Margaret Laurence, a Canadian writer is a historical as well as a regional novelist who is peculiarly conscious of a personal need for the imaginative revision of history. Her work can be divided into two parts according to its setting: African and Canadian. This thesis is on her Canadian fiction which is also known as her Manawakan fiction. Accordingly, her works have been examined in chronological order (with the exception of *Jason's Quest*, her novel for children). I have employed a combination of critical methods to analyse aesthetic, textual and historical problems.

Chapter I and II comprise Laurence’s biographical information, the influences on her Canadian works and the themes behind her fiction. Together, these chapters show the links between her African and Canadian writing, the unity and continuity of her work, and the maturation of her socio-political concerns. Her basic vision is seen as religious and humanistic.

Travel played an important role in Laurence’s life. It helped shape her literary vision, and provided her with a central metaphor: the psychic journey towards inner freedom and spiritual maturity. The themes that shape her Canadian fiction- roots, ancestors, human complexity, acceptance of the Other and the search for inner freedom- these concerns first emerged in her African writing.

Chapters III, IV, V, VI, focus on the value of Laurence’s work and its relevance to contemporary literature and society. The five works set in Canada in Laurence’s fictional town of Manawaka are meant to be read together. This cycle of fiction constitutes a remarkable gallery of vital individuals, a composite portrait of women’s experience in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the imaginative recreation of an entire society.
town of Manawaka are meant to be read together. This cycle of fiction constitutes a remarkable gallery of vital individuals, a composite portrait of women's experience in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the imaginative recreation of an entire society.

The last chapter 'Manawaka' shows that Laurence has turned the Manitoba town of her youth into a metaphor of universal human experience.

The epic quality of Laurence's fiction and her ability to give symbolic form to social or collective life, has earned for Laurence a justified comparison with Tolstoy, while her literary vision of the two-way flow of time places her among philosophical novelists like Proust. Laurence's art builds upon the fiction of Canadian writers such as Sinclair Ross and greatly advances that tradition.

No work of this scope would be possible without the help of others. My thanks go out to Professor A. K. Joshi for supervising the thesis, for offering valuable insights and clarifications, and for steadfastly refusing to hurry me, insisting instead that I take all the time necessary to write the best thesis possible.

To Shastri Institute of Indo-Canadian Studies, Delhi, University of Baroda, University of Toronto, Canada, Centre of Canadian Studies Goa University, S.N.D.T. Bombay, for research material

To Principal Bhaskar Nayak, Govt. College, Quepem, my parents, brother, other members of the family and friends for extending cooperation during various stages in the completion of my thesis.

Linda Maria Fernandes