. It is better to be up and doing.
(*The Canadian Settlers' Guide*, 1855)

Morag: Thank you, Mrs. Traill.
Catharine Parr Traill: That, my dear, was when we were at one time

> surrounded by forest fires which threatened the crops, fences, stock, stable, cabin, furniture and, of course, children. Your situation, if I may say so, can scarcely be termed comparable.
> *Morag:* Well uh no, I guess not. Hold on, though. *You* try having your only child disappear you know where, Mrs. Traill. Also, with no strong or even feeble shoulder upon which to lean, on occasion. (D, 79-80)

By presenting free direct speech in the order of a play script Laurence increases the illusion of dramatic, rather than pictorial, presentation. The reader has the impression of "hearing" this fictionalized dialogue rather than being told about it. This, in turn, reflects the very nature of the dialogue; its dramatic status reinforces the fantasy aspect of the verbal interchange and emphasizes the surrealistic nature of Morag's role-playing. So, by choosing to present certain sections of the narrative in the form of dramatized free direct speech, Laurence intensifies the reader's experience of the story. Laurence achieves this intensity by increasing the narrative's realism without detracting from its objectivity; by decreasing the distance between character and implied reader; by underplaying the existence of Morag as narrator and emphasizing her existence as character.

These free speech acts also highlight an aspect of Morag's character which is constantly instrumental in the narrative content and the communication processes. Because this dialogue is internalized and fantasized, the dramatic presentation of the interchange dramatizes the internal conflict within Morag which she is trying to resolve through her autobiographical writing. In her psychological analysis of Laurence's fiction, "Margaret Laurence, Carl Jung and the Manawaka Women," Nancy Bailey recognizes that

> The characteristic narrative voice of a Laurence novel is that of internal dialogue. At times this dialogue parallels the conflict through which the inner self and the mask achieve integration and growth. We can watch the process most clearly and most often in Morag....[There are] two selves which, knowing one another in different degrees and accepting, although grudgingly, their relation to each other, are able to argue as equals....[11]

This mode of internal dialogue, in which two selves are fused into one, is most apparent in

Morag's conversations with CPT. In other instances this mode of narrative communication is used to exemplify the cold, harsh side of human relations--humanity devoid of warmth and driven by loneliness, fear and greed. The impersonal and insensitive language of the following dialogue of free direct speech is intensified by the lack of narratorial comments (except the cursory narratorial remarks in parentheses) to provide a point of moral and judgemental contact and to inject a degree of mediating warmth and concern.

> *Maggie T.:* I thought I heard you coupla times before, upchucking. In the john. Wasn't sure it was you, Miss Gunn.
> *Morag:* Yeh, it was me.
> *Maggie:* (crudely, but with accuracy) I'd say you'd got a bun in the oven. Either that or the booze, and you don't have the signs of an alkie, as I should know, being probably the world's top authority on rubby-dubs.
> *Morag:* Huh?
> *Maggie:* Winos. I get more than my fair quota here, you can bet your bottom dollar. You preggers, kid?
> *Morag:* Yeh, I think so. It seems unbelievable.
> *Maggie:* C'mon, now, honey, don't give me that line, like he only screwed you once and you never thought it was possible the first time. You're no virginal seventeen....(D, 240-241)

A further aspect of the novel's third-person narrative that serves to create the illusion of a first person narrative is the degree of omniscience afforded Morag. As a narrator who is involved in the story events of the narrative, it would be unrealistic for Laurence to grant Morag omniscience; if she did, Morag would function well as a narrator but poorly as a character. Laurence compromises and grants her character the status of a "limited third person narrator"; that is, Laurence only allows Morag to relate information to which Morag as a character could have access.[19] The protagonist-narrator can know only her own thoughts and the events which she has witnessed. She can only guess at the thoughts of others and relate, second-hand, events which took place away from her immediate vision. It is, however, not only practicalities such as people and events that limit the narrator's vision, but individual character traits such as age, attitude, and fear. In the following passage Morag's, naivety and fear of rejection prompt her to lie, indirectly, to Brooke. Morag is not sure if Brooke would

still want her if he knew she had already had a sexual experience with Jules. She is unable to know Brooke's true feelings and can therefore only surmise what these are:

> The first time they see a man naked. Should she tell him? But she cannot. What would he think of her? But is she deceiving him? Perfidious Morag. If she tells him about Jules, he will leave her. She cannot. Would he understand? Would any man? She does not think so, and cannot bear to take the chance. (D, 161)

Again, this focalisation of consciousness through a single character enhances the immediacy of the third person narrative so that it is similar to the presentation of a first person narrative. It brings the reader closer to Morag as a character because he sees things from her focal point only and is as ignorant of details and of the solutions to problems as Morag herself is.

> *Were they* [Morag's parents] *angry at me often, or only sometimes? Did my father feel he'd done well with his life, or that he was a total loss, or did he feel anything? Did my mother feel pleased when she saw him come in from the barn, or did she think to herself--or aloud--that she'd married beneath her? Did she welcome him in bed, or did she make a habit of turning away and muttering that she had a headache? Did he think she was the best lay he'd ever had, or did he gri his teeth in hardly suppressed resentment at her coldness? No way of knowing.* (D, 15)

The reader is no more able to answer these questions than Morag and, yet, because Morag has articulated her thoughts, he is party to her doubts. This focalisation of consciousness through a single character serves not only to reinforce the credibility of Laurence's narrative stance, but to promote an awareness of the novel's themes. Because the reader is caught up in Morag's predicament, he is manipulated into searching for answers with Morag and, consequently, becomes actively involved in the themes of lost heritage, rootlessness and dispossession.

However, the first person narrative status of this text is not established solely through the illusion of immediacy created by the novel's "free" style. As illustrated in the above passage, Laurence also utilizes speech acts which can only be accorded to a first person

narrator. At times, Morag adopts the narrative styles of free direct thought and extended free direct thought, known as interior monologue[20]: "She is filled with the profound conviction that she will not write anything more, anyway. *Big deal. Keel over with sorrow, world. As if it would matter* (D, 215. Emphasis mine). The italicised portion of this passage represents free direct thought; that is, it represents the thoughts of Morag without the mediation of a third person narrator. This free style is distinguishable from interior monologue only as regards its length; interior monologue is a much more sustained representation of language in this manner:

> *That's a christly bloody useless word, Sorry. C. Logan. Christie, tell the garbage--throw those decayed bones like dice or like sorcerer's symbols. You really could see, though. What about me? Do I only pretend to see, in writing? What did I ever see about you, Christie, until it was too late? I told my child tales about you, but never took her to see you. I made a legend out of you, while the living you was there alone in that mouldering house.* (D, 337)

It is often argued that this form of speech cannot strictly be classified as interior monologue because, although it does present the articulated thoughts of the character, these thoughts are too structured to be termed interior monologue. A number of critics believe that interior monologue must be both unarticulated *and* unorganized. As Edouard Dujardin explains:

> [Interior monologue] is that unheard and unspoken speech by which a character expresses his inmost thoughts (those lying nearest the unconscious) without [illegible]rd to logical organisation--that is, in their original state--by means of [illegible] sentences reduced to the syntactic minimum, and in such a way as to give the impression of reproducing the thoughts just as they came into the mind.[21]

However, this does not take into account the existence of the "stream of consciousness" technique; what Dujardin is really defining is stream of consciousness--"the direct quotation of the mind"--not interior monologue, its more structured predecessor. Laurence does not go to the extreme of using the stream of consciousness technique in this novel as it would be at odds with the ordered representation of rational questioning in the narrative content of this fictional

creation. (Stream of consciousness represents "the random ordering of thoughts and impressions"; by going "beyond syntax[,] it constrains the arrangement of semantic elements according to the principles of free association" [SD, 188, 189]). Rather, Laurence uses the most ordered form of interior monologue to present Morag's thoughts, for interior monologue, as a form of direct free thought, allows the verbalisation of perceptual and conceptual phenomena. As Chatman notes, "the verbal medium necessarily presupposes a verbalisation of that which is not in essence verbal....Can non-verbal sensations be transformed into 'unassigned' words? The answer is yes: by means of the '*interior monologue*' (SD, 182).[22] To ensure a synthesis of form and content in this work, Laurence adopted the more obviously organized form of interior monologue, what Chatman terms "conceptual interior monologue," as the dominant mode of extended free direct thought.

> [L]et "interior monologue" be the class term and two other terms refer to the two sub-classes 'conceptual' and 'perceptual.' 'Conceptual interior monologue' can label the record of actual words passing through a character's mind, and 'perceptual interior monologue,' the communication, by conventional verbal transformation, that of the character's unarticulated sense impressions (with a narrator's internal analysis). (SD, 188)

By using interior monologue, Laurence is able to narrow the distance between the implied reader and the narrator while creating a sense of immediacy and reflecting the nature of the narrative content--introspective, logical, organized, rational enquiry. Both the present tense and the self-identification in the above passage (D, 337) set it off as a first person narrative in the form of an interior monologue and, to make sure that the narrative shift does not pass the reader unnoticed, Laurence emphasizes it by placing it in italics. As a result, Morag is able to relay *all* necessary information to the reader without sacrificing the illusion of reality and without distancing herself from the reader.

Hence, by incorporating a variety of speech acts, free indirect speech, free direct speech, free indirect thought, free direct thought, and extended free direct thought (interior

monologue), in a single narrative text being narrated by a single narrator, Laurence has created a narrative form that is at the same time both objective and poignantly personal to present a story that requires mediation through a character's individual and highly subjective consciousness. By oscillating between Morag as protagonist-narrator and Morag as "focal character," Laurence can have the best of both worlds: a character who is presented with immediacy but who still retains a degree of detachment. As Eastman explains:

> Each point of view confers its own freedoms and imposes its characteristic limitations. Although first person allows the focal character to speak authentically and convincingly as "I," it may also hold the reader so close to the narrator that he cannot see either him or others objectively. Third person limited must sacrifice that rush of intimate self-revelation, but it still holds the reader near to the focal character, and with a definite gain in detachment.[23]

But, whether the novel is written in the first person, third person or both, this mode of analysis is only the starting point for a more detailed study of a novel's narrative form. It clears the way for an analysis of narrative point of view.

II

Point of view in *The Diviners* is a complex element of the narrative structure requiring a comprehensive definition which distinguishes between voice and perspective. Both elements of point of view, voice and perspective, belong exclusively to Morag. However, it will be shown that the perspective is not consistent because it is dependent on the age at which Morag experienced the events recounted in the narrative. Also, because the narrative point of view is the domain solely of the novel's protagonist narrator, it is necessary to question the reliability of this narrator. In the novel, unreliability is mainly a result of Morag's lack of information due to her involvement in the story. This affects the novel's communication processes as it

necessitates a secret communion between the reader and the implied reader to process all the information necessary

Percy Lubbock recognised the importance of point of view in his classic study of form in fiction sixty-three years ago, when he stated: the "whole intricate question of *method* in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of the point of view--the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story."[24] Yet, point of view is one of the most controversial terms in literary criticism. All critics are aware of its existence and use it in their literary analysis of work, but very few can agree on its exact meaning. Point of view means different things to different people, ranging from simply "the person telling the story" to "the voice and perspective from which the story is narrated." According to Chatman:

> It is the task of narrative theory, to deal with the ambiguities and unclarities of terms passed down to it...."point of view," [is] one of the most troublesome critical terms. Its plurisignification must give pause to anyone who wishes to use it in precise discussion. (SD, 151)

So, before analysing point of view in *The Diviners*, it will be beneficial to outline exactly what we mean by "point of view" in this context.

There are a number of questions to be answered when dealing with point of view in a fictional text. Brooks and Warren provide a starting point with their extremely simple definition of this term:

> In discussing point of view in narration, we do not mean a physical point; we mean, rather, a person who bears some relation to the action, either as observer or participant, and whose intelligence serves the reader as a kind of guide to the action. Point of view, then, involves two questions: "Who tells the story? What is his relation to the action?"[25]

The first question has already been answered: Morag is undoubtedly the narrator of *The Diviners*. The second question is more interpretative in its nature because the choices open to

the novelist are placed on a continuum ranging from complete impartiality to total involvement. The narrator can narrate events and existents as a complete outsider who is uninvolved in the action of the story, or as someone only peripherally involved in the action, or as a character integrally involved in the narrative events. In each instance, the degree of involvement also indicates a level of impartiality: it is much easier for an onlooker to be impartial in his account of events than it is for a person involved in the events. So, the term point of view in its simplest form designates the position from which a narrative is being told; that is, it refers to the consciousness that relates the events of the story to the reader. Thus, Morag provides the single point of view in *The Diviners*. No other point of view is discernible. All information imparted to the reader is mediated through the sole consciousness of the narrator.

Using Brooks and Warren's definition, the two possibilities that present themselves are first person and third person points of view. However, these terms are far too limited to be of use in this thesis as they only account for two simple narrative situations. *The Diviners* incorporates both first person and third person narration, and the narrative point of view is determined not simply by the individual speaking but also by the maturity of this individual at the time of each narrative event. The point of view is still a first person point of view. That is, it is the point of view of the overt protagonist-narrator, but it shifts internally during the narrative transmission.

To explain the ramifications of point of view in *The Diviners*, I first need to expand the definition of this term. A further more comprehensive means of defining point of view is proposed by Chatman. Using the pioneering work of such scholars as Lubbock, Brooks and Warren, Friedman, Booth and Genette,[26] Chatman allows the province of point of view to include simply "the physical place or ideological or practical life-orientation to which events stand in relation" (SD, 153). He then identifies a further category which he calls "voice"; this category, although symbiotically related to "point of view," is an independent category which "refers to the speech or other overt means through which events and existents

are communicated to the audience" (SD, 153). By introducing this extra category, Chatman divides the metaphor "point of view" into two separate narrative domains which aid sophisticated structural analysis: she who tells the story and she who perceives it. "Thus point of view is *in* the story (when it is the character's) but voice is always outside, in the discourse" (SD, 154). The central problem with this division of a single term is that Chatman emphasizes the importance of vision over what he calls "point of view." In stating "point of view does *not* means expression; it *only* means the perspective in terms of which the expression is made," he places voice above point of view in order of importance (SD, 153. Second emphasis mine).[27] For this reason, Gérard Genette's sub-classification of point of view, which formed the basis for Chatman's work concerning this term, is preferable because it reinforces the role of the narrator's perspective rather than her voice. An examination of Genette's re-classification of perceptual terms indicates the inadequacy of Chatman's use of the metaphor "point of view"; Chatman ignores the *balanced* division of experience and expression and emphasizes vision without indicating the importance of perception. A. Lodge illustrates, these two aspects of narrative are equally dependent each upon the other: "In a verbal text you cannot have a perspective that is not voiced, and every voice implies its own perspective."[28] Genette does not retain the term point of view as he sees it as potentially misleading; instead, he employs the terms *mood* and *voice* to describe what Chatman refers to as point of view and voice.

> [M]ost of the theoretical works on this subject [point of view]...suffer from a regrettable confusion between what I call here *mood* and *voice*, a confusion between the question *who is the character whose point of view orientates the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?*--or more simply, the question *who sees?* and the question *who speaks?*[29]

Instead of using the potentially misleading metaphor "point of view," Genette adopts the "slightly more abstract term *focalisation*" to account for both mood and voice.[30] As both Genette's and Chatman's comments indicate, point of view can involve two different people as the same individual need not vocalise the story *and* perceive it: "the perspective and the

expression need not be lodged in the same person" (SD, 153). The categories of first person and third person point of view are inadequate as they do not incorporate the division of perspective and voice implicit in modern fiction. Genette, using Brooks and Warren as his point of reference, constructs a diagram which amplifies the necessity for this sub-classification of point of view by highlighting the inadequacy of simpler applications of this term.

Table IV

A FOUR-TERM TYPOLOGY OF THE

FOCUS OF NARRATION

	Internal analysis of events	*Outside observation of events*
Narrator as a character in the story	1. Main character tells his story	2. Minor character tells main character's story
Narrator not a character in the story	4. Analytic or omniscient author tells story	3. Author tells story as observer

Source: Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 186.

Concerning the table, Genette states:

> Now it is obvious that only the vertical demarcation relates to "point of view" (inner or outer), while the horizontal bears on voice (the identity of the narrator), with no real difference in point of view between 1 and 4...and between 2 and 3....[31]

In this way, Genette emphasizes not only the necessity of subdividing the term "point of view," but also, the importance of "mood" in the narrative because it "operate[s] at the level of [a] connection between *story* and *narrative*...."[32]

In this study "point of view" will be taken to cover both aspects of narratorial orientation: the narrator's voice and the narrator's perspective. For, as Lodge concludes, "perspective and voice are so intimately related...it seems sensible to consider them together under a single head, and the traditional term 'point of view' is the most convenient."[33] The terms "perspective" and "voice" will be used to refer to the two dimensions of "point of view" because, as terms, they are self-explanatory.

The voice element of point of view in *The Diviners* belongs exclusively to Morag. No other character or "disembodied intelligence" fulfills the function of vocalising the narrative events in the story. The perspective also belongs exclusively to Morag but its manifestation is dependent upon the dual movement of time in the novel. Thus, there exist two perspectives which belong to Morag: the perspective of Morag in the time present and the perspective of Morag in the progressive flow of time past. The *dominant* perspective is that of the mature narrator who is recording the events of the story retrospectively, while the "framed" perspective is that of the younger Morag. Laurence herself outlines this narrative method early in the book when she explains, inadvertently, the rationale behind the utilisation of this form.

> *The spruce-house family must have appeared around the time my mother took sick. The whole thing was so quiet. No outer drama. That was the way, there. But I remember it, everything. Somewhat ironically, it is the first memory of actual people that I can trust, although I can't trust it completely, either, partly because I recognize anomalies in it, ways of expressing the remembering, ways which aren't those of a five-year-old, as though I was older in that memory (and the words bigger) than in some subsequent ones when I was six or seven, and partly because it was only what was happening to Me.* (D, 11)

Laurence illustrates that the action of *remembering* is taking place in the memorybank movies; these analeptic sections are not taking place in the time present of the narrative. However, the memorybank movies are alive and vibrant for Morag. The past is brought forward into the present so that Morag is almost reliving these experiences. Her tearful reaction to the memories in the snapshots (D, 15) is an indication of Morag's intense involvement in past

events as if they were part of the immediate present. Such feelings of immediacy are conveyed through the use of a child's vocabulary and perceptions. Also, the form establishes that the character is herself the central concern in the memories and, therefore, these memories are recalled subjectively. One can easily identify the dual perspective in this novel in the style of different sections of the narrative; that is, by the language and syntax the narrator uses to verbalize her experiences. The elder Morag has the range of vocabulary and the sophistication of syntactical constructions to write a passage such as the following:

> Across the river, the clumps of willow bent silver-green down to the water, and behind them the great maples and oaks stirred a little, the giant dark green tranquility disturbed only slightly by the wind. There were more dead elms this year, dry bones, the grey skeletons of trees. Soon there would be no elms left. (D, 4)

Both the lyrical style and the tone of this passage mark it as being written from the perspective of the adult Morag; the tone of the passage also serves as an indication. The poignantly sad sound of both the words and the sentiments suggest a person who is experienced in life and who feels that time is running out: how long will it be before the beauty of the world has been totally corrupted by civilization? Both the style and tone are radically different from the sections of narrative denoting Morag's retrospective communications, that is, the narrative of her autobiographical novel. In her fictional creation, Morag narrates from the perspective of her younger self:

> Smelly. The house is smelly. It smells like pee or something, but not like a barn. Worse. Morag sits still on the kitchen chair. The two people are looking at her. Let them look. She will not let on. She will not say anything. (D, 24)

Here, the truncated syntax, the nursery rhyme rhythm, the repetition, and the predominantly monosyllabic vocabulary all serve to identify the perspective of the passage as being that of the

younger Morag. It is the language of a child, lacking the rich vibrating resonances of the adult Morag. Also the defiant, aggressive tone reflects the character of one who is scared but is desperate not to reveal her fear. This is very different from the graceful, almost mellow and resigned tone of the earlier passage.

The perspective of the mature narrator functions throughout the time present of the novel. The young Morag's perspective is prevalent in the time past sequences of the narrative; that is, the younger Morag is the pervading consciousness in the adult Morag's fictional re-creation of her past in her autobiography. The adult perspective does not overtly intrude into these chapters of Morag's book but, as already intimated, the mediating presence of the adult narrator is never forgotten as it is her consciousness that is controlling the entire narrative in terms of voice and initial motivation. The narrative of the younger Morag is still ultimately controlled by the older Morag who is selecting the individual events to narrate as a possible answer to her emotional uncertainities in the present. It is *her* mind which ultimately controls the entire novel. As Chatman says of the "autobiographical" novel: "the protagonist-as-narrator reports things from the perceptual point of view of [her] younger self. [Her] ideology on the other hand tends to be that of [her] older self. The narrator is older and wiser for [her] experiences" (SD, 158). However, the demarcation between the two perspectives is not so rigid as to detract from the novel's central unity. Elements of the two perspectives overlap and provide a sense of unity. For example, Laurence's intermingling of narrative styles reinforces the impression that the older and the younger Morag are one and the same and, therefore, adds to the presentation of the work as a unified, artistic whole. Talking in the time present, Morag retrieves her old snapshots and describes them using the language of a mature, articulate woman. However, the language of Hill Street, the language of her younger self, is never all that far away.

> They [her snapshots] were jammed any-old-how into an ancient tattered manilla envelope that Christie had given her once when she was a kid, and which said *McVitie & Pearl, Barristers and Solicitors, Manawaka, Manitoba.*

> Christie must have found it at the dump--the Nuisance Grounds, as they were known; what an incredible name, when you thought of the implications. The thick brown paper stank a bit when Christie had handed it to her, faintly shitlike, faintly the sweetish ether smell of spoiled fruit. (D, 5)

The last two phrases show starkly the juxtaposition of the young Morag, with her coarse, defiant language, and the older Morag, who possesses greater knowledge and powers of expression. This complicated narrative construction allows the reader to experience the emotional development of Morag both as a child and an adult. The authentic reconstruction of the past from the perspective of the younger Morag ensures that the reader establishes an empathetic relationship with the novel's protagonist. It also provides variety; the shifts from one perspective to another and back create a narrative flexibility which is both entertaining and intriguing, increasing the emotional effect of each time sequence.

The form of this novel, a protagonist-narrator who narrates in the third and first person from the perspective of herself at the time of the narrative events, gives rise to the question of the narrator's reliability because of her proximity to the content of the novel. Reliability can be assessed on the basis of the validity of narrative information transmitted by the narrator: how far can you accept, unquestioningly, the information imparted by a character who is integrally involved in the narrative events? By seeing things exclusively through Morag's eyes, do we not compromise ourselves into accepting a discourse distorted by the biases and prejudices inherent in Morag's character and upon which the narrative is based? The narrator herself questions her reliability but does not know how to counter it:

> This Jules was different. Perhaps he, too, found that although you needed to do battle, you didn't always need to, every minute. *Or was she interpreting him, as usual, only through her own eyes? How else could you interpret anyone?* (D, 363. Emphasis mine)

The narrator may be unreliable not only because of her involvement in the narrative but also because of her lack of knowledge. (As previously illustrated, she is only granted third person

limited omniscience.) Also, she may be unreliable as she is in a heightened emotional state in the time present because of her daughter's departure:

> Something about Pique's going, apart from the actual departure itself, was unresolved in Morag's mind. The fact that Pique was going West? Yes. Morag was both glad and uncertain. What would Pique's father think, if he knew? Well, he wouldn't know and didn't have all that much right to judge anyway. Would Pique go to Manawaka? If she did, would she find anything there which would have meaning for her? (D, 5)

The reader is further compromised in his acceptance of information imparted because of the time of the narrative experience in relation to its expression. As already explained, the narrator is not involved in the majority of the story events she is relating at the time of narration; she is recounting a good deal of the narrative retrospectively. Hence, the account may contain inaccuracies due to lapses of memory, subconscious alteration of emphasis over the years, or sentimentality. For example, after providing the background information for a snapshot she is studying, the narrator chides herself for the unreliabiliy of her narrative: *All this is crazy, of course, and quite untrue. Or maybe not. I am remembering myself composing this interpretation, in Christie and Prin's house* (D, 7). Such a narrative stance reinforces the material of the narrative--the protagonist's uncertainty of the nature of her existence, her continual confusion of fact and fantasy, her search for inner peace.

Thus, the narrative situation carefully created by Laurence for the reader is one in which information is provided by a narrator who is unintentionally unreliable: she does not have access to all the information necessary to provide the reader with a comprehensive statement of events; she is self-conscious of her role as a narrator; she is intensely involved in the events of the narrative; and she is narrating retrospectively. All these factors culminate in the unavoidable truth that the reader is presented with a narrator who is potentially unreliable. In such a situation the reader is forced into mediating the information he receives and evaluating its validity on the basis of the narrator's possible bias and lack of critical powers and

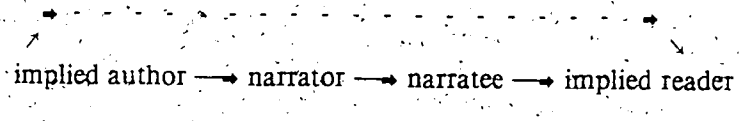
information; that is, he attempts to establish any instances of the discrepancy between what the narrator perceives and what, in truth, is the situation. Thus, the reader is cast in the role of both partisan and judge.

However, because the unreliability of the narrative is not deliberate--Morag is not intentionally providing us with unreliable information--the reader does not lose sympathy for the narrator. The open nature of Morag's unreliability and the self-examinations she imposes on herself to try to present a reliable narrative ensures that the reader is aware of his function of narrative arbitrator and does not feel antagonistic towards his source of information. Such considerations lead us to a more specific formulation of a definition of unreliability to accommodate the narrator whose unreliability is not pervasive, is not deliberately promoted by the narrator herself, and is not detrimental to the narrative content. Booth provides such a definition which extends beyond the consideration of unreliability as "a matter of lying": "For lack of better terms, I have called a narrator *reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not."[34] Thus, narrative reliability is concerned with the degree of identification between implied author and narrator. If the narrator possesses the same cultural and moral values as the implied author, the narrative will not be unreliable but, if the values of the narrator are different from those of the implied author, then the narrator's stance is unreliable because it is at odds with the stance of the narrative content: "The implied author always establishes the norms of the narrative;...The norms are general cultural codes....The real author can postulate whatever norms he likes through his implied author" (SD, 149). In *The Diviners*, the distance between the implied author and the mature narrator is minimal, but the distance between the implied author and the narrator speaking from the child's perspective is much greater. For instance, we know that the condemnation of Christie by the younger Morag does not reflect the implied author's evaluation of the scavenger. The implied author regards Christie as a true diviner, a *shaman*, whereas the narrator states: "Stars! Fire-Stars! How does it happen? She wants to ask, but won't. Christie would think she was dumb. She isn't the dumb one.

Christie is" (D, 30-31). This opinion is spoken from the perspective of a child whereas, when speaking from the adult perspective, the narrator expresses a reverence for Christie which crystallizes the stance of the implied author and the opinions of the implied reader: "Christie knew things about inner truths that I am only just beginning to understand" (D, 341). So, the narrator is unreliable (in Booth's use of the term) [illegible] speaking from the child's perspective. However, this unreliability does not p[illegible]y in the narrative because Laurence provides information above and beyond that [illegible]consciously" imparted by the narrator, so that a collusion between implied author and reader is achieved. Chatman illustrates this mode of narrative transmission diagramatically.

Table V

THE BY-PATH OF UNRELIABLE NARRATION



Source: Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p. 233.

Thus, a fictional account which is narrated by an unreliable narrator incorporates communication processes of an unusually subtle and complex nature between the implied author and the implied reader. These communication processes rely on the implied reader's identification with the norms of the narrative, as intended by the author. This presupposes that the reader's cultural and moral orientation is in accordance with the novel's implied

author. The reader must empathise with the values presented in the novel's "substance of content." These values are the values of the implied author. If a narrator is unreliable because he stands in opposition to the novel's "substance of content," narrative communication can only take place in that work if the reader possesses the same cultural orientation as the implied author. If the implied author and the implied reader are in agreement regarding the novel's "substance of content," then, once the implied reader senses a discrepancy between the narrator's and the implied author's perception of events and existents, she must identify with the implied author and consequently, a secret communion is established.

This element of unreliability is therefore beneficial as it demands active participation by the reader in the understanding of narrative events. By establishing a secret communion between implied author and implied reader, Laurence is able to guide the reader to make judgements and evaluations which Morag makes but does not articulate. In this manner, Morag retains credibility as a fictional character because she is not required to vocalise *all* her feelings and perceptions in an unrealistic manner. Often, Morag withholds psychological information to ensure personal credibility and to promote the collusion between implied author and implied reader, forcing the implied reader to actively participate in the creative processes of the narrative. For example, when discussing her story of a young farmer who resolves to survive, Morag muses:

> "It's [the story] not based on anyone real."
> And yet in a way, it is. She sees the distortion and sees why the story had to end this way. The child, in some way, although without realizing it, saving the father's life. The father going on living. Could it have ended any other way, the story? No. Anyway, the child isn't her. She realizes almost with surprise that this is true. The child *isn't* her. Can the story child really exist separately? Can it be both her and not her? (D, 146-147)

Thus, the role of the reader is to participate in the creative processes of the narrative to complete the uncompleted psychological revelations in the story as experienced, but unarticulated, by Morag. To make sense of the story the reader has to find a meaning beyond

the narrator's words. The reader has to enter into a secret communion with the implied author to fully comprehend Morag's personal development.

There are many instances of this nature, in which the narrator does not fulfill her narrative functions to the satisfaction of the reader. This, combined with the other instances of narratorial unreliability already outlined, is suggestive of an overall design envisaged by Laurence, by which communication can be achieved between the implied author and the implied reader outside the narrator's consciousness. In this manner, the form of the novel is supportive of the novel's content as it promotes a psychological activity and awareness on the part of the reader which parallels the psychological functioning of the protagonist-narrator. Also, the utilization of both third and first person narratives and a dual perspective within a single voice, reinforces the material of the novel by reflecting the narrative concerns of individual development and the nature of truth. Laurence's choice of narrative voice and point of view in *The Diviners* supports the claim that form and content are indivisible.

NOTES

[1] Gom, "Margaret Laurence and the First Person," p. 250.

[2] Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, p. 40.

[3] Hagar Shipley is struggling to overcome her all-consuming pride and to reconcile her degree of responsibility in the deaths of her "lost men" before she dies. In her last days in the hospital she conquers this inner battle and manages to attain a degree of inner serenity: "Pride was my wilderness, and the demon that led me there was fear. I was alone, never anything else, and never free, for I carried my chains within me, and they spread out from me and shackled all I touched. Oh, my two, my dead. Dead by your own hands or by mine? Nothing can take away those years," Margaret Laurence, *The Stone Angel* (Toronto: Bantam-Seal Books, 1964), p. 261. All subsequent references to this work, hereafter referred to as SA, appear in parenthesis in the text.

Rachel Cameron is a thirty-four-year-old virgin spinster who is undergoing an emotional crisis in which she questions her own worth and sexuality. Her story is one of growing self-awareness and self-respect resulting in a modestly reassuring inner peace: "I will be different. I will remain the same....I will be lonely, almost certainly....I will rage in my insomnia like a prophetess....I will be afraid. Sometimes I will feel light-hearted. I may sing aloud, even in the dark. I will ask myself if I am going mad, but if I do, I won't know it. God's mercy on reluctant jesters. God's grace on fools. God's pity on God, "Margaret Laurence, *A Jest of God* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966), pp. 201-202. All subsequent references to this work, hereafter referred to as JG, appear in parentheses in the text.

Stacey Cameron, Rachel's older sister, is also experiencing extreme psychological upheaval. Nearly forty years old, married with four children, and housebound with the youngest, Stacey has reached a time in her life when she is dissatisfied with her mode of existence to the extent that she is willing to jeopardize her position of wife and mother to experience excitement and stimulation. Stacey ultimately comes to realize the value of her family, to appreciate the true meaning and quality of her roles as wife and mother, to accept her "middle-age" status gracefully, and to respect the nature of her existence and see that "[m]aybe the trivialities aren't so bad after all," Margaret Laurence, *The Fire-Dwellers* (Toronto: Bantam-Seal Books, 1969), p. 276. All subsequent references to this work, hereafter referred to as FD, appear in parentheses in the text.

The struggle experienced by the protagonist-narrator in *A Bird in the House* is not as narrowly defined as those experienced by the heroines in Laurence's other work. The crises which Vanessa Macleod faces are presented as a series of traumatic incidents and lessons that mould the child into a woman. Through her childhood experiences Vanessa learns, as does Morag, the value of the past and, as the last story comes to a close, she begins to understand the significance of the people and places which framed her childhood existence: "I did not go to look at Grandfather Connor's grave. There was no need. It was not his monument. I parked the car beside the Brick House....I had feared and fought the old man, yet he proclaimed himself in my veins," Margaret Laurence, *A Bird in the House* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 207. All subsequent references to this work, hereafter referred to as BH, appear in parentheses in the text.

In all cases, the psychological battles of the female protagonists are personal and

harrowing, requiring careful self-analysis on the part of the individual to achieve a state of self-knowledge.

[4] Margaret Laurence speaking in the National Film Board's production, *Margaret Laurence: First Lady of Manawaka*.

[5] Morag as an artist-figure and author of her story will be discussed in Chapter Four.

[6] The creative preoccupations of Morag will not be discussed in this chapter but in chapter four.

[7] Laurence in an interview with Earle Toppings, *Canadian Writers on Tape: Margaret Laurence* (Ontario: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1971).

[8] Focalisation is Genette's term, outlined in *Narrative Discourse*, for the perceptual orientation of the narrative. The term is used here because it has a degree of abstractness which is desirable until the discussion of point of view in the second section of this chapter. For an examination of this term see Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, pp. 71-85.

[9] Margaret Laurence, "Author's Commentary," in *Sixteen by Twelve*, ed., John Metcalf (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1970), p. 73.

[10] H.J. Rosengarten, "Inescapable Bonds," *Canadian Literature*, No. 35 (1968), p. 100.

[11] Gom, "Margaret Laurence and the First Person," p. 239.

[12] Laurence in an interview with Earle Toppings, *Canadian Writers on Tape*.

[13] Hehner, "River of Now and Then," p. 46.

[14] For example, compare the tone of the third person narrative voice on page 192 and the first person narrative voice on page 5. In both passages the tone is essentially humourous (although the humour is black) and self-deprecating.

[15] Clara Thomas, *The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1975), p. 134.

In terms of form, a novel is judged "realistic" or not depending on whether it employs a communication method of "showing" or "telling." Does the author allow events to take place before your eyes, or does she adopt a technique of telling you what you are supposed to be seeing. Following James' use of the terms "drama" and "picture" to discuss realism in fiction, Percy Lubbock refers to these two narrative methods as "pictorial description" and "dramatic dialogue" respectively. Booth refers to the terms "scene" and "summary" as he feels that "pictorial description" involves a great deal of summarizing and condensing of detail by the author. A scenic narrative method is employed when the author effaces himself as much as possible from the narrative and allows the story to reveal itself, rather than be told. This binary classification is akin to Aristotle's classification of diegesis and mimesis.

[17] George Bowering, "That Fool of a Fear: Notes on *A Jest of God*," *Canadian Literature*, No. 50 (1971), p. 54.

[18] Nancy Bailey, "Margaret Laurence, Carl Jung and the Manawaka Women," *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 2 (1977), 310.

[19] The third person narrative in *The Fire-Dwellers* is also one in which the narrator is afforded only limited omniscience. See Gom, "Margaret Laurence and the First Person," p. 236.

[20] Robert Humphrey talks of direct and indirect interior monologue as sub-categories of interior monologue (the two remaining categories are soliloquy and omniscient description.) See *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, Perspectives in Criticism, No. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954).

[21] Edouard Dujardin, quoted by Leon Edel in *The Psychological Novel, 1900-1950* (1955; rev. London: R. Hart-Davis, 1961), p. 90.

[22] For a detailed analysis of the term "interior monologue" see: Derek Bickerton, "Modes of Interior Monologue; A Formal Definition," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 28

(1967), 229-239; and Dorrit Cohn, "Narrated Monologue; Definition of a Fictional Style," *Comparative Literature*, 18 (1966), 97-112.

[23] Eastman, *A Guide to the Novel*, p. 33.

[24] Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, p. 251.

[25] Cleanth Brooks & Robert Penn Warren, *Modern Rhetoric: Shorter Edition* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1949), pp. 208-209.

[26] Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*;
Cleanth Brooks & Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Fiction*, 1943; rpt. (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1959); and *Modern Rhetoric*;
Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: the Development of a Critical Concept," *PMLA*, 52 (1955), 1160-1184;
Booth, *Rhetoric*;
Genette, *Narrative Discourse*.

[27] Lodge identifies this problem in *Form in Fiction*, pp. 6-7.

[28] Lodge, *Form in Fiction*, p. 6.

[29] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 186.

[30] Rimon-Kenan follows Genette's example in her text, *Narrative Fiction*, because she believes that "Genette's treatment [of point of view] has the great advantage of dispelling the confusion between perspective and narration which often occurs when "point of view" or similar terms are used," p. 71.

[31] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 186-187.

[32] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 32.

[33] Lodge, *Form in Fiction*, p. 7.

[34] Booth, *Rhetoric*, pp. 158-159.

Chapter IV

TIME

> ...time is not only a recurrent theme in a great deal of narrative fiction, it is also a constituent factor of both story and text. The peculiarity of verbal narrative is that in it time is constitutive both of the means of representation (language) and of the object represented (the incidents of the story). Thus time in narrative fiction can be defined as the relations of chronology between story and text.[1]

The treatment of "time" in *The Diviners* is probably the most extensively documented aspect of the novel's narrative form, for the use of time and time as a theme are of central importance in this work. The basic temporal structure of the novel--chronologically arranged parallel time sequences of past and present written in the present and past tenses respectively--dictates the temporal thematic content of the novel and makes possible the exploration of such themes as heritage, creativity and the temporal nature of existence.

In every text there are two manifestations of time, as Gérard Genette has pointed out in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1972): story-time and discourse-time.[2] Story-time is the time attributed to the narrative events prior to the imposition of form; therefore, story-time is, in the case of *The Diviners*, the time from Morag's existence in her mother's womb to the autumn of her forty-seventh year. Discourse-time is the narrative time subsequent to the application of form on the story events. It is the time of story events once they have been arranged in the narrative 'plot' with its requirements of selection and arrangement of events. Discourse-time must necessarily diverge from story-time because the imposition of plot designates the existence of narrative events and existents which have been *ordered* so as to engage the emotions and develop the theme: "'The aesthetic function of the plot is precisely this bringing of an *arrangement* of motifs to the attention of the reader'."[3] The demands of a plot require a re-arrangement of story events and an emphasis of vision on

narrative events crucial to the development of plot.

Discourse-time deviates from story-time not only because of the demands of plot, but also because of the very essence of its existence--language. Language is linear in its presentation, requiring, at a given moment, a single focus on the written page; individuals are not capable of reading more than a few words at a time: "Text-time [discourse-time] is thus inescapably linear, and therefore cannot correspond to the multilinearity of 'real' story-time."[4] Consequently, narrative necessarily incorporates an "unnatural" prerequisite of linear temporality which is at odds with the multilinear temporal nature of life. As Joseph Frank observes, "since language proceeds in time, it is impossible to approach this simultaneity of perception except by breaking up temporal sequence."[5] In "Gadgetry or Growing," Laurence speaks of the problems she encountered with this aspect of narrative when she wrote *The Fire-Dwellers*. Because of the nature of Stacey's existence Laurence wanted to capture the illusion of concurrent activity on the written page, thus recreating the chaos and constant demands of the MacAindra household. Finding a form which would promote this temporal illusion proved to be a difficult task for Laurence, who considered a number of techniques to present the multilinear existence of time: "I then thought the novel should be written in three of four columns, newspaper style, with three or four things happening simultaneously. Luckily, it occurred to me in time that few people were likely to have three or four pairs of eyes."[6] Discourse-time can only attempt to approximate a verisimilitude of "real" time; it can never hope to capture the true nature of life's temporal existence regardless of the narrative structures which evolve.

Unlike story-time, discourse-time is necessarily an abstraction because it cannot be measured in units of time. Discourse-time is differentiated from story-time not only by the incorporation of story events into a plot, but also because the experience of those story events is determined by the act of reading itself, and not simply by sensory perceptions such as sight or sound. While story-time is defined as "the duration of the purported events of the narrative," discourse-time is commonly defined as "reading time": "the time it takes to peruse

the discourse" (SD, 62). Therefore, discourse-time is as much spatial as temporal for it is a function of lines as well as hours and minutes. Also, the temporal measurement of story is the same for each person; that is, Christie's relation of his tale of "the Battle of Bourlon Wood" may, for example, last twenty-five minutes and, if this is so, it will last this long regardless of his audience. However, the time it takes to read Morag's rendition of Christie's tale in her autobiography is dependent on the reading skills of the individual; the spatial measure of three paragraphs can involve numerous temporal manifestations dependent on the reader's reading speed. So there can be no standardization of discourse-time and any discussion of this aspect of narrative must be in "pseudo" temporal terms:

> Strictly speaking, it [discourse-time] is a spatial, not a temporal dimension. The narrative text as text has no other temporality than the one it metonymically derives from the process of its reading. What discussions of text time actually refer to is the linear (spatial) disposition of linguistic segments in the continuum of the text. Thus both story-time and text-time may in fact be no more than pseudo temporal. Nevertheless, as long as we remember their 'pseudo' nature they remain useful constructs for a study of the important facets of the story-text relations.[7]

By accepting the "pseudo" nature of discourse and acknowledging that "the narrative text, like every other text, has no other temporality than what it borrows, metonymically, from its own reading,"[8] the critic is able to examine the temporal relations in a narrative by identifying discrepancies between story-time and discourse-time and examining the cause and effect of such temporal discord.

But even so, what is the true nature of temporal existence in life? Are clocks and calendars, the only means by which time can be measured, or can it be measured by some inner clock, a psychological clock? Is three hours waiting for a train the same as three hours at the theatre? This aspect of psychological-time is referred to by E. M. Forster as "value."

> [T]here seems something else in life besides time, something which may

> conveniently be called 'value', something which is measured not by minutes or hours, but by intensity, so that when we look at our past it does not stretch back evenly but piles up into a few notable pinnacles, and when we look at the future it seems sometimes a wall, sometimes a cloud, sometimes a sun, but never a chronological chart. Neither memory nor anticipation is much interested in Father Time, and all dreamers, artists, and lovers are partially delivered from his tyranny; he can kill them but he cannot secure their attention, and at the very moment of doom, when the clock collected in the tower its strength and struck, they may be looking the other way. So daily life, whatever it may be really, is practically composed of two lives--the life in time and the life by values.[9]

Laurence is aware of these temporal discrepancies and chooses to focus her attention on the psychological aspect of time: "When I say 'time,' I don't mean clock-time, in this context, nor do I mean any kind of absolute time--which I don't believe to exist, in any event. I mean historical time, variable and fluctuating."[10] While clock-time is measurable, psychological-time is bounded by different laws which render it immeasurable. Jules' experience at Dieppe epitomizes such temporal intangibility. In response to Morag's enquiry, "Did it--last long?" Jules replies, "Yeh. One million years. Coupla hours, actually. I can't really say--I don't know. Didn't seem very real at the time" (D, 133). Each experience may be monitored according to its duration and time of occurrence, but these measurements are actually unrelated to the experience of the event; they bear no relation to psychological-time, the temporal domain of primary importance to Laurence. As Patricia Morley observes: "The creative vision that underlies the work [*The Diviners*] is located in Laurence's understanding of the way in which humans experience time. Simple-minded notions (such as the one-way flow of time or the idea that individual pasts consist of clearly verifiable sets of events) are invalidated."[11] This tension between clock-time and psychological-time forms the basis for all Laurence's Manawaka fiction and demands a technically adept handling of temporal existence in the discourse.

> In all her Manawaka novels, Margaret Laurence has worked with concepts of time. Hagar, Rachel, and Stacey are all enslaved by quantitative time, the man-made measurement of minutes, hours, and days....In their heads, they

> also experience felt time, in memories and fantasies which are set in juxtaposition to the rigidly measured minutes, hours, and days of their experimental world.[12]

Such a concentration on psychological time in each of Laurence's Manawaka works is successfully realized because of the careful manipulation of temporal form in each. Laurence's use of temporal anomalies is most extensive and most effective in her latest novel in which she distorts order, duration and frequency as temporal concerns to circumscribe the novel's story.

These three levels of temporal relations, order, duration and frequency, were first identified and analysed by Genette. This chapter will analyse *The Diviners* in terms of these three categories. The novel will be studied with regard, first, to the order in which events are presented in the discourse; secondly, to the duration of these events; and thirdly, to the frequency with which each event occurs. At times, the division between categories may appear arbitrary and confused because the three areas of concern are not mutually exclusive. For example, the *extent* of anachronous sequences is examined in accordance with Genette's organization, in the section concerning order. However, *extent* could easily have been examined in the second section dealing with duration.

I

The study of order in narrative involves an explanation of the discrepancies between the order of events in the story and their rearranged order in the discourse; that is "the temporal *order* of succession of the events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative." What we are concerned with are the occurrent *anachronies* in the text, which encompass "the various types of discordance between the two orderings of story and narrative."[13] Anachronies can take the form of either *analepses* or *prolepses*; in other words, the discrepancies between the story-time and the discourse-time can incorporate the

narration of an event that happened in the past or one that happens in the future. In either instance, the event being narrated is displaced from its normal chronological sequence and can be termed either subjective or objective--subjective if the narration is undertaken by the character himself, and objective if it is undertaken by the author or narrator who is not the character.[14] Genette summarizes these possible temporal relations by

> ...designating as *prolepsis* any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later, designating as *analepsis* any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment, and reserving the general term *anachrony* to designate all forms of discordance between the temporal orders of story and narrative.[15]

An analysis of the treatment of order in *The Diviners* will require critical appraisals of the occurrence of analeptic and proleptic sections and the treatment of narrative tense. These areas will be studied in the following order: analepses (their *homodiegetic* and external nature, their *reach* and *extent*, and their internal organization); the inversion of tenses (rendering past experiences in the present tense and present experiences in the preterite tense); and prolepses (anticipating future events with narrative "clues," and fantasizing about such events in the novel's "innerfilms").

Anachronous sequences are prominent in all the Manawaka fiction but only extensively so in the first and last works, *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners*.[16] In all these novels, the dominant anachrony is in the form of analepses, the narration of events happening prior to the point reached in the story-time. In each work, the analepses are *homodiegetic* (concerned with the same subject as is being discussed in the time present) and thus, the form accommodates the continuing internalization of the narrative in the consciousness of the female protagonist in a manner which defines the self-analytical nature of the narrative content. In both *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners*, the analepses are external (they begin and end before the NOW of the narrative) and so they are especially well integrated in the material of the NOW of the narrative

without promoting confusion or distraction.

> [E]xternal analepses and internal analepses (or the internal part of mixed analepses) function for purposes of narrative analysis in totally different ways....External analepses, by the very fact that they are external, never at any moment risk interfering in the first narrative for their only function is to fill out the first narrative by enlightening the reader on one or another "antecedent"....The case is otherwise with the internal analepses: since their temporal field is contained within the temporal field of the first narrative, they present an obvious risk of redundancy or collusion.[17]

In *The Fire-Dwellers*, however, the analepses are often internal to further designate the chaotic nature of Stacey's life. These analepses are typographically indicated by a right indent to distinguish their anachronic nature.

> The shore of the Sound. The huge water-whitened log, and herself perched on it: The black water lighted streakily by stars. Luke. The A. frame. *What's the bad news? What's with you?* I took off. *Well, don't worry. Sometimes people do.* Then, later, after he said about the kid in the Cariboo, the one whose mother took off. *Stacey, you don't need to be sorry. It hurts?* Yes. *Well, go ahead and bawl. No shame in that. You're not alone.*
> I am, though. I am now. (FD, 227)

It is necessary to establish the nature of an analepsis in terms not only of its voice and subject, but also of how far, temporally, the anachrony is distanced from the NOW of the narrative, and how long this anachrony is; that is, it is necessary to determine the *reach* and the *extent* of each discrepancy between story-time and discourse-time.

> An anachrony can reach into the past or the future, either more or less far from the "present" moment (that is, from the moment in the story when the narrative was interrupted to make room for the anachrony): this temporal distance we will name the anachrony's *reach*. The anachrony itself can also cover a duration of story that is more or less long: we will call this *extent*.[18]

In *The Fire-Dwellers*, the reach does not extend beyond the time that Stacey is twelve, and ordinarily the reach is only a few years; this is because her problems in the time present are firmly rooted in her existence as wife and mother. On the other hand, the reach in *The Stone Angel* is ninety years as Hagar alludes to the event of her birth in the first few lines of the novel: "Above the town, on the hill brow, the stone angel used to stand. I wonder if she stands there yet, in memory of her who relinquished her feeble ghost as I gained my stubborn one" (SA, 1). Similarly, *The Diviners* establishes an extensive reach of forty-seven years when Morag describes herself as being "buried alive, the first burial, still a little fish, connected unthinkingly with life, held to existence by a single thread" (D, 6). In both *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners* the reach, symptomatic of the "external" nature of the analepses, designates the depth of Hagar's and Morag's emotional problems in the time present by illustrating that the seeds of unrest began germinating from birth. Their problems are not immediate in the same manner as Stacey's; they are deeply ingrained in the very fabric of their beings. By establishing a reach of this magnitude the form of each work articulates the theme of the past bearing on the present, not simply the immediate past, but the entire past of one's life.

In *The Diviners*, an individual's past is the past of a lifetime, not simply of the past few years, and this past remains with you always. As Christie tells Morag; "It'll [Morag's experiences in Manawaka] all go along with you, too. That goes without saying" (D, 168). However, the reach of *The Diviners* goes back further than the snapshots portraying Morag's subconscious memory in the first section of the novel. The tales voiced by Christie and Jules have a reach extending back over many generations. Christie's tales of Piper Gunn present analepses reaching back to the Highland Clearances whilst Jules' tales, passed on to him by his father, extend back to the Riel Rebellion. Both sets of analepses provide "interpretations" of the origins of the dispossession of these two cultures. By furnishing the novel with analepses containing reaches of such magnitude, Laurence succeeds in creating a form which serves to demarcate the notion of a pervading sense of historical past in the present, not merely the past of one's own generation, but the past of one's ancestors--"historical time."

> In any work of fiction, the span of time present in the story is not only as long as the time-span of every character's life and memory; it also represents everything acquired and passed on in a kind of memory -- heritage from one generation to another. The time which is present in any story, therefore, must--by implication at least--include not only the totality of the characters' lives but also the inherited time of perhaps two or even three past generations, in terms of parents' and grandparents' recollections and the much longer past which has become legend, the past of a collective cultural memory.[19]

This sense of "historical time" is not exclusive to *The Diviners*. It does arise in the other Manawaka novels but only as an echo or a reverberation, not as a complete unit in the anachronic sequence. Hagar may possess a name derived from the Old Testament, and she may muse upon disintegrating "entirely, like the flowers found on ancient young Tutankamen's tomb, which crumbled when time flooded in through the broken door" (SA, 97), but the allusions do not produce the same effect as the actual form of *The Diviners* which defines the novel's view and treatment of time.

The reach of the analepses in *The Diviners*, because it is far greater than that of the previous works in the Manawaka series, is able to demarcate three time sequences as part of a single temporal state: time present, time past and "historical time."[20] The extent of the analepses also reinforces this notion as the majority of the novel is rendered in analeptic sequences, the time present only emerging as the dominant temporal state of the narrative in the last section of the novel where past and present coalesce. The form of the novel, because its temporal condition is defined predominantly by the use of anachronous sequences comprised of analeptic narratives of considerable reach and extent, defines the thematic concern of time in he work. That is, the anachronous form of the narrative dictates the implied author's view of e nature of time in man's existence: each individual is moulded by his historical and immediate past which in turn dictates the quality and nature of existence in the time present. Who and what a person's true past is remains undefined until the near end of the novel, when Morag discovers that her true past lies in her place of childhood, not the place from whence her ancestors came in the eighteenth century. Her true roots lie in Manawaka and her true father is Christie, her guide, her mentor and, through his tales, the giver of her heritage. Morag comes

to this realization when she visits Dan McRaith in Scotland.

> McRaith points across the firth to the north.
> 'Away over there is Sutherland, Morag Dhu, where your people came from. When do you want to drive there?'
> Morag considers.
> 'I thought I would have to go. But I guess I don't after all.'
> 'Why would that be?'
> 'I don't know that I can explain. It has to do with Christie. The myths are my reality. Something like that. And also, I don't need to go there because I know now what it was I had to learn there.'
> 'What's that?'
> 'It's a deep land here, all right,' Morag says. 'But it's not mine, except a long long way back. I always thought it was the land of my ancestors, but it's not.'
> 'What is then?'
> 'Christie's real country. Where I was born.' (D, 318-319)

Order refers not only to the occurrence, or not, of anachronous sequences, but also to the possibility of anachrony within the anachronous sequence. Are the analepses presented randomly or are they presented in an orderly, chronological fashion? In both *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners*, the analepses follow a strict chronological pattern, so that the reach nishes with each successive analeptic occurrence. However, the rationale behind the use of chronological analepses is different in each case and, as a result, the function of form to define content is achieved to a different degree in each. In *The Stone Angel* Laurence chose a chronological representation of Hagar's memories solely for the simplification of the narrative, believing that a haphazard rendering of ninety years' worth of memories would confuse the reader. However, Hagar is, in the time present, "rampant with memory" and therefore, an anachronous rendering of memory would have been far more acceptable in realizing the narrative content of the novel. As the work stands, the orderly mode of recollection is at variance with the nature of the narrative material and, thus, a synthesis of form and content is not achieved and the work remains flawed. In retrospect, Laurence acknowledges this weakness:

> I wouldn't go to great lengths to defend the form of the novel, at this distance, for I know its flaws. The flashback method is, I think, a little overworked in it, and I am not at all sure that flashbacks ought to be in chronological order, as I placed them in order to make it easier for the reader to follow Hagar's life.[21]

Yet Laurence employs the same technique in *The Diviners*; she presents the time past in strict chronological sequence until past and present converge at the close of the novel. Again, this form is unrealistic as people do not remember events in chronological order; they recall them randomly according to subconscious sensory associations. Laurence has been criticised for this aspect of the narrative discourse:

> Without obvious motivation, the recollections of a life in chronological order seem quite out of keeping with the essentially realistic tenor of the book, quite contrary to the psychological authenticity otherwise displayed. While Laurence claims the illusion of seeing time flow both ways, she in fact has it flow in only one direction--at two different speeds. For Hagar, the two velocities of consciousness collided, merged, at the point of her death. In Morag's context, they meet only because one has caught up with the other.[22]

Morag comments on the improbability of ordered experience when she deliberately organizes her snapshots according to their temporal relations: "Morag puts the pictures into chronological order. As though there were really any chronological order, or any order at all, if it came to that" (D, 5-6). Why, then, having realized the inadequacy of this form in *The Stone Angel*, would Laurence choose to employ it again? Did she simply decide, as with the earlier novel, that it would have to suffice because she "could not discover any alternative" form?[23] This seems unlikely as Laurence presented the reader with an anachronous analeptic sequence in *The Fire-Dwellers*. Stacey's memories are not only surprisingly brief, they are also presented at random, totally negating any temporal ordering of the past and therefore specifying the anachronic quality of the narrative content. It would seem, then, that Laurence's employment of ordered analepses was not a result of necessity imposed by her lack of creative resources, but of choice as Laurence felt that this temporal form would define some

aspect of narrative content. This view is reinforced by the fact that Laurence draws so much attention to the artificial nature of the analepses by designating them as "snapshots" and "memorybank movies"; it is unlikely that she would emphasize the structured aspect of the novel if she felt that it was a defect.

In fact, the form of the narrative does serve to define the content of the narrative, but in a very different manner than in *The Fire-Dwellers*. By drawing attention to the artificiality of her narrative method, Laurence reveals the rationale behind this form. It is a means by which the novelistic nature of Morag's creative processes can be designated and the reader can be sensitive to Morag's overriding creative concern. The unnatural order of past events in this work becomes natural because no attempt is being made to simulate the random recollection of past events. Morag is systematically exorcising the ghosts of her past. The seemingly disorganized presentation of analepses would produce a disparity of form and content because it would be juxtaposed to the deliberate ordered method of Morag who is embarking, self-consciously, on a journey into the past using the form of a novel to resolve her problems in the present. Morag is obsessed with order and ordering her life in the hope of uncovering the answers to all the questions which are burning in her head: "These kids reversed the order of life, staying up all night and sleeping most of the day. *Order*. For heaven's sake. It flowed in Morag's veins, despise it though she might" (D, 236). The existence of the past as recreated fiction and the novel as a structure containing another novel is realized in the artificiality of the form--the presentation of the past in strict chronological order. The narrative material concerned with fiction and fact and fiction within fiction is realized in the rendering of ordered temporal relations in the discourse. As Laurence explains, the imposition of order on the narrative is acceptable because the novel itself contains an internal fictional structure so that order is being imposed on art, not life and,

> ...to some extent that problem [of chronological analepses] was overcome in *The Diviners*, because Morag consciously sets out to write down her memories, to get her life into some kind of perspective, to see what has happened to her.

> One might call it an "examined life," and she is examining her own life. Doing it in that way, of course, you would do it chronologically.[24]

Also, like the chronological analepses, the presentation of narrative experiences under the "contrived" headings of "memorybank movies," "snapshots," "tales," "lists," "innerfilms" and the like is acceptable because this form functions to define the novel's internal fictional status. These labels have, like the chronology of the analepses, been severely criticized as obtrusive and artificial but such an attitude ignores the intentional nature of the obtrusiveness of such techniques. In the same manner as the "unnatural" ordering of the past events, these *ficelles*[25] denote the artificial nature of the memories being incorporated by Morag into her autobiography comprised of her own "personal and fictional words." Thus, "Laurence underlines Morag's role as shaper of experiences by giving titles to individual episodes from her past and by interjecting into her memories her admissions of distortion and invention."[26] The artificial nature of the temporal form of the novel serves to interpret the quintessential creative nature of the narrative material. The novel is realistic as far as its portrayal of human nature is concerned, but it is, after all, a work of art within a work of art and as such the form of the novel must reflect this aspect of the narrative.

> The method I chose [for *The Stone Angel*] diminishes the novel's resemblance to life, but on the other hand, writing--however consciously unordered its method--is never as disorderly as life. Art, in fact, is never life. It is never as paradoxical, chaotic, complex or as alive as life.[27]

It is possible that the chronological rendering of anachronous temporal order detracts from the notion of psychological-time versus clock-time. By grounding the novel's anachronies in a "normal" order, Laurence establishes clock-time as the overriding measure of existence. However, inverting the tenses in the time sequences of past and present Laurence creates an awareness of psychological-time working alongside, but out of sequence with, clock-time.[28] Chatman claims that the tense system is a "semantic means of signalling"

story-time; the past perfect tense renders a ...erior time, the preterite tense--past time, the present tense--present time, and the fu... tense--future time. By the manipulation of all four tenses, the author can "indicate at ... four temporal stages in a sequence of events": the earliest period, a subsequent period, a still later period, and the latest period respectively (SD, 80). However, Laurence contravenes these norms by communicating the present time of the narrative using the preterite tense, and the past time of the narrative using the present tense.

This narrative form defines the concept of psychological-time in which the past, is still an integral part of the present. To deny the past is to deny a part of one's self. Morag's marriage to Brooke fails precisely because it is built on a denial of the past. Brooke is attracted to Morag because she appears unfettered by the past, an attractive partner for one who is afraid of the workings of time. He attempts to fight time by denying its power; he scorns his past by diminishing its importance and he hides from the future by denying Morag the child she wants. Morag is unable to live out his fantasy after she returns to Manawaka to say a last farewell to Prin. Morag comes to realize that it is not possible to deny one's past and, what's more, she no longer wishes to. Her desire to liberate herself from the lie she has been living, to be a complete person with a past and a future, signals the end of her marriage with Brooke. It was doomed to failure from the outset as both Morag and Brooke refused to acknowledge the power of the past which exists as a continual present. By presenting past experiences in the present tense, Morag injects a sense of immediacy into the narrative, just as she did with her speech acts, while creating a sense of the present in the past. The past flows into and shapes the present and, at the same time, the past is given a present by its recollection and inevitable recreation as a myth in the present, resurrected from its past. Morag is aware of these temporal relations. She understands that the past not only exists in but is redefined by the present. Pique is shaped by Morag's past which is, itself, fluid and changeable:

> *Whatever is happening to Pique is not what I think is happening, whatever that may be. What happened to me wasn't what anyone else thought was happening, and maybe not even what I thought was happening at the time. A popular*

> *misconception is that we can't change the past--everyone is constantly changing their own past, recalling it, revisiting it. What happened? A meaningless question. But one I keep trying to answer, knowing there is no answer.* (D, 49)

In using the present tense to articulate past experiences Laurence utilizes the form of the narrative to define the creative processes of memory. The past can never be simply recalled and presented as an established experience because the act of recalling incorporates the functioning of the consciousness which, because of its existence in the present, edits and redefines its memories of the past. This view of the functioning of memory and its influence on the present is voiced by I. A. Richards who describes memory as "that apparent revival of past experience to which the richness and complexity of experience is due....It is a way peculiar to living tissue by which the past influences our present behaviour across, as it might appear, a gulf of time."[29] Hence, memories are not static but constantly shifting variations of the same theme; they are, as the titles of Morag's autobiographical chapters suggest, like movies which are stored in the mind to be edited and re-run. The memories for Morag's chapters unfold in this way, the past constantly pushing into the present in a flow of images which refuse to be ignored:

> Last night, sleepless until three A.M., long and stupendously vivid scenes unfolded. Too tired to get up and write them down, she still couldn't shut the projector off for the night. Got up and jotted down key words, to remind her. Staring at these key words now, she wondered what in heaven's name they were meant to unlock. (D, 137)

Such memories are not bound by clock-time but by psychological-time because they exist in one's consciousness. And, at a further remove; once they are unlocked, these memories are recorded by Morag and are therefore subject to both psychological-time and discourse-time. So that, if discourse-time is, as already suggested, an abstraction which cannot be subjected to the usual temporal measurements of the clock, then the entire structure of the narrative discourse is subject to the individual unbound nature of psychological-time. Thus, the

temporal form of the novel defines the psychological content of the novel; the function of memory is established through the use of "subjective time."[30]

Having used the present tense in the narrative of the novel's analepses, Morag uses the preterite tense for the narration of the time present sequence.[31] Also, just as tense inversion in the analepses defined the temporal relation of the past existing as a constant presence in the present, the use of the preterite tense in the present illustrates that the temporal flow is not simply in one direction. Not only does the past mould and determine the present but, as defined by the use of film imagery, the present recalls and gives meaning to the past.[32] Also, the present is only the present for the instant that it is experienced; then it too becomes the past, to be recalled and reshaped but never again to be felt as it did for the transitory moment in which it occupied the present. Thus, the recording of the present in the past tense, ensures that the irreversible, unyielding, ever continuous nature of time is realized. Moss comments on this aspect of the narrative when he states: "On-going lived-in time...is related in the present tense as Laurence convincingly projects the irretrievability of each passing moment and the poignancy for Morag of its slipping by, particularly at this age and stage in her life."[33] In this form of inverted tenses, Morag's attitude to time is specified; she does not see it, like Stacey, "as a negative, hostile phenomenon,"[34] but more like the "winged chariot hurrying near." Morag does not feel threatened by time; she simply acknowledges its relentless forward movement in the time present. This attitude towards the onward, undaunting, seemingly linear movement of time is echoed by Pique, when she refuses to accept Jules' appraisal of himself as an aging singer: "'You're not getting old.' The young voice crying out against time, against the evidence of her eyes" (D, 347). But by the end of the novel, Morag realizes that this fear is self-defeating because, like the novel she is writing, and like the river she is watching, time is not linear; the past, the present and the future, are all intermingling and interdependent. Chronological temporal structures can only exist as artefacts; they are a dimension of art, not life. Laurence ensures that the implied author and the narrator of her work are in agreement with each other and with her; both narrative constructs hold the view which she herself

expresses and assigns to the narrator to communicate.

> Once the narrative voice is truly established--that is, once the writer has listened, really listened, to the speech and idiom and outlook of the character--it is then not the writer but the character who, by some process of transferal, bears the responsibility of the treatment of time within the work. It is the character who chooses which parts of the personal past, the family past and the ancestoral past have to be revealed in order for the present to be realized and the future to happen. This is not a morbid dwelling on the past on the part of the writer or character. It is, rather, an expression of the feeling which I strongly hold about time--that the past and the future are both always present, *present* in both senses of the word, always now and always here with us.[35]

Thus, the distance between the author and the reader is, in terms of the communication processes, very small indeed. Laurence, through her manipulation of vocal and temporal forms, ensures that her concept of time is conveyed to the reader with the minimum of intervention.

The opening section of the novel, the "River of Now and Then," introduces the central metaphor of the work:

> The river flowed both ways. The current moved from north to south, but the wind usually came from the south, rippling the bronze-green water in the opposite direction. This apparently impossible contradiction, made apparent and possible, still fascinated Morag, even after the years of river-watching. (D, 3)

As the novel progresses it becomes apparent that the river functions as a metaphor not only for time, present and past, but for time future as well. The future is not dealt with in as much depth as the past because its existence is not part of Morag's film collection; she does not know it and is therefore unable to play it in the same manner as she does the past. Time in the future is like the far reaches of the river: "further out, the water deepened and kept its life from sight" (D, 370). Thus, *The Diviners* makes little use of the anachronous form of

prolepsis which, like analepsis, is the instance of a discrepancy between the story-time and the discourse-time of the narrative but which is differentiated from analepsis by its existence in the future of the narrative NOW, not in the past. This form of anachrony is ordinarily the more uncommon of the two because of the author's concern with suspense and a suitable element of realism. The so-called "first-person" narrative does, however, lend "itself better than any other to anticipation, by the very fact of its avowedly retrospective character, which authorizes the narrator to allude to the future and in particular to his present situation for these to some extent form part of [his] role."[36] This form of anticipation cannot strictly be referred to as "prolepsis" because it is hinting at, rather than telling of, the future. Such hints are referred to, by Genette, as *amorce* and do appear in *The Diviners*: "But why had she got pregnant all those times? As a clueless sixteen-year old, perhaps. But after that, what compulsion? Morag does not bring up this question, *nor will she, ever*" (D, 283. Emphasis mine). This form of anticipation is possible without detracting from the realism of the novel because it is a mode of internal homodiegetic prolepsis within the external analepsis; that is, the anticipation is part of Morag's knowledge because the relationship with Fan is over before the time present from which Morag is narrating. Another form of anticipation emerges in *The Diviners* where incidents function as foreshadowings of later events. These 'clues' exist as such on a subconscious level and are only acknowledged in retrospect. For example, the fire in the valley is foreshadowed by Morag's description of the Tonnerre shack only fourteen pages earlier: "The main shack has a bigger stove but with shakier looking stove-pipes" (D, 113). This mode of prolepsis serves, to a certain degree, to interpret the temporal theme of the interdependent nature of present and future in that the future of the Tonnerre family is circumscribed by that family's mode of existence in the present.

The form of "telling" the future, rather than hinting at it, is less explicit in its explication of the multilinear fabric of life. The narrative device of "innerfilms" provides the novel with its limited instances of prolepses. These devices are voiced in a self-deprecating tone of disbelief to designate the mystery of the unknown. These proleptic sections are more

concerned with denoting the theme of fact and fantasy combining in the experience of life. They indicate that myth and reality converge not only in the past but in the future as well. These prolepses give an inaccurate account of the future because they represent Morag's fantasies and dreams rather than prophesies. The innerfilms exist as homodiegetic prolepses, internally and externally; that is, the prolepses are mixed in nature as some eventually exist as events in the story while the innerfilm on page 101 relates Morag's death--a fictional account of the future which remains outside the domain of the story-time:

> Morag lying in a white satin-lined coffin eyes closed face awfully pale and she is wearing a yellow silk dancing-dress she has never danced in it and now never will coffin is closed and hearse goes to the graveyard Christie is absent overcome with sorrow Stacey Mavis Vanessa Julie, Ross Jamie etcetera crying in sadness wishing they had recognized the qualities Morag had before too late (D, 101)

This projection into the future is one of Morag's childhood fantasies which displays her hopes for the future and her fears in the present. This form of narrative illustrates the manner in which people in the present are occupied with thoughts of the future which bring the future, in a fictionalized form, into the present. Thus, like the past, the future can only be realised in an individual's consciousness and, therefore, it is ultimately more fiction than fact and is bounded by the limitations of psychological-time rather than clock-time. Just as the past is a mixture of fact and myth, so too is the future. The "fact" of this innerfilm is presented in the second section of this episode when Morag fantasizes about the novel she has written which is found after her death and is "one of the finest ever written in a long time anywhere it is published" (D, 101). This does hold an element of truth as Morag does produce work that is published and admired. Also, just as the past encompasses more than merely the past experiences of Morag in her lifetime, so the future extends further than Morag's point of death; "historical time" flows into the future beyond the span of one's natural life. The innerfilm ends with the musing: "Morag never knows novel has been published (unless watching from somewhere?)"

(D, 101) and later, in the time present, Morag continues to ponder on the life to come, an aspect of "historical" time in the future: "How great if one could believe in a re-encounter beyond this ridge of tears. When They Call the Roll Up Yonder, I'll Be There. How Christie would laugh at that" (D, 172-173). So, the prolepses in *The Diviners* not only further define the theme of the intangible nature of time and the mythical quality of existence, they also extend the work's portrayal of time to the "historical future." Laurence's use of prolepses in the novel functions to extend her definition of the "ephemeral hourglass" by adding a temporal dimension not covered in the previous works, "the need for time present to build time future."[37] Although the use of prolepsis is not extensive in *The Diviners*, it does serve to further demarcate the temporal concerns of the work. Time is not chronological. The past is part of the present; the present makes meaning of the past and anticipates the future; the future is beginning now and will eventually become the past; and this past is part of the present which is yet to arrive. Thus, the overall temporal structure of the novel presents a "graphic image [which] is also the Yoruba symbol of the continuum of time, the three interflowing circles of the serpent swallowing his tail."[38]

Just as the past is the dominant time in the early sections of the novel, the present and the future dominate in the final section where the analepses disappear. The novel draws to a conclusion which implies that the past dictates the present and the future holds the past and the present in it. Morag has already come close to understanding this aspect of the multifarious funtioning of time in her assessment of her temporal relationship with her daughter:

> Would Pique's life be better or worse than Morag's?
> *Mine hasn't been too bad. Been? Time running out. Is that what is really going on, with me, now, with her? Pique, harbinger of my death, continuer of life.* (D, 239)

Now, at the close of the novel, Morag realizes that Pique will ensure the perpetual existence of past and present in the future; she is one of "The Inheritors." The pervasive river metaphor is

representative of the novel's temporal structure, which in turn defines the thematic temporal concerns of the novel:

> The waters flowed from north to south, and the current was visible, but now a south wind was blowing, ruffling the water in the opposite direction, so that the river, as so often here, seemed to be flowing both ways.
> *Look ahead into the past, and back into the future, until the silence.* (D, 370)

II

The imposition of plot not only requires the relocation of events in the narrative order, but also the placement of emphasis to draw attention to, or from, significant narrative events. The temporal technique used to increase or decrease emphasis is *duration*.[39] Laurence uses this temporal relation to emphasize story events and to define the thematic content of the work. Just as order is used to define the multifarious, circular nature of existence, so duration is used to define this notion of temporal existence and to demarcate the narrative concerns of legend and myth. This study will proceed to analyse the temporal concern of duration in *The Diviners* by examining this variable in terms of the "*duration* of succession [of the events in the story] or story sections and the pseudo-duration (in fact, length of text) of their telling in the narrative--connections, thus, of speed."[40] It is the duration of events in the discourse which controls the tempo of the narrative. Jonathan Raban regards this concept as central to the temporal structure of any narrative:

> One of the ways in which a narrator can order a story is by varying the portion of time allocated to particular incidents. An important event can be described at greater length than it took to happen, while a whole swathe of history may

> be dealt with in a paragraph. This flexibility of tempo is one of the novelist's major instruments; he can indicate the relative value of each occurrence by his handling of pace.[41]

However, because people read at different speeds, this aspect of narrative anachrony is the most difficult to discuss in absolute terms. Its measurement is dependent on a number of variables which are, in turn, dependent on a number of extenuating circumstances; hence, its evaluation is necessarily dependent upon personal rather than universal criteria. Genette explains that

> ...comparing the "duration" of a narrative to that of the story it tells is a trickier operation, for the simplest reason that no one can measure the duration of a narrative. What we spontaneously call such can be nothing more...than the time needed for reading; it is too obvious that reading time varies according to particular circumstances, and that, unlike what happens in movies, or even music, nothing here allows us to determine a "normal" speed of execution.[42]

The way to overcome this problem is to establish a theoretical durative "norm" against which the narrative discourse may be evaluated. Genette uses the term *isochronous* narrative to designate this "norm" which is "a narrative with unchanging speed, without accelerations or slow downs where the relationship duration-of-story / length-of-narrative would remain always steady."[43] Genette concedes the impossibility of such a narrative but nevertheless proposes it as a point of reference, a "norm" against which to evaluate the duration of a text. The existence of *summaries*, *scenes*, *pauses* and *ellipses* are the main points of concern in the analysis of this aspect of temporal narrative technique according to Genette; however, Chatman proposes another category which he calls *stretch* and which will also be considered.

Summary is the presentation of events whereby their duration in the discourse-time is less than their duration in the story-time. The use of summary serves to increase the tempo while decreasing the realism of the narrative.[44] Many events can be related in a short period of time which provides the narrative with an intensity not possible in an isochronous narrative.

This method of temporal representation is particularly suited for a novel of action where the pace produces a sense of urgency and the reader is preoccupied with reading quickly to discover what happens next. In *The Diviners*, summary is used infrequently, occurring mainly during the tales told by Christie, Jules and Morag in the narrative. For example, Christie's *Tale of Piper Gunn and the Long March* condenses a period of many weeks into a space of two pages.

> So Piper Gunn, he got out his bagpipes and he piped the people onto the new land, that terrible bad land, frozen as it sure as hell was, and they built their mud shacks to the music that man played.
>
> Now they lived there and they suffered and then they suffered more, through the long days and longer nights, and it seemed there was no end to their suffering. But they didn't give in. They hunted for meat, to live. (D,68)

By incorporating summary into the narrative's "tales," Laurence injects an intensity into the narrative which provides the novel with a refreshing variety of tempo. In such instances, the summary involves a condensing of historical time rather than of story-time. Historical events have been summarised but story-time is only the time of the tale-telling, not the actual event, so that the summary does not involve a compression of story-time, only a compression of historical [illegible] the story-time which is, in turn, faithfully represented by the discourse-time. In this manner, a faster narrative tempo is achieved without a discrepancy between story-time and discourse-time.[45] By limiting the use of summary in this way, Laurence ensures a certain degree of realism in the text. This is because ordinarily, a compression of narrative detail incorporates a sacrifice, on the part of the novelist, of the illusion of reality. As Booth remarks, "Time must be *foreshortened* to achieve intensity, but in foreshortening the novelist must use *dissimulation* successfully in order to preserve the illusion of reality."[46] Laurence, however, does not use dissimulation as Booth advocates. Rather than employ a method of "telling" while still striving to maintain an illusion of realism, she adopts a durative technique of scene and ellipsis, and makes use of the third temporal relation between story-time and discourse-time--frequency.

The method of scene and ellipsis still presents a fast narrative tempo in which story-time is much greater than discourse-time, but it incorporates a narrative technique of "showing" rather than "telling." The temporal presentation of events in the mode of a scene is, as the term implies, a situation in which discourse-time is equal to story-time and therefore the duration of events is realistic. This diegetic narrative form is most suited to novels of character, such as *The Diviners*, rather than to novels of action. The tempo is slow and the emphasis is generally placed on the people involved in the event rather than the event itself. Often, in narratives of this nature, the novelist will go beyond the scenic presentation of events to the extreme of employing a "stretch" technique in which, as Chatman explains, discourse-time is greater than story-time (SD, 68). This technique is used to present narrative events of crucial importance. Laurence incorporates this method of extended discourse duration in *A Jest of God* where the events are always secondary to the workings of Rachel's mind. Again, this method involves a relinquishing of realism, as in *A Jest of God*, where the method of stretch is mainly utilised to ransack Rachel's mind during events or, more often, in between dialogue. In this manner the story-time is almost frozen, and Laurence approaches the extreme durative presentation of "pause," where story-time is equal to zero. Such handling of Rachel's thoughts in between dialogue is often clumsy to the point where it threatens to frustrate Laurence's apparent attempt to simulate reality in this work.[7] The time-lapses between conversational interchanges are often too long, giving an impression of stagnation, pregnant pauses and lack of temporal awareness. For example, after Calla has given Rachel a graphic description of the Tabernacle (JG, 132-133), Rachel does not reply until six paragraphs later; here discourse time is almost a page, whereas story time is *presumed* to be negligible as Rachel, very unconvincingly, wonders:

> What are we talking about, Calla and I, where did I leave her? Painting the Tabernacle. It's all right. ***Only an instant has elapsed, I guess.*** (JG, 133. Emphasis mine)

However, neither pause nor stretch is used as a temporal state in *The Diviners* where Laurence employs the more realistic mode of scene and ellipsis. Laurence manages to cover a period of forty-seven years, with minimal use of summary, by presenting important narrative events as a scene, and unimportant ones as ellipsis. This technique not only provides the novel with a realistic form, it also imposes a form within a form in that the most obvious use of ellipsis is between Memorybank Movies, that is, between chapters of Morag's autobiography. Here, each one presents an episode in Morag's novel and the time elapsed between each Memorybank Movie is accepted without explanation because the reader knows that, as far as Morag is concerned, nothing of importance has happened during that time and therefore, nothing needs to be recorded. If an ellipsis is not signified by the introduction of a new Memorybank Movie, it is heralded by a physical break on the page or an asterisk. These ellipses are a mixture of explicit, implicit and hypothetical.

The most common form of ellipsis in *The Diviners*, explicit ellipsis, occurs when Morag indicates that a certain amount of story-time has elapsed with no corresponding lapse of discourse-time. There are two forms of explict ellipsis known as indefinite and definite respectively, and in both cases, the omission of story events is explicitly referred to in the discourse and, therefore, the ellipsis is not "true" ellipsis because discourse time does not quite equal zero. The indication that time has elapsed is sufficient to occupy a measure of discourse time, even if it is only a few words.[41] For example, a number of the earlier Memorybank Movies begin with an account of Morag's age: "Seven is much older than six" (D, 28); "Morag is nine" (D, 38); "Morag is twelve" (D, 49); while at other times the story-time is a little more indefinite: "Finally able to get back to work after several days, Morag did not welcome interruption" (D, 365). This type of information is sufficient for the reader to work out the approximate duration of story-time which has been omitted from the discourse--it is explicit indefinite ellipsis. Explicit indefinite ellipsis occurs when the time elapsed is stated in a more direct manner so that the discrepancy between discourse-time and story-time is fully understood: "Morag Skelton, age twenty-four, has now lived in Toronto for four years" (D,

180); and "It is three years since Morag first met Dan McRaith" (D, 310).

Less frequently used but still indispensible to the definition of narrative content and the simulation of reality, is implicit ellipsis; that is, an ellipsis "whose very presence is not announced in the text and the reader can infer only from some chronological lacuna or gap in chronological continuity."[49] Again, these implicit ellipses occur most frequently as time elapsed between autobiographical chapters. Also, when such ellipses occur within a memorybank movie or a chapter in the present tense, they are indicated as visible spaces or an asterisk on the page. The occurrence of implicit ellipses between Memorybank Movies increases narrative tempo and also denotes the existence of Memorybank Movies as self-contained chapters in Morag's latest novel. Here, continuity is not required because we are aware that the words we are reading are part of Morag's fictional creation and therefore verisimilitude is not demanded or even attempted. For example, the Memorybank Movie "Frictions" ends with Morag submitting *Spear of Innocence* for publication, and the next incident recorded in the narrative is Morag receiving a telegram from Christie in the Memorybank Movie "Prin." No indication is given of a time lapse between these two events but the break between Memorybank Movies makes the ellipsis implicit whilst providing the structure of self-contained incidents in Morag's selection of events from the past to be incorporated in her book. However, the use of implicit ellipsis is not always so essential to a definition of narrative content; on occasions it is *only* a functional device to get from one narrative point to another without providing the reader with superfluous accounts of unimportant events:

> Morag rises [to leave Japonica Chapel].
> "Hector, thanks."
> "For nothing," Hector says. "Any time."
> Then, simultaneously seeing the grotesque quality of this last statement, they both laugh.
>
> *
>
> Morag rummages through the Hill Street house. (D, 327-328)

The use of such ellipsis indicates the nature of Morag's journey towards self-discovery. It is a journey that can only be fulfilled if Morag is sufficiently aware of the importance of individual events even if she is, at the time, unaware of their significance. It is only through a process of careful selection that Morag can re-appraise her life to understand the meaning of her existence--past and present. This selection in turn dictates the fabric of the chapters in which she records her "private and fictional words."

Hypothetical ellipsis is used very sparingly in *The Diviners* as it is a form more suited to a novel of suspense and intrigue than to one of psychological self-analysis. It is "the most implicit form of ellipsis...impossible to place in any spot at all, and revealed after the event by an analepsis."[50] The occurrence of such a method is used primarily to reinforce the narrative form of perception through a single consciousness; that is, hypothetical ellipses arise because the reader's knowledge of events is limited by Morag's knowledge of events. Like Morag, the reader encounters hypothetical ellipses completely ignorant of the past event. For example, Brooke's "affair" during his marriage to Morag comes as a complete surprise to the reader:

> "Brooke, I'm sorry. Not for what happened last night. I'm sorry that neither of us were different. But Brooke--you've put yourself inside women other than me."
>
> "Not since we married," Brooke says. "Unless you want to drag up that one time when we were in Nova Scotia, that girl on old Kenton's trawler, his niece or something. But once she hauled me into her bunk, I couldn't."
>
> Morag stares at him. Then laughs. He looks at her as though she has suddenly become demented.
>
> "I never knew," Morag says. (D, 227-228)

The reader also has never known of this event and is not even aware of when this trip to Nova Scotia took place. Obviously, this section of the story had been omitted from Morag's Memorybank Movies and the reader is unaware of the omission until after the event.

By using this method of scene and ellipsis, explicit, implicit and hypothetical, Laurence creates a novel which is not only realistic but whose form defines both the autobiographically structured novel within the novel and the nature of Morag's intensely personal quest to

understand incidents in her past, to make sense of the present and to embrace the future. This method also controls the tempo of the novel and, hence, section one and five of the novel, "River of Now and Then" and "The Diviners," are slower and more relaxed than the interim sections because the use of ellipses is not so extensive and the story-time omitted during the ellipses is very small.

III

As well as using the temporal relation of scene and ellipsis to direct attention, increase narrative tempo, and negate superfluous story events, Laurence also uses the temporal relation of frequency to achieve these effects. Narrative frequency can be defined as "the relations of frequency (or, more simply, repetition) between the narrative and the diegesis."[51] That is, frequency is concerned with the number of times a given event in the story is related: once, more than once or, if there are a number of similar occurrences, less than once because their narration is subsumed in the narration of collective incidents. These different types of frequency are known as singulative, repetitive and iterative respectively. Chatman defines one more repetition relation which he refers to as "multi-singularly frequency" (SD, 78). This section will deal briefly with singulative and multi-singularly frequency, and examine iterative and repetitive frequency in much greater detail.

Multi-singularly frequency is the narration of an event N times which happens N times. This should be distinguished from "singulative frequency, narrating a single event once, because the effects produced are very different. Genette claims that "the singulative is...defined not by the number of occurrences on both sides [story and discourse] but by the equality of this number."[52] However, when the same type of incident frequently recurs, the narration of this incident with a corresponding frequency produces an effect clearly different from narrating a less repetitive event the corresponding number of times. Simple singulative

frequency is "of course basic and perhaps obligatory, at least in traditional narratives" (SD, 78). In *The Diviners* it is the norm because it supports the scenic mode of fictional presentation in the novel. An event, when it is narrated, is normally presented with equal duration and frequency in the temporal relation between story and discourse. This ensures that the dominant narrative mode is one of "showing" rather than "telling," where dramatic presentation increases the realism of the work. Multi-singulative frequency is rarely used in fiction unless for the purpose of producing a very significant narrative effect.[53] The use of this type of frequency can be harmful to the aesthetic appeal of the novel unless its inclusion is imperative to the rhythm of the novel. In *The Fire-Dwellers*, Laurence could well have related the mundane nature of Stacey's household chores by providing details of such tasks as washing and cooking as they occurred each day. However, Laurence was aware that such a method would create a very uninteresting narrative for her reader and therefore relied on the reader to take such things for granted.[54] No narrative can be comprised solely of singulative (multi- or not) frequency because:

> Part of the existence of art is that it is concerned with form. That is, when you are writing a novel you are being selective. You cannot put down everything that happened in one person's week or day, even, if you went into every single detail. It is simply impossible to do. You have to be selective. If you were writing about somebody's life, that is, in the way that I wrote about Hagar's life, in *The Stone Angel*, she's 90 years old; obviously I'm not putting in a tenth of what happened. I think this is one reason why I am so concerned with form.[55]

When Laurence feels that events are not important enough to warrant singulative frequency but that they should, nevertheless, be acknowledged, she adopts a temporal form which is close to that of summary, *iterative* frequency, where a single narrative utterance takes upon itself several occurrences together of the same event. This form necessarily incorporates a reduction in discourse-time and consequently, the tempo of the novel is increased while the realism is decreased because of the intrusion of the narrator who must perform the task of

summarising. This narrative form does not occur very frequently in *The Diviners* and the scenic presentation of events still remains the pervasive temporal form. The use of iterative frequency is regarded in the same light as the use of ellipsis, acceptable in a fictional creation within a fictional creation, where its existence accommodates the possible scenic narration of events without an unmanageable length of discourse-time. For example, Morag's sojourn with Jules after she has left Brooke is important only in as far as the reader needs to know who Pique's father is and the nature of the relationship between Jules and Morag:

> Morag stays with him [Jules] for just over three weeks. They speak little and make love not at night when he comes home late, but in the mornings, late mornings, when he wakens. He comes home bleak usually....She is overtaken by a profound lethargy, some days, and sleeps as much as fourteen hours. Other days, she rushes around the city, making her preparations for departure. (D, 229)

The use of iterative frequency provides this information with the minimum of effort while, at the same time, it defines the nature of the relationship between Morag and Jules. It is a union of two souls in tune with one another, a union which does not require or demand explanation or analysis for, like divining, it is a gift which needs to be accepted on trust. It is a union which survives a lifetime without the need for articulated commitments and promises. As John Moss explains, the elusive quality of this unusual relationship is beautiful. Commenting on this aspect of the story he remarks:

> The tremendous power of this [Jules'] death comes of the complex, almost mystical relationship Jules and Morag shared, which somehow transcends ordinary passing. Theirs is a story of bonds and affection more enduring than love; of sex more potent that passionate embraces; of a lasting connection between psyches and souls, occasionally complemented by sexual consummation and wordless touching, but needing no such reinforcement to endure.[56]

The use of *repetitive* frequency is the most interesting aspect of this category of the temporal relations between story and discourse in that it seems to define the themes of heritage and inheritance, fact and fiction. Repetitive frequency is similar to the temporal concept of "stretch" in that discourse-time is much greater than story-time because the same event is narrated more than once. That is, "the same event can be told several times not only with stylistic variations...but also with variations in point of view."[57] Rimmon-Kenan places increased emphasis on the disimilarity between repetitions by stating that repetition cannot exist with purity because its re-location in the narrative incorporates an inherent change in perception.[58] This is the element of repetitive frequency that Laurence exploits in *The Diviners*. Its manifestation is primarily in the tales told by Christie, Jules and Morag, and the songs sung by Jules and Pique. For example, Morag and Christie read about the Battle of Bourlon Wood in *The 60th Canadian Field Artillery Battery Book* but this historical account is deemed unsatisfactory by Christie, who takes it upon himself to relate his version of the event:

> Oh Jesus," Christie says, "don't they make it sound like a Sunday school picnic?"
> "What happened, Christie?"
> Christie sits down and rolls a cigarette.
>
> *Christie's Tale of the Battle of Bourlon Wood*
>
> Well, d'you see, it was like the book says but it wasn't like that, also. That is the strangeness. (D, 73)

By relating this event twice, from two different points of view--the historian's and Christie's--Laurence defines the theme of history and legend. What is the truth concerning the past? Is there any such thing as the absolute truth or is it all relative? This nebulous aspect of the past is defined in the presentation of the same incident by different people. The past is different for everyone; the truth exists as a separate entity for each person because of the

different perspectives of the people recalling the event and the fictional nature of memory: "How would Brooke remember those years? Not the same obviously. A different set of memories" (D, 175). The tales are even further removed from their original "truth" because not only are they being narrated from several different perspectives, but these perspectives are then being voiced by Morag, which involves another level of interpretation and fictionalization. But, the mythical aspect of the tales, the means by which they are constantly subjected to personal rather than universal truths, is seen to be relatively unimportant by the close of the novel because story-telling is a means by which one is given a notion of one's heritage. For Morag and Jules, and ultimately Pique, the tales must be their reality because they give them a sense of their ancient ties. The tales passed by word of mouth must necessarily contain more truth for them than the accounts recorded in history books. Morag comes to realize this when she recounts tales to Pique. Only when she herself has become a tale-teller does Morag understand the personal truth inherent in Christie's tales and the sense of belonging they instilled within her:

> When [Christie] used to tell [Morag] the tales about Piper Gunn, at first, I used to believe every word. Then later I didn't believe a word of them, and thought he'd made them up out of whole cloth....But later still, I realized they'd been taken from things that happened, and who's to know what really happened? So I started believing in them again, in a different way. (D, 300)

Not only does this repetitive frequency establish the nature of one's heritage, it also defines the essence of the future in terms of the past and the present. Morag makes a legend out of Christie for her daughter in order to give Pique a sense of her maternal roots, and Jules creates songs of his ancestors which provide Pique with a knowledge of her paternal roots, the Métis part of her being with which she is so unfamiliar.

The episode of the fire at the Tonnerre shack is the most frequently retold episode in the entire novel.[59] First experienced by Morag, it is retold to Jules and then Jules retells it in a number of songs. During a visit to McConnell's Landing, Jules tells Pique about the fire in

the valley three times:

> Lazarus, he lost some of those children,
> Some to fire, some to the city's heart of stone.
> Maybe when they went, was the worst time that was sent.
> For then he really knew he was alone.
> . . . . . .
> Pique raises her head.
> "I didn't know it was like that."
> "There's a lot you don't know," Jules says harshly. "Your mother didn't tell you that when my sister died in that fire, with her kids, she was stoned out of her head with home brew, on account of she didn't give a fuck whether she lived or died, and she had her reasons."
> "No. I just heard about the fire. I know about that. Do you have to tell me again? I don't want to hear it."
> . . . . . .
> "Yeh, I guess I have to tell you it, again."
> . . . . . .
> My sister's death
> Fire and snow -
> Burned out her sorrow
> In the valley below.
> My sister's eyes
> Fire and snow -
> What they were telling
> You'll never know. (D, 349-350)

In this manner, repetitive frequency serves to emphasize a crucial event and to define the nature of truth, the ever-continuing presence of the past in the present, and the necessity to be given a sense of your place in the world, to understand your roots in order that you may understand yourself. And, in the same way that Morag and Jules, like Christie and Lazarus before them, immortalise their forbears and provide a heritage for Pique through their tales and songs, Pique, harbinger of death and continuer of life, will do the same with Morag and Jules in the oral tradition of songs. The story tellers will become legends themselves in the hands of the "Inheritors."

The snapshots also present instances of repetitive frequency. The set of snapshots that present Morag as a young child in section one of the novel are similar in composition to those that present Pique as a young child in section four of the novel. Although the two sets of

snapshots described do not present exactly the same subject, their "substance of expression" is similar. Both snapshots capture images of a child and her parents with echoes of the first set strongly apparent in the second set.

SNAPSHOT:

> The child [Morag] sits on the front steps of the house. She has lost the infant plumpness which presumably she once had, but she is built stockily, at age about two. Her hair is straight and dark, like her father's. She looks grave, although not unhappy. Thoughtful, perhaps. She wears a plain cotton dress with puff sleeves and a sash, and she or someone has tucked it modestly around her knees. (D, 6-7)

> *Snapshot:* Pique age one, sits on the front steps of the house on Begonia Road. Her sturdy legs are stretched to their full length in front of her, and her feet are encased in new white shoes, high around her ankles so she will learn to walk steadily. She wears a yellow dress, very short, patterned with butterflies green and mauve and blue. Her straight black hair is still not very long and is brushed carefully for the picture. Her round face is unsmiling but not unhappy. Her large dark eyes look openly and with trust at the person behind the camera, namely her mother. (D, 258)

This form of repetitive frequency, where similarities are evident although the incidents being described are not exactly the same, indicates the multifarious nature of time in life. History repeats itself because the past intrudes into the present and the layers of temporal experience cannot be severed; they exist simultaneously. It is through this self-perpetuating aspect of experience that Morag is able to understand the quality of her past. She understands, for example, that just as Jules wants to see his daughter but cannot bear for her to see him, so too did Morag's parents want and not want to see her: "They had wanted to see her; but they had not wanted her to see them. The gaps in understanding--the long-ago child wondering what was being kept from her, wondering why they did not want to see her" (D, 365). History repeats itself and its cyclical nature brings with it understanding for some and problems for others. At the close of the novel, Pique is embarking on the quest for a divination of one's self--the quest which Morag has just completed.

In summary, Laurence's rendering of discourse-time in terms of order, duration and frequency, functions to define the content of the novel. This aspect of discourse is one which Laurence finds extremely difficult but which, in her last novel, she has conquered. In *The Diviners* she has managed to counter all the problems narrative time poses; problems with which she is always wrestling in her fiction.

> How can one even begin to convey this sense of time? What parts of the time-span should be conveyed? These are questions which I always find enormously troubling and before beginning any piece of work, I tend to brood quite a long time (clock-wise) on these things.[60]

By using chronological analepses running alongside the time present; inversed tenses; notable *amorce* and prolepses; reiterative frequency; and scene and ellipsis, Laurence creates a form which defines the nature by which the past dictates the present which in turn becomes the past which dictates the present of the future. The form makes clear the mythical nature of the past, the mysteries it holds which can only be recalled as an interpretation of an event, not as it existed in the purity of the NOW of its being. These temporal relations between story and discourse also demarcate the nature of heritage, its importance, its nature and its influence, and the nature of the creative processes by which Morag finally understands her heritage and hence, herself.

NOTES

[1] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, p. 44.

[2] The ensuing discussion concerning the temporal structure of *The Diviners* relies primarily on the work of Gérard Genette (1972) as this forms the basis for most temporal narrative theory subsequent to this date. However, the terms "story-time" and "discourse-time" (as proposed by Chatman) will be employed in preference to Genette's terms, "story-time" and "text-time," to maintain terminological continuity in this work. The use of these terms does not indicate an ideological digression from Genette's work; rather, it reflects an attempt at simplification, for Chatman's study of temporal relations is based upon Genette's pioneering study, and the different terms do not signify divergent theoretical stances. Genette is most useful in this context as he is "a critic who is almost militantly a low structuralist" (Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, p. 158) because he emphasizes the need for the exercise of commonsense and he considers the application of theory to literary works. Also, the text Genette uses as the basis for his study, Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, is similar to *The Diviners* for both works focus on a character-artist "learning how to see his world clearly and understand it, how to structure his vision of the world in a way that will enable him to write the book we are reading." (Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, pp. 158, 163). Hence, the foundations of enquiry into the temporal concerns of *The Diviners* are built on Genette's study of order (*ordre*), duration (*durée*), and frequency (*fréquence*) as defined in *Narrative Discourse*.

[3] Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, p. 78. Emphasis mine.

[4] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, p. 45.

[5] Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in the Modern Novel," 1945; rpt. in *Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction 1920-1951: Representing the Achievement of Modern American and British Critics*, ed. John W. Aldridge (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952), p. 43.

[6] Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," p. 60.

[7] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, p. 44.

[8] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 34.

[9] Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 36.

[10] Margaret Laurence, "Time and the Narrative Voice," in *The Narrative Voice: Short Stories and Reflections by Canadian Authors*, ed. John Metcalf (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Ltd., 1972), p. 126.

[11] Patricia Morley, *Margaret Laurence* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1981), p. 120.

[12] Clara Thomas, "The Wild Garden and the Manawaka World," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 2 (1976), 402-403.

[13] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 35.

[14] See Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 39.

[15] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 40.

[16] The incidence of anachrony is very limited in *A Bird in the House* because of the internal structuring of short stories. *The Fire-Dwellers*, however, incorporates a number of analepses, but they are all brief and decidedly subservient to the "first narrative." *A Jest of God* only possesses one temporal digression which occurs at the beginning of chapter eleven where Rachel is recalling, in the past tense, her experiences in the hospital. This episode is anachronously narrated as it constitutes the climax of Rachel's emotional development. From this point on we are presented with a Rachel who has fused her states of existence in to the single of state of being for which she has yearned--"*I am the mother now*" (JG, 184).

[17] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 49-50.

[18] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 48.

[19] Laurence, "Time and the Narrative Voice," p. 126.

[20] This sense of "historical time" as demarcated by the novel's form, is also reinforced by the symbolic use of water in the novel:

"Water is a life symbol at the beginning of the Bible as the spirit of God moves upon the surface of the waters in the story of Creation. The Old Testament associates water with purification, birth and healing while in the New Testament--especially in the Fourth Gospel--water symbolises generation and revival of life. The use of this symbol in *The Diviners* is inaugurated by the "River of Now and Then," a symbol of individual and collective memory which is the essence of Mrs. Laurence's concept of historical time."
Miriam A. Lancaster, "Jacob and the Angel: A Study of Biblical Influences in the Works of Margaret Laurence," M.A. Thesis Victoria 1977, p. 95.

[21] Laurence, "Ten Years' Sentences," pp. 13-14.

[22] Moss, *Sex and Violence*, p. 80.

[23] Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," p. 56.

[24] Rosemary Sullivan, "An Interview with Margaret Laurence," in *A Place To Stand On: Essays by and about Margaret Laurence*, Western Canadian Literary Document Series IV, ed., George Woodcock, gen. ed., Shirley Neuman (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983), p. 76.

[25] Henry James, "Preface to 'The Ambassadors'" 1909; rpt. in *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed., David Lodge (London: Longma. Group Ltd., 1972), p. 54. *Ficelle* is James' term for an artificial narrative 'device'.

[26] Phyllis Bruce, "The Diviners," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *The Canadian Forum*, May/Jun. 1974, p. 15.

[27] Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," pp. 56-57.

[28] A discussion of tense is included in this section dealing with narrative order because, as Genette explains (borrowing Todorov's definition) the problem of tense is one "in which the relationship between the time of the story and the time of the discourse is expressed" and "the temporal distortions" which occur are "infidelities to the chronological order of events," *Narrative Discourse*, p. 29.

[29] I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1948), p. 103.

[30] See Gom, "Laurence and the use of Memory," p. 48.

[31] The use of the preterite tense in the present functions in a manner similar to the incorporation of "free" style in the novel's speech acts. Although the preterite tense is a past tense, it nevertheless gives the illusion of a present tense. By using this verb form to indicate the time in which action takes place in the present, Laurence is able to inverse the normal tense constructions without appearing awkward. As Lodge observes, the preterite tense "tends to create the illusion of 'the present' in which the characters act, especially when it is combined with diectic adverbs of time, such as 'now', 'yesterday' etc. which logically should only be used with the present tense," "Form in Fiction," p. 5.

[32] The use of the present tense to narrate the novel's memorybank movies is in keeping with the cinematic nature of these *ficelles* (discussed in the following chapter) because film necessarily has to be in the present tense, it cannot use the preterite tense to render experiences (SD, 84).

[33] Moss, *Sex and Violence*, p. 80.

[34] Morley, *Margaret Laurence*, p. 204.

[35] Laurence, "Time and the Narrative Voice," p. 127.

[36] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 67.

[37] Ronald Labonte, "Disclosing and Touching: Revaluating the Manawaka world," *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, No. 27 (1980), p. 179.

[38] Clara Thomas, "The Wild Garden and the Manawaka World," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 22 (1976), 404.

[39] *Frequency* is also used but this will be discussed in the third section of the chapter.

[40] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 35.

[41] Jonathan Raban, *The Technique of Modern Fiction: Essays in Practical Criticism* (London: Edward Arnold's Publishers Ltd., 1968), p. 57.

[42] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 86.

[43] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 88.

[44] As the previously presented argument regarding "showing" and "telling" infers, the realism of "showing" requires a parity of story-time and discourse-time.

[45] These narrative tales should not be regarded as digressions because such a stance presupposes the existence of a main narrative. The tales are an integral part of the narrative and serve to increase, rather than decrease, the narrative tempo.

[46] Booth, *Rhetoric*, p. 44. Here Booth is presenting, and upholding, an argument of Henry James.

[47] See Bowering's article "That Fool of a Fear: Notes on *A Jest of God*."

[48] For an analysis of definite and indefinite explicit ellipsis see Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 106-108.

[49] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 108.

[50] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 109.

[51] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 113.

[52] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 115.

[53] The example Chatman cites is Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie*, SD, p.79.

[54] Laurence explains why she decided not to record the mundane details of Stacey's daily existence:

"I was often overcome with the absolute impossibility of getting enough of it [details of Stacey's daily existence] into a novel, while at the same time leaving out much of the strictly domestic detail....[which] was not likely to make very thrilling reading. Maybe I did not put enough of this detail in--one reviewer made the comment that Stacey never does anything but sit around drinking gin and reading women's magazines. One wanted to ask him who the hell he thought got the meals and washed the dishes in the MacAindra house."
Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," pp. 59-60.

[55] Laurence, in an interview with Bernice Lever, "Margaret Laurence," p. 8.

[56] Moss, *Sex and Violence*, p. 79.

[57] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 115.

[58] Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, pp. 56-57.

[59] The fire in the Tonnerre shack is first mentioned in "The Loons," one of the short stories in *A Bird in the House*. Taken as a whole, the Manawaka series contains a great number of repetitions of this sort. The departure of the Cameron Highlanders to Dieppe, for instance, is described in every work in the Manawaka series. Such repetitions can also be seen as a form of extended prolepsis, where central events in a novel are alluded to in a previous work. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine these two devices, repetition and prolepsis, in terms of the Manawaka series as a whole.

[60] Laurence, "Time and the Narrative Voice," p. 126.

Chapter V

MODERNISM

> Novelistic "reality" has always been fictive. It is ordered and patterned in a way that life experience rarely, if ever, is. Yet it is a paradigmatic order. One of John Barth's characters even claims that "Art is as natural an artifice as Nature; the truth of Fiction is that Fact is fantasy; the made-up story is a model of the world."[1]

In 1969 Laurence claimed that one of the major changes in her work over the previous ten years was that she had "become more concerned with form in writing than [she] used to be."[2] Her last work, *The Diviners*, exists as Laurence's fullest expression of this concern. It is her most experimental and ambitious work in terms of its "fictional form." As well as manipulating creative forms of narrative voice, point of view and temporal relations to structure the communication processes of the novel, Laurence employs a number of subordinate narrative devices, *ficelles*, to define thematic content and extend the limits of the novel's "substance of expression." Communicated by an artist-narrator, the novel is also extremely self-reflective. It is concerned with its structural composition and conscious of its artistic existence. The self-conscious nature of the narrative functions as the extreme manifestation of Laurence's fusion of form and content. In this narcissistic narrative, form itself becomes a part of content. As a result of these structural complexities, *The Diviners* may be termed a modernistic novel. When this was suggested to Laurence, she agreed emphatically:

> *Fabre:* You should get many reverberations from *The Diviners* which, maybe, haven't come yet because it is your most modernistic book so far.
> *Laurence:* Undoubtedly.[3]

Before continuing, the term "modernism" requires definition, it is a formidable task. Modernism is constantly referred to as a term which defies definition. David Lodge's article, "The Language of Modernist Fiction: Metaphor and Metonymy," provides one of the most comprehensive explications of this term. Lodge identifies seven features of modernism, some or all of which are found in each modernist narrative: experimental or innovatory form; preoccupation with consciousness; introspection; open-ended construction; prominent modes of aesthetic ordering; employment of single, limited point of view, or multiple viewpoints; and complex handling of time.[4] I have explored a number of these features of *The Diviners* in previous chapters. In this chapter, I use "modernist" to describe *The Diviners* in terms of the first and third features; that is, the innovative, self-conscious form of the novel. The discussion of innovative forms will focus on the labelled devices of snapshots, memorybank movies and innerfilms (tales will be discussed as an aspect of the novel's self-consciousness), and on the typographical arrangement of lists and dramatic conversations. A number of these devices are also of significance in the discussion on self-consciousness. The self-conscious aspect of the novel is more difficult to qualify. This is because, as an aspect of modernist fiction, self-consciousness has only received detailed critical attention in the last ten years. Linda Hutcheon's work in this area, *Narcissistic Narrative: the metafictional paradox*, provides one of the few critical studies of this narrative feature. Hutcheon defines self-conscious fiction as "in some dominant and constitutive way, self-referring or autorepresentational: it provides within itself, a commentary on its own status as fiction and as language, and also, on its own processes of production and reception."[5] This chapter will focus on Morag's status as an artist; Morag's fascination with language and the lost languages of the dispossessed; the fictional status of the narrative and its internalised autobiography; and the role of the reader in such a self-conscious narrative.

Both structural innovation and self-conscious awareness have been present in the novel since the inception of the genre. *The Diviners* is a modernist narrative because of the *degree* to which these features are present.[6] These features define the theme of myth and reality and

extend the discoursive possibilities of the medium of the novel. The self-conscious form of *The Diviners* serves two functions: firstly, it not only *defines*, it ultimately *becomes* the content; secondly, it synthesizes the "whole communication situation."

I

In *The Diviners*, the subordinate narrative devices which Laurence used received much criticism because of their obtrusive nature.[7] By examining the key statements made against these devices and then indicating their development from the other Manawaka works, I will show that Laurence used these obtrusive devices to define the novel's content. It will be made clear that the narrative devices serve two key functions which are intimately related: firstly, they define the thematic concern of the co-existence and fusion of fact and fiction; secondly, they broaden the novel's "substance of expression," thereby promoting the longevity of the genre of the novel.

One reviewer recognised that "essentially, in terms of form, *The Diviners* represents a major experiment, a radical advance from the other Manawaka books."[8] However, such an appraisal was the exception rather than the rule; the use of *ficelles* in the narrative evoked a predominantly negative critical response. The consensus of opinion, when an opinion was expressed, was that the division of narrative modes under specific headings such as "snapshot," "innerfilm" and "memorybank movie" marred the work and provided very little in terms of narrative content. For example, Robert Fulford expressed grave disappointment at Laurence's lack of sophistication: "The first time I read *The Diviners* I could see hardly anything in it but the flaws."[9] Brita Mickleburgh felt insulted by the slur on her reading skills: "Unfortunately, Laurence has chosen to label the accounts from [Morag's] past with headings like "Snapshot" or "Memorybank Movie" which are at the best superfluous, and at the worst, artificial and distracting. Readers who are accustomed to the worlds of James

Joyce and Virginia Woolf can surely cope with the movement of a plot which alternates directly between past and present."[10] And Michael Peterman, despite his praise of Laurence's skill in this work, objected to the novel's narrative devices: "Clearly, [*The Diviners*] is Laurence's most technically and thematically complicated novel, however awkward or obtrusive one may find such devices as the "Snapshot" and "Memorybank Movie."[11] What critics fail to notice is that the incorporation of such narrative devices in the discourse is indicative not of Laurence's inability to integrate her narrative material in a more fluid manner, but of a decision to impose a self-conscious, artificial order on the narrative experience to demarcate narrative content. Thus, Moss misses the point when he claims that "artistically, [*The Diviners*] is flawed, inferior here and there, to *The Fire-Dwellers*, *A Jest of God* or, her most critically applauded novel, *The Stone Angel*; lacking their overall coherence, their neat tucked-in shapes."[12] Laurence does not want to produce a "neat tucked-in" novel; on the contrary, her aim is to produce a deliberately obtrusive and artificial narrative. As a result, the narrative draw attentions to itself as narrative in order to establish the novel's inner fictional structure and to analyse the craft of fiction.

The narrative devices criticized in *The Diviners* are not peculiar to that work alone; they are merely extreme manifestations of unusual narrative forms Laurence used in the earlier Manawaka fiction. The modernistic status of the text is achieved not by the devices alone, but by their degree of audibility. For instance, the memorybank movies are present in *The Fire-Dwellers* but their existence is heralded by a typographical arrangement rather than by a heading. These analeptic occurrences, as experienced by Stacey, appear in sections which are indented to the right. This draws attention to the sporadic, chaotic flow of images without drawing too much attention to the actual form itself.[13] Similarly, the innerfilms of Morag's fantasies and desires are again descendents of typographical arrangements in *The Fire-Dwellers* and, also, in this instance, *A Jest of God*: Stacey's fantasies are indicated not by a label but by italicised print; Rachel's, by a single dash at the beginning of each fantasized section.[14] The methods used in the earlier works were not regarded as particularly innovative because they had

been used extensively by a number of authors prior to Laurence. Laurence was aware of this degree of conventionality. In "Gadgetry and Growing," she comments: "nothing in my fourth novel, *The Fire-Dwellers*, is really new in terms of general form in the contemporary novel."[15] In *The Stone Angel*, narrative sections of such a specific nature are not identified at all; Hagar's memories and fantasies are allowed to drift freely in and out of the fabric of the narrative. The narrative devices in *The Diviners*, therefore, are indicative not of a digression from the structure of Laurence's previous work, but of a progression which increases the narcissistic nature of the structure. The major difference between the devices used in *The Diviners* and those used in the previous Manawaka works is their intentional prominence. The devices draw attention to themselves by the self-conscious act of labelling. Laurence's decision to emphasize the artificiality of her narrative structure is not a result of her inability to perfect natural transitions between narrative events nor of her belief that the reader needs guidance through the different levels of discourse. These assertions are verified by the complex narrative structures of the previous Manawaka novels, which are, on the whole, both fluid and demanding. In *The Diviners*, the obtrusive nature of the narrative devices functions as an essential aspect of the structuring of a narrative that defines narrative content.

As already established in the preceding chapter, *The Diviners* argues that fact and fiction are inseparable. "Historical" texts are not factual accounts of past events, they are simply *versions* of these events.

Laurence uses innerfilms, snapshots and memorybank movies to define her thematic concern with the relation between fact and fiction. Innerfilms have already been discussed in the preceeding chapter where they were shown to be fantasy projections which combined fiction with future fact. This device need not be discussed in this context a second time. The snapshots appear in the opening section of the novel and their form and content prepare the reader for the memorybank movies. Morag comments at length on them. Before describing them she explains that she keeps the snapshots "not for what they show but for what is hidden in them" (D, 7). The ensuing vignettes serve to illustrate, very starkly, that Morag's accounts

are a mixture of fact and fiction. The reader is able to identify the essence of each snapshot and its existence outside of Morag's poetic embellishments. For example, the third snapshot is described initially in factual terms; however, the second paragraph of the commentary is primarily a product of Morag's imagination, a combination of real and fictitious memories:

> The child, three years old, is standing behind the heavy-wire-netted farm gate, peering out. The person with the camera is standing unseen on the other side. The child is laughing, acting up, play-acting goofily, playing to an audience of one, the picture-taker.
>
> What is not recorded in the picture is that after Morag's father has taken this picture, he asks if she'd like to have him help her climb the gate. Her father never minds helping her. He always has time. (D, 7)

As John Wainwright attests, the snapshots contain facts that are the foreground of fiction.[16] These narrative devices instruct the reader how he should assimilate information in the memorybank movies. He should be conscious of the narrator's relation to events and heed her warning: "All this is crazy of course, and quite untrue. Or maybe true and maybe not" (D, 7). Such instruction is necessary because the truth implicit in the novel's memorybank movies has even greater nebulosity due to the dependence of these sections on memory and on artisitic creation. The memorybank movies constitute the sum of Morag's "private and fictional words."

As already suggested in the previous chapter, the obtrusive nature of the "labels" for these narrative devices draws attention to the artificial structure of a novel within a novel and the role of Morag as creator of her life, past to present, in novel form.[17] By labelling the sections of analepses "memorybank movies" Laurence identifies them as chapters in Morag's work. Not all readers of *The Diviners* agree that the memorybank movies are chapters in the novel that Morag is writing. Some critics do not recognize the internal fictional structure at all;[18] some seem rather surprised by such a proposition;[19] while others see the whole novel as Morag's fictional creation and do not believe that a frame narrative exists.[20] However, the deliberate isolation of memorybank movies with their inversed tense structure and maturing

perspective indicates that these sections are to be regarded as autonomous within a greater external structure. As Cooper observes in her article "Images of Closure in *The Diviners*," the numerous allusions to "work" before and after the memorybank movie sections which identify these episodes as Morag's fictional creation:

> In Donald Cameron's interview with Laurence, while she is working on *The Diviners*, she affirms, "When I say 'work,' I only mean writing." And in *The Diviners* "the only meaning the word work had for her was writing" (p. 98). Abrupt interruptions of the movies and a return to the present are all always interruptions of Morag's writing.[21]

Although Cooper's argument that Laurence equates "work" with "writing" is valid, her assertion that present tense sections indicate "*interruptions* of Morag's writing" is too sweeping. The past tense passages do exist in this capacity at times (see for example D, 286), but there are a number of occasions when such passages take place first thing in the morning. For example, in the opening passage of "Halls of Sion," Morag is just beginning her work for the day, not stopping it:

> Morag sat at the table in the kitchen, with a notebook in front of her and a ballpoint pen in her hand. Not writing. Looking at the river. Getting started each morning was monstrous, an almost impossible exercise of will, in which finally the will was never enough, and it had to be begun on faith. (D, 137)

Shifts from the memorybank movies to the NOW of the discourse, often indicate a temporal flow rather than an abrupt interruption. Also, the transition from time present to time past does not always herald an immediate act of writing. Often, the situation in the time present is not conducive to creative writing even though memorybank movies are introduced. For example, just prior to "Memorybank Movie: Raj Mataj" it is late evening in the time present and Morag is drinking whiskey in her dimly lit kitchen:

> Morag poured some more whiskey and sat looking out the window, with only one small lamp on in the kitchen, so she could see the night river with stars floating like watercandles in it. No sounds except the sometime shushing of wind through the light-leafed willows and occasionally the ghostfluttering of the wings of a flicker, hunting the moths that were clustering around the house windows, moths that always insanely wanted in, however dim the light inside. (D, 174-75)

Morag is not likely to start writing in such a situation. However, the constant references to work and writing in the time present indicate that this time sequence is responsible for the act of creation; it is not a part of the creation. The act of creation taking place in the time present is necessarily Morag's autobiography because, as Morag herself explains, the work is extremely personal and not necessarily intended for publication (D, 80 & 287). Leona Gom supports this reading of the novel's structure when she claims that Morag's "novel unfolds for her even as Laurence's unfolds for the reader. And Laurence gives us strong hints throughout *The Diviners* that the novel on which Morag is working is actually a verbal transcription of the movies she is playing. Thus, movies actually become chapters in Morag's novel."[22]

Memorybank movies exist as personal truth because they are reconstructions of past events, but as chapters in Morag's autobiography, they are comprised of her "private and fictional words" and are therefore a fusion of fact and fantasy. The labelling of these narrative events ensures that the reader understands the imaginative nature of the past events. As Phyllis Bruce points out, Morag's "struggles to reconstruct [the past] must inevitably become a blend of *dichtung und wahrheit*, poetry and truth."[23] In labelling Morag's reconstruction of past events, Laurence ensures that the form of the novel establishes the personal nature of truth. Even the labels themselves help to synthesize fact and fantasy. For example, "Memorybank Movie: Once Upon A Time There Was" (D, 11) gives an account of Morag's experiences at the time of her parents' death. Facts exist in this account: a lady called Mrs. Pearl looks after Morag; Morag's parents die of polio; Morag is sent to stay with Christie and Prin Logan; and so on. The title of the memorybank movie, however, has a fairy tale quality indicating fantasy rather than fact. The overall effect is an awareness that events

recorded in the memorybank movies are a mixture of fact and fantasy; the theme of historical truth versus personal truth is realised. The segregation of these sections from the frame narrative also emphasizes their status as fictional re-creations of past events. If they had remained a part of the frame narrative as similar events did in *The Stone Angel*, their fictional status would not be defined and Morag's creative function in the narrative would be difficult to assess. As it stands, "[n]arrative reveals structure; and structure, theme and vision."[24] Laurence's intent is to utilize the form of the novel to define the novel's content. The artificial structure designates the creative element of the past. It is artificial because it exists as a representation of facts within art, Morag's past as fictionalised in her autobiography.

When using all three subordinate narrative devices, innerfilms, snapshots and memorybank movies, Laurence imposes order on an essentially disordered aspect of life. The obtrusive devices function like the unnaturally ordered temporal relations discussed in the last chapter; they impose form on a formless existence. The "artificial and distracting" narrative devices follow the modernist tradition of presenting chaotic reality within structured art.[25] Laurence also uses innovative typography in this manner. The arrangement of words in the form of "lists" is especially revealing in terms of presenting ordered disorder as well as defining narrative content. In *The Diviners*, lists appear unheralded by a label but are conspicuous because of their visual composition on the page. Items in these lists are ordered in so far as similar items are presented in groups on different lines and each item or group of items is easily identified. On the other hand, the punctuation in these sections consists solely of double spacings in place of full stops. Hence, the lists contain order and define Morag's attempt to understand the chaos of life in which she is subsumed. For example, the disarray of the Nuisance Grounds is conveyed in the following list:

> a rusty car with no tires and one door off
> mountains of empty tin cans, some with labels still on Best Pie Pumpkin
> moth-eaten sweaters and ragged coats
> a whole bunch of bedsprings
> green mould like fur on things

rotten fruits oranges bananas gone bad soft black
FLIES on them
a car axle but no car
maple syrup tins with holes in them
saucepans and kettles also with holes
a sewing machine with no wheel or handle
broken bottles (beer milk rye and baby)
more rotten stuff cabbages phew
a cracked toilet bowl
wornout shoes some bulging where bunions have been
boxes of not-used rubber frenchies she knows what they're for Eva told her
(why thrown out? holes in the rubber is why; that'd fool somebody ha ha)
a pile of clothes and old newspapers, **BURNING**
and stench sour sickly sweet rotten many smells **STINKS**
and a **ZILLION** crawling flies (D, 58)

By using the list to describe the Nuisance Grounds, Laurence has succeeded in portraying the vast, untouchable natu[illegible] the dump. Such a place is able to pervade a person's consciousness by gaining access through almost every sensory channel. Morag attempts to overcome her feelings of fascination and intrigue concerning the the dump by objectifying its contents in a list. The list makes apparent the desolate atmosphere of the place and its fascinating, repulsive enormity as perceived by the young Morag. By experimenting with typography, Laurence has created a form which defines content.

Laurence also uses lists to expand the possibilities of a novel's discourse by presenting aspects of its story in new, exciting, more effective ways. Unusual typography has been an integral part of Laurence's fiction since the publication of *A Jest of God*, and *The Diviners* is no exception; here Laurence uses italics for sections of interior monologue, bold print for signs and a question mark for *Skinner's Tale of Dieppe*. In *The Diviners*, Laurence expands her previous use of typography to provide even more visual variety on the written page. In her latest novel, Laurence provides a combination of narrative devices and arrangements to provide visual variety not usually encountered in narrative discourse: snapshots, memorybank movies, innerfilms, lists devoid of punctuation, letters, postcards, dramatic dialogues, songs, poems, tales, children's rhymes and chants, book reviews, hymns, posters, epitaphs on tombstones. Sherrill Grace argues that as "a contrast to the main narrative [these devices] provide variety

and vitality."[26] The narrative devices not only define the artificial internal structuring of the protagonist's "private and fictional words" within the frame narrative and impose ordered form on disordered content, they also provide a visual stimulus which Laurence feels is necessary for the longevity of the novel as a generic form: "People have been saying the novel is dead for a long long time. As far as I'm concerned it's still extremely alive. It simply finds new forms."[27] The use of narrative *ficelles* and unusual typography in *The Diviners* is not gimmicky, a means of injecting something new into a narrative which does not demand that particular device or devices; on the contrary, it is an attempt to extend the visual possibilities of this generic form.

Narrative devices and typography also integrate the novel's "substance of expression" by combining the three media of literature, motion pictures and, to a lesser extent, theatre. Laurence feels that visual variety and innovative modes of communication are both a result of, and a reaction against, the twentieth century medium of motion pictures.[28] The novel becomes more cinematic in form because of the influence of the cinema and of the need to satisfy a reading audience whose expectations have been influenced to a large extent by motion pictures.[29] Laurence uses snapshots, memorybank movies, innerfilms, acts and dramatic conventions to add a cinematic, and partly theatric, dimension to the novel; the names of these devices alone are an indication of their cinematic and theatric nature.

The extensive use of film imagery in *The Diviners* constantly conveys an idea of memory as essentially cinematic: "And it began happening again, again, as it had been doing for years, and perhaps the film would never end until she did" (D, 140). When recollecting past events Morag functions in the same manner as a film editor; she imposes order on experiences that are essentially scenic in nature: "The films were beginning again. Sneakily unfolding inside her head. She could not even be sure of their veracity, nor guess how many times they had been refilmed, a scene deleted here, another added there. But they were on again, a new season of the old films" (D, 23). To capture this experience in *The Fire-Dwellers*, Laurence tried a technique of "voice and pictures." Concerning narrative

technique in *The Fire-Dwellers*, Laurence remarks:

> Finally the form and material [of *The Fire-Dwellers*] sorted themselves out. I was, I think, considerably influenced, although subconsciously, by years of TV watching. I kept thinking, "What I want to get is the effect of voices and pictures--just voices and pictures." I became obsessed with this notion, as it seemed to convey the quality of lives I wanted to try and get across. It was only much later that I realized that "voices and pictures" is only another--and to my mind, better--way of saying "audio-visual." Except, of course, that both voices and pictures in a novel have to be conveyed only through the printed word-although in the future this may change, and some day I would dearly love to write a novel which was illustrated in some kind of bizarre way by a really good artist. In any event, I wanted the pictures--that is, the descriptions--whether in outer life or dreams or memories, to be as sharp and instantaneous as possible, and always brief, because it seemed to me that this is the way--or at least one way--life is perceived, in short sharp visual images which leap away from us even as we look at them.[30]

Laurence could not use the same technique in *The Diviners* because the form would be too disjointed for the ordered content of the latest novel. It would not serve to define the conscious organization of memories into an autobiography, nor the rationalization process deliberately undertaken by Morag, nor the obsession that she seems to have for order in the time present. A more rigidly ordered cinematic form than "short sharp visual images" is required if an image of "voices and pictures" is to be conveyed while the form functions simultaneously as a vehicle for the definition of the work's fictional content.

The snapshots establish the cinematic nature of the discourse as a whole and introduce the more complex forms of the subsequent innerfilms and memorybank movies. Each snapshot presents a single image. The composition of these snapshots is a simple precursor of the proleptic innerfilms. The innerfilms present a collection of isolated images in an abrupt, choppy manner. Such style is suggestive of a collection of fleeting, sharp glimpses:

> Morag living in her own apartment in the city a small apartment but lovely deep-pile rug (blue) and a beige chesterfield suite the thick upholstered kind large radio in a walnut cabinet lots of bookshelves a fireplace that really works (D, 101)

However, the snapshots are of the past and better delineate the nature of the analeptic sections, a succession of images from the past presented in chronological order, which constitute the novel's inner fictional autobiography. The individual snapshots are similar to single "frames" of a film. Action is captured by a camera and frozen in time; there is no indication of events before or after this point in time. The snapshots, therefore, present a single visual image of a time in the past; a natural foundation for the novel's memorybank movies which present a succession of visual images. Each memorybank movie is structured as if it were a series of snapshots linked together. The Memorybank movies develop from the snapshots in the same manner as motion pictures developed from experiments in instantaneous photography.[31] Laurence introduces the reader very gently to the complex structure of the memorybank movie by first introducing him to the relatively simple snapshots.

Each memorybank movie follows the next in chronological sequence, separated by a "jump" in time or a section of the narative in the time present. This temporal format can be seen as both cinematic and theatric. As defined in the previous chapter, the temporal composition of the memorybank movies is "scene" and "ellipsis." Here, the story events are presented in each memorybank movie as though they were a number of self-contained incidents projected on a screen, a series of consecutive frames in the mode of "snapshots." Where the fluidity of the discourse is disrupted by ellipsis, the temporal dislocation is similar to a "cut" in a film. That is, the transitions between the scenic memorybank movies are achieved in a manner similar to transitions between temporally discordant frames. The effect of the memorybank movies as a whole is similar to that of *montage* in the cinema.[32] But, Laurence's technique of scene and ellipsis is related not only to cinema but also to theatre. The sharp division between memorybank movies which heralds a temporal, and usually a spatial, shift, is similar to both editing a film and dropping a curtain in the theatre (during which time the set is changed and the audience is prepared for a temporal shift in the action). The relationship between the curtain in the theatre, the editor in motion pictures, and the novelist in literature is outlined by Ralph Stephenson:

> From scene to scene, editing must establish the change in time and place as the story requires; it resembles the changing of sets in the theatre, though changes in the cinema are far more frequent and are more like the chapters or paragraphs of a novel.[33]

Chatman provides a very simple definition of "cut" which will help focus the analogy between *The Diviners* and film with respect to uses of scene and ellipsis and successive discordant frames: "'cut' [is] the transition between shots linked together by a single join, giving the impression during projection that the first shot is suddenly and instantaneously displaced by the second. ('Cut' is precisely what the editor does: he snips the film exactly at the edge of the appropriate frame of shot A and at the beginning of shot B, and glues them together)" (SD, 71). This cinematic method of presenting the duration of events in which story-time equals discourse-time and theny story-time equals N (where N is unknown but greater than zero) and discourse-time equals zero is, according to Chatman, the norm with modern novelists (SD, 75).

The incorporation of 'conversations' and 'acts' in the novel further injects a theatric flavour into the discourse and serves to broaden the novel's "substance of expression." These narrative devices also help define narrative content by reinforcing the protagonist's perception of events. For example, *Conversation Overheard from the Teacher's Room All of Them in There Gabbing at Recess* is presented in the form of a dramatic play (this is similar to the structure of Morag's conversations with CPT, which are described by Carrington as "miniature plays"[34]):

Miss McMurtrie: oh, Skinner's bad enough but at least he's away from school half the time and not much missed by me I can tell you but Morag never misses a day sometimes I wonder what on earth I'm going to do with her you find her same Ethel
Miss Plowright: how do you mean exactly
Miss McMurtrie: well one day she's boisterous and noisy chewing gum in class whispering drawing dirty pictures *you* know and then heavens the next day she'll be so sullen not speaking to a soul and you can't get a word out of her she won't answer just sits there looking sullen if you take my meaning
Miss Plowright: oh yes yes oh yes she was just like that in my class I always thought you know maybe she wasn't well maybe not quite *all*

there

. . . . . .

Miss McMurtrie: ...I think you're wrong there Ethel she's bright enough but doesn't seem to give a hoot

Mr Tate: the home the home always look to the home old Christie and that half-witted wife of his (D, 51-52)

This conversation not only injects a dramatic flavour into the novel by existing as a dramatic script without a written narrative, but also defines Morag's alienation and isolation as a child, struggling on her own while neither asking for, nor receiving, warmth and understanding from her teachers. By placing this conversation in an obtrusive form, Laurence emphasizes the authority of the teachers in their secure, close environment. They are perplexed by Morag but not exactly concerned. Mr. Tate may perceive the root of the problem but he makes no attempt to rectify the situation by talking to Morag's guardians or taking any other course of action. The form of this conversation conveys the inflexibility of the Manawaka hierarchy and, therefore, the necessity for Morag's lonely defiance and nurtured ambition: "Morag doesn't let on. If you let on, ever, you're done for" (D, 51). The dramatic dimension of the novel's form is further defined by the presentation of narrative events as "acts." Morag's experiences in the Wachakwa Valley are related in three separate memorybank movies, with the titles: "Down in the Valley the Valley So Low" (D, 102), "Down in the Valley, Act II" (D, 107) and "Down in the Valley, Act III" (D, 127). In this manner, the self-contained scenic nature of each event is defined. The overall structure of the novel is similar in that it is divided into five sections like a three act play, with the "River of Now and Then" functioning as the prologue and "The Diviners" as the epilogue. Within this construction the memorybank movies can be seen to exist as extended scenes.[35]

Thus, Laurence's use of narrative devices does not, as the critics claim, result in a flawed novel. Instead, the devices extend the discoursive possibilities of the narrative and help to define narrative content. The theme of fact and fiction is realized in the narrative form. The novel's modes of communication are extended to incorporate the medium of both film and theatre; Laurence's use of dramatic style and film imagery is not a "concession to cinematic

influence," as Moss claims,[36] but an attempt to combine an interest in cinematic forms with a modernist piece of literature. In so doing, Laurence is able to integrate the novel's "substance of expression" in a manner which exceeds conventional forms of literary presentation.

II

The self-conscious aspect of *The Diviners* is very difficult to examine as relatively few works have been written which deal exclusively with the theory of metafiction and/or metalanguage.[37] Also, the critical appraisals of *The Diviners* tend to eschew comment on this aspect of the narrative. The exploration of fact and fiction, a theme realized in the novel's self-conscious structure, is examined by critics predominantly in abstract terms and in a manner that fails to recognize the importance of discourse in the presentation of this aspect of the story. The status of the novel as a *künstlerroman* seems to have been overlooked as critics prefer to assign this work to the simpler category of a *bildungsroman*.[38] But, in *The Diviners*, the narcissistic form of the novel, with its exploration of language, conscious acts of story-telling and internalised layers of fiction, becomes the thematic content; the form that questions the relation of fiction and reality within itself actually exists as the thematic manifestation of this concern in the novel. Such a fusion of form and content emerged as the tradition of the *künstlerroman* developed from the *bildungsroman* or *entwicklungsroman* and the narrative interest of novels in the *künstlerroman* began to focus on the use of language and the act of writing.[39] This section, therefore, will focus on Morag as an artist figure; the examination of language within the narrative discourse; the role of the story-tellers; and the act of fictional creation presenting different layers of fictional reality. I shall argue that the self-conscious status of the narrative redefines the parameters of the creative responsibilities of the implied reader. As Hutcheon explains:

> What has *always* been a truism of fiction, though rarely made conscious, is brought to the fore in modern texts: the making of fictive worlds and the constructive, creative functioning of language itself are now self-consciously shared by the author and reader. The latter is no longer asked merely to recognize that fictional objects are "like life"; he is asked to participate in the creation of worlds and of meaning through language.[40]

The various levels of fictional reality (presented by Christie and Jules the story tellers, and Morag the artist) exist as structural concerns which are thematised to become narrative content; they constitute the theme of fiction versus history. In conclusion, the novel's self-consciousness will be seen to accommodate a consolidation of the "whole communication situation" as outlined by Chatman.

Like all the other *ficelles* in this novel, Morag's status as an artist has been criticized because a number of critics have failed to comprehend its structural and, consequently, its thematic significance. Gotlieb feels that, the novel is flawed not only because it is too long, but also because Morag does not possess the strength of character necessary for a writer.[41] It is unclear exactly what Gotlieb expects of a writer; maybe she expects her to be struggling and impoverished, an image Audrey Thomas evidently nurtures. Thomas feels cheated because Morag does not encounter any major difficulties in the course of her writing: "The fact that her [Morag's] very first book is accepted and from then on it seems to be smooth sailing (from a literary point of view) is maybe a little improbable. Maybe we would like Morag to struggle more, as a writer, the way she has to as a person. She is never Down and Out in London or Paris or New York."[42] Although Thomas qualifies her criticism with repeated "maybe"s, she seems to ignore a great deal of narrative detail. Laurence does present Morag as struggling in a "Portrait of the Artist as a Pregnant Skivvy" (D, 242); she does discuss rejections of the first novel (D, 212); she includes reviews, good and bad, of all Morag's novels (D, 214, 336, 342-343); and she provides indications that Morag is not exactly wealthy, simply self-supporting (D, 20-21). In addition, the point of Laurence's work is not to give a detailed account of the financial hardships suffered by an artist. *The Diviners* is designed to provide an insight into the creative processes of art--both art in general and literature in particular.

Marge Piercy's objection to Morag as a writer also appears surprisingly superficial. Piercy's comments illustrate that she is looking for very specific detail pertaining exclusively to Morag's work rather than to the work of an artist in more universal terms:

> There is much not worked through in Morag as a writer....The creative process of Morag's novels is worked into the narrative in a perfunctory way except for one character Lilac, from Morag's first novel, indicating that Laurence would know how to do it if she bothered. Thus, Morag as writer ends up vaguely romanticized.[43]

But Laurence herself explains why the creative processes of each of Morag's works is not examined in detail; rendering the plots of the four novels Morag writes would be both tedious and unproductive.[44] The omission of such detail is necessary to control the narrative tempo and to limit/control the novel's focus. The creative processes Laurence explores in the novel are not those of Morag's individual works because Laurence is concerned with a creative self-consciousness that explores the universal aspects of art. The narrative interest is with creative activity and Laurence chose to explore the artistic processes with which she is most familiar. Essentially, Morag is an author rather than another form of artist only because Laurence is more knowledgable about this profession than any other. Laurence expressed this opinion herself: "I know it's bloody difficult, it's one of the most difficult things to do...writing about a writer. But I had to. At first I had her as a painter, but what the hell do I know about painting?"[45] The most constructive criticism of Morag is voiced by Barbara Hehner who believes that "in her presentation of the internal doubts that beset Morag as a writer (and which surely afflict Laurence as well), Laurence comes perilously close to sinking her novel under the weight of its self-consciousness."[46] Such an assessment of Morag's character is justified by numerous textual examples: (D, 46, 23, 173, and *passim*). The neuroses that beset Morag in the time present are sadly overdone and the reader feels irritated by the character's constant self-deprecation. However, this aspect of the narrative does not detract greatly from the the credibility of Morag as an artist. Her sensitivity to language and

the power of the written word are more than sufficient to combat the other shortcomings in her characterization.

The self-reflective nature of a narcissistic narrative is essentially linguistic.[47] In *The Diviners*, this linguistic nature of the self-conscious narrative is examined by Morag in her capacity as a "wordsmith." During her childhood, Morag is fascinated by the historical and social connotations of specific words. She questions both the denotative and connotative meaning of language (for example, D, 30). Throughout her life, Morag is fascinated by the heritage of language; she feels that the Gaelic language of her ancestors may be the key to her identity in the same manner that the Cree language may unlock inner secrets for Jules. Such an interest in the power of language manifests itself in Morag's comments on the nature and role of language in her professional capacity as an author. That is, Morag is interested in the relationship between life, language and fictional creativity. How can you capture reality in language and present this reality in fiction? Morag often contemplates this difficulty:

> The swallows dipped and spun over the water, a streaking of blue-black wings and bright breastfeathers. How could that colour be caught in words? A sort of rosy peach colour, but that sounded corny and was also inaccurate. (D, 4)

Morag is continually arrested by the inadequacy of words. Before beginning to write her autobiographical novel, Morag articulates her dependence on a verbal medium which she cannot trust but which nevertheless intrigues her:

> Probably no one could catch the river's colour even with paints, much less words. A daft profession. Wordsmith. Liar, more likely. Weaving fabrications. Yet, with typical ambiguity, convinced that fiction was more true than fact. Or that fact was in fact fiction. (D, 21)

The problem of language and "the tenuous and tricky relationship between word and fact,"[48] is bound up in the process of creativity of the novel within the novel. In a narrative which is so

concerned with its own processes of communication, that the form of the novel becomes an aspect of the novel's content. Language is not only an integral concern in the novel's structure, it is also a thematic concern in its own right. Linda Hutcheon explains the transition from form to content in a self-conscious novel: "The writer calls his reader's attention to the activity of writing as an event within the novel, as an event of equally great significance to that of the events of the story which he is supposed to be telling." In such fiction, she argues, "the reader is made aware of the fact that literature is less a verbal object carrying some meaning than it is its own experience of building, from the language, a coherent autonomous whole of form and content."[49] The narcissistic fascination with language in *The Diviners* can be seen in the importance of the oral act of story telling.

The forms of Jules' and Christie's tales of the Métis rebellion become thematised to provide the narrative interest concerning the inseparability of myth and history in reconstructions of the past. Christie and Jules demonstrate that no absolute truths exist. Fact and fiction are inseparable as history and myth co-exist and fuse to create personal truths locked in language. Both Christie and Jules believe in their own fictional reality and demonstrate that the importance of history is its personal relevance, not its universal acceptance. *Christie's Tale of Piper Gunn and the Rebels* extolls the virtues of the Sutherlanders while deriding "Reel" and the Métis. In Christie's version of this episode in history, Riel was "a rebel chief. Short little man...with burning eyes" (D, 106) and the Métis were "halfbreeds" who wanted, for no apparent reason, to overthrow the government. Jules, in his role of story teller, relates these events so that justice appears to be on the Métis' side and the British are cast as invaders, usurpers of the Métis land. Riel is "like a prophet, see? And he has the power" and he "is a very tall guy, taller even than Rider Tonnerre," while Christie's heroes "are one hell of a mean outfit" (D, 119). Morag, listening to both tales in the story--although narrating them, retaining the individual styles of Christie and Jules in the discourse--presents the textbook version of this event in history and her own interpretation of the facts, seeing truth and distortion in both tales. She argues that Christie's version of events

is not quite accurate, a point Christie partially concedes while reinforcing the truth of his interpretation of events. In the following extract Morag argues in parenthetical asides while Christie tells his tale:

> (The government down East sent out the Army from Ontario and like that, and Riel fled, Christie. He came back, to Saskatchewan, in 1885.)
> Well, some say that. Others say different. Of course, I *know* the Army and that came out, like, but the truth of the matter is that them Sutherlanders had *taken back the Fort* before even a smell of an army got there. (D, 106)

Jules is less dogmatic about the validity of his version of events because he, like Morag, is more *consciously* aware of the fictional status of reality and the existence of relative truth. In response to Morag's reliance on official texts Jules defends the conceptual stance of his tale rather than specific facts: "the books, they lie about [Riel]. I don't say Lazarus told the story the way it happened, but neither did the books and they're one hell of a sight worse because they made out that the guy was nuts" (D, 119). Morag agrees, in essence, with Jules as she too is dubious about the reliability of historical textbooks: "The book in History said he was nuts, but he didn't seem so nuts to me" (D, 107). Laurence makes clear that history simply presents a *version* of the truth; there is no absolute truth. In a letter to Clara Thomas, she explains her personal stance on the question of history and fiction:

> I subsequently had many conversations with him [W. L. Morton] about the nature of writing history and fiction. I believe...as I think he does, too...that the two disciplines are very much related. The historian, like the novelist, must be selective and must necessarily write his own interpretation of the historical era with which he is dealing.[50]

When Pique demands "to know what really happened," she is raising the question posed by historians; Leopold Von Ranke, the leading German historian of the nineteenth century, stated that the only task for the historian was to show "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist.*"[51] Morag answers

Pique's demand sadly, and perhaps unkindly, "You do, eh? Well, so do I. But there's no one version. There just isn't" (D, 287). Morag's words express the nature of the novel's content.

The Diviners makes many demands on its reader. Hutcheon explains the manner in which such metafictional narratives demand "a new role of the reader":

> Metafictions...bare the conventions, disrupt the codes that now *have* to be acknowledged. The reader must accept responsibility for the act of decoding, the act of reading. Disturbed, defied, forced out of his complacency, he must self-consciously establish new codes in order to come to terms with new literary phenomenon....It [the metafictional novel] now demands that he be conscious of the work, the actual construction, that he too is undertaking, for it is the reader who, in Ingarden's terms, "concretizes" the work of art and gives it life.[52]

The implied reader is required to participate actively in the novel's creation. He too must question. Further demands are made upon the reader by Laurence's manipulation of levels of fictional reality in the text.

The self-conscious form of *The Diviners* defines the thematic concept of fact and fiction in human experience by presenting the reader with various different levels of fictional reality. Barry Cameron explains how this manifests itself when he describes *The Diviners* as:

> a novel which is essentially about itself as a novel. *The Diviners* is about the act of writing fiction and the ways in which the fictionalising of experience is a necessary and fundamental part of being human. In some sense, we are all novelists like Morag, constantly creating and recreating our experiences, mythologizing the past and inventing memories, because our ordinary experiences (what we customarilly call life), in which everything melts immediately into the past, cannot yield a genuine sense of meaning. Fiction, in this fundamental sense (*fingere*--to make or shape), is our only means of making life fully available, of preserving it as a present reality. This motive for fiction is clearly evident in Morag's need to discover and to preserve what is real in her past.[53]

The form of the novel not only circumscribes "the ways in which the fictionalising of experience is a necessary and fundamental part of being human," but also signifies that

fictionalising is part of reality. The text follows the modernist tradition by imposing a strict order on an aspect of life which is essentially formless. If Laurence believes that fact and fiction are ultimately inseparable then her deliberate separating of these experiences in the same artificial manner as the novel's memorybank movies, (by the use of obtrusive labels), reinforces the inner stucture of Morag's autobiography which, because of its self-conscious existence, is able to bring form to chaotic experience. Laurence explains that

> In one way, fiction may be viewed as history, just as recorded history may be viewed as fiction. They are twin disciplines, and they include biography and autobiography, for the perceptions, interpretations, and choices of material of particular writers give form to our past and relate it to our present and our future. All fiction is written about the past. Even if we write about this day, *now*, this hour, this moment, as we set down the words the moment becomes the past.[54]

The novel illustrates that myths are created by a transformation of "historical fact" into subjective or personal truths and that these myths, in turn, are afforded the factual status of history because of their fictional reality.

In a letter to Ella, Morag confesses that she likes "the idea of history and fiction interweaving" (D, 341) when she explains that the tales of Christie and Jules are more fully grounded in history than she had previously thought:

> Rider was called Prince of the Braves, Skinner said, and his rifle was named La Petite. Infactuality (if that isn't a word, it should be), those names pertained to Gabrielle Dumont, Riel's lieutenant in Saskatchewan, much later on. That's okay--Skinner's grandad had a right to borrow them. I like the thought of history and fiction interweaving. The tale of how Rider got his horse, Roi du Lac, I've recently discovered, comes from a Cree legend--probably old Jules didn't know that. You wonder how long that story had been passed on. (D, 341)

The discourse of *The Diviners* also defines the manner in which history and fiction are interwoven. For example, the Louis Riel song which is sung by Pique does exist outside the

novel as one written by Riel just before his death. *The 60th Canadian Field Artillery Battle Book* also exists outside the confines of this fiction as a book in its own right. And the regiment to which Christie and Colin Gunn belonged from 1916-1919, is the regiment in which Laurence's father served in the First World War. Thus, fiction and fact intertwine not only in the fictional life of Morag, but also within the novel's discourse so that the form of the novel defines the novel's content. As Laurence herself acknowledges: "There is a lot of history in my fiction."[55]

The narrative presents a fusion of fact and fiction in the sense that facts which are external to the fictional creation are incorporated into the discourse. Also, the narrative presents a cohesion of fact and fiction within the fiction written by Morag which she discusses in her latest fictional creation. Her completed novels, *Spear of Innocence*, *Prospero's Child*, *Jonah* and *Shadow of Eden* all contain strongly autobiographical elements that draw upon the facts of her life which are themselves fiction. As Ildikó de Papp Carrington observes, "there is more than one autobiographical novel within *The Diviners*."[56] Thus, *The Diviners* is a fictional text which discusses an autobiographical fictional text which discusses fictional texts which exist on another narrative level. In this manner, the discussions of fiction within the fiction constitute a metafictional aspect of the novel's discourse. The narrator self-consciously exhibits, on one narrative level, the structure of the novel written about her writing her own autobiography; this autobiography, in turn, discusses previous fictional constructions which she has created. By providing such a "multiplicity of narrative forms," Laurence produces a text in which fact and fiction intertwine in a metafictional mode. Writing to Ella, Morag remarks:

> Odd--the tales Christie used to tell of Piper Gunn and the Sutherlanders, and now this book [*Shadow of Eden*] deals with the same period. The novel follows them on the sea journey to Hudson Bay, through that winter at Churchill and then on the long walk to York Factory in the spring. Christie always said they walked about a thousand miles--it was about a hundred and fifty, in fact, but you know he was right; it must've felt like a thousand. The man who led them on that march, and on the trip by water to Red River, was young Archie MacDonald, but in my mind the piper who played them on will always be that giant of a man, Piper Gunn, who probably never lived in so-called real life but

who lives forever. (D, 341)

Morag's realizes that her adolescent disdain for Christie's tales was not warranted. As she comes to understand the nature of fact, Morag also becomes "consciously aware of fiction as an accessible alternative to fact, something which she herself, by participating in its form while not having to believe in its content, can manipulate."[57] Myth becomes Morag's reality and she combines her personal reality and the facts of "historical" reality in the creation of a new fiction. This reflects the structure of *The Diviners* as a whole which fuses history and fiction on various narrative levels to allow for the manipulation of fictional reality. Such a complex narrative structure also demarcates the nature of temporal experience as well as the nature of reality. Carrington mentions this when she talks of "the way in which Morag recalls her past to the reader, turns segments of her past into a series of novels, and lives and narrates her present all simultaneously. *The Diviners* is like a nest of Chinese boxes; stories within stories. Beginning with *Spear of Innocence*, Morag is remembering, writing, living, and turning her living into writing all at the same time."[58]

Each of Morag's novels is strongly autobiographical. *Spear of Innocence*, written at a time of spiritual and physical suffocation during Morag's marriage to Brooke, represents an exorcism of Morag's past life in Manawaka, a past she has denied. Eva's abortion is dealt with in detail as a fictional episode in the novel. Lilac Stonehouse, the heroine, undergoes the same traumatic ordeal, and this coalescing of fiction and fact within a book within the autobiography within the novel, demonstrates the manner in which fiction becomes the embodiment of an individual's personal reality which is more tangible than an attempted factual reconstruction of the past:

> Lilac has aborted herself in a way that Morag recalls from long ago. And yet it is not Eva for whom Morag experiences pain now--it is Lilac only at this moment....Odd--if you had a friend who had just aborted herself, causing chaos all round and not only to herself, no one would be surprised if you felt upset, anxious, shaken. It is no different with fiction--more so, maybe,

because Morag has felt Lilac's feelings. (D, 187-188)

Morag finds the fiction she creates just as emotionally disturbing, if not more so, than the past events that inspired them. Thus, "[a]ccording to the criterion of inner reality, differences between actual people and the imaginary characters of the tales and of Morag's fiction no longer exist because they are equally real in the mind."[59]

Spear of Innocence is the only work which incorporates an instance of *explicit* metafiction. Here, Morag employs the same narrative form as Laurence in *The Diviners*. Morag comments on the problems which she and her potential reader encounter with the form of her creation. Such comments also apply to the problems encountered by Laurence and her reader with *The Diviners*: "It is being written in the third person, but from Lilac's point of view, and as this is a limited one, people have to be communicated to the reader solely through their words and acts which Lilac does not often understand" (D, 184). This self-conscious examination of the novel's form indicates "Laurence's concern with fiction about fiction, with the process and the purpose of its creation."[60] It is one of the few instances in which Laurence instructs the reader in the complexities of narrative form and how the discourse is to be approached. Thus, the novel is, in a sense, metafictional, but this aspect of the narrative is not an overriding concern. Laurence does not follow the post-modernist tradition of examining in great detail the narrative structure of her creation and the manner in which it should be explored by the reader. Laurence's use of metafiction is relatively covert and her narrator, as an artist figure, is self-conscious about her creative position in the text without allowing this self-consciousness to pervade all levels of the narrative in a self-conscious manner.[61]

Morag's *Spear of Innocence* is the most extensively discussed fictional creation in *The Diviners*; it not only incorporates a concern with metafiction, but explores the relationship between art and life. Morag has already addressed the problem of fictional reality. Questioning the truth and the validity of the existence of fictional reality, Morag acknowledged that "fiction was more true than fact. Or that fact was in fact fiction" (D, 21). What

remains to be examined is the concept of life prophesying art or vice versa. Morag raises this question when she meets Fan Brady. Lilac, having gained her existence from the events of Morag's past, prophesizes the existence of a person about whom Morag knew nothing at the time of Lilac's creation.

> Morag is fascinated. Does fiction prophesy life? Is she looking at Lilac Stonehouse from *Spear of Innocence*? Fan Brady, though, hasn't got Lilac's naiveté. Fan is tough in spirit, wiry and wary in the soul. She is not really like Lilac at all, of course. She is almost the opposite. And yet, looking at Fan now is almost like looking at some distorted and older but still recognizable mirror-image of Lilac. There is a sense in which Fan *has* that same terrifying innocence, expressed in different ways. (D, 254)

Not only has life given form to art but art, in turn, appears to have given form to life. The fictional levels of reality thus serve to fuse the past and the future in the art of fiction. The discovery of this interrelation of art and life prompts Morag to question the role of the artist and the nature of his/her profession:

> Later, upstairs, Morag thinks about Fan Brady. Lilac Stonehouse begins to look pretty pale stuff in comparison. Could you get Fan Brady down on paper? Only an approximation. Even the name of the club, for heaven's sake. "The Figleaf" is much better than "Crowe's Cave." *And you think Fan Brady's crazy?* (D, 258)

However, Laurence does manage to "get Fan Brady down on paper." The comments Morag makes alert the reader to the processes of fictional creation beyond Morag as artist. The reader becomes aware of the status of the implied author as an artist on another narrative level. By incorporating varying levels of fictional reality into the novel's discourse, Laurence uses the form of the novel to illustrate the close relationship between life and art and the curious nature of the artist's profession.

A further dimension of the fictional reality presented in *The Diviners* is incorporated extensively in the fictions (Morag's novels) within the fiction (Morag's autobiography) within the fictional work as a whole (*The Diviners*). As a novelist, Morag explores her past in each of her fictional creations. As already stated, *Spear of Innocence* involves an examination of Morag's past experiences in Manawaka, experiences which she had, up until that point, tried to deny. *Prospero's Child* is a fictional examination of the break-up of Morag's marriage with Brooke. Brooke is a very thinly disguised Prospero while Morag and Jules are cast as Mira and Caliban-descendents of Prospero, Miranda and Caliban from Shakespeare's pastoral tragi-comedy. Christie's role in Morag's past is examined in her third novel, *Jonah*, in which the protagonist is presented as a prototype of Christie and Morag is his ungrateful daughter, Coral. And in *Shadow of Eden*, Morag explores the myths and legends of her past and comes to understand the inseparable status of fact and fantasy. History and legend become one in Morag's fictional reconstructions of fictional representations of historical events. Each fictional creation corresponds to a phase of development in Morag's life and, in certain instances, to phases in Laurence's life.

As a forty-seven-year-old woman, Morag is examining these past fictions in a present fiction. But, existing in the novel written by Laurence, Morag is also examining elements of existence similar to her creator's so that Laurence, at times, appears as a novelist examining aspects of her existence in a fiction which internally re-examines these elements. For example, in the narrative level of Morag's second novel, *Prospero's Child*, "Laurence is writing fiction about fiction: a novelist separated from her husband is writing about a novelist separated from her husband who has written about a woman separating from her husband."[62] This structure is also implicit in *Jonah*, but the correspondence between art and life is more spiritual than literal; that is, events are not exactly the same in the work as they are in life, but the quiddity of each character is drawn from individuals outside the fictional creation. As Kuropatwa notes, Christie and Morag are personified by Jonah and Coral in this work but

> characterization is not a matter of strict duplication from life; in the process of transformation from life to literature, from the events of the past to the stories of the present, Morag captures the essence of the characters in question and their interplay. Jonah is created not in Christie's image but in his spirit, and the same is true of the relationship of Morag and Coral.[63]

Similarly, in *The Diviners* the artist is exploring autobiographical elements of her life in a work that is autobiographical in a spiritual rather than a literal sense.[64] Laurence is quite adamant that the novel is not an autobiography but feels that the problem of such a label arises because, as previously indicated, art is a product of life:

> ...a lot of people tend to interpret everything that you write as totally autobiographical and, of course, it isn't. The whole question of how fiction is made of life is a subtle and difficult one and I think that what people don't realise is that in many cases writers may be writing in a way that is sort of *spiritually* autobiographical as, indeed *The Diviners* was for me. But the things that actually happened to Morag did not happen to me. I think that it is difficult for people to really grasp the fact that there is such a thing as fiction.[65]

There are no doubt great similarities between the author and her fictional protagonist and, hence, many critics have refused to accept Laurence's affirmation that the novel is a totally fictitious composition.[66] Margaret Atwood's article, "Face to Face," probably contributed a great deal to the critics' skepticism. In the article Atwood illuminates the strong autobiographical elements in the novel by informing her reader that Laurence "will apologize for anything, from the smoker's cough that sounds like the Springhill Mine Disaster [c.f. D, 173] to the flourishing patch of weeds outside her cottage [c.f. D, 45-46] to her erratic work habits [c.f. D, 137], but the apologies are really a way of warning you not to bother trying to get her to do anything she doesn't want [c.f. D, 47]...." Atwood goes on to explain that while Laurence was in England she did

> most of her writing in the summer in the small cabin on the shore of the

> Otonabee river which she bought four years ago [c.f. D, 337-38]. It's remote enough so she can work undistubed, it's not in a city (cities make her nervous) [c.f. D, 180], but it's close enough to other people so she doesn't feel too isolated (wilderness makes her nervous also) [c.f. D, 286].[67]

Having reinforced the similarities between Laurence and her protagonist in *The Diviners*, Atwood proceeds to explain that only the "careless" would identify Laurence with Morag.[68] However, similarities cannot be denied and Laurence herself draws attention to her affinity with the protagonist.[69]

Nevertheless, the novel is not autobiographical in the same way as her earlier work, *A Bird in the House*. In the earlier book, characters and situations were drawn directly from Laurence's childhood. Laurence identifies a number of the autobiographical elements in the title story of this work:

> "A Bird in the House" is a story which happens to be mainly autobiographical. It sets down, in fictional form, the death of my father. It is one of a series of short stories which I've written, all based on my childhood family and set in a small prairie town similar to the one in which I grew up.[70]

Laurence is aware that this collection of short stories is a fictional creation whilst being at the same time, a form of exorcism of her own past: "I have said publicly that the stories in *A Bird in the House* were based on myself as a child and my childhood family, but I have always added that they were also highly fictionalised as well."[71] The concept of fact and fiction intermingling in narrative has been realised not only in these stories but also, in a less overt manner, in *The Diviners*. Like Laurence, the protagonist of *The Diviners* is an artist and, as a result, the identification between the two is extensive. It is in this manner that the protagonist of *The Diviners* injects the work with an autobiographical status in a way similar to *A Bird in the House* whilst being, at the same time, vastly different.

Both works are autobiographical in terms of their "form of content," but the autobiographical elements reside in different subcategories. Whereas in *A Bird in the House* the

events are autobiographical, in *The Diviners*, it is the *existents*. Laurence calls this mode of fiction "spiritual autobiography":

> Of course people have asked me if it's [*The Diviners*] largely autobiographical, and of course it is *not*. It could be described probably as a kind of spiritual autobiography. The things that happened to Morag in her life have not happened to me. But in terms of her development, and her lifeview, in a spiritual sense, the book is autobiographical.[72]

Such close identification between the novelist and her fictional creation automatically gives rise to questions concerning the communication processes of the novel. Just as fiction becomes Morag's personal truth, so the fictionalised projection of the author of *The Diviners* becomes the reader's personal truth. The implied author becomes a reality for the reader. The image of the implied author gained from the narrative becomes the embodiment of Laurence the novelist--the fiction becomes the personal fact. The communication processes become compressed because, as Barry Cameron states, "Although Morag is obviously not Laurence, she is, as a character who is a novelist, at least a symbolic surrogate of the author...."[73] Laurence has indicated that in her fiction, the distance between herself and the implied author in the work is negligible because she does not impose opinions contrary to her own in her fiction. She believes that a writer should be committed to communicating his own personal truths in fiction, not mutated, unrepresentative attitudes:

> The greatest problem of all [when writing] is to try and tell enough of your own truth from your own viewpoint, from your own eyes, to be able to go deeply enough....to be able to tell as much of that truth as you can bear to tell, and this is very hard. It sounds easy just to tell the truth. There isn't anything more difficult.[74]

Laurence spurns the idea of presenting attitudes, attributable to a persona but not to herself, in fiction. Therefore, the values and attitudes attributed to the implied author can, in the case of

Laurence's work, be *largely* (not necessarily entirely) attributed to Laurence herself. That is, the novel's "substance of content" reflects not only the views of the implied author, but those of the author as well.

The distance between Laurence, the self-conscious author, and Morag, the self-conscious narrator, is also rather small. Laurence intermingles fact and fiction in this creation so that a good deal of herself is worked into the character of Morag. The creative ideology with which Laurence imbibes Morag is commensurate to Laurence's own creative ideology. In an interview with Michael Fabre, Laurence alluded to the similarities between herself and her protagonist in terms of their artistic status: "...when I have Morag as a child composing this poem [*The Wise Men*], that is based on a memory which I have of myself as a child composing something similar to the poem."[75] And throughout the novel, the reader is aware, as a result of the numerous interviews Laurence has given, that "Morag's views clearly parallel those of Margaret Laurence. In essence there is no contradiction between Morag's and Margaret Laurence's views of their common artistic commitment."[76] It is obviously far too simplistic to state that Morag is, in essence, a fictional version of Laurence; rather, it would be more accurate to describe Morag as a fictional extension of Laurence's artistic self. Morag is both a fictional character in her own right and Laurence's artistic alter-ego.

In *The Diviners*, the communication processes, as outlined by Chatman in *Story and Discourse*, have been consolidated. Although Laurence cannot be equated with either the implied author, or the artist-narrator, the distance between the three is minimal; Laurence has compressed the transmission of the text to achieve a synthesis of communication. The author, the implied author and the narrator are drawn closely together. The implied reader is responsible for a large proportion of the narrative creation which brings him much closer to the narrative material and, consequently, to the aforementioned agents of communication. The

distance between the author, implied author, narrator, implied reader and reader is minimised to achieve an immediacy of presentation in the work.

Notes

[1] Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: the metafictional paradox* (1980; rpt. New York: Methuen, Inc., 1984), p. 47. Hutcheon is quoting from Barth's "Bellerophoniad," *Chimera* (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 246.

[2] Laurence, "Ten Years' Sentences," p. 16.

[3] Michael Fabre, "From *The Stone Angel* to *The Diviners*," in *A Place to Stand On: Essays by and about Margaret Laurence*, ed., George Woodcock, Western Canadian Literary Document Series, Vol. IV, gen. ed., Shirley Neuman (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983), p. 209.

[4] David Lodge, "The Language of Modernist Fiction: Metaphor and Metonymy," in *Modernism 1890-1930*, ed., Malcolm Bradbury & James McFarlane (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 481.

[5] Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, p. 6.

[6] See Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, pp. 13, 18.

[7] In this chapter I have called all the narrative devices other than those already discussed, narrative voice, point of view and time, "subordinate." This distinction is not designed as a value judgement but a device to avoid confusion.

[8] J.R. Struthers, "Laurence's Ritual Epic Triumph," *London Free Press*, 12 July 1975, p. 43.

[9] Fulford, "It's Fascinating Despite the Flaws," Sec. H, p. 10.

[10] Mickleburgh, "The Diviners," p. 112.

[11] Michael Peterman, "Margaret Laurence," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 13, No. 3 (1978), 103.

[12] Moss, *Sex and Violence*, p. 69.

[13] In "Gadgetry and Growing," Laurence explains why she felt such typography was necessary in this instance: "Her [Stacey's] memories are set to one side of the page in an attempt to clarify the fact that these are flashing in and out of her mind while she is doing other things," p. 61.

[14] For an examination of *The Fire-Dwellers* and *The Diviners* in such comparative terms see Struthers, "Laurence's Ritual Epic Triumph," p.43.

[15] Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," p. 59.

[16] John Wainwright, "Motives for Metaphor: Art and the Artist in Seven Canadian Novels," Diss. Dalhousie 1978, p. 45.

[17] I acknowledge that all narrative structures are necessarily artificial. However, what is important here is, once again, the *degree* of artificiality. *The Diviners* presents a narrative whose artificiality contains another artificial narrative whose existence is a further remove from reality.

[18] Therrien claims that Morag cannot be writing such a novel because her fictional creation is sent to the publishers far too early! He is obviously alluding to Morag's fourth novel, *Shadow of Eden*, although he does not make this clear, and, if this is the case, he fails to explain the meaning of the novel's closing words. "Form and Content in *The Diviners* by Margaret Laurence and *Kamouraska* by Anne Herbert," p.10.

[19] In "Paradox of the Past," Salvatore finds only a "suggestion" that Morag is the author of an autobiography in *The Diviners*, p. 38.

[20] Carrington talks of Morag's fictional creations including her "fifth novel, which she finishes in the final sentence of the book and which is obviously *The Diviners*-"Tales in the Telling," p. 156.

[21] Cooper, "Images of Closure in *The Diviners*," p. 100.

[22] Gom, "Laurence and the Use of Memory," pp. 51-52.

[23] Bruce, "Diviners," p. 15.

[24] Morley, *Margaret Laurence*, p. 128.

[25] Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane identify "a sense of the nihilistic order behind the ordered surface of life and reality" as one of the "four great preoccupations of the modernist novel." *Modernism 1890 - 1910* , p. 393.

[26] Grace, "A Portrait of the Artist as Laurence Hero," p. 67.

[27] Laurence, in *For Openers: Conversations with 24 Canadian Writers*, by Alan Twigg (B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1981), pp. 266-67.

[28] Talking of the development of visual variety in narrative discourse, Laurence claims:

"I think that every writer, in this particular time, in our age has learned a great deal from both films and from TV, not consciously, perhaps, but I think these things have influenced writing. My writing has always tended to be very visual, which is just partly my natural way of doing things. But yes, I do feel that--in ways I find difficult to analyse--my own writing has been influenced by both film and TV in the sort of visual techniques that we use."

Laurence in an interview with Graeme Gibson, *Eleven Canadian Novelists*, p. 186.

[29] Laurence is aware of the pressure that the medium of film imposes on the novel. Discussing *The Fire-Dwellers*, Laurence writes:

"The dreams and fantasies were put in italics only in order to identify them as dreams and fantasies, and also, perhaps, to provide a kind of visual variety on the page-something I have myself felt a need for, sometimes, in reading novels-that no one tone should go on too long, that there should be some visual break-and I think that probably our need for this kind of variety has been conditioned by films and TV. I do not think that this is either a good or a bad thing. I simply think it is a fact. But if pressed for an opinion I would say it was probably more a good thing than a bad, because as long as the novel continues to be able to change-not for gimmicky reasons, but for reasons of inner necessity-there is a good chance that it may remain alive."

Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," p. 61.

[30] Laurence, "Gadgetry or Growing," pp. 60-61.

[31] See, Lewis Jacobs, *The Emergence of Film Art: The Evolution and Development of the Motion Picture as an Art Form 1900 to the Present* (New York: Hopkinson & Blake, Publishers, 1969), pp. 4-9; and David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), pp. 1-30.

[32] Although etymologically a French word, in cinematic language, *Montage* is a Russian term designating "a rapid impressionistic succession of shots, sometimes linked by dissolves, wipes or other optical effects." Ernest Lindgren, *The Art of the Film*, 2nd ed. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), p. 90; see also p. 229 and Ralph Stephenson & Jean R. Debrix, *Cinema as Art*, rev ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 59-62, 99-101.

[33] Ralph Stephenson, "The Art of Motion Pictures," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica-Macropaedia*, 15th ed. (Chicago: William Benton, Publiser, 1974), p. 503.

[34] Carrington, "Tales in the Telling," p. 167.

[35] The allocation of the title "act" to three of the memorybank movies would appear to run counter to this description of the overall structure of the novel. However, the label "act" is an indication of the relative importance of these memorybank movies; our sympathy with the older Morag and the problems she encounters with her daughter, is dependent upon our perception of these three narrative scenes.

[36] In *Sex and Violence*, Moss questions Laurence's interest in the medium of film: "The story of Morag's life comes through in an arrangement of 'memorybank movies'--a concession to cinematic influence on literature, or perhaps an indication of Laurence's lack of faith in her ability to break away from linearity." -- p. 80. However, Laurence believes very strongly that both novels and short stories have been greatly influenced by the media of film and that life in general has become increasingly cinematic in composition. See Laurence, in *Eleven Canadian Novelists*, p. 186.

[37] For a detailed review of literature see Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, pp. 4 and 20.

[38] David Stouck is the only critic I have come across who refers to this text as a *künstlerroman*, "The Diviners," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *West Coast Review*, 10, No. 1 (1975), 45.

[39] See Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, pp. 11-12.

[40] Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, p. 30.

[41] Phyllis Gotlieb, "Margaret Laurence," rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *The Tamarack Review*, No. 63 (October, 1974), p. 81.

[42] Audrey Thomas, "A Broken Wand?" rev. of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *Canadian Literature*, No. 62 (Fall, 1974), p. 90.

[43] Piercy, "Gritty Places and Strong Women," p. 213.

[44] Laurence actually tried telling the reader the plot of each novel in an early draft of this work but then, thankfully, decided that it was "really drab stuff." Laurence, in an interview with Bernice Lever, "Margaret Laurence," p. 5.

[45] Laurence, in "Face to Face," by Margaret Atwood, *Maclean's*, May 1974, p. 44.

[46] Hehner, "River of Now and Then," p. 52.

[47] See Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, pp. 34-35.

[48] Dombrowski, "Word and Fact," p. 50.

[49] Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, pp. 12 & 42.

[50] Margaret Laurence, correspondence with Clara Thomas, October 27, 1977. Quoted in Clara Thomas, "The Chariot of Ossian: Myth and Manitoba in *The Diviners*," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 13, No. 3 (1978), 63.

[51] Quoted by Barbara Tuchman, *Practising History* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1982), p. 18.

[52] Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, p. 39.

[53] Barry Cameron, "The Diviners," rev of *The Diviners*, by Margaret Laurence, *Queen's Quarterly*, 81 (1974), 639.

[54] Margaret Laurence, "Ivory Tower or Grass Roots? The Novelist as Socio-political Being," in *A Political Art: Essays and Images in Honour of George Woodcock*, ed., William H. New (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978), p. 15.

[55] Laurence, in "From 'The Stone Angel' to 'The Diviners'," p. 208.

[56] Carrington, "Tales in the Telling," p. 154.

[57] Wainwright, "Motives for Metaphor," p. 55.

[58] Carrington, "Tales in the Telling," p. 160.

[59] Maeser, "Myth and Reality," p. 282.

[60] Carrington, "Tales in the Telling," p. 155.

[61] For example, compare this novel to one written by a French-Canadian author the year previously, that is, to Hubert Aquin's *The Antiphonary*. This novel is firmly entrenched in the post-modernist tradition, not only because of the internal chaos of the narrative form, but also because of the extreme metafictional comments and passages that pervade the novel. For example, the novel's artist-narrator explains the problems with which she is confronted and the means by which she will overcome them:

"If at this point I take the liberty of using the conventions of secondary and ternary narration, it is because I want to gain time--or rather, catch up in time with what had taken place quite outside the range of my possible knowledge. I don't know if the Asianists had a name for this type of literary procedure. Perhaps even the Ancient Greek rhetors had a term

for it? Is it an ellipse? Or (what do I know?) an inverted anacoluthon? The point is, all this amounts to saying that I'm about to narrate things that I didn't yet know while I was in my room at the Holiday Inn Motel on Côte de Liesse."
Hubert Aquin, *The Antiphonary*, trans. Alan Brown (1973; rpt. Toronto: General Publishing Company Ltd., 1983), p. 89.

[62] Carrington, "Tales in the Telling," p. 158.

[63] Kuropatwa, "Time in Margaret Laurence's 'The Diviners'," p. 69.

[64] The use of the term "spiritual" in this context does not refer to the genre of spiritual autobiographies written to analyse the individual's spiritual journey to enlightenment; rather, it refers to an autobiography which has pyschological, as opposed to physical, similarities between the author and the novel's protagonist.

[65] Laurence in an interview with Bernice Lever, "Margaret Laurence," pp. 8-9.

[66] For example, MacSween finds the book unsatisfactory because its extensive autobiographical flavour makes it too similar to *The Stone Angel*. He argues that although Laurence has "declared that in this later book she does not present us with her life...every page of the book denies this. The events are certainly not the same, but they parallel the happenings of her own life."-R. J. MacSween, "The Diviners," *The Antigonish Review*, 18 (1974), 107.

[67] See also, Laurence's comment in an interview with Harriet Law: "Margaret Atwood once said about me that I'm not a person who feels at ease with the wilderness and I'm not a person who feels at ease with the metropolis, and it's quite true." In "Our Myths: Our Selves," pp. 38-39.

[68] Atwood, "[illegible]ce," pp. 39, 43, 44.

[69] In "Paradox of the Past, [illegible]tore holds this opinion when he states: "In *The Diviners*, we continually wonder [illegible]rag is Margaret Laurence. I feel Laurence deliberately directs attention to the resemblance between herself and the protagonist," p. 38.

[70] Laurence, "Author's Commentry," p. 73.

[71] Laurence, in an interview with Bernice Lever, "Margaret Laurence," p. 4.

[72] Laurence, in an interview with Harriet Law, "Our Myths: Our Selves," p. 34.

[73] Cameron, "The Diviners," p. 639.

[74] Laurence in an interview with Graeme Gibson, *Eleven Canadian Novelists*, p. 189.

[75] Laurence, in "From 'The Stone Angel' to 'The Diviners'," p. 208.

[76] Therrien, "Form and Content in *The Diviners* by Margaret Laurence and *Kamouraska* by Anne Herbert," p. 18.

CONCLUSION

In Latin *concludere* means to "shut up." Peace. Constriction. Guarded silence.[1]

If I have achieved one thing in this work, I hope it is to validate Davey's belief that "ultimately, only the form of a writer's work speaks to us."[2] The form of Margaret Laurence's work does speak to us; in fact, the ability of the discourse to communicate is such that this thesis has only just *begun* to examine the structure of Laurence's work. There are still a great many things that have been left unsaid. An analysis of the semiotic composition of the novel was, for example, beyond the scope of this study. The nature of the narratee in the text has yet to recieve a detailed examination: can he be identified; if so, to what degree is he evoked; what function does he perform? There are many areas that still require attention and, if subjected to a structuralist analysis, these areas would yield a number of insights into the narrative content of *The Diviners*. Especially informative would be a structuralist analysis that treats the entire Manawaka series as a unified whole. For example, an examination of the temporal relations between the works, such as the occurrence of iterative frequency or the nature of proleptic sections, would provide an interesting research project to further our understanding of Margaret Laurence's work.

Nevertheless, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of structural analysis to literature. By adopting a structuralist approach I was able to explain a great deal of the "how" of the narrative and, also, as a result, the "what" of the narrative. The "what" was examined in a manner not possible when using a thematic approach. The value of structuralist criticism is realised in the nature of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study. The conclusions may not be definitive but they do, nevertheless, provide an increased understanding of both the "how" and the "what" of the narrative. By conducting a detailed structuralist analysis of *The*

Diviners, I have shown how the communication processes are structured and how form defines content.

Chatman's conception of the "whole communication situation" (SD, 15) is a critical construct that accommodates an analysis of discourse to further understand story. When applied to individual works of narrative fiction, Chatman's conception of narrative provides a sound basis from which to analyse individual texts. Although the communication processes in *The Diviners* conform to the description offered by Chatman, the structure of the narrative creates a communication situation in which the distance between each construct in Chatman's diagram is diminished. In Chapter Two my examination of narrative voice and point of view showed that the narrative situation in *The Diviners* created the paradox of immediacy and distance, and also, the possibility of unreliability. I demonstrated that the third person narrative voice achieved a distancing effect between the reader and the narrative content, while the "free" speech acts provided the illusion of a predominantly first person narrative and closed the distance between the implied reader and the narrator. The novel's point of view presents a similar paradox. Throughout the narrative, the voice of the discourse belongs exclusively to Morag. This creates an intimacy between the implied reader and the protagonist. However, the perspective is constantly vacillating between the young Morag and the older Morag and a degree of objectivity is achieved. The older Morag questions her younger self in sections of interior monologue. These paradoxes force the implied reader to act as both partisan and judge in the narrative processes. Also, the degree of unreliability in the narrative due to the protagonist-narrator requires the implied reader to establish a secret communion with the implied author to make sense of the story beyond the immediate presentation of story events and existents in the narrative discourse. Thus the reader actively participates in the narrative processes. The narcissistic nature of the narrative increases this active role on the part of the reader. As I demonstrated in Chapter Four of this study, the novel's fascination with its own means of creativity and forms of expression, involves the reader in an examination of the nature of fictional creativity. The implied reader is jointly responsible for the success of the

narrative he is reading because he is "asked to *participate* in the creation of worlds and of meaning through langage."[3] The narrative form requires the implied reader not only to commune with the implied author, evaluate the judgements of the narrator, and participate in the act of fictional creation, but also, such a form presents a close identification between the first three features of Chatman's conception of the communication processes. The unreliability of the author outlined in Chapter Two, was shown to be factual rather than spiritual; that is, the narrator does not advocate values and cultural expectations contrary to the novel's "substance of content." Therefore, there is a close communion between implied author and narrator. Also, the element of "spiritual autobiography" in the novel, as identified in Chapter Four during an analysis of levels of fictional reality, ensures a high degree of identification between author and narrator in the narrative discourse. The net result is that the communication situation is consolidated, indicating Laurence's desire to produce a narrative that possesses a sense of immediacy. Distances between author, implied author, narrator, implied reader and reader are shortened so that each individual construct exists in close proximity to its neighbour. Such a narrative form provides an immediacy of perception for the reader.

Each chapter in the thesis illustrated the manner in which form defines content in *The Diviners*. In Chapter Two I showed that both narrative voice and point of view exist first and foremost to define the character of Morag and the functioning of her consciousness. The third person pronouns used by the narrator to describe herself defines that character's desire not only to rationalise and objectify situations, but also to capture them in narrative form--in an autobiography. The nature of Morag's personal, psychological quest in the time present is defined by the formal features of narrative voice and point of view. By focusing on the main character, the narrative form establishes the "frame" setting for the novel: Morag's consciousness. Form defines both narrative existents: character and setting. The Chapter dealing with time demonstrates most clearly the manner in which the novel's "form of expression" functions to define the "form of content." The order, frequency and duration of

narrative events in the novel define both the fictional autobiography being written by Morag and the theme of personal truth and the multifarious nature time. For example, the chronological ordering of analeptic sequences and the durative style of "scene" and "ellipsis" establishes the discourse's internal structure of a fictional autobiography. This narrative content is further demarcated by the narrative devices examined in Chapter Four. These devices also define the thematic concern of the relationship between fiction and reality; especially the "tales" in the narrative, which are able to define content because of the use of iterative frequency. The inversion of tenses and the occurrence of prolepsis defines the psychological nature of time in which the past, present and future coexist on circular, intertwining temporal planes. The extreme manifestation of this phenomenon--content being defined by form--is evident in the presentation of narrative self-consciousness in this work. The narcissistic nature of the narrative discourse becomes thematised to provide the narrative interest of artistic creation. Form ultimately functions to define content.

NOTES

[1] Vincent B. Leitch, *Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction* (London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1983), p. 253.

[2] Davey, *From There to Here*, p. 10.

[3] Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, p. 30. Emphasis mine.

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