Chapter I
Introduction

The Canadian novelist Margaret Laurence is often credited with the enviable reputation of being "the first writer to credit a feeling of tradition" among the novelists in Canada. She is Canada's most successful novelist. Being one of the foremost writers of Canada, Laurence, through her Manawaka novels, deals with certain issues like post-colonial experience, anti-colonialism, anti-racism, feminism and so on. She deals with the problems of women in Canadian society and in her writings the female protagonists dominate. The protagonists and numerous subsidiary characters in the novels of Laurence provide us the spiritual condition of modern Canadians with specific reference to their physical and cultural milieu. An interesting aspect of the novels of Laurence is that while expressing their specific socio-historic situations, they raise their highly individualised characters to the universal level. In her novels the protagonists attempt to come to terms with themselves and their surroundings. The themes of survival and quest for identity are well depicted.

General Perspectives

In Canadian Literature most of the writers have perceived the local and regional problems as international and universal ones. They deal with themes such as identity-crisis, quest-motif, experience of
isolation and dissimilation, problems of social prejudice, multi-centralism, pluralism, minority cultures, multi-ethnicity, women’s problems which are universal, isolation, struggle for survival and so on.

The nineteen eighties and nineties had witnessed a remarkable flowering of Canadian literature in all forms—poetry, drama and fiction. In the present times it has been felt that Canadian literature is worthy of serious study. The best known Canadian women novelist, Margaret Atwood, has aptly pointed out that, Canadian literature has demonstrated its own existence. “In the first half of the twentieth century, Canadian literary writing did make a mark but it was ‘invisible’ to the outside world and thus failed to draw the international attention it deserved.” Though it was not noticed beyond its boundaries it took a definite shape in form and content.

The earliest growth of Canadian Literature can be traced to the original people, the Indian tribes spread far and wide in the temperate regions. These aboriginal people, in their songs and stories, spoke about the world around them, for Canada did not have any heroic issues, no gigantic war or adventurous event.

Canadian Literature reflects a regionally diverse and multi-cultural society. Canadian culture like Indian is mosaic, rather than a melting pot. The variety of literature in Canada foster the growth of a
unique composite identity. Canada is a complete world in microcosm, and it has various ethno-cultural groups and political, social and religious differences. The citizens of Canada who are from various parts of the world retain their own distinctive heritage.

The true identity of the Canadian Literature depends on the dual nature of the Canadian Literature, French and English. The origin of fiction as a literary form, the western influence is in itself a cross-cultural phenomenon. Fiction emerged as a result of the meeting of two cultures and as a result of the diversity of cultures there was the emergence of varied literatures prominent being South Asian Canadian literature. There were certain writers who created an impact on Canadian literature.

Canadian writings started surfacing in the mid-eighties in the journal such as The Toronto South Asian Review and in the individual writers like Rohinton Mistry, Bharathi Mukherjee and M.G. Vasanji.

The Canadians have their own values and heritages and thereby they enrich Canadian culture. Commonwealth Literature has made a small niche for itself as recently in the eighties and nineties. Among the Commonwealth countries such as Canada, Australia, Nigeria, New literature, Canadian literature has drawn in enormous attention.

The Literatures of Africa, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and Pakistan comprise the post-colonial literature. Most of these
countries were under the rule of the British and the people of these countries suffered much under the rule of the British colonisers. They were reduced to a state of slavery. The individuality, culture and unique traditions of these countries were crushed by the colonisers. In certain nations like India, Sri Lanka and Africa, people felt the need for a change. The quest for independence and freedom instigated the self-respect of the people. After a great struggle and sacrifice the colonisers were driven out and although they left, they had a great influence on the lifestyle of the people. This impact was felt in literature too. People felt free and happy. Writers of these countries depicted in their works the feelings and aspirations which were till then suppressed by the rule of the British.

These writers started building up a unique tradition of their own in the literary field. This literature had a unique combination of the tradition and culture of the native land with a little impact of the colonial character. In countries like Australia and Canada the writers were none other than the settlers, who were none other than the colonisers. These writers were known as post-colonial writers, were always in a constant search for an identity and they were successful in their search for an identity. The post-colonial writers experienced trauma, caused by the colonisers. The humiliations and sufferings of these writers were revealed through their writings.
Canadian literature is a literary output which gained gradually a unique identity of its own transcending political, racial and cultural barriers. In the twenties and thirties of this century, it began to flourish and later achieved a new identity. First F. R. Scott and A.J.M Smith established themselves as Canadian poets. Later novelists like Hugh Maclenan and Sinclair Ross emerged as famous novelists. These people as novelists changed the course of Canadian fiction. The spirit of national culture is dominant in the poems of Smith and also in the novels of Maclenan.

The spirit of post-modernism was present in many of the writers works:

The protagonists of mainstream writers like Atwood, Laurence, Kroetsch and Hodgins for instance, and those created by First Nation writers and those from racial and ethnic minorities, struggle to transcend their victim state. Their quest for a positive identity within the Canadian mosaic structure, is very much in tune with the sprit of post-modernism for the desire for a ‘single’, ‘unified’ Canadian identity has now given way to a celebration of plurality and multiplicity.  

In the 1940s and 1950s there were several writers whose experimentations with realism led primarily to variations in voice and
point of view. Many of these works were exploring the limits of technique: they were more focused on external subject such as the agrarian conventions of society, which was their prime aim to change.

"Identity was both the end of a psychological quest and a current social desire, as the fiction of the time revealed [...] In Lafin des songes (1950), Elie tells of one man's suicide and another's efforts to fight the pressures of the society around him."^4

In Canada, the 1960s signified the completion of a hundred years of Confederation. It engendered a wave of nationalistic fervour across Canada. The age-old Canadian problematic quest for a distinctive identity found a solution. Aided by financial and other support from the government and other agencies, there occurred in Canada according to Northrop Frye "a verbal explosion."^5 Later this paved way for Canadian writing which showed a propensity to evolving and asserting the Canadian identity by describing and defining the archetypal Canadian motifs and metaphors.

Without exaggeration, the two Margaret's—Laurence's writing in the 1960s and 70s and Atwood writing from the 1970s through into the 90s—have been the pioneers of contemporary Canadian Women's fiction in English. Their novels have contributed substantially to the definition of a national identity in Canadian Literature, and to its
international reputation, signposting a specific landscape and culture as an important location in the ‘global village.’

The 1960s in Canada were also years marked by a heady Canadian nationalism (cultural and economic). As a result there was a creation of new press to champion experimental or non-commercial novels. Gradually Canadian classics were available. The new novelists were given due recognition for there were annual contests and awards for the best first novel. There were many changes in the literary field. Most of the novelists in Canada at one time were, academic or writers-in-residence at the universities.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Canadian Literature is said to have progressed, from being an initiative art, to the assertive. Writers like Rudy Wiebe, Robert Kroetsch, Robertson Davies and so on have all made significant contributions to the emerging trend. In recent times, the Canadian novel has increasingly become “ [...] a major participant in cultural debates about nationality, ethnicity and regional identity, and more recently, aboriginality, gender and sexuality.”

The 1970s saw a drastic change. “This period also saw the coming of (writing) age of a generation of immigrants or children of immigrants, some writing in English, others in their native tongues.” The works of these people reveal the problems faced by any newcomer to any society, problems within the self and the family structure and
also with the new world to be confronted. “These works were obsessed with social, psychological and physical displacement and their tales were of struggle for survival and against alienation.”⁹ For that process of identity seeking, there continued to be few fictions, written in Inuit, Indian or Metis community.

The Canadian fiction follows more or less the same development as the Commonwealth Fiction since the late 19th Century. During the 1950s Robertson Davies, Mavis Gallant, Mordecan Raichler, Sinclair Ross, Sheila Watson and Alice Munro were the prominent writers. These writers, in their works revealed the multiculturalism of Canada. Minority cultures, heterogeneity pluralism, regional identities are some of the salient features of the Twentieth Century Canadian Fiction.

With the advent of women novelists Margaret Atwood and Margaret Laurance, the Canadian novel took a new path in the 1960s. These writers concentrated more on the inner world of feelings and sensibilities. They showed very little interest in the socio-cultural aspects. These women writers concentrated more on their inner selves. Like the novels of Anita Desai there is a certain amount of the socio-cultural background depicted in some novels of Atwood and Laurence.

A few novels like Atwood’s Surfacing, Laurence’s A Jest of God and The Diviners do reflect the Canadian social scene in all its variety,
colour and complexity. Laurence's *A Jest of God* and *The Diviners* recreate a small town known as Manawaka as real as R.K.Narayan's Malgudi.

In the novel *Surfacing*, Atwood gives glimpses of both the rural and urban scenes of Canada. The narrator who is also the heroine moves from the city to a remote lake in northern Quebec in search of her father. The protagonist along with her companions Anna, David and Joe reveal the many aspects of the urban culture of Canada. The values relating to love, sex and marriage which are part of the culture are vividly depicted in the novel. Any reader who is involved in the novel sees the differences in values and attitudes which go with the urban and rural cultures.

Love, sex, marriage, divorce are not new to any society. There is nothing especially Canadian about it. These facts can be true to any society anywhere in the world. But in the rural societies, whether it is in Canada or anywhere the values are cherished.

Another seminal theme of the Canadian novel is freedom. According to Laurence, freedom for human beings is always partial and imperfect. Human communication and isolation are the other themes which are largely depicted by the writers.

The theme of alienation and survival are dominant in the novels of Margaret Laurence and Atwood. Both these writers feel that the
quest for spiritual survival is necessary. The characters in their novel struggle to overcome alienation. They finally achieve personal and social integration. The Manawaka town in Laurence's fictional world is a symbol of alienation and spiritual survival. Atwood's seven novels are set in the city of Toronto. In her novels boarding houses, rented rooms, and hotels, convey a profound sense of rootlessness. There are other images of alienation such as tourists, refugees, exiles, immigrants and invaders.

The four writers Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Rudy Wiebe and Robert Kroetsch have been in the forefront of literary scene in the post-sixties. Their writings have had a palpable effect on Canadian culture and literature in the subsequent decades. Margaret Laurence quite justifiably underlines the significant role of the writers. Commenting on the enigma of identity she observes:

The feeling we got in the 60s that we were a culture that mattered to ourselves and the world has helped our writer, but our writers also helped in forming those feelings.¹⁰

The theme of quest is very prominent in western literature. The pages of classic literature have portrayed the hero's quest with vigour. Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress* explore the inner self of the protagonists. Northrop Frye identifies “the central myth of
literature in its narrative aspect, with the quest-myth.”¹¹

The theme of alienation, survival and identity are central to the works of Margaret Atwood and the Manawaka novels of Margaret Laurence. The characters in their novels struggle to overcome alienation and achieve personal and social integration, “which is imagined as a freedom to love, to share, to meet, to touch. Such a state [...] is our spiritual home, the human good the grail.”¹²

Margaret Laurence (1926-1987) was a descendant of a British settler and she wrote her first work, a collection of stories set in Ghana. After her experiences in Africa, she has developed a difference in her outlook and in spirituality. She spent twelve years in Africa. Her experiences in the struggle for freedom and nationhood in Africa sharpened her sense of understanding Canada as a new country. Canada in its own ways was trying to come to terms with the colonial inheritance.

Laurence's initial books such as A Tree for Poverty, The Tomorrow Tamer, This Side Jordan, The Prophet's Camel Bell express her anti-imperialistic and anticolonial views. She returned to England and spent a few years there. It was here that she wrote three of her Manawaka novels. The sufferings, humiliations and the ill-treatment which the natives underwent in the hands of the British colonisers were revealed to a great extent in her works. Her characters are life
like and they are ordinary people who are revered as extraordinary by her imaginative quality of characterisation.

In the life of Laurence, travel plays a major role in shaping the literary vision of the writer. The journeys which she undertook helped her to become aware of oneself and one's community. Born in Neepawa, Manitoba in 1926, Jean Margaret Wemyss, grew up in this town as an orphan. She was looked after by her mother's family. Laurence father was of Scottish ancestry, whereas her mother, ne’e Simpson, was Irish. Since both the family belong to Protestant, the religious and cultural traditions of Puritanism were very prominent features in Laurence's bringing.

Laurence uses metaphor in her novels to depict ideas such as survival with dignity, love and growth. In the description of Somaliland the metaphor of journey becomes a living reality. Her stay in Africa provided lessons in human nature and self-knowledge. It also provided great complexes of metaphors which she used throughout her writing career.

The town of Neepawa provided the inspiration for Laurence's fictional Manawaka. Neepawa became a major centre of a rich agricultural district. It was also rich in dairy products, salt and wood. It was aptly named. It was earlier settled by the Scottish prisoners.
These families are described by Laurence in her fictions *The Stone Angel, A Jest of God,* and *The Diviners.* The town of Neepawa is the prairie town which Laurence herself admits in her novels.

When Laurence was in Somaliland, she wrote the novel *A Tree for Poverty.* Philip Shirley the chief Secretary of the Protectorate where Laurence worked was responsible for publishing the manuscript of *A Tree for Poverty.* The next five years Laurence spent in Ghana where she drafted *This Side Jordan* just after the birth of her son. The African stories were written in Vancouver.

It was at this time that Laurence's maternal grandfather John Simpson, passed away. It is not only the frequent deaths which occurred in the family but also the realisation of the death of her own maternal grandfather induced Laurence to have 'death' as one of the themes in the Manawaka Novels. Her grandfather was a stern man who seemed incapable of expressing any emotion but anger. Although he was such a harsh personality he was admired for his qualities, strength and pride. In *A Bird in the House,* the grandfather plays a very significant role.

Laurence spent seven years in Africa and out of these experiences, she gained a greater understanding of her own roots. After her separation from her husband in 1962 she wrote *The Stone Angel.* In December 1963 Laurence wrote *The Diviners.* Her seven years stay
in Africa led to five books. The British life in Buckinghamshire is reflected in *Jason's Quest*, a novel she wrote for children.

The African writings and experiences took a literary shape in Canada. In 1970 Laurence returned to Canada and published her epic novel *The Diviners*. The years also marked Laurence's increased involvement in the Canadian life - social, literary and political.

Laurence has influenced and advised the later generation of Canadian writers through several years from her cottage near Otonabee River. She was also a writer-in residence at the Ontario University. She has also involved herself in the political scene, supporting the Canadian writers, protesting against the unfair conditions meted to them.

Laurence's views about her life, work, and literary aims are known through her own impressions. Her works reveal that she is a highly self-conscious writer, with clear-cut goals. Another major theme in her novels is isolation and human communication.

With reference to Laurence's method of writing fiction, she gives importance to characters first. The whole novel and the story are woven around the characters. She thinks of her characters for years. She later depicts them by means of a story. Her characters are life like characters with all paradoxes and craziness.

H.J.Rosengarten points out that Laurence's first person
narrative technique conveys the intensity of her “waking nightmare by the constant juxtaposition of the dreams of her inner world and the demands of her external world."\(^{13}\)

In one of her interviews Laurence expresses that time and place are the basic shaping forces of any writer. She possesses an intimate knowledge of four generations in her fictional town of Manawaka; the generations of her grandparents, parents, self and children.

**Objectives**

The aim of the thesis is to highlight and focus on the theme of quest for identity in the Manawaka novels of Laurence. The protagonist’s quest for identity is the crux of her work. Her protagonists are known for their inner strength and they emerge triumphant of their sufferings. Within the limited canvas available for expounding the thesis, this thematic study confines itself to the five Manawaka novels. The search for a meaningful Canadian life has been an important issue in Canada and the search continues to remain an important concern.

**Significance of the Study**

For Laurence there is nothing sentimental in handling the themes. According to Laurence man is in a free state, whereas the other side of freedom is bondage, alienation and so on. These bonds are either imposed on the characters or it is out of their control. Isolation,
exile, alienation are seen as forms of bondage or psychic slavery. The characters in the African and Canadian stories struggle very hard to break these bonds, to overcome alienation, to achieve an integration of both personal and social love and to share love, to meet, to touch—such a state Laurence implies is the spiritual home, the human goal. Laurence main theme, the search for identity, for inner freedom, indicates a quest structure. Laurence in her review of Margaret Atwood’s novel Surfacing remarks:

For it is the ancient Quest which is the journey here, the descent into the dark regions, where some special knowledge is gained, some revelation, before the return to the world of known creatures [...] ‘human kind’s quest for the archetypal parents, for our gods, for our own meanings in the face of our knowledge of the inevitability of death’ is central to mythology, religion and history.14

Laurence's experiences in Africa had a great impact on the literary vision of Laurence. She emphasised that she began to write her Canadian experience only after living in and writing about Africa. In an unpublished article of 1969 Laurence writes of her desire to reveal the long gradual and unending process of self knowledge.

Roots, ancestors, human complexity, acceptance of the other, the essential of inner and the search for inner freedom and growth are
some of the themes which shape the Manawaka fiction. The African experience helped Laurence to identify these themes of the fiction.

Laurence's main body of work, which her African experiences had prepared her for the Canadian-set novels. They are The Stone Angel, A Jest of God, The Fire-Dwellers and The Diviners. In all these novels, the fictional town of Manawaka is present in the mind of the characters.

Laurence in her novels uses the theory of Carl Jung's "Collective Unconscious". She is concerned with the growth of the individual psyche towards wholeness—a process which Jung called 'individuation.'

Laurence's primary theme is the search for inner freedom. In her novels all her protagonists struggle to achieve the inner freedom. Hagar wrestles with pride, Rachel, with fear, Stacey with frustration, Vanessa, her refusal to acknowledge her grandfather as part of herself.

Laurence's characterisation and dramatisation of the universal human experiences are the spiritual and psychological truth. Here in lies the strength and beauty of her works.

The Manawaka novels of Margaret Laurence The Stone Angel, A Jest of God, The Fire-Dwellers, A Bird in a House and The Diviners have been chosen for study. The theme of quest and survival is a common theme which is seen in all her novels but the theme of quest for identity is taken for discussion. Laurence says:
The quest for physical and spiritual freedom, the quest for relationships of equality and communication—these themes run through my fiction and are connected with the theme of survival, not mere physical survival, but a survival of the spirit, with human dignity and ability to give and receive love.\textsuperscript{15}

Laurence projects the message that by being kind, sympathetic, compassionate to the poor, dispossessed the downtrodden and oppressed community, man can be closer to God and only then his quest achieves a wholeness, a complete form.

She has made use of the Heraclitean elements—earth, water air and fire, as well as Heraclitean time as flux. The Manawaka fictions are dominated by the imagery associated with one of the four elements:

Exploration of the individual’s search for a new sense of personal identity dominates the novels and short stories of Margaret Laurence. In each Manawaka narrative, the Metis family of Jules Tonnerre becomes the focus of suffering and death, acceptance and endurance that are integrally related to the experience of each of Laurence’s heroines.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Review of the related works}

Margaret Laurence depicts her characters within the male-
dominated societies. Though the female protagonist undertakes quests for identities beyond those defined by familial or social roles the fundamental thrust is on the spiritual or psychological quests to identify oneself. Many writers have dealt on such themes as quest for identity that is quest for self-realisation.

Women in Laurence begin by being frustrated and dissatisfied with the roles assigned to them by the society. They undertake the quest for identity by breaking the long-standing habits: "of seeking approval, of trying to please parents, lovers, husbands, friends, children, but never herself. In probing her experience and asking basic questions, a woman may begin to wonder whether she has ever chosen anything she has done." This feeling alienates them from the immediate surrounding and society at large. The quest for identity demands the quest for self-realisation, an attempt to understand oneself. Hence every quest demands a conscious attempt to develop qualities like love, compassion, humility and simplicity. Laurence also uses landscape to analyse and probe the mindscape of the individuals. This tradition has been made popular in this century by D.H.Lawrence, Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene. In the New Literatures in English, Patrick White and Laurence share this convention with Wilson Harris and Malcolm Lowry. Patrick White's *Voss, A Fringe of Leaves, Riders in the Chariot* are very good examples of the quest
theme of identity (examples are Elizabeth Hunter's, Ellen Roxburgh's and Laura's illuminations). Anitha Desai's works such as *Cry the Peacock*, and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula* depict the quest theme of identity. This quest for identity in Laurence's novels is "the archetypal quest for identity" shared by many English-Canadian writers. "This trait also offers comparison between Laurence and writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Edward Brathwaite, Derek Walcott and George Lamming all of whom are committed to a strong "sense of mission."\(^{18}\)

Clara Thomas observes that these writers attempt "to explore and illuminate the past of their peoples inorder to bring a sense of dignity and continuity to the lives of men and women in the present."\(^{19}\)

Hence in a nutshell it can be said that like the characters Jane Austen's novel they tend to show little interest in the great-socio-cultural questions of the day, like in the novels of Anita Desai, they withdraw into their innerselves. These writers’ novels move steadily towards a discovery of the self and the landscape across which the journey, geophysical or cultural, takes place transcending all locals, regional, nationalistic and cultural concerns.

**Hypothesis**

The Canadian literary scholarship during the last two decades
has invariably felt concerned about issues pertaining to Canadian identity. Many critics and writers have raised this problem and strived to answer the questions: “Who are we? Or where is here?” as Northrop Frye puts it. W.L. Morton in his book The Canadian Identity has discussed various aspects of this topic. Since then the Canadian scientists and writers seem to have remained preoccupied with question of defining and categorizing the Canadian Identity in its right perspective. The question of identity has been expressed in three levels as national, regional and personal or individual identity. Laurence’s protagonists keep asking the inquiring question “who am I”, “who are we?” “How am I related to this place” “How am I accepted, recognised, loved, considered, treated by the others in the Canadian society? She tries to find positive answers for all these questions. In Laurence’s Manawaka novels the theme of identity is well depicted. Laurence reveals her protagonists identity crisis in these works.

**Methodology**

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter Introduction deals with a brief sketch of Laurence’s life and achievements and the intellectual atmosphere of her age. The theme of quest for identity in the world classics are touched upon. The historical and the socio-economic background of Canada, the rise of the Canadian novel with reference to Margaret Laurence, her social vision and her
technique are discussed.

Chapter two brings out the theme of quest for identity in *The Stone Angel*, the first of the series of the five Manawaka novels. The novel is about Hager Shipley, a ninety-year-old proud woman who struggles to maintain her independence. She recalls certain events, questions and understands them. Mingling past and present, she maintains pride in the face of senility. Her affinity with nature, silences her own thoughts and feelings. Through her self-realisation, and self-recognition she moderates from enormity to humanity.

Chapter three focuses on the quest for identity in the second novel of Manawaka series *A Jest of God*. The novel is about a spinster school teacher Rachel Cameron. An introvert by nature, she remains preoccupied with her own individual self.

She is obsessed with her own status, her image in the community and her family. She avoids any kind of link with anyone. Such aloofness adds to her problem of identity. Rachel’s emotional involvement frees her from nagging fears and anxieties. She learns to accept and to live with her limitations. She moves finally to a recognition that she must and she will rely on whatever strength she can find or forge within herself.

Chapter four analyses *The Fire-Dwellers*, a novel about Rachel’s older sister Stacey MacAindra. It is a searching novel about life in the
mid-twentieth century as seen through the eyes of middle-aged, middle-class, ordinary sort of a woman who needs to remind herself that she should have an identity of her own, other than that of wife and mother. She is not able to cope with the mechanical city life in Vancouver. All her attempts to find her identity and to escape from all responsibilities culminate in her coming back home and accepting that her family is "more or less okay" (FD 281). In the process of her journey towards identity, she develops an awareness and sympathy for Mrs. Cameron. She is reminded of her own suffering arising from a state of self-estrangement. This further adds to her personal identity crisis when she looks at Valentine Tonnerre's downfall an account of her habits of drug addiction. She is shocked and horrified to know about the link between her dead father, her husband and herself. There is a change in her relationship with her children. She starts treating them as individuals. Stacey's short-time relationship with Luke Venturi promotes her individuality. Though she battles with the wilderness of the city, she survives and emerges victorious.

Chapter five portrays the identity theme in A Bird in the House—a collection of eight short stories. These stories as Laurence herself admits are directly drawn from her childhood. Laurence describes A Bird in the House as the only semi-auto biographical fiction she has ever written. Laurence's strong sense of regional identity is revealed in
her dealings with prairie life. Vanessa as a child is a sensitive observer of incidents and of the lives of people around her. Her attitude towards duty, love, work and so on is due to her treatment of Grandfather Timothy Connor and Grandmother Macleod in the story “To Set Our House in Order”. Vanessa’s Grandfather Connor is a suppressor belonging to the patriarchal community. He enforces his authority over the women of his family. She undergoes traumatic experiences and she narrates the sufferings of her Grandmother, Mother, aunt and herself in his hands. Vanessa’s growth as an artist are brought out vividly in the novel. Inspite of all the hurdles she is able to survive and prove her identity.

The penultimate chapter elucidates in detail, the last novel of the Manawaka series The Diviners. It is considered as an epic novel of Laurence with multifarious themes. The protagonist Morag Gunn is subjected to many hazardous situations both physical and mental in the hands of colonial imperialistic husbands and only in the end she realises the value of her heritage and past. Morag Gunn is depicted as a woman who has conquered her spirit without losing her self-respect and her identity.

The seventh chapter is a summing up of the argument and conclusion. The salient features of the preceding chapters are discussed and a conclusion is arrived at.